

POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG DALITS AND NON-DALITS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MAHENDERGARH DISTRICT IN HARYANA

A Thesis

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**In the School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG DALITS AND NON-DALITS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MAHENDERGARH DISTRICT IN HARYANA” submitted to Central University of Haryana in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, is a record of original research work done by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Chanchal Kumar Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Central University of Haryana.

The contents of this dissertation have not been submitted so far in part or in full for any degree or diploma this University or in any other institution.

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This is to certify that the thesis entitled "POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG DALITS AND NON-DALITS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MAHENDERGARH DISTRICT IN HARYANA" submitted to Central University of Haryana in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science is a record of original work done by Mr. Ram Sharan during the period of his study under my supervision and guidance. To the best of my knowledge and belief this work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree/ Diploma of this University or any other institution.

I deem the present research work fit for being evaluated for the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

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CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Caste System and The Dalit	1
1.2 Meaning of the Term Dalit	3
1.3 Historical Position	5
1.4 Efforts Towards Uplifting	8
1.5 Non-Dalit in India with Special Reference to Haryana	19
1.6 Statement of the Problem	33
1.7 Objectives	34
1.8 Hypothesis	34
1.9 Methods and Methodology	35
1.10 References	36

Chapter 2: Review of Literature41

Chapter 3: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction	81
3.2 Concept Clarification	82
3.3 Political Awareness and Political Participation	87
3.4 Variables of Political Awareness	93
3.5 References	96

Chapter 4: Political Awareness: The Concept and its Application for Dalit Politics

4.1 Introduction	100
4.2 Political Awareness	101
4.3 Political Participation and People Participation	104
4.4 Citizen Participation	105
4.5 Democracy and Political Awareness	106
4.6 Significance of Political Awareness	107
4.7 Factors Affecting Political Awareness	111
4.8 Political Awareness in India	120
4.9 Political Awareness in Post-Independence in Era	122
4.10 Political Awareness among Dalits in India	131
4.11 References	132

Chapter 5: The Study Area and Survey Sample

5.1 Introduction	136
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5.2 Socio Cultural Environment	137
5.3 Geographic Location	139
5.4 Economic Profile	142
5.5 Administrative Set Up	144
5.6 References	149
Chapter 6: Political Awareness among Dalits and Non Dalits in Mahendergarh	
6.1 Introduction	151
6.2 Level of Political Awareness	155
6.3 Mass Media and its impact on Political Awareness	161
6.4 References	169
Chapter 7: ANOVA Based Analysis of Data: Political Awareness among Dalits and Non-Dalits in Mahendergarh	
7.1 Introduction	172
7.2 ANOVA Based Analysis	175
7.3 Detailed Analysis	183
Bibliography	195

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

At all times and in every society there are certain disadvantaged groups. They lag behind the mainstream of the society due to one reason or the other. In Indian context, ‘*dalits*’ constitute one such group. The *dalits*, which is a social group peculiar to India, lagged behind the rest of the society in several respects since ages. They have been discriminated in several respects and were meted out, in several cases, even inhuman treatment, by the rest of the society particularly the socially advanced groups. They have been poor, deprived of basic human rights and treated as social inferiors in the society.

1.1 The Caste System and the Dalits

The caste system or *varna-vayavastha*, which has dominated Indian society for over 3000 years, was developed by Brahmins (Hindu priests) to maintain their superiority over less educated, less skilled and lower castes. Over the time, caste system was formalized into four distinct social groups called castes or *varnas*, which was organized in hierarchical manner. At the top of the social hierarchy were the *brahmins*, who were considered arbiters in the matters of learning, teaching and religion. Next in the line of hierarchy have been the *kshatriyas* who were warriors and administrators. The third and fourth in the social hierarchy have been the *vaisyas* who constituted the commercial class and the *sudras* who have been the farmers and peasants,

respectively.¹ The four castes are socially and religiously important because they are said to have divine origin.²

Outside the *varna* system, there is a fifth group called *dalits*, who were prevented from doing any but the most menial jobs and were untouchable for the rest of the castes. They have been certain primitives, criminals, defeated and degraded people.³ *Dalits* were referred to as *panchamas* or people of fifth order.⁴ The *dalits* were also called as *pulkasas* and *chandalas* engaged in polluting work such as sweeping and were believed to be the illegitimate children of *sudra* fathers and *brahmin* mothers.⁵ The *chandalas* were the most despised of the Hindu society. They were not allowed to live within the walls of the town. The *pulkasas* like *chandalas* were also despised people. They were excluded from the category of castes. In the *Dharam Shastra* the occupation of a *chandalas* is to carry the dead bodies of men and animals and to execute criminals.⁶ While crises of temporary untouchability occurred in the lifecycle of all castes, the Scheduled Castes were born as untouchables, they lived in untouchability and died as untouchable.⁷ The *dalits* in present context in India are referred to as the Scheduled Castes.

Initially, the Rigvedic *varna* system in the first instance was labour division, i.e., this social classification was on the basis of the work performed by an individual. *Brahmins* or priests were just like Bureaucrats of today. They were the virtually powerful. The *kshatriyas* or warriors were the military personnel and the rulers. The *vaishyas* were merchants and cultivators, while the *sudras* were menials and labourers. But this classification soon became rigid and degenerated and gradually the caste of a person was determined on the basis of lineage.

The doctrine of inequality is core at the heart of the caste system. Dalits are outcastes or people who fell outside the four fold caste system. As a system of social, economic and religious governance, the rigid caste system based on lineage of an individual was not founded on the

principle of equality, liberty or fraternity, but on the principle of inequality in every sphere of life. The social, religious, cultural and economic rights of the person belonging to a particular caste are predetermined on the basis of his or her birth and are thus hereditary; they are not subject to change after the birth of a person.⁸

1.2 Meaning of the Term Dalit

According to Molesworth's Marathi-English Dictionary (1975), the meaning of *dalit* is ground, broken or reduced to pieces generally.⁹ *Dalit* is not a caste in India. Dalit is a man exploited by rituals and upper castes. It means burst, split, broken, downtrodden, scattered, crushed and destroyed. In popular parlance *dalit* refers to ex-untouchable population of India.¹⁰ In legal terminology in India, a *dalit* is a person who belongs to the castes identified as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The term *dalits* has under gone many changes and each time it appears with new nomenclature. The Hindu doctrine of creation exemplified in *chaturanana* scheme of social stratification does not clearly account for the origin of the untouchables. As discussed above, those who were below or outside the four *varnas* were called as *panchams*. In the later Vedic period they were referred as *chandalas* and *pulkasas*. According to *Baudayana Dharm Sutra*, a *chandala* is an offspring of *sudra* father and *brahmin* mother. These *chandalas* do not denote one single homogeneous class, but offsprings of five different varieties.¹¹ The term *antyaaja*, *aniyavasin*, *asuras*, *dasas* or *dasyas* and *raksasa* was used over the period of time.

The term was initially coined by Narsi Mehta, a Bhakti era poet to refer to the children of *devadasis* (female temple dancers).¹² Symbolically speaking, they were children of God in that the *devadasis* were dedicated to the service of God and sexual union between the agents and

servants of God was mystified and even invested with an aura of divinity.¹³ Perhaps the last saint poet in this stream was Narsi Mehta a Gujarati, who coined the term Harijan. The term Harijan literally means ‘children of God.’ By the late 19th century the term ‘depressed classes’ was introduced by the British administration to refer to the untouchables and tribes.

The Government of India Act, 1935 introduced the term Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to replace the earlier composite term depressed classes used for these categories.¹⁴ Mahatma Gandhi invoked the term “Harijan” in a different sense a word intended to express his compassion and meant to be ennobling. But it was totally rejected by conscious untouchables and wondered why they had been signed out as ‘children of God?’ In this terminology *dalits* perceived another attempt to subtle segregation from the rest of society.¹⁵ But Ambedkar, the most outstanding leader of the Scheduled Castes in modern times, rejected it outright and insisted that these people be referred to as ‘untouchables’ so as to avoid the obfuscation of reality.¹⁶

The last and the current label used by Scheduled Castes to define themselves is *dalit*, the oppressed. The basic characteristic features of the *dalits* in India are: A recent coinage, it came into vogue in the 1970s in Maharashtra with the formation of a political party that called itself the Dalit Panthers. Although the Dalit identity crystallized first in Maharashtra, it spread quickly, gaining wide currency, and it is now used all over India.¹⁷ They are stigmatized people and poverty is their constant companion; segregated by the society marginalized by the polity, oppressed by the power mongers. Act of brutality and terror continue to be part of the atrocities perpetuated on *dalits*.¹⁸

Thus, it can be said that *dalit* is not the name of any traditional caste;¹⁹ rather it is a social group which has been deprived of the rights which other sections of society enjoyed. People

belonging to this group worked as manual scavengers, clearing away dead animals and doing other such works. Engaging in these activities was considered to be polluting to the individual who performed them and this pollution is considered to be contagious. As a result, *dalits* were commonly banned and segregated from the rest of the society.

1.3 Historical Position

During the Vedic times, when the caste system was not defined on the basis of birth rather on the basis of the occupation pursued by an individual, the position of the *dalits* was not pathetic. However, their position started deteriorating when the caste of a person was determined on the basis of lineage. The *Dharam Shastras* and the Epics mention the *nishada*, *chandala*, *pulkasas* as degraded ones.²⁰ The outcaste people were mainly bounded labourers and could do only menial jobs. They were denied access to temples, wells and schools.²¹ Manu's work is full of inhuman codification of caste rules. He supported the supremacy of *brahmins* and other dominating communities and fully condemned the Non-Arya *sudras* and *chandalas*.²² Hence the position of *chandalas* was very critical at that time. *chandalas* could not live in the villages, they could perform the menial and unskilled labour particularly the ritually unclean works.²³ So they were out of the Hindu caste system cut off from the rest of the society. Chinese pilgrim Fahien, a contemporary of Chandra Gupta-II, visited and lived in India between 405 A.D. and 411 A.D. He stated that *chandalas* lived apart from others, in separate quarter. The other Chinese traveler Yuan Chaug, who visited India in 629 A.D., reiterated that "these people were forced to live outside the city."²⁴ In Buddha and Mahavira, period the condition of the *dalits* was not worse. Both Buddha and Mahavira admitted untouchables in their administration and social order, during their life time they condemned caste system.²⁵

By the time of medieval period, the practice of untouchability had set in. In the beginning of the eleventh century Al-Brunie visited India and left some valuable accounts of the life of the people during that period. He said that *sudras* followed by a section of people, *antyaja* or *achhut* were engaged in eight varieties of crafts and trades.²⁶ Those were sailor, fisherman, juggler, basket maker, weaver, shoemakers and hunter of birds and wild animals.

During thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Hindu religion was promoted at high-level. During this period, the condition of *dalits* was not very good. During Medieval period, the Arab invasions started, one after another and plundered the country followed by massacres and destruction of religious sites. During *Sultanate* period and *Mughal* regime, the *sudaras* and untouchables suffered very badly.²⁷ With the emergence of Kabir, Ravidas, Dadu, Nanak etc., it almost became a movement of social awakening and unity among lower castes. *Bhakti* movement condemned the social odds and oppressive features of Hindu society and also attacked Muslim orthodoxy. It opposed caste system and practice of untouchability. At that time society was consisted of poor and rich, the master and the slave. The *dalits* were known as *achhut* in this period. Ramanand, a Hindu reformer, Rai Das, a *chammar* of Banarasa, preached equality and opposed untouchability. The *Bhakti* movement rejected the authority of Vedas, *brahmin* priesthood and ritual practices, but failed to recover the lost identity. It was continued in various forms till the 18th century.²⁸

During the 19th century during British rule the condition of *dalits* was not as worse as it was in ancient time and during *Bhakti* period. The emergence of British power made a lot of difference for downtrodden people. They brought a sense of liberty for the marginalized communities. The British strongly opposed the rituals as *sati partha* and untouchability.²⁹ During

this British period, the *dalits* were known as untouchables and they were officially called the Scheduled Castes. After independence the position of *dalits* has improved considerably due to constitutional provisions and the efforts undertaken by the government, spread of education and awareness. Although the concept of untouchability was made illegal after India gained independence in 1947, the persecution and alienation of the *dalits* has not been stopped³⁰ altogether. They are still facing economic problems, socio-cultural and political discrimination in the name of caste in many parts of India. The education is the basic factor for upliftment of any section of society. But the quality of education especially of government school in rural areas is very poor. In rural areas there is inadequate infrastructure, lack of accountability of teachers and inadequate working conditions of teachers and this has adversely affected the quality of education thereat.

Even now the position of *dalits* especially of the women and children of this category is vulnerable. *Dalit* women and children are primarily engaged in civic sanitation work followed by leather fraying in tanning and footwear manufacturing whereas many *dalits* are agricultural labourers.³¹ Most of the *dalits* are living very critical life particularly in states like Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan etc. Dalits claim that their economic, social cultural rights as well as their civil and political rights have been violated by the government and its entities for centuries. They argue that the government should recognize and enforce economic, social cultural rights of *dalits*.³²

Therefore, the condition and position of *dalits* was very critical in ancient and in medieval periods. But when the Western ruler held the power in India, the position of *dalits* was improved in modern times. Their condition and position has improved further and is still

improving due to constitutional provisions and the legislative and executive efforts. So the position of *dalits* is not as critical in present as it was earlier.

1.4 Efforts towards Uplifting

Even though the *dalits* were deprived of several social and political rights and were even regarded untouchables, there have been several individual, group and governmental efforts to mitigate their sufferings. Some of these efforts have been stated in this section.

Efforts during Pre Independence Period

Renaissance in India appeared during the beginning of nineteenth century. During this period, several efforts were made to liberate the people from the clutches of religious orthodoxy and to eradicate social and cultural evils. Several movements were launched especially by those who got western liberal education. Besides, the British government also undertook several measures to remove the prevailing evil practices. They also introduced the western education system which was based on western democratic ideas. Several of these efforts were directly aimed at improving the lot of the *dalits* while several others had indirectly contributed to improve their condition. Some of the important efforts during the pre-independence period are discussed in this section.

Impact of Western Education and Culture

In 19th century, English education which was imparted with the view to popularize the western way of living and thinking transformed the mind of Indians. The spread of western liberal education triggered the process of social and cultural reforms and helped develop scientific and rational attitude, which was due to the study of English literature, philosophy and science.³³ The British observed that in India *brahmins* alone were the custodians of imparting

education, learning and knowledge and that the system of education in this country had become redundant. Therefore, they introduced the Western system of education in India. Although amongst the untouchables education came very late, but the spread of education changed their way of living and thinking. It also changed their socio-economic conditions.

In the earlier 19th century Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the *Brahmo Samaj* and acknowledged the virtues of Western education, liberal outlook and legal institutions. Dr. Ambedkar also admired the English education and held that “Untouchability can be removed by education alone, yet he was greatly committed to the cause of education. He founded the people’s Education Society at Bombay in July 1945. He started the Siddharth College, Bombay in 1946.³⁴ Hence English education and Western values benefited all parts of the Indian society and it improved the socio-cultural, economic condition of untouchable or *dalits* also.

Laws and Policies during British Rule

During the British rule in India, downtrodden people started getting some relief and it brought a sense of liberty for the marginalized communities.³⁵ The main source of the socio-cultural oppress of scheduled castes is the practice of untouchability. The first governmental step to legislate against untouchability was taken in 1858 when an untouchable boy was refused admission in a government school in Dharwar, a small town in the then Mysore state southern India.³⁶ In 1858 Government of India declared that educational institutions of government will be open to all classes. From 1858 in theory all government schools and colleges were open to untouchables but in practice, admission was often refused to them in rural areas.³⁷ But over the period of time, the situation was changed and untouchables also got admission in schools and colleges.

After 1920 the non-*Brahmin* movement took a political colour. The political reforms announced by the Montague-Chelmsford Commission of British Government in 1918 and the subsequent grant of adult suffrage brought the non-*Brahmins* movement in to political arena. During the elections held in 1920, 1923, and 1926, several Non-*Brahmins* were elected to provincial councils and a separate Non-*Brahmin* political party was constituted.³⁸ In 1930, Gandhi viewed the *dalit* problem as social one, whereas Ambedkar saw it a political and economic problem created by upper castes. When Dr. Ambedkar becomes the first law minister in colonial India, he brought some legal reforms, which later on got incorporated into the Constitution.³⁹

It is critical to see that constitutional reservation for the *dalits* was not an idea of equality, but was a historic compromise. The British Government announced in 1932, the creation of communal electorates, i.e., separate seats and extra votes for Dalits and Muslims. An agitated Gandhi went on a fast unto death against separate electorates for Dalits. Faced with intense pressure from popular sympathy for an ailing Gandhi, Ambedkar compromised, giving up on the demand that Dalit voters be kept separate, but gaining reserved constituencies for the depressed classes. This Poona Pact of 1932 became the basis for providing reservations to the depressed classes in the Government of India Act, 1935 which in turn, became the template for the Constitution of India.⁴⁰

Social Movements

In terms of this paradigm the anti-caste social movements were began in the 19th century under the inspiration of Jyotiba-Phule and was carried on during 1920s by the Non-*Brahmins* movements in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu and then developed under the leadership of Dr.

Ambedkar. Jotiba Phule (1826-1890) was himself not a *dalit*, but a man of backward classes, a *malis* (gardener) by occupation and classed with the Maratha *kunbes* as people of middle status. While he developed a strong *dalit* movement, his main organizational work was in fact among the middle to low. Non-*Brahmin* castes of Maharashtra, traditionally classed as *sudra* and known till today as the Bahun Samaj.⁴¹ He began as a first social reformer who established schools for both girls and untouchable boys. Mahatma Jotiba Phule founded first Non-*Brahmin* organization named *Satya Shodhak Samaj* in 1873 at Pune. The early *Satya Shodhak Samaj* movement stressed only two things, first education of the masses and second was reduction of rituals power.⁴² Phule himself was a creative pioneer in education. After Jotiba Phule, Shahu Ji Maharaj of Kolhapur kept the movement alive from the turn of the century until his death in 1923. He was first King of India, who implemented reservation policy in his province.⁴³ He constructed many schools and colleges for the *dalit* people. He opposed caste system and untouchability.

By the 1920s a new militant mass oriented movement arose in Tamil Nadu. Its leader was E.V. Rama Sarami Periyar from a merchant family. In the early 1920s, he took part in the *Vaikom Temple Satyagrah*, reportedly clashing with Gandhi while taking a militant position. In 1925 Periyar left the Congress and formed the Self-Respect League in 1926 and its focus was similar to that of Phule for the abolition of caste and supporting the liberation of women. He attacked all religions more than Phule did.⁴⁴ In 1944 he revived the Justice Party and changed its name to Dravida Kazhagam (DK). He launched a number of vigorous anti-untouchability movements that not only claimed a higher social, economic and political recognition to the untouchables, but also some sort of reverse adverse treatment to the hitherto dominant upper caste communities.⁴⁵

Some *Brahmins* also took up the work of educating the untouchables. Pandurang Mahadeo, Bapat (1880-1967) popularly known as Senapati Bapat, a revolutionary who was the first Indian to study in Paris. In August 1913, he began teaching children of untouchables at Partner, a small Town in the Ahmadnagar district.⁴⁶ He gave them books and taught them how to read and write. He regularly visited the hutments of the untouchables and to persuade them to send their children to his school. Bapat invited the untouchables for dinner at his house when he celebrated the birth of his son Vaman.

Bhaurao Paigonda Patil who dropped out education from the Raja Ram High school while he was studying in matriculation, followed the ideas of Shahu Chhatrapati in the field of education. He established a study center at Dudhgaon in Satara District of Maharashtra.⁴⁷ Education, Bhaurao believed, was a way to the solution of many of the problems of poor depressed class people in the rural areas. He made it a mission of his life.

A significant anti-untouchability movement appeared in Punjab during this time known as *Adi-dharam* movement. It was led by a prominent untouchable of the state named Mangoo Ram, with the aim of throwing out the customs and rituals of untouchables in the state. The *Adi-dharam* movement under the direction and leadership of Mangoo Ram also sought to uplift scheduled castes. The *Adi-dharam* movement began with the belief that the untouchables in Punjab existed as a distinct socio-religious entity or quam like those of Hindu, Muslims or Sikhs since ages and with a conviction to remove it.⁴⁸

They should, therefore demand for distinct set of patterns of treatment which may lead to the amelioration of their socio-religious and political condition in the society. Hence, many social activists of the 19th century and in the early 20th century made efforts to organize the non-

Brahmin movements and *dalits* were drawn to an anti-caste, anti-*Brahmin* and anti-Hindu ideology of the kind that Phule formulate. The non-*brahmin* movements in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Karnataka, all argued in terms of the Aryan conquest and *brahmin* exploitation through religion.⁴⁹

Drawing his descent from the untouchable caste of *mahar*, Dr. Ambedkar began the *Mahar* movement in 1926 with the aim of eradicating untouchability from Maharashtra. Though the *Mahar* movement attained fair degree of success, its experiences convinced Ambedkar that for the holistic advancement of the plight of his fellow brethren, the movement must be rooted in the political mould.⁵⁰

Dr. Ambedkar made efforts to transform the hierarchical structure of Indian society for the restoration of equal rights and justice to the neglected lot by building up a critique from within the structure of Indian society. His was not a theoretical attempt but a practical approach to the problems of untouchability.⁵¹ Ambedkar took as his basic goal the ending of exploitation and oppression and the achievement of equality, liberty and fraternity.

Efforts during Post-Independence Period

Efforts towards uplifting the *dalits* got further impetus during the post-independence. Our Constitution provides several provisions which are aimed at improving the lot of this section of society. Parliament also enacted some laws for the benefit of this section and some executive efforts have also been directed towards the achievement of this objective.

Constitutional Provisions

The Indian constitution in its bill of Rights guarantees all citizens basic civil and political rights and fundamental freedom. In addition, the constitution has special provisions prohibiting discrimination based on caste. These constitutional provisions are found under the Right to

equality (Article 14, 15, 16, and 17), the Right against Exploitation (Articles 23, 24), cultural and Educational Rights (Article 29(2)), and prohibition against disenfranchisement in elections based on one's religion, race or sex (Article 325).⁵²

These rights are inviolable rights of the citizens against the state. Any law or executive action depriving individuals of their freedom could be challenged in Supreme Court or High courts.⁵³ The constitution of India also prohibits any forms of discrimination against the *dalits*. The spirit of the constitution is that the equality, Justice and progress of Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes will be a measure of the progress of the Indian society as a whole. The Preamble of the Constitution proclaimed to secure to the people of India "Social, economic and political Justice, equality of status and opportunity and to promote fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual, thus aiming at anti-caste-discrimination aspirations."⁵⁴ Part III of the Constitution of India provides fundamental rights to the citizens of India to assure equality, freedom and dignified life. Unlike the U.S. Constitution, the Indian Constitution provides equality before law and equal protection of laws so that all are considered equal before the law and they are equally protected by the law of the country. Article 17, abolishes the age old practice of untouchability due to which the *dalits* had to face many humiliations and denial of rights. Untouchability has been made an offence punishable by law.⁵⁵ In a continuing effort to ensure that the aims of article 17 are fully realized, Parliament came out with the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955.⁵⁶ To break the notion of upgrading service of the upper castes for the lower castes, Article 23 of the Constitution prohibits bonded labour so that their exploitation by upper caste people can be eliminated. Articles 330 and 333 permit Union and state legislatures to reserve seats for members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes based on population in each constituency.⁵⁷ Article 338 mandates the creation of a National Commission for Scheduled Castes and

Scheduled Tribes to monitor safe guards provided to them. Finally, Article 341 makes possible the governmental identification of different sub categories of scheduled castes in relation to each state and authorizes the President to declare certain caste as scheduled Castes (SCs) for special benefits like reservation in government jobs and academic institutions, free hostel facility for SC children.⁵⁸

Special Safeguards

Reservation in educational institutes, Jobs and other Constitutional Safeguards should also be provided to the *dalits* in the Constitution of India. To allow for proportional representation of scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribes, the constitution reserves 22.5% of Seats in government Jobs, state legislative, the lower house of the Parliament and Government educational institutions.⁵⁹ Originally the provision of reservation of seats was provided for only up to 1960, but it has been extended periodically and the provision continues to this Date. Article 330 provides for reservation of seats for SCs/STs in the State Legislative Assemblies. Article 335 claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts in the government.⁶⁰

SC/ST Commission

There shall be a special officer for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to be appointed by the President of India. It shall be the duty of the Special officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the constitution and report to the President upon the working of those safeguards at such intervals as the President may direct and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament. The Constitution of India gave a special mandate to the President of India under Article 341 (1) to specify the castes, races under a Schedule. The Castes

as listed become eligible for the purposes of discriminatory protections and favors designed for that purpose.⁶¹

Punjab State SC Commission directed the local police and civil administration to re-open all cases where alleged atrocities have been committed on Dalit and Forcible compromises executed by the police instead of providing Justice to the Victims.⁶²

Hence the Constitution of India provides for a number of protective measures for the welfare of the scheduled castes. Chief among the State measures are: representation in Parliament, state legislatures and panchayats; representation in services both in the central and state governments, special provisions for social educational and economic advancement; banning traffic in human beings and forced labour, abolition of the practice of untouchability and appointment of special officer to investigate all matter relating to safe guards provided for the scheduled castes. So all the measures stated above in Constitution played a prominent role for uplifting the *dalits*.

Legislative Measures

Legislature played an prominent role for upliftment of the *dalits* in India. The second major source of change in the status of the scheduled castes is legislative and administrative measures undertaken for the betterment of this category. Originally, the provision for reservation of seats was provided only for 10 years in the constitution, but it has been extended periodically and the provision continues to this date. While the reserved positions are filled in the case of legislative bodies, wherein no educational or other qualifications are prescribed, the situation with regard to public services is quite different. Second, Article 17, of the Indian Constitution (promulgated in 1950), the practice of untouchability is for bidden and its practice in any form is made punishable. However, a country wide legislation the Untouchability (offences) Act, was

passed only in 1955. According to this Act, Scheduled Castes should have access to all public places, including places of worship and public utilities. However to plug some of the loopholes in the 1955 Act and to augment its scope, the protection of Civil Right act 1976 was passed.⁶³ The Act provide for more stringent punishment for the practice of untouchability in any form. As a result, the socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes improved and social discrimination against them partly disappeared. To meet this new development the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, was passed. The Indian state has been sensitive to the changing need for upliftment of the Scheduled Castes. To fulfill the constitutional provisions pertaining to Scheduled castes, legislature has passed various laws to protect their rights. These include the Protection of Civil Rights (Anti-Untouchability) Act, 1955, the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, 1976, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Rules 1995, the Employment of Manual scavenger and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 and various land reform laws to redistribute community land to the land less.⁶⁴

Hence these measures have been enacted under Article (15 (4)) and Article 46 of the Constitution and are meant to enable them achieve socio-economic development in their own geographical location.⁶⁵ Finally to monitor enforcement of these laws, the central Government established the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes and the National Human Rights Commission in the early 1990s (NCDHR). Policy and legislative measures to promote equal rights for Dalits have so far not touched upon the private sector, but this is about to change. The Govt. of India is now urging the private sector to take on its responsibility of empowering dalits socially and economically. The ILO (International Labour office), Asia Pacific Employment paper provides an insight on the discussion taking place in

India since 2003 how private enterprises can support better and “Decent work” employment opportunities for Dalits.⁶⁶

Executive Measures

Despite the legal safeguards provided for the protection of the scheduled caste from caste based atrocities and discrimination, the atrocities on the *dalits* are not coming to end and the *dalits* are still meted out with various forms of atrocities in different parts of the country. After 65 years of independence the *dalits* are denied their social and economic rights and they are being subjected to various types of atrocities. Due to the ineffective implementation of the anti-atrocities law and lack of strong will on part of the state to prevent the atrocities, the crimes or atrocities against the scheduled castes are still persisting.⁶⁷

To fulfill the constitutional provisions pertaining to scheduled castes, the Government of India has passed various laws to protect their rights. To monitor enforcement of these laws, the Central Government establishes executive bodies such as the National Commission for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes and the National Human Rights Commission since early 1990s.⁶⁸

The Government of India implemented the reservation policy to create jobs opportunities for the *dalits* and other disadvantaged groups. The post-independence government was committed to set a quota for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in all the governmental functionaries including seats in Parliament and other elected bodies in proportion to their population.⁶⁹

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules 1995, played a notable role to prevent the atrocities against the *dalits*. These rules give powers to state

executive for prevention atrocities against the *dalits*. The state government shall have set up a “Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes Protection Cell” at the state head quarter under the charge of Director of Police/Inspector General of Police.⁷⁰

The state Government shall nominate a Nodal Officer of the level of a secretary to the State Government preferably belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes for co-ordinating the functioning of the District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police or the offices authorized by them investigating officers and other officer responsible for implementing the provisions of Act.

The District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police shall visit the place or area where the atrocity has been committed to assess the loss of life and damage to the property and draw a list of victims, their family members and dependents entitled for relief. The State Govt. shall made necessary provisions in its annual budget for providing relief and rehabilitation facilities to the victims of atrocity.

The state government shall prepare a model contingency plan for implementing the Act and notify the same in its official Gazetteer. The state government shall every year, before 31 March, forward the report to the Central Government about the measures taken for implementing provisions of the Act and various schemes plan framed by it during the previous calendar year.

1.5 Non-Dalit in India with Special Reference to Haryana

Caste is a traditional concept of social hierarchy. As ‘Manu’ has classified the castes in Hindu mythology which is known as ‘Manu Smariti’. In this traditional concept of social hierarchy, Manu has classified as Braham as at apex, Khatria ranks second in this caste hierarchy, vaish comes at third place. Lastly, the ‘Shudhra’ comes in the last in this caste

hierarchy. In this traditional concept of social hierarchy. We may understand that the caste Brahman, Khatria and Vaish may be called as 'Non-Dalit Caste' in Indian Caste system. Whereas, the 'Shudhras' are known as 'Dalits' in caste hierarchy.

In the ancient India, castes have been played a significant and notable role, as the castes have been playing well knit cohesive and integrated role to make the tradition, society by its salient feature 'the division of labour' and their economic interdependent ship. This economic inter-dependent ship also known as 'Yajmani system' in the traditional concept of social hierarchy. This system used to produce 'centripetal force' for the society by making the 'social fabric' inter-dependent ship. In this concept, as 'Manu' has discussed the salient feature of first three castes in his social hierarchy. All these three castes are non-dalit castes of today.

Keeping in view the sub-division of caste hierarchy which subsequently sub-divided into large number of sub-castes and 'Gotras' streams. As we know it very well that the castes belong to 'Dalits' come off the 'service-classes'. Whereas the upper castes are known as 'Non-Dalit' castes. In this category, as per the requirement of the study. The 'dominant castes' have been the 'Non-Dalit' castes in India. All these non-dalit castes have been traditionally the castes which have been the 'functional classification' for the white color jobs or bread earner. On the other hand, the 'Shudhras' which have been traditionally 'functionally classified' by low status of jobs in the society.

In context to Non-Dalit castes as M.N. Sri Niwasan (1984) has highlighted the cultural characteristics through attaining the 'cultural traits' through sanskritization. These 'non-dalits' are differentiated from their socio-economic and cultural dynamism. These Non-Dalits castes are characterized by acquiring various cultural traits through 'social processes' taken place during different successive periods. It has been observed that there was a considerable 'cultural-lag'

between the dalits and non-dalits during few decades back in India. As a result, there was a considerable gap between Dalits and 'Non-Dalits' on level of political awareness too. This difference between 'Dalits' and 'Non-Dalits' has given rise to widen the socio-economic and general awareness between the two major social segments.

In India, there are near about 1200 castes which come under the schedule of other backward classes in the Indian society, may also referred as 'Non-Dalit' castes in India. All these castes have been classified by the 'Mandal commission' in the early 90s and subsequently implemented by the parliamentary amendment through amendment procedure of Indian constitution (Indian constitutional Amendment Act.). The castes, belong to this category accounts 52 percent of India's total population. This segment of the population of India belong to 'Non-Dalit' segment of population in the social caste-hierarchy. All these mostly non-dalit caste segment is characterized by the white color means of earning of bread. The people, belong to this category are dominantly the workmen and the artisan who work with their skills. There are few castes which can be exemplified with the castes such as Kumhar, Nai, Darzi, Shimpa, Khati, Teli, Jogi etc. All these castes belong to 'Non-Dalit' segment of population. In this context, it has been observed that all these castes, despite its non-dalit nature, never been a dominant castes.

Among to 'Non-Dalit castes' there have been some of 'Dominant castes' in the caste-hierarchy. Amongst a sizable numerical strength of the dominant castes, Brahmins, being at apex in the social caste system have been dominant castes in North as well as south India. In the northern India, wide spreaded Brahmins in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and at few areas in Punjab and Haryana where the Gaud Brahmins and Saraswat Brahmins have been dominant castes in some of areas of these states. In the western U.P. where the, Tyagi-Brahiman are dominant caste as 'Non-Dalit' caste. In middle of Gangetic plain, where Dwedi, Chaturvedi, Mishra have been

dominated Gotras distributed within these states. In the states like Uttarkhand and Himachal Pradesh the Brahmins such as Tiwari, Numandri and Saraswat have been dominant Brahmins as 'Non-Dalit' castes in these states. In the states West Bengal where the Brahmins like Mukharzi Chatarzi, Chakarwarty and upadhaya have been dominant Brahmin (non-Dalit) castes. In the state like Orisha, where the Brahmins like Mishra, Satpati, Nanda and Patnayak have been 'Dominant Brahmins'. Similarly the other Brahmins like Dixit, Parikh have been dominant Brahmin castes in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

In South India, the Ayanger and Ayyar Brahmin has been dominant caste in Tamilnadu and Kerala respectively. All these non dalits Brahman castes have been considerable representation in politics, public administration, government and corporate services. A considerable percentage of land holdings have been occupied by the Brahmin castes with their respective regions. However, there is considerable political awareness among the Brahmins of different regions of India. Since independence, we may understand the dominancy of Brahmins in the Indian politics. In the northern Indian states there have been dominance of non-dalits or Brahmins castes in parliament state assembly and even chief ministers to Prime ministers post.

Among the 'Non-Dalit Caste' there are other castes as Jats, Jat-Sikhs, Ahirs and other cultivating castes, which have been playing a significant role in their dominancy in the specific regions. In case of Jats & Jat Sikhs as a dominant castes are dominant within the 200 K.M. radius of Delhi. Even within the periphery of outer Delhi, there is considerable dominance of Jat castes of Jat Rana, Tokas and Shokin, Gotras. They are dominant in the politics of Delhi. Almost agricultural land holdings have been occupied by the dominant 'Jat caste.' The clans like Sekhon, Grewal, Kang, Virk, Siddhu, Dhillon, Mangat have been major Jat clans of Punjab.

In Haryana, where the Jat community has been dominant caste in the Haryana-Politics. However, they are also having a considerable share in the services, property, business, public administration and local self governments. The combined effects of all these factors have given rise to develop more socio-economic and political awareness among the 'Non-Dalits' of Haryana. The Jaat community, as a dominant caste is confined to Rohtak, Sonapat, Jhajjar, Bhiwani, Hissar, Jind and Panipat districts of Haryana. These districts are characterized by a specific dominant 'Gotra', popularly known as 'Khap'. All these khaps are well aware of prevailing political activities and act as a strong 'pressure groups' for making decision on socio-economic and political crucial matters, belong to the villagers, belong to different rural social hierarchy. There are some of prevailing 'centripetal and the centrifugal force' which determine the behavior of the 'Khap Panchayats' in different regions of Haryana (Satpal Singh 2013).

Among other dominant castes of Haryana, the Ahir (Yadav) rank second, who have a considerable share in socio-economic and political activities in Haryana. The major consideration of Yadavs is in the southern region of Haryana. Whole of Rewari district, district Mahendergarh and Bhiwani district are some of Yadav pockets of Haryana. In the Bhiwani district, where the dominant caste has been the Jaat community, but there are few villages such as Misri, Bhageshwari, Barsana, Chang Road, Balroad and some of other villages where the 'Yadavs' are having a complete dominance within this region. The land holding of the southern districts have been owned by the 'Yadavs'. They are also having or considerable share in the services and political activities in the government and local self government too. Desai, A.R. (1984) has discussed the magnitude and composition of dominant castes in rural India, indicate some of quantitative and qualitative parameters which determine the levels of political interests in the rural society of India. He has carried out some of empirical study on various rural areas of

India and found a considerable regional disparity of the behavior of various 'dominant castes' of rural India. M.S. A. Rao (1981) also discusses the growth of various movements of 'peasant-class' during different successive periods. He has highlighted the salient features of political awareness among the peasants which is one of 'non-Dalit' dominant group in the rural society. In the period of early 40s Ch. Chhotu Ram, the leader of the peasants of Punjab and Haryana region has been played a significant role by creating an awareness for the rights of the farmers, belong to different hierarchy. These segment of the peasants were 'Non-Dalits' and had a more political awareness for their rights in the 'National Movement days'.

The 'Khatrias' which are Rajputs of different clans, scattered in all over northern India, Rajasthan, Madhaya Pradesh, Bihar, U.P. and the hill states. The Khatria with its different nomenclatures, has been a dominant caste in above mentioned regions. All these 'Khatrias' belong to 'Non-Dalit' community which is inhabited mostly in Indo-Gangetic plains and hills of sub-Himalayan region.

Keeping in view their sub-clan which shows a considerable regional disparity for their dominance. In the northern India the major clans of the Rajputs are Pawar, Rawats, Bhadoria, Sindhiya, Chauhans, Parmars, Ranawats, Pathania, Negi and Mankotias.

These clans are charaterised by the ownership of land-holdings, political representatives for governments and local-self governemtns. In addition, they are numerically dominated in some of cluster areas too. They are having a considerable number of government jobs such as Military, Police, Civil service and professionals of different streams. All these 'Khatrias' come off 'Non-Dalits' in the caste-hierarchy in India. Among the 'Rajputs', a consistant representatives of political parties for a apex positions, such as chief Ministers of various states

are some of examples of dominance of Rajputs and their high level of 'Political Awareness' in northern and central regions of India.

In Haryana, the Rajputs have never been a dominant caste, except few villages of districts like Bhiwani and Hissar, where there are a few villages, belong to Parmar clan and Chauhan clans. Though they are having a considerable share of land-holdings, but indicate a least political-representation in Haryana-politics. They are having a considerable share in military-services and good professionals in Haryana.

Hence, it is obvious that the Rajputs is one of dominant caste, belong to 'Non-Dalit' caste in habited, mostly in Bhiwani and Hissar district of Haryana. The Rajputs in Haryana, are found in the cluster forms, which tend to produce least 'political-force' among the 'non-dalits' in Haryana. And the Jats have gained more importance to have a public representative at different political levels. The 'Vaish' mostly belong to Aggarwal community of different parts of India. This a Bania community, which has been a bigger-business caste of northern and central parts of India. The population belong to Bania community has been spread over a major part of Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and parts of Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Assam, Odisha etc. Apart from the Vaish, which belong to Aggarwal community, are Jains too. All these are the people belong to bania community, but has adopted the 'Jain Dharma', mostly inhabited in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh. They are mostly businessmen and good professionals of different technical and non-technical streams. A considerable number of public-representatives have been at different political-hierarchy of different political parties in India.

In Haryana, right from the very beginning there has been a considerable political participation, particularly at a apex level, it has been one of business caste among 'Non-Dalits' in

Haryana. In the initial years of Haryana's formation, the leaders like Banarsidas Gupta and subsequently Mange Ram Gupta, Om Prakash Jindal and now Naveen Kumar Jindal are some of examples which indicate a consistency dominance in Haryana politics. In this context, the 'Banias' who have migrated to other states like Assam, Odisha, Bihar and Chhatisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and other states have shown no-interest in the political activities in the states, where they are presently reside in different parts of India. Among the non-dalits, there are the castes which belong to dominant 'cultivating castes' in southern parts of India. The Nairs of Kerala and the Redies of Andhra Pradesh. These two castes having a considerable participation in their 'region' and 'national politics' of their respective states at different political hierarchy.

Among the 'Non-Dalits', there has been a considerable and significant role of 'minority' and other backward classes in different parts of India. In Uttar Pradesh, there is dominant role of Muslims, which is comprised of different castes, play a significant role in the state and India politics. There has been a significant role of 'Muslims' in expediting the National movement for India's independence too. There are a large number of examples of 'Muslim leaders' such as Mulana Azad, Jinnah, Saffatulla Khan, Abdul Gaffar Khan, who have played a notable role for freedom struggle.

In the present politics, there have been various Muslim leaders such as Jakir Hussain Dr. Nazama Happtualla, Abdul Kalam, Dr. Hamid Ansari etc. who have been at apex position of the state. In the present Indian politics, the leaders like Gulam Nabi Azad, Mukhtiar Ahmad Ansari, and Salman Khur Shid have been playing a significant role in the India politics. Though the Muslim comes in Minority, but has a considerable and significant role in the regional and National politics. The constituencies of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh such as Aligarh, Moradabad, Farukhabad, Azamgarh, Muzaffar Nagar in U.P. & Bhopal and Indore in M.P. have

a considerable number of 'Muslims' who are politically strong and make a considerable difference to the vote-bank. It is the solo factor which determines the voting-behaviour of the regional and National politics. Similarly there are other regions like Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, Ajmer and Jaipur in Rajasthan, Malerkotla in Punjab, Bhwandi in Mumbai, Mujjaffarpur in Bihar and some of pokets of south India have a considerable dominance of Muslim caste, which has been playing a significant role in the active participation in the political activities. Though the Muslims as a 'Non-Dalit' community are relatively poorer and having a least share in the service sector but determine the voting behavior of the regional and national politics. It is because of relatively low literacy rates and religious prejudices against family planning and women's education, as a result the shrewd politicians are relatively affect their attitude towards their 'vested interests' and ultimately affects the voting behavior of the regional politics as well as the national politics in India.

In Haryana, where the minority of Muslim Community are dominant in the Mewat region of Haryana. They are the 'Meoes', who adopted the Muslim religion during early Mughal period. In the Mewat region which is comprised of the district headquarters 'Nuh' and the Tehsil Ferozpuer Jhirka and a part of Hathin Tehsil of Palwal district. In this region, there has been a significant role, played by the leaders, belong to every regional and National political parties of Haryana. Amongst the Political leaders such as Taiyab Hussain, Yaseen Azad Mohamad and now Afftab Ahmad, the Minister of Transport Haryana has been a considerable place in the Haryana politics. Whole Mewat region is characterized with general backwardness and chronic drinking water problem in almost whole region of Mewat. It is because of the sub-surface water of Mewat which is sline and not suitable for drinking purposes for human and bovine consumption. There is wide spread low literacy rate particularly among the women, prejudices

against family planning are some of pressing problems of this region. As a result, a cumulatively has given rise to dominance of few families for taking participation in regional and state politics of Haryana. Hence, the 'Meos' are the one of community, among the 'Non-Dalits' of Haryana, has a significant role as 'Minority' dominance, but least political participation by the majority of the 'Meo-population' of Mewat of Haryana.

The role of 'other backward class' as 'Non-Dalit' caste has a significant role in regional and National politics. It is because of higher literacy rates among the people, belong to 'other backward classes'. The numerical strength of these castes is 52% of the total population of India. Though there is 27% reservation for the other Backward classes in the all India and central services but there is no reservation in the state assemblies and the parliament. That is why, no political party is in a position to ignore the people, belong to Backward class. All these Non-Dalit' people population live in various states of India, make a considerable difference on 'voting-behaviour', if there is reservation in the state assemblies and the parliament elections.

Though the people belong to other backward classes enjoy their socio economic status more or less almost equaling to the dominant castes, particularly in the urban areas, but they are scattered in nature and almost 'unorganized', way. As a result, could not make as an 'effective pressure groups' so that they may raise their voice for choosing their leaders among the OBC category as a 'Non-Dalit Pleader' out of Backward classes. Though the people belong to OBC category, are having a very much political awareness and a considerable share in the service-sector. They are the good professionals but lack of minority of different backward classes, has given rise to not organize to build a pressure on state and the central government. All these related problems have given rise to political incompetency and choosing their 'right leaders' and make the government of their own for their respective regions. These types of some of

‘centrifugal forces’ have given rise to frequently averting their due share in the regional and national politics among this ‘Non-Dalit’ castes in India.

In case of Haryana, where the other Backward classes constitutes over 50 per cent of population, but their share of state reservation policy is still 10 per cent in the class-I and class-II services. The dominant castes of the state politics, do not bother about their due share for the state service. Since the formation of Haryana, Nov. 1, 1966 the people, belong to other Backward classes have failed to pressurise the governments, came in different successive periods. Same tendency has been observed for allotting the quota for the beneficiaries of other socio-economic and political aspects. Among this ‘Non-Dalit’ categories, most of the people are ready to become ‘followers’ rather than ‘leaders’ in various parts of Haryana. Till now, they have never been to mobilise any resources in an effective ways. It is because of ‘poor collective bargaining’ of the ‘other backward classes of the state. In this categories, there are few ‘petty leaders’ who keep on full feeling their ‘vested interests’ rather than representing the mass of the backward classes. This is a ‘plight’ on the part of the people, belong to backward classes. It is because of least socio-economic and politically mobility among this ‘Non-Dalit’ category of a large number of backward castes in Haryana.

Apart from the backward castes, there is a considerable number of ‘Punjabi population’, which includes Khatri & Aroras particularly those who have migrated from Pakistan to Punjab and Haryana, played a notable role and established themselves in an adverse circumstances, created during Indo-Pakistan partition. There are over 40% of the Punjabi speaking Hindus, who have been migrated from the Punjab of Pakistan to the Punjab of India and subsequently settled in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab. All these Punjabi speaking Hindus are having a some of Hard-working attributes which have been proved conducive to resettle in an adverse circumstance. The

numerical strength of Punjabi speaking Hindus are in the districts such as Panipat, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Karnal, Ambala, Kurukshetra and Sonapat, where the Punjabis have been inhabited with a sizable numerical strength. Though most of the Punjabies are engaged in the business activities. It is because of their inherited business skill and partly because of least probability of getting opportunities to get the jobs in the government's services. In almost an government which has come in Haryana, did not bother too much for the Punjabi speaking Hindus. A considerable segment of the 'Punjabi population' who has got the services either in the central government or by his own efforts or acquire the professional qualifications.

In this context, almost all the leaders, belong to dominant castes have tried to oblige the Punjabies by making the leaders like Ashok Arora, by the INLD party, and Bharat Bhushan Batra by the Indian National Congress Party. It is because of the 'Vested interest' developed by each and every political party. There is a considerable vote-bank of the Punjabies, who are one of major population segment which belong to 'Non-Dalit caste', want to mobilize every political party in Haryana.

Though there are few Punjabies, who have been landlords in Pakistan, allotted the cultivable land in Punjab, Haryana and Rajsthan. These Punjabies are having some of political interest to represent themselves in the local self governments and doing well and become responsive to the public works. In this context, only few cases have been noticed in rural areas of Haryana. It has been observed that the Punjabi's presence in the local self governments is negligible and often they are influenced by the dominant castes where they inhabited. It has been often observed that there are strong prejudices against the Punjabies, particularly the Punjabies living in the rural areas. All these factors have given rise to oppress the growing the budding leaders among this 'Non-Dalit' community of Haryana.

Though there is wide-spread political awareness among the Punjabi speaking Hindu Population in Haryana, but due to mind-set of the dominant castes which has always been proved a 'wet-blanket' to take an active political participation at different political hierarchy. And this segment of 'Non-Dalit' population has always been suffering from the adverse, closed and prejudicious attitudes of the people, belong to 'Dominant Caste' has made this 'Non-Dalit' segment, lag behind by several decades for receiving the return of their worth in various political activities in Haryana.

Among the 'Non-Dalit' segment of the society, the 'Christians', who has a significant number in India. It is the fourth religious population, mostly live in the Metroplitan regions. It has been observed that the 'Indian Christians' community, which enjoy 'Non-Dalit' status today, have been 'converted Christians'. Most of the Indian Christians have been Dalit. Hindus and subsequently due to unfavourable social-conditions, they have converted as 'Chritians'. In India, there is considerable variability among 'Chritians' who live in different regions of India.

In the Northern region of India, it has been observed that the 'Meteropolitan cities' like Delhi, Ludhiana, Bareilly, Lucknow, Allahabad, Agra, Varanasi, Jhansi, Ambala, Amritsar, Pathankot and Jammu cities are having a considerable number of 'Christians'. The Christian in northern India is well educated, cultured and peaceful community. Though chritians are in minority, but here are few states, where the 'Chritians' are in a 'Dominant' position. These states are Goa, Kerala which constitute from 20 to 40% of the 'Chritian Population' Tamil Nadu, Karnatka and Andhra Pradesh are having 10 to 15 per cent chritians.

In the eastern part of India, there is considerable number of 'Chritians' in Kolkatta and its sub-urban areas. The north-eastern states like Assam, Mizoram, Meghaliya, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pardesh and Nagaland are having a considerable number of Chritians (15 to 35%)

with in these seven sister states. In the eastern part of India, concentration of 'Christian population' is the result of development of 'Britishers Christian Missionaries' within these states. The literacy rates for these states are relatively higher and influenced by the 'British culture' to a considerable extent. The political awareness among the 'Christians' are every high and who have been continuously protesting against the 'discriminated policy' of the central government in their respective states.

Christians in Haryana are in very minority. The number of Christians in the Total population is less than 1 per cent. Maximum christian in the cities, are in Ambala, Gurgaon, Karnal, Panipat and Rohtak. Other districts are having a negligible christian population. It has been observed that the 'Christians' are having an adequate 'political awareness', but they have never been taken an active-participation in Haryana politics. It is because of their 'passive nature' and numerically small segment of 'Non-Dalit' of Haryana.

Hence, it is obvious from the socio-economic and political point of view, the 'Non-Dalit' population is dynamic and having a considerable share in the politics. Most of the 'Non-Dalit' population belong to 'Dominant castes'. A considerable part of the land-holdings, business, services (government and corporate) are some of salient features associated with the 'Non-Dalit' segment of population. There has been high probability of social and occupational mobility among them. They are having high degree of spatial mobility too. As a result, there is higher probability for taking an active political participation for forming governments and local self governments. The 'Non-Dalit' segment of population is relatively aware of the political activities, happening around there and respond in accordance with prevailing local conditions.

In Haryana, the 'Non-Dalit' segment of population has been playing a significant and notable role in Haryana politics. This segment of population, mostly belong to 'Dominant Caste'

and having a considerable share in services, land-holdings, and having a better social and occupation mobility in the state. They are having a more political participation at various political hierarchy. The share of administrative positions of 'Non-Dalits' in the 'Haryana Administration' are having considerable share and expedite their 'social mobility' through their socio-political network. They know better to mobilize their resources by influencing their political connections and take advantages of their socio-economic dominance in the state. On the other hand, an other segment of population which is comprised of the Punjabi speaking Hindus the Brahmins and the people belong to backward class having a considerable share in Haryana's economy, but almost passive nature in Haryana politics. As a result, negligible participation in the Haryana politics. Hence, it is obvious that the castes belong to 'Non-Dalit' segment of society, play a significant role in India. They are having a considerable share of wealth, education, business and political power to mobilize their human and financial resources which have led to development themselves. They are relatively more aware of the political activities, prevailing within their region and their surrounding areas. They are having a better political network which has been proved conducive to mobilize the human, financial and physical resources to get the targeted results.

1.6 Statement of the Problem

In the above sections, an effort has been made to highlight the importance of political awareness of the citizens of a democratic country. It has also been observed that the level of political awareness of the dalits is usually believed to be relatively low in comparison to non-dalit because of their age old suppression, discrimination and due to low level of education among them. Keeping in view this problematic area, the researcher chose to study the level of political awareness of the dalits and non-dalit of Mahendergarh district in Haryana state. The problem

under study may be stated as: “Political Awareness Among Dalits and non-dalit: A comparative Study of Mahendergarh District in Haryana”.

1.7 Objectives

Following are the main objective of the study:

1. To know whether there exist significant difference in the level of political awareness among the dalits and non-dalits of Mahendergarh District vis-à-vis their level of age.
2. To know whether there exist significant difference in the level of political awareness among the dalits and non-dalit of Mahendergarh District vis-à-vis their level of income.
3. To know whether there exist significant difference in the level of political awareness among the dalit and non-dalits of Mahendergarh District vis-à-vis their level of education.
4. To know the level of political awareness among the dalit of Mahendergarh District.
5. To know the level of political awareness among the non-dalit of Mahendergarh in Haryana
6. To know whether there is any difference in the level of political awareness among dalit and non-dalit in Mahendergarh District in Haryana.

1.8 Hypotheses

It is proposed to test the following hypotheses:

1. There exists significant difference in the level of political awareness among the dalits and non-dalits of Mahendergarh District vis-à-vis their level of age.
2. There exists significant difference in the level of political awareness among dalits and non-dalits of Mahendergarh District vis-à-vis their level of income.

3. There exists significant difference in the level of political awareness among dalits and non-dalits of Mahendergarh District vis-à-vis their level of education.
4. The level of political awareness of the dalit in Mahendergarh District is relatively low in comparison to non-dalits.
5. The level of political awareness of the non-dalit in Mahendergarh District is relatively high in comparison to dalits.
6. Null Hypothesis: There is no difference in the level of political awareness among the dalits and non-dalit in Mahendergarh District of Haryana.

1.9 Methods and the Methodology

The present study is basically an empirical study, which is based upon primary as well as secondary sources of information. In this study, we interviewed the Dalit leaders, common Dalit community, non-Dalit leaders and Non Dalit community members from Mahendergarh district.

The data was collected by conducting interviews with the respondents. For this a total sample of three hundred respondents was selected on the basis of purposive and random sampling method. Out of these three hundred, 150 respondents were taken from Dalits and 150 from Non Dalits.

With a view to proceed further, an interview schedule-cum-questionnaire was prepared. It contained questions regarding the participation in different political processes as well as general questions regarding the socio-economic background of respondents like: education, profession etc. It also contained questions to know the social and political awareness of the respondents, their attitude towards political parties, Dalit organizations and Dalit issues etc. After systematization and analysis of the data, conclusions have been drawn. In addition to the data collected through empirical survey, the Constitution of India, Census of India and Statistical

Abstracts of Punjab have been consulted. The relevant books, journals and newspapers etc. have also been made use of as secondary sources of data.

The primary data generated by the researcher has been analysed on two bases: on the basis of one-way ANOVA and through percentages for in depth analysis. ANOVA is a tool for comparing the differences in means between various groups. There are three versions of ANOVA – one-way ANOVA, two-way ANOVA and n-way ANOVA. Since in the present study we have to ascertain whether Level of Political Awareness and the scores of respondents vis-à-vis their Age/ Level of Education/ Level of Income are individually “statistically different”, therefore, one-way ANOVA has been used.

Secondary sources used in the study include Census 2011 report, District Gazetteer of Mahendergarh district, and the other reports published by the Government of India and the Government of Haryana, books and research articles on the subject, journals, newspapers etc.

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Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In order to highlight the problematic areas of political awareness among dalits and non-dalits, the authors, belong to various streams of social sciences have put forward their views through their writings. The review of related literature has been discussed as follows:

During the last few decades there have been a number of works done on various aspects of Dalits in the different parts of India. Most of them are sociological, anthropological and some of them are political in nature. However it is also important that more or equal attention should be given to the participation of Dalits in the political system of the society. Although many studies have been undertaken on the role of Dalits in Indian politics and their status in Indian society, yet in the context of Punjab, barring a few scholarly works, not much research work has been undertaken in this field, particularly on the issue of political participation of Dalits. A brief review of the existing literature on Dalit issues in India and in Punjab is given below.

Denzial Ibbetson's, *Punjab Castes* (1916)¹ explains the genesis of caste on the basis of occupation. The emergence of a new occupation or a change in the traditional occupation led to the birth of a new caste. To Ibbetson castes are nothing but groups of people having specific occupation, and these occupations have been arranged in a pollution-purity continuum and this ranking has a bearing on the social intercourse of these groups, that is, caste. He further maintains that these occupations are preserved through certain religious principles.

Rajani Kothari, the well known political scientist, in his pioneer work *Caste in Indian Politics* (1954)² exhibits the role of caste in Indian politics. The author emphasizes that political mobilization of various sections of Indian society has given salience to caste in Indian politics.

He also points out that mobilization of different caste groups has been a major technique with various political parties for expanding their support base.

To analyze the relationship between social status and occupational status of the Scheduled Castes, D' Souza (1962)³ conducted a study of three villages of Gujrat, Mysore and Maharashtra. The study brings out that in Gujrat and Mysore occupational status of the Scheduled Castes was the lowest in their respective villages. In the social evolution too, they were ranked lowest by others and by themselves but the situation was different in the Maharashtra villages. The occupational status of the Scheduled Castes was higher than that of some other castes.

Mahars (SC) had also given up their traditional unclean occupation. This did bring about some change in the attitude of the villagers towards the social status of Mahars but social tension and oppression had arisen in their relation with the other castes. The author also observes that people would take some time to forget past occupation of the Scheduled Castes.

Baldev Raj Nayar (1965)⁴ while writing on the role of caste in Punjab, takes up the case of the victory of an Akali Dal supported Scheduled Caste candidate in a rural Sidhwan Bet constituency elections of 1962. He shows the powerful influence of religious loyalties in the voting behavior of both Hindus and Sikhs and the important role played by the gurdwaras for the Akali Dal candidate.

But he also suggests that many other factors cut into religious loyalties. In the particular case under study the conflicts among Jat-Sikh factions within the village and the candidate's use of kinship ties were among the more important factors which led a number of Sikhs to vote for the Congress rather than Akali Dal. Loyalties to caste, religion, faction and party were thus all

present: the voter had to make a choice among his conflicting loyalties, and the skill of successful candidate lay in his ability to build a coalition of diverse loyalties.

Nayar in his illustrious *Minority Politics in Punjab* (1966)⁵⁶ pointed out the cleavages based on religion, caste, rural-urban divide and class amongst the people of the state and raised the question as to the significance of these various cleavages in the population of Punjab for the politics of the state. His work was, however, mainly concerned with the role of religion in Punjab politics. Despite this, he made some valuable observations regarding the role of caste as well.

In *Social Change in Modern India*, Srinivas (1966)⁵ has defined the process of Sanskritization: Sanskritization is the process by which a low Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently twice born caste. The low caste takes to the conduct, customs and rituals of higher caste. By Sanskritization a caste or a tribal community ventures to gain higher status in society. In the process of Sanskritization a claim is made for higher status in the social structure and it is therefore a vertical movement. But in Sanskritization there is improvement of status only, there is no structural change.

Chandidas's (1969)⁶ study examined how close to equality were the Scheduled Castes. The data was taken from Data unit of Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). The author concluded that after two decades of special concessions to bring them at par with the general population, the Scheduled Castes remained at the rear end of development. In the agricultural sector, where the Scheduled Castes were concentrated, their position as compared with that of the non-Scheduled Castes, was inferior regarding land as well as size of holdings. Their rate of urbanization and education and their average per-capita income in comparison to the non-Scheduled Castes was lower.

A study by Saberwal (1972)⁷ of three reserved assembly constituencies in Punjab shows that Scheduled Caste leaders have relatively limited political resources and political socialization. Therefore, the net result of this adverse condition is that the leaders refrain from adopting a stable political stance and depend on the patronage given by upper castes and the constitution. Saberwal concludes in his study that without political reservation, the access of the SCs to various elite settings in the political arena would decline, leading to greater inequalities in society. Thus, it is clear from the study that due to political reservation, Scheduled Caste leaders are not inspired to group the larger institutional mechanisms which underlie inequalities, at the same time, the provision for reserved constituencies is indispensable for better political participation of the Scheduled Castes.

Mahar's (1972)⁸ edited volume on Dalits is one of the best collections of articles by eminent scholars. The introduction to this volume is written by Opler who argues that interaction of themes such as hierarchy, 'dharma' and ritual purity is pertinent to the understanding of culture of Hindu society. He contends that so long as these themes persist, the existing inequalities would continue. Some of the papers in the book highlight the role of untouchables in rural communities. They stress, what is now common place, that the problems of untouchables are predominantly socio-economic and that the upper castes do not treat favorably to the growing awareness of the untouchables stemming from their education, government and political privileges. Mencher's paper observes that the problem of untouchability is an economic one and cannot be solved in isolation from the overall economic development of the nation. The history of untouchables in the past century or so points to several attempts by them to gain a new identity through religious conversions. Alexander's study of the new Christians of Kerala highlights this point. Despite conversions, the Pulays in Kerala have hardly rid themselves of

their traditional allegiances. Owen Lynch's study of Jatavas explains the attempts of this community to gain a new identity through conversion under the leadership of Ambedkar. Zelliott's comparative analysis of Gandhi and Ambedkar who held such divergent views brings out their historic roles and stresses the two main dimensions of the problem.

Another study *Beyond the Village : Sociological Explorations* by Saberwal (1972)⁹ based on the survey of industrial township of Punjab, explores the underlying social processes involved in the transformation of closed status group, i.e. caste into an open unbounded system in which any person of a group could take part according to the group's achieved role. He describes how the political processes led the Dalits to a higher level of consciousness of their rights, and how the former relation between caste and occupation was being eroded leading many of them to join the high status network. The processes of social mobility and change have been explained in the context of only one variable i.e. Industrialization.

Shah's work *Politics of the Schedules Castes and Scheduled Tribes* (1975)¹⁰ deals with the political awareness and behavior of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. His findings are that in the last two decades the political participation of SC's and STs has increased considerably. But the political parties have failed in lessening the gap between the deprived communities and the upper castes at political participation. The main object of the study is to examine the nature and extent of political participation of the SC and ST leaders in Gujarat. The study contains ten chapters and covers a vast spectrum of state politics. The author has appraised various types of movements-social, religious political before and after independence. The contributions of M.K. Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar and Gaekwad have been acknowledged in particular. The author has successfully attempted to examine socio-economic and psychological attributes of political and non-political leaders and their attitude and cognition towards their communities, political system

and society at large. Thus, the study has a comparative analytical description of various aspects of the phenomenon of politics.

I.P. Singh's (1975)¹¹ analysis of a Sikh village in Punjab and of changing Sikh traditions in relation to dominant Hindu tradition illustrates a process of differentiation that is fairly characteristic of Indian civilization- the rise of dissenting sects. The Sikhs share with the Buddhists, the Jains and Bhakti movements, an anti -caste sentiment which at the inception of the movement promises significant social and cultural changes but later mellows into some form of compromise with the orthodox position. He finds upper castes and low castes clearly distinguished and not a single case of inter marriage. In the field of performances, Sikh festivals celebrating special Sikh heroes and saints have been added to traditional Hindu festivals.

N.D. Palmer (1976)¹² has done splendid work on elections in respect of South Asian countries of India, Pakistan, Ceylon and Nepal. However, the major portion of his book is devoted to the study of elections and voting behavior in India. The book may safely be designated as a classic of electoral studies in India. The author has tried to correlate electoral politics and voting behavior with the process of political development in India. He has highlighted the functions of elections in political system which according to him is political choice, political participation and political socialization. He gives a summary of elections from 1951 to 1972.

He has also produced a profile of Indian voters and thoroughly discussed the determinants of voting behavior of the Indian electorate. But the book, based as it is on aggregate data, has formulated certain generalizations regarding the behavior of Indian voters in general and does not provide though study of voting behavior of the down trodden people i.e. Dalits.

Maharia(1978)¹³ conducted a study to examine the effects of development and welfare

programmes on weaker sections in India. The author defined weaker sections as those persons who strikingly fell below the prescribed standards or were placed at the lowest level of society. Characteristics of backwardness might be identified as untouchability, lower social status, unclean occupations, poverty and unemployment, lack of education and low level of living. The author observed that many programmes had been introduced for the benefit of weaker sections in our country but they had not made any impact because even if we had resources (i.e. capital, labor force, technical knowledge etc.), their use was restricted; people were not able to utilize them.

Leela Vasaria (1979)¹⁴ conducted a study "The Harijans Worsening Plight" in four districts of Tamil Nadu of 1000 rural families-800 Harijans and 200 non-Harijans. The study attempted to measure, through economic and social status indices, the level of discrimination suffered by Harijans as also to study the trends in poverty in the two decades between 1950 and 1970. The per capita income of Harijans in 1970 was Rs. 277 as against Rs. 406 of the non-Harijans when Harijan and non-Harijans were employed as coolies. The daily wages of Harijans were less than non-Harijans. The Harijans' income was less because of the small land holding and the low paid menial jobs.

Pimpley (1980)¹⁵ sets out to assess the status of the Scheduled Caste students of Punjab and identify the difficulties and experiences of discrimination. Based on well-designed sample survey of 487 students from schools and colleges, the author concludes that Scheduled Castes have not fully utilized the educational opportunities provided to them by the state government. Two major factors in the form of conjectures for low utilization have been offered by the author. These are general poverty and lack of the culture of education. The comparison of school and college sample shows the difference in their response on several dimensions but without

changing the major conclusion. The author feels that a radical transformation of the social structure is necessary to ameliorate the condition of the Scheduled Castes. On the whole, the study provides an illuminating profile of the Scheduled Caste students of Punjab.

D' Souza's *Educational Inequalities among Scheduled Castes-A Case Study in Punjab* (1980)⁶⁸ supports the hypothesis that inequalities have a systematic character and that when Scheduled Castes who are structurally differentiated are subjected to uniform condition of change, different castes respond differently, with the result that the gap between them widens further. Caste differences and the concentration of different Scheduled Castes in various educationally and socio-economically different regions are responsible for widening the gap. The solutions suggested to tackle the issue is to improve the socio-economic conditions for the structurally disadvantaged sections. Such a suggestion in no way helps the planners to evolve any action plan. The measure of coefficient of equality used by the author seems to be promising techniques to analyze the increasing gap.

Khan (1980)¹⁶ made an attempt to assess the changes, which have taken place in several aspects of the life of the Scheduled Castes who were subject to several forms of disabilities in the past. Endeavour has also been made to evaluate the working of the governmental policies and programmes for the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes since independence. He observes that Scheduled Castes have not been benefited much from the governmental measures and their economic condition has not improved much. Joshi's *Democracy in Search of Equality: Untouchable Politics and Indian Social Change* (1982)⁷⁰ analyses the role of SC legislator's and finds reservation for SCs and STs as the major factor for their political activities. However Joshi observes that the provision for reserved seats is not enough for the Scheduled Castes to reduce their political dependence on the higher castes. Sachchidananda in his remarkable work *The*

Harijan Elite (1985)⁷¹ points out that reservation measures in jobs, scholarships and seats in legislatures has created a section among the Harijans who do not care for their own community. This is the rise of the 'elite class' within the Harijans. He suggests economic upliftment of all the Harijans.

Mandal's book *Tribals at Polls* (1986)¹⁷ is a longitudinal study of a parliamentary constituency in tribal Bihar. It brings out in detail the political process at work from 1977 to 1984 parliamentary elections. It deals with the changing scenario of the political climate and the changing attitude of the electorate in India.

Narayanan in his "Reservation in Politics and Scheduled Caste Elite" (1986)¹⁸ finds that the present system of political reservation benefits only the Scheduled Caste elite and not Scheduled Caste masses. She concludes that the Scheduled Caste leaders are in a better position to represent SCs' interests but as the policy of reservation for SCs and STs exists today, it tends to create an elite section and the system has not worked to benefit the common SC and ST population.

Kiran Shukla in *Caste Politics in India: A Case Study of Bihar* (1987)¹⁹, has tried to illustrate the impact of caste on state politics. The author attempts to find the actual influence of caste on the state politics. According to her the impact of caste on politics has progressively been increasing and if the present situation is any indicator of the future, it is very unlikely that the impact will be reduced in future. In the second chapter the author, taking the period from 1912 to 1980, has shown that from the beginning it has been due to economic and social predominance that caste has been influencing politics. In the third chapter the author concludes that caste is playing its role under the shade of class interest. Juergensmeyer has done a pioneer work *Religious Rebels in Punjab : The Social Vision of Untouchability* (1988)²⁰. The author has

explained the social condition of Dalits in Punjab. This book is about the particular segment of Punjabi society, the so called untouchable castes and their non-violent movements for social change in which lower caste activities have been involved throughout the present century. The Dalit rebels revolted against untouchability on the basis of religion in organized way rather than on the basis of caste. The book also explores other avenues of expression that were available to socially minded Punjabi untouchables in the 20th century. The author also highlights the political awakening among the Dalits through various movements.

Jatinder Kaur's book *Punjab Crisis : the Political Perception of Rural Voters* (1989)²¹ is an analysis of the Punjab problem at the grass root level. This study probes the political outlook of the rural people of Punjab and the extent to which this outlook strengthens democratic structure especially the electoral process. The author analyses the level of political awareness and the participation of the people in the electoral process.

Benjamin (1989)²² observes that the Scheduled Castes of rural Bihar have not reached the level of power sharing despite state help. There is some association at lower levels between social mobility and political participation. Social mobility is not taking place among the Scheduled Castes primarily because of the obstructive role of neo-rich middle castes or classes operating through muscle men and senas.

Panday's study "Protective Discrimination and Social Uplift Among Scheduled Castes" (1991)²³ is an empirical analysis of the impact of special privileges along with democratic secularism in the social mobility and upliftment of Harijans in modern India. The study also gives special analysis of their rise in social hierarchy, social position, mobilization in attitude towards social institutions, patterns of behaviour, style of life, social contacts and nearness with upper castes.

From Untouchables to Dalits (1992)²⁴ by Zelliott provides an overview of the Dalits' political and religious movements in Maharashtra from the Bhakti tradition of Chokhamela and Ekanth to the Mahar movement under the leadership of B.R. Ambedkar to the consequence of Buddhist revival and finally to the literary movement in the 1970's. He has written extensively on the life, thought and works of B.R. Ambedkar, and maps out the historical linkage of the untouchable protests with that of the religious movements as modes of protest and change; from the Bhakti movement in the fourteenth century to the Buddhist revival in the 20th century. Kshirsagar (1994)²⁵ important study deals with the Dalit movements and its leaders in India. It provides the socio-political profile of all those leaders who had worked for the emancipation of their brethren from the curse of untouchability and caste system, especially during 1857 to 1956. No doubt there are certain other books on Dalit movement and its leaders, but they are scanty and scattered. As most of them are written in the regional languages, they are not accessible to others. Hence such leaders and their movements remained unknown to other regions. This book gives knowledge about all the Dalit movements all over India. In addition the author has also included the contribution made by non-Dalit leaders and their organizations aimed at Dalit upliftment. Surinder Mohan in an article published in *Mainstream* "Paradox of Dalit Politics" (1994)⁸¹ has analyzed the paradoxes of Dalit politics in India. He observed that Ambedkar had grasped certain fundamental lessons about how the Dalit politics had to be developed. Ambedkar pleaded for an alliance between the Dalits and other backward castes, both being oppressed by iniquitous caste system. In fact Ambedkar wanted to make Dalits effective constituents of a viable political force. The authors suggested that long term political strategy is required to be built up on

the guidelines of Dr. Ambedkar for the downtrodden people to unite together politically for participating in the electoral politics of the country.

Singh and Jammu in their well-documented study "Untouchability in Rural Punjab" (1995)²⁶ highlight the sense of untouchability prevailing in the villages of Punjab. They collected the information from five villages of Patiala district. The findings of the study indicate that SCs still live in separate places in the villages. Although, the sense of untouchability in physical terms is almost negligible but some of people still hesitate to touch the lower caste people. Though people of higher Caste and SCs can sit on the same cot but inter-caste circle of friendship is quite narrow. SCs are not fully free at religious gatherings, they even have different religious places.

Sangwan's work *Social System and the Dalit Identity* (1996)²⁷ covers the social structure including the dynamics of the caste system, the evolution of the system, the law and its interpretations, the present status and the hopes and aspirations of the Dalit communities in terms of social and economic betterment. Recent years have seen a great upsurge of Dalit sentiment and determination in India. He argues that it happened only with the collective efforts. The collective consciousness of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes represents the consciousness of the large part of India. However the political implications are diverse and the political diversity of India is tied up inextricably with its social and regional realities. As with other movements the Dalits constitute a vocal and decisive segment of the population of the country. They are a force to be reckoned with. Ghosh and Ghosh's study (1997)⁸⁴ mainly deals with the Dalit Women. The author discusses various types of Dalit communities which are considered lowest in the social hierarchy beyond the four Hindu Varnas. The author not only analyses the status of Dalit women in Indian society but also the status of

Dalit women in Dalit society. Constitutional and legal protections given after Independence are also discussed in detail.

James Massey's work *Down Trodden - The Struggle of India's Dalits for Identity, Solidarity and Liberation* (1997)²⁸ tries to deal with the terminology which is being used for Dalits and the origin of untouchability in India. He deals with some of the religious movements in India which worked for the upliftment of Dalits. He also deals with internationalization of Dalit issues and tries to show the condition of Dalits in the era of liberalization.

Suresh Kumar's article "India At Fifty: The Dalit Situation" (1997)²⁹ expresses the view that violation of civil and human rights and atrocities against the Dalits have been on the rise over the years. The Dalits are still far behind the general population in terms of literacy and education. Despite preferential treatment as a part of the affirmative action of the state, the majority of the Dalits can not afford higher education as they are still below poverty line. But despite the shortcomings and limitations of the affirmative actions of the state, the Dalits have been able to forge an independent identity in its various terms and manifestations. According to the author the growing sense of awareness and assertiveness among Dalits have brought them together on many common platforms. They are now able to express and articulate their common Dalit identity through collective communication action.

Bandyopadhyay (1999)³⁰ states in his article that the Dalits in the Indian society have been often suppressed by the elite class even after independence. He explains that the system of administration lacks accountability to the people. The bureaucratic system below the state level, was nurtured in such a way that they are almost non-accountable to the people. The author hopes that the new panchayati Raj system will remove the inherent weakness of the administration at the local level. He states that elected representatives of the people should have the right to

exercises superintendence and control over government officials. He argues that the democracy of the elites is on the offensive against the democracy of the Dalits. V.B. Singh's article "Deprivation and Political Consciousness" (1999)³¹ examines the nature of deprivation of the Scheduled Castes and also discusses its implications for effective political participation. He observes that the phenomenon of deprivation arises out of inequitable distribution of and access to both material and non-material resources in a society. As a matter of fact, in every society, certain groups enjoy disproportionate share in social resources. The Scheduled Castes as a group, with a long history of socio-economic deprivation, present a very good sample for examining the nature and extent of deprivation.

Pushpendra's article "Dalit Assertion through Electoral Politics" (1999)³² examines the data on voting behaviour of the Scheduled Castes and traces the change in party preferences of the Scheduled Castes. In order to explain why this assertion took place through elections, the author has analysed the opinion of the Scheduled Castes about the legitimacy of the political system. A further attempt is made to find internal differentiation among the Scheduled Castes regarding their voting behaviour.

Michael's edited work *Dalits in Modern India: Vision and Values* (1999)³³ throws light upon almost every aspect of Dalit life. It is a collection of articles by eminent scholars. The articles focus on the major concerns of the Dalits. The book is divided into four parts. First part deals with historical aspect and traces the origin and development of untouchability in Indian civilization. The Dalit vision of Indian society is not same as the upper caste Hindu vision. The second part has articles studying the contribution of Jyotiba Phule and B.R. Ambedkar, who laid the foundation for the Dalit movements and who are also known as the fathers of the Indian social revolution. Part III deals with methodological and operational aspect of Dalits in Indian society.

Here the articles give critique of traditional Indian sociology which look at Indian society mainly from a Sanskrit perspective. In the course of this critique, the author also makes an attempt to propose a method for the study of complex nature of Hinduism and Indian society. The fourth and last part concentrates on the economic condition of the Dalits where problems of employment of the Dalits are also discussed.

Interrogating caste is wide-ranging and amply illustrated account of the working and function of caste in India. Gupta's *Interrogating Caste: Understanding Hierarchy and Difference in Indian Society* (2000)³⁴ draws upon insights from a variety of disciplines including sociology, anthropology, history and Marxian theory, to analyse the caste system and to provide fresh insights into reality that often appears too familiar to us. As the subtitle denotes, the book is about understanding hierarchy and difference in Indian society. The author challenges the view that there is a single caste hierarchy to which every caste acquiesces ideologically; this is not only the most prevalent academic view, but also the dominant notion about caste in India. He instead argues that there are probably as many hierarchies as there are castes in India. He challenges one of the fundamental assumptions of electoral politics in India that if the caste composition of electoral constituencies is known, political outcomes can be predicted. By treating caste in this fashion, he has produced a work that is timely, very much needed and extremely accomplished. It corrects many of our misconceptions about castes.

Ramashray Roy's *Dalit Development and Democracy* (2000)³⁵ is an important work on the Indian Dalits. The author examines the social, economic as well as political issues concerning development of the Dalits. The study, therefore, has a wide canvas. It takes up aspects related to economic betterment, social upliftment and political empowerment and in that process sheds new light on several facts of Dalit life. As the author points out, the continued depressed

socio-economic condition of the Dalits in India raises questions about the relationship between development and democracy.

Sudha Pai's *Dalit Assertion and Unfinished Democratic Revolution: the BSP in Uttar Pradesh* (2002)³⁶, traces the growth of BSP in UP and in the process dispels several myths and historical interpretations. The author says that Dalit assertion in the context of UP means assertion against upper caste domination, against the state for its failure to improve the socio-economic condition of Dalits and remove the practice of untouchability.

Vivek Kumar's article "Caste Mobilization in UP and its Impact on Assembly Election" (2002)³⁷ examines the nature of caste mobilization in Uttar Pradesh. According to Kumar caste mobilization can be easily observed at two levels: one at the level of caste connections organized by different socio-political organizations and second in the form of formation of single caste based politics. A major threat of this caste mobilization can be seen in the election of UP Assembly election 2002 which was again resulted in a hung Assembly.

Malhotra's study *Gender, Caste and Religious Identity-Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab* (2002)³⁸ focuses on how the notion of being 'high caste', as it developed and transformed during the colonial period, contributed to the formation of a middle class among the Hindus and the Sikhs. While many reformist Sikhs and Hindus either denied or re-conceptualized caste, the author draws attention to the innovative ways, in which older privileges shaped newer identities. This in turn, had an impact on gender relation, and encouraged the re-examination of women's role and place in society. The author deals with the problem of women's relationship to the concepts of caste and religiosity in the context of the reformist imagination of the period. Caste was seen as a quality 'attached' to men, making women's relationship to it ambiguous. The late nineteenth century high caste men tried to grapple with this conundrum and upgrade women to a

life suitable to the high caste, modernist middle classes. The author further highlights how the new notions of ideal femininity were hidden under the gamut of new and often oppressive cultural practices. He maps the emergence of new high caste, middle class patriarchal structures among the Hindus and the Sikhs, and the ideological pillars, on which they rested. By focusing on the issues of caste, religion and gender in the formation of a middle class, the author fills a major gap in the social history of colonial Punjab.

Vivek Kumar in his *Dalit Leadership in India* (2002)³⁹ envisages to conceptualize the Dalit leadership in modern day national politics. It traces its origin, growth and development and examines its nature and dynamics, besides inquiring into its strategy or strategies adopted for mobilization and empowerment of the Dalit masses. On the basis of existing temporal reality the author has divided the Dalit leadership into two categories – one dependent category which wanted the upliftment of the Dalits within the Hindu social order and other independent category insisted for Dalits' upliftment outside the people of Hindu social order.

Vivek Kumar in his another article (2003)⁴⁰ observes that the Dalits have changed their style of assertion with the structural changes in the Indian society. The change in their style is testimony to the increasing level of consciousness among them. The political assertion of the Dalits in the state has broken the political hegemony of the twice born castes. The article has deconstructed the myth of homogenized Hindu - whole by giving them a separate identity with the construction of different socio-cultural symbols. It says that the political mobilization in the state has checked the communal mobilization of the Sangh Parivar by weaning out the Dalits from its fold. The Dalit assertion has strengthened the Indian democracy and today representative democracy is moving towards participatory democracy in the state as the Dalits themselves are sitting in the institutions of power, taking and implementing decision on their own.

H.K. Puri's article "Scheduled Castes in Sikh Community: A historical Perspective" (2003)⁴¹ is an understanding of the distinctive pattern of caste hierarchy in Sikhism which points to a new pattern of competing hierarchies, parallel to that of the Hindus. It calls for deeper insight into the dynamics of political power and economic relations both at the local and regional levels. Not looking closely at the ground level social reality may leave the impression that overall Sikh community represents homogeneity of castes rather than division. In the explanations rooted in the primacy of ideology or culture, on the other hand, the survival of casteism according to the learned scholar, is some times regarded a consequence of incomplete liberation of Sikhism from the stronghold of Brahmanism, emphasizing greater distancing of Sikhs from the Hindus.

Jodhka touched the issue of untouchability, role of various reform movements, question of Sikh identity, the Singh Sabha movement and the Ad-Dharmi movement in his paper entitled "The Scheduled Castes in Contemporary Punjab" (2003)⁴². Chamar and Ad-Dharmi communities have turned out to be more successful entrepreneurs than other small and less mobilized groups among the Scheduled Castes. He holds that the institution of caste is comparatively weak in Punjab.

Gill in his paper "Reservation and Protective Justice" (2003)⁴³ finds it a social reality, which not only provides ground for social exploitation but also avenues for the mobility of Scheduled Castes. The study finds that there is structural inequality despite reservation policy. The author raises the question of constitutional equality in the context of reservation policy. The study is limited to the urban populace only. The analysis points out that reservation provides an opportunity to the lower section of the society to achieve those qualities and attributes on which modern industrial society lays premium essential for social and economic mobility.

Yagati's work *Dalit's Struggle for Identity* (2003)⁴² deals with the familiar story of Dalits with a new perspective. Often social scientists in general and historians in particular interpret Dalit consciousness as 'false consciousness' which undermines their radical political self-assertion. This work mainly deals with Dalits' political consciousness, their struggle for identity, and the manner in which they rose from a stage of being political nonentities to a stage when they could develop their own self-definition and roles within the dialectics of nationalist anti-colonial struggle. The strength of this work lies in drawing upon vernacular sources and in presenting an insider's perspective.

Chandra's work *Liberation & Social Articulation of Dalits* (2003)⁴³ in two volumes tracks down Dalit history, their marginalization, welfare measures and awakening of Dalits. Besides, the work also suggests ways and means to bring Dalits into mainstream society. The first volume traces the social history of Dalits, their ethnicity and racial conflicts, their exclusion from mainstream society, and land laws related to Dalits. The second volume deals with social disabilities of Dalits, their rights, educational development and welfare programmes aimed at them. The burning issues of Dalits and racially discriminated people are elaborately described in the volume. The role of state and social agencies in the mainstreaming of these people are also discussed.

Muthaiah's article "Politics of Dalit Identity" (2004)¹⁰³ is devoted to the study of designation of Dalits in different contexts of their designation-impregnate with politics of designator and designates. Designations like Scheduled Castes, Dalits and Bahujan are elite-manufactured categories with politics of their own but alien to common people. Reservation broke monopoly of one or two castes in various fields but preserved caste identities. Ronki Ram's article "Untouchability, Dalit Consciousness and the Ad Dharm Movement in Punjab" (2004)⁴⁴

is confined to Ad-Dharm movement in Punjab. Its aim is to explore first the social and political arrangements in colonial Punjab during the 1920s which led to the rise of this movement and second, to document the present status of the movement in Punjab. The article explores the circumstances in which the Ad-Dharm movement originated in 1925 and what accounted for its so called demise in 1968, who were its protagonists, what objectives did it seek to achieve and what were the tactics and strategies adopted for the realization of these objectives.

Puri's edited book *Dalits in Regional Context* (2004)⁴⁵ has assessed the present condition of Dalits in Punjab. It is a collection of articles by eminent scholars of Punjab. These articles cover a wide range of local-regional differences in the historical evolution of caste hierarchies, the differential impact of socio-economic changes, the state's affirmative actions, the individual and collective Dalit aspirations and coping strategies, and the experience of political resistance and mobilization within different regions. This regional case study contributes to a more nuanced and composite understanding of the Dalits' position in this continental polity. The legacy of Ad Dharm in the radicalization of Dalit consciousness in contemporary Punjab is explored by Ronki Ram in his article "Limits of untouchability, Dalit Assertion and Caste violence in Punjab". He also deals with the source of untouchability, caste and domination and the state of untouchability in Punjab. The article reflects briefly on the role of upper caste social reformers in the eradication of untouchability. Mark Juergensmeyer in his article "Cultures of Deprivation: Three Case Studies in Punjab" in the above cited work has captured the intertwining of the social and the economic dimensions through a more inclusive meaning attached to the words-culture and deprivation. His comparative study of three villages representing three different locales points to different levels of the cultures of deprivation in one and the same state. S.S. Jodhka presents a picture of the impact socio-economic development and the strategies of

social and cultural assertion made on the life and struggle of the Dalits. The title of the article "Dissociation, Distancing and Autonomy" draws our attention to the dynamics of the process of social change that underlay the observable sense of autonomy in this section of the people in Punjab.

Another very interesting study in the book is 'Interrogating Changing Status of Dalits of Punjab' by Parmjit Singh. On the basis of his empirical survey of low castes and the Scheduled Castes, Judge points to not only the evidence of their autonomy but also to their assertiveness which includes a readiness for confrontation in case of discrimination and insult. Harish K. Puri's article "The Scheduled Castes in the Sikh Community" aims at exploring the difference between the doctrinal principles of Sikh religion and the ruling social and political interests in the context of the changes in society and economy of Punjab. Sucha Singh Gill's paper is organized into three sections. The distribution of Scheduled Caste workforce across nine industrial categories is examined in comparison to Scheduled Caste workforce in section I. The educational status and progress is covered in section II. Section three analyses the role of reservation policy for Scheduled Castes. Shalini Sharma and B.K. Aggarwal's article "Educating Dalit Women for Development" notices a close connection between higher levels of education in Dalit families and a higher incidence of recourse to pre-natal diagnostic techniques and female foeticide, in precisely the same way as among the educated and better-off sections of higher castes. Parmod Kumar and Rainuka Dagar's study also brings out how in the post Green Revolution period the Dalit males' taste of prosperity led them to emulate the upper castes not only in terms of tightening control over their women but also in terms of violence against women. Their field work study shows that such incidence of control and violence has increased among the Dalits and exceeds that among the non-Dalits.

Thus the edited work of Harish Puri provides a multidimensional study of the Dalits in contemporary Punjab and is academically very important and relevant. Buta Singh, the well known parliamentarian, in his *Dalit and Dalit Awakening in India* (2004)⁴⁶ has laid thrust on Dalits' status in ancient, medieval and modern India. He has given in detail, the origin of caste and caste system and social status of Dalits and untouchability in medieval India. The Bhakti movement as the voice of revolt, devotion and its implications has also been discussed in detail.

Sudha Pai's essay "Social capital, Panchayats and Grassroots democracy: The Politics of Dalit Assertion in two districts of Uttar Pradesh" (2004)⁴⁷ examines the politics of identity, the role of social capital in resolving conflicts among social groups competing for the benefits of development within the new Panchayats established under the 73rd Amendment Act in U.P. The essay shows that the new Panchayats are an arena of conflicts and contestation over scarce resources, social status and political power. Conflicts have increased not only between the dominant castes and Dalits, but the increasing differentiation of identities and awareness has sharpened competition and conflicts between sections of the rural poor. The author argues that social capital in the form of communal solidarity has united the Dalits for joint social and political action against the upper and middle castes. But in negative terms, increased social awareness, politicization and their improvement in their economic position, has divided the group of their own community with whom they have common economic interests. This means that group identities have the potential to create strong reservoirs of social capital within segments.

Bhatia's article "Dalit Rebellion Against Untouchability in Chawada, Rajasthan" (2006)⁴⁸ presents a detailed case study of Dalit rebellion against untouchables in Chakward, a village of Jaipur district in Rajasthan. The case study highlights the fact that, while many humiliating practices of the past have ceased, caste discriminations continue in many forms. Caste

based hierarchy and power are still at the heart of the traditional social order and determine, to a large extent, the kinds of lives that people live. Further the police, administration and state machinery have failed to protect the constitutional rights of Dalits and often end up aligning with the forces that suppress them. In the eyes of the law-enforcing agencies, Dalits remain unequal citizens. The Chakwa story brings out the difficulties that Dalits face in breaking traditional forms of oppression. Any attempt to challenge the traditional social order makes them vulnerable to repression and violence, and also to isolation. The article also argues that this rebellion against untouchables did not really challenge the caste system itself.

After having reviewed the available literature on the themes related with our research problem, it may be stated that though a lot of literature is available on Dalit issues in general and on Dalit assertions in India, in particular yet not much has been written on the political participation of Dalits in Punjab. Hence there is a justification of an objective scientific study to understand the issue of political awareness among Dalits in Punjab where they are in such a great number and to evaluate their political participation. Thus the present study of political participation of Dalits in Punjab is academically and politically relevant. It may partially fulfil the gap in knowledge on this important theme.

K.R. Narayanan (2011), has examined the position of scheduled castes which are still the lowest, the most deprived, the most dispossessed and the least educated section of Indian society. If Gandhi aroused the masses of India as a whole Ambedkar aroused and organized social and political consciousness among the lowest strata of Indian society. Our democracy is functioning properly in India because the average voter is able to cast his vote with a degree of intelligence and political consciousness. Today the voter from the lowest strata of society is able

to exercise his right to vote properly partly due to the work done by Dr. Ambedkar in arousing their political consciousness.

David L. Shills Editor of International Encyclopedia of social sciences, (Vol-12,) reveals, that political participations is positively correlated with the political awareness. Meaning these by voluntary activities by which the members of a society share in the selection in of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy is influenced by the political awareness. The political activities which including voting, seeking information, discussing & attending meetings, contributing financially and speech making working in campaigns are all depends upon the political awareness of the people and it cumulatively affected the levels of political participation in society. People participate in politics whenever they do something to affect public.

S. Sherril Kenneth, Vagler J. David (2008), have examined that political awareness is best explained by political factors such as political information, education level, Economic conditions, a feeling of political efficiency and holding the certain beliefs. It may well be noted that non-participation is also best explained by these political factors. We have seen that people who participate in the electoral process are better educated, wealthier and in general better off than those who do not participate. But we have also seen that social and economic factors effect participation directly. They are mediated and shaped by political awareness of an individual.

Hutchmson Alex (2007) in his blocritics explained that the level of political awareness of the masses of developed countries is very high. They take active part in political activity and public policy development and they are more aware than the people of developing countries. The author described that the people of developed countries are very cognizant about their political system, government, policy making process, constitution and they are always remain very well

aware about the all types of political activities which occurs at national level or international level.

J.R. Arnold, (2012) has discussed the multifaceted views on political awareness corruption perceptions and democratic accountability in Latin America.” He has mentioned that voter to be able to monitor their representatives effectively, they must be aware of the extent of corruption within their respective countries. There are the instances where the voters underestimate corruption levels; politician is not held to account for their malfeasant actions. Informed or well aware citizens on the other hand are better equipped to judge the performance of their politician and can therefore punish them during elections. The author contents that extent of public ignorance with in Latin America countries erroneously shapes citizens perception of corruption and thus, leads to weak accountability mechanisms, as such, his policy implication focus on role of the citizens in acquiring pertinent political information in order improve his/her levels of corruption perception. This article extends our understanding of why systems with a lively and free media may still lead to ineffective voter monitoring of corrupt politicians.

The article reflect that the countries whose public ignorance levels are high will have greater levels of corruption, and other side the process of opening up the information environment will result in reduction of corruption levels, as politically aware citizens begin to use their knowledge of political actions to reward or punish politicians.

Rajni Kothari (2010) examines the place of caste in politics of India. It is very comprehensive factor of the Indian politics which affect the level of political awareness of all the strata of the society. According to Kothari people do not cast their vote, they vote their caste. So caste is very important factor which influence the whole politics and is a leading factor to create the political awareness among the masses. Kothari also reflects on obvious impact of different

caste, especially in the regional politics. He also examines different magnitude of political awareness within specific caste and the dominant caste in the regional politics in India. He also reviews the level of political awareness in rural and urban areas of some of pockets of India. Kothari has tried to establish a 'cause effect relationship' between the caste and the level of political awareness in India. A comprehensive study, carried out by Kothari, reflect the political awareness its magnitude, composition and the direction in relation to caste and the dominant caste in a particular area. He has tried to elaborate the different levels of political awareness by citing different examples in the regional politics in India. Kothari, Rajni (1970) examines some of quantitative and qualitative variables for determine the voting behavior of voters. Amongst these parameters, the level of political awareness is most dominant factor which determines the magnitude and direction of polling during an election. He also point out the level of election in relation to constituency (Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha or election and Local Self government) reflect a varied voting behavior, determined by solo parameter i.e. the level of political awareness in an area.

Harley, Jean (2007), examines the role of leadership for creating to political awareness among the masses. The author also discuss the leadership qualities which pave the way to develop the views on various issues come across during propagation of theoretical and practical phases of politics. The author focus on cultivating the leadership qualities among the leaders. He also emphasis on the specific skill too. These specific skills may be proved conductive to inculcate, the right things into the wrong minds. It also help to overcome the prejudices against the prevailing political dimensions across all sectors. The managing skill also help to manage to change taken place during different successive periods. How to lead the political awareness? Hartley has been examined to situation for agriculture sector, industrial sector, co-operative

sector, public policy and their implementation, mixed economy etc. He also pointed out that the different traits of leadership can be proved conducive to create an adequate political awareness among the masses, so that they may take a judicious decision to choose a right leader and may become highly responsible and responsive to the public works.

Zelliot (2001)⁷⁰ has made a multifaceted review of the social movements, forwarded by Dr. Ambedkar. It was an essay on social movements. “Untouchable to Dalit” which includes grievances faced by the dalits. The author has discussed deteriorated socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes and tribes dwelling in different regions of India. Ambedkar has enlightened an awakening in the dalits and inspired them for fighting for their right of equality. However, Dr. Ambedkar was blessed with all leadership qualities; as a result he led this movement which was an urgent need of that time. Dr. Ambedkar felt it was imperative to raise the educational standard of depressed class. He was also of the view that political power was the only alternative which could ameliorate the deteriorated conditions of the dalits in India.

Duffee (2002)⁷⁰ has examined the multiple aspects of political awareness among the dalits in India. The author discusses the factors which affect directly or indirectly political awareness of the people belongs to the dalits community. He also refers to some of socio-cultural aspects which reflect the position, the prospects of the dalits culture among different power structures, emerging in the contemporary society.

Sharma, Reeta (2003)⁷⁰ in her paper on “Flames of Caste” described her view on this burning question. According to the author, considerable improvement has taken place in the social and economic conditions of the dalits under the impact of social welfare measures which cover education, reservation in jobs, changes in occupation and political awareness and international migration. These are some of the traits of growing prosperity among the dalits. On the other hand,

as we observe that the majority of the dalits are very poor, exploited and subjected to inhuman insult and atrocities. Even after governments and constitutional support, the dalits are not duly represented in Punjab.

Rawat (2005)⁷⁰ discusses a sizeable numerical strength of the movement led by different social reformers and contemporary dalits leaders. Multiple of cause-effect relationships have been discussed in this paper. A historic past has reflected a glorious functioning of the dalits movement based on nationalism and humanism towards political awareness. The outcome of these movements remained fruitful

Asghar (2006)⁷⁰ has discussed the ‘vested interests’ of the upper castes which have always been proved a ‘wet-blanket’ in the growth of the dalits in the Indian society. The author comments that the upper caste Hindus are swept off their feet by powerful emotional propaganda. The dalits have been victims of upper caste elite’s politics in order to keep their caste flock with them. The caste awareness is increasing with the passage of time and gaining the democratic awareness. But dalits are far behind in the field of education, yet education and awareness among them are fast spreading and they are becoming more aware of their rights.

Sita Pati, (2009)⁷⁰ has examined the changing socio-economic conditions of the dalits during the last sixty six years. In his paper ‘The dalit Contract with India’, the author highlights some of ‘directed change’ which have taken place after the independence of India. As a result, a significant share of the dalits has increased in the politics and the administration. It indicates a steady growth of political awareness in different directions. It also indicates a good potential for future performance.

Mimroth (2009)⁷⁰ has highlighted that the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments have brought a considerable section of the dalits into the power circles at the local level and thus has

brought a big breakthrough for the people of this community. As a result, political awareness among the dalits community has increased.

Sarah Beth (2009)⁷⁰ highlighted on this aspect that the dalit autobiographies are not only written for the purpose of personal reflection, but also cover literary aspect of works as well as influential political statements. In other instance, Jai Prakash Kardam has justifies his views by saying “if you have the power to write and I don’t have the power to write, then they will listen to you. They will look at me, clap their hands and go away.” Hence dalit literature has played a very significant role for expediting the dalit awareness or movements.

George Oommen (2009)⁷⁰ discusses the ups and downs of the dalits, especially after the post-independence period. Dalit panther movement in Maharashtra, which had popularized the word of Dalit for this neglected section of society, is one of the best example cited for the new wave of the dalit awareness movement. The Dalit panthers saw ‘Caste’ as the major source by which their humanity was being virtually reduced to a state of being no people. However, class analysis also used as an effective tool to understand the plight of this down trodden people. Owing to considerable influence of the Secular Dalit movement in India and liberation theology from Latin America, dalit Theology began the movement by accepting Marxian analytical tools.

Satchianandan (2009)⁷⁰ expresses his ideas on dalit consciousness and explains that ‘dalit consciousness’ is a term often used in discussions of dalit politics and identity. Political leaders on dalit issue refer to it in term of political awareness in the sense of consciousness rising among the marginalized sections of the Indian society. Sometimes, it also refers to the notion of collective identity among the diverse dalit communities. These two usages are fundamentally same in their emphasis on the need to be aware of the age long exploitation based on caste.

Kamble (2009)⁷⁰ explain her ideas about the dalit awareness and participation of women in panchayati Raj institutions. Author says that vision of political development emphasizes on political awareness among the masses and active participation as innate to its discourse. Development in this sense needs democratic decisions making activity of all the stakeholders uniformed and active civil society and inclusive political structure to reach at its goal.

Chanchreek (2010)⁷⁰ has discussed the historic past of dalits which have been entangled with rigid caste system in India. He has made a comprehensive review on the deteriorated conditions of dalits during ancient and medieval periods of India. He had mainly focused on slavery and suppressed conditions of dalits in the ancient and medieval periods. The emergence of Buddhism was certainly an era of social transformation, when the untouchables and other marginalized sections of society got equal treatment in the society. Buddha himself initiated many shudra dalits in his order, who have deprived with their civil rights in the Vedic period. They were also denied from their right to education and to gain knowledge and treated worst than animals.

Kethineni and Humiston (2010)⁷⁰ have discussed the deteriorating socio-economic conditions of the dalits. In the present scenario it indicates a better change among dalits. For this radical change, the credit goes to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who had led the movement with great enthusiasm. Mahatma Gandhi also threw an adequate light on the grievances and discussed different problems in his 'My experiment with truth. When Dr. Ambedkar became first law minister of India he made some significant legal and welfare oriented reforms and incorporated in the Indian constitution. In this paper, the authors have highlighted the strong reforming measures, which were very urgent for that time.

Khadaga, Parejuli, and Dhruva (2011)⁷⁰ have discussed their views on socio-economic conditions of dalits in Nepal. The authors have highlighted the social hierarchy in terms of caste-

occupation, caste barriers and untouchability, which have been some of salient features of traditional Hindu society, found nowhere in the other parts of the world. It was chronically deep rooted social problem, except its symbolic value it does not have any functional importance in the society. Even though considerable interaction has developed but caste is still considered as an important factor in maintaining social distance. Hence no date can be predicted for comprehensive eradication of caste prejudices, but due to growing socio-political awareness among the educated dalits and non-dalits, the distance between them need to be narrowed down. In spite of caste hierarchy, those who have been able to attain economic, educational and political achievement have received greater acceptability in the society.

S.K. Gupta (1985) in his study present a detailed and analytical account of the multifaceted struggle of the scheduled castes, the odyssey of their transformation from an apolitical, ostracized and indigent mass into a crucial factor in the Indian political structure.

Many attempts were made in the nineteenth and twentieth century's by the socio-religious reforms , religious zealots and eclectics to purge the system of social evils and to eliminate inequalities heaped upon the lower castes . Many socio-religious and secular organizations emerged on the Indian scene. Of these, the Brahmo Samaj, the satya Shodhak Samaj, the Arya Samaj , the Dev Samaj , the Prarthana Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Depressed Classes Mission, the National Social Conferences, the provincial social conferences, and the All-India anti-Untouchability League , and the small sects such as the Satnamis, the Radhaswamis the Shikshaparas, directly or indirectly not only voiced against the inequalities between man and man, caste and caste, and group and group but also called for and contributed to the uplift of the untouchables. It is in the light of the emergence and efforts of these organizations and those of the Christian missionaries, the pioneers in the field that the socio-economic condition of the

depressed classes in 1916 has to be studied to established a proper perspective. Since India is virtually a continent united in a single state, the conditions of the people of vary widely from province to province and from district to district within certain provinces. Thus to minimize the hazards of generalization , it will be equally essential to first attempt a province-wise analysis of the socio-economic condition of the depressed classes .

Zoya Hasan (2009) explained about the interest in patterns of political representation and strategies for social inclusion has exploded both in india and around the world. The past few years have witnessed an upsurge of interest in strategies of inclusion ranging from affirmative action to mandatory reservations. The proliferation of democracy in the last decade has led to the emergence of a consensus that within democratic systems one social group should not monopolize political power or governance . this has led to an awareness that creating political systems that address the needs of various groups, especially those that are marginalized on the basis of race, religion, and ethnic background, is necessary for equity, fairness, and political stability .

At an empirical level, political changes around the world have stimulated reflection on questions of exclusion of marginalized groups and ways of redressing this imbalance. Special efforts have been made to include those previously excluded in government and legislatures. In the realm of formal politics the modes of representation are increasingly dominated by descriptive representation and participation in decision making. Overall, it is widely believed that a more balanced representation in governance would lead to better decision making and policy priorities that reflect people's concerns.

Dr. Shailendra Kumar Singh (2010), has described that Ambedkar framed the constitution, and has become a symbol of the struggle against oppression and discrimination in modern politics. A member of an untouchable caste, Ambedkar was raised in poverty and faced caste discrimination

throughout his life. Through the sponsorship of the maharaja of Baroda, he attended Columbia university, and then moved to London, where he studied at the London School of Economics and trained for the bar. On his return to India, Ambedkar became a spokesman for the Untouchables, campaigning for social, economic, and political rights. His opposition to the Indian National Congress, which he saw as being dominated by caste Hindus, brought him into conflict with Gandhi. Upon independence Ambedkar was inducted into the Congress-led administration, and given a powerful role as chair of the drafting committee of the constitution. Here he used his legal expertise to mould a document which combined the existing political arrangements with aspects of the American Bill of Rights and guaranteed protection for the most disadvantaged groups in society. Ambedkar's political philosophy combined a rational individualism with a social critique which sought to undermine the constraints which held back personal development, particularly caste discrimination and economic disparities. His disillusionment with Hinduism led him on a search for an alternative religion more compatible with his political outlook, and in 1956 Ambedkar converted, followed by some three million followers, to Buddhism. His assertive championing of the socially and economically disadvantaged, and reputation as the Untouchable who framed the constitution, has given him an iconic status amongst the poor of modern India.

R.K. Ksirsagar (1992) in his book highlighted that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was the champion of human rights, emancipator of the so-called untouchables, a protagonist of social justice, a compassionate revolutionary, the architect of the constitution of India and a great reviver of Buddhism in India. He visualized a new social order based on justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. His whole life was but a mission based on reason and morality. He was not a mere thinker, but a dedicated social activist. Politics for him was a mission and not a trade. He thought not only for the upliftment of his community, but of the nation as a whole. He gave to India a

new vision, a new philosophy and a new way to march on. However, he was woefully misunderstood by the caste hindus in general. Even, the academicians have not given due attention to his thoughts, especially to his political thoughts. Today the nation needs his thoughts in order to solve the vexed problems before it. Political thoughts of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar are not a speculation regarding utopian ideal, but it is an attempt to provide empirical solutions to the complex problems of the society.

Sudha Pai (2011), described that the rise of Bahujan Samaj party has been one of most significant developments in Uttar Pradesh politics since the 1980s. The presents study analyses the emergence, ideology, mobilisational strategies and electoral progress of the BSP, against the backdrop of the phenomena of dalit assertion , both historically, and particularly, the strong wave witnessed in recent years, which has taken two forms: electoral and grassroots activism. While highlighting its considerable achievements, the study explores the reasons for the failure of the Bahujan Samaj Party to harness the rising wave of dalit assertion, evident in up society today. The work attempts a sympathetic yet critical look at a Party, once eulogised as a social movement that would introduce social revolution and transformation which larger got converted into an opportunistic political party, interested in capture of state power and political empowerment of Dalits, and attempts to explain what went wrong. It examines how empowering the BSP-experience has actually been for the vast majority of subaltern dalits and whether it has contributed to the social deepening of Indian democracy, or merely helped in the upward mobility of the elite sections of the dalits. It provides an understanding of the impact of the BSP, on both UP and Indian politics, in a phase when sectarian identities have become important following the unraveling of the Nehruvian consensus, which was upheld by the single dominant party system.

P.S. Krishnan (2009) in his study reveals that Dr. Ambedkar is a well known and universally accepted icon of social justice in our country. What is more remarkable is the fact that his following has not diminished with his demise, rather his influence and acceptability have been increasingly growing with passage of years. So much so that social justice has moved to the centre stage of all discussions and action in recent years with the reinforced and visible emphasis of the process of planning and governance on equity and inclusion. Ambedkar was deeply heart by the social malady of derivation and exclusion of a very large section of Indian society-the “untouchables” and the backwards. He sought to fight against the social evil, risking personal isolation from the then all encompassing mainstream of political movement of freedom struggle. This was reflected in his bitter strategic duel with Mahatma Gandhi, sense of disillusionment with india’s independence devoid of social justice and equality and his note of caution on the contradictions between political equality and social inequality that the constitution sought to provide. Taking his words seriously and inspired by his vision, the Indian constitution-makers and leadership thereafter have been striving hard to redeem pledge of social justice which, for Ambedkar, meant essentially liberty, equality, fraternity and mobility for all. But still, we have miles to go.

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CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

One of the prominent aspects of economic, political and social relations revolves around the issues of inequality based on class, caste, race and gender. In the context of India, caste based politics has always remained in the forefront. But during the last two decades, the assertion of the people from low castes including the Dalits has assumed unprecedented significance. The Dalit question is one of the most important questions in today's political and academic debates in India. Dalit assertion, Dalit leadership and voting pattern of the Dalits etc., are the elements of these debates.

Dalits are underprivileged in all social, economic and political fronts which leads to their misery, discrimination, exploitation and oppression by the caste dominated society. The theory of the caste system is interlinked with the *varna model* which divided the Hindu society into four orders-the Brahmins, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Sudras. 1 The first three castes are considered twice born or 'dvija' since the men from these castes were entitled to use the sacred thread at the Vedic site of Upanayana, which the Sudras were not allowed to perform. 2 Sudras were the people who cultivated the land, mended the shoes, washed the clothes and did all types of menial works. Members of this caste, however, shared the stigma of untouchability; they were frequently denied the chance to eat, smoke or even sit with members of the upper castes, and

they often must use separate wells from those maintained for the use of others. 3 This pitiable condition of Dalits was seen and well addressed by some eminent social and political philosophers like Joytiba Phule, Mahatma Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar and others and during their long careers they had taken some ameliorative measures in order to raise their social status. India after gaining independence enacted different social legislations to reform the position of Dalits which included-to remove the untouchability and discrimination against them and secondly to elevate their status in such a way that they have an equal status with other segments. The provisions of voting rights, reservation in education and jobs and in the political fields, are the steps which have been in existence since the adoption of the Constitution. Efforts are still going on to remove different discriminatory practices against them. One of the major aspects of the socio-economic status of Dalits is their political consciousness and awareness about various political activities and participation in these activities. The Dalit consciousness about political activities may contribute in various decisions relating to their rights and privileges. Thus political awareness and participation of the Dalits is an important area of study.

At the outset, it may be pointed out that though the term Dalit signifies a broad canvas, yet it is generally used as an alternative for the Scheduled Castes as recognized in the Indian Constitution.

3.2 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

The two concepts which have been used in the present study are Dalit and political participation. Before presenting the details of the present study, it is pertinent to clarify the above mentioned terms as clearly as possible.

In India, Dalit is a modern term for the untouchables, who have been exploited and subjected to atrocities due to the social stratification of Indian society. In many cases, Dalits are easily targeted even now in this independent nation where the constitution guarantees equal rights and privileges to every citizen. Throughout the century they have been victimized religiously, socially, culturally and most of all economically. Dalit is an expression of the existing contradiction, inequality and exploitation in the Indian hierarchy. In the annals of Indian history, Dalits were referred to with different nomenclatures like- Chandals, Avarnas, Achhuts, Adidravida, depressed classes, oppressed Hindu, Harijan, Scheduled Castes etc. at different points of time.⁴ However, after the emergence of the Dalit Panther movement, they preferred to be called as Dalits. The word Dalit, should normally refer to all oppressed classes including not only Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes but also the extremely backward among other backward castes. However there is a general agreement about the fact that the Scheduled Castes form the hard core of Dalits, who face more oppression and social indignities than the OBCs. Our main concern in this work, therefore, is with Scheduled Castes.

The term Dalit is derived from the Sanskrit root *dal* which means burst, split, broken, down trodden. Dalit has become part of the vocabulary of the North-Indian languages. For example, in Punjabi the well-known Punjabi dictionary 'The Mahan Kosh' by Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha defines Dalit as one who belongs to the lowest caste (Hini jati) and has been trampled down by or broken under the feet of the upper castes (Uchi jati).⁵ The most appropriate definition is given by Professor Gangadhar Pantawane, founder editor of Amitadarsh (Mirror of identity):- "To me, Dalit is not a caste, he is a man exploited by the social and economic traditions of his country. He does not believe in God, rebirth, soul, holy books teaching

separation, fate and heaven because they have made him a slave. He does believe in humanism. Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution.⁶

It was used in the new context in Marathi by New Buddhist activists, the followers of B.R. Ambedkar in the early 1970s.⁷ Dalit refers to those who have been broken, grounded down by those above them in a deliberate way, there is in, the word itself, an internal denial-pollution, Karma and justified caste hierarchy.⁸ It was seemingly first used in the context of caste oppression by the great nineteenth century reformer Jyotiba Phule.⁹ It is interesting that the category Dalit was used by Ambedkar himself in his fortnightly *Bahiskruit Bharat*. He defines it comprehensively: Dalithood is a kind of life condition which characterizes the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of Dalits by the social, economic, cultural and political domination of the upper caste Brahminical order.¹⁰ He, however, did not use this category often, preferring to deploy different terms depending upon changing context. For example, when dealing with the imperial state he used the category of depressed classes and when addressing high caste Hindus he used the category '*bahiskruit*' meaning total out-caste.¹¹

If one takes this view, all the exploited, and the downtrodden producers, who have been deprived from the ownership of the means of production, denied basic rights of a dignified social life and livelihood, discriminated through biased socio-economic and political decisions taken in favour of non-producers and privileged classes and kept deliberately away from the mainstream advantages of progress are to be considered Dalits.¹² It is to be noted that economically, a poor person is different from a Dalit. A poor person may be deprived in the economic sphere, especially of income necessary to participate in the economy. However, he/she may not be necessarily deprived in social and cultural spheres, that is, he/she may not face the same type of exclusion in the social and cultural life of his neighborhood as a Dalit faces.¹³ The recent use of

the term Dalit has been developed in the manifesto of Dalit Panther movement in 1973 : “Who is Dalit?” in this regard, this manifesto says members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited socially, politically, economically and in the name of religion.¹⁴ So Dalits are exclusively the socially and economically marginalized people of India.

A variety of other names have been used in both English and Indian languages before and after independence to designate these people who are at the lowest rung in the social structure. Besides the term Scheduled Castes and untouchables the term- chandals, Avarnas, depressed classes and Harijan have become well known. James Massey¹⁵ points out that these have been changed occasionally, in most cases, to despise them or to show contempt. Since they were considered outside chaturvarna- the four-caste system, they were labelled out-castes and untouchables and alienated from the main stream of the society.¹⁶ Untouchable is the word used by Ambedkar for those castes who are lowest in the Hindu scale of pollution. It first appeared in 1909. However, the word had now disappeared from ordinary parlance following widespread education and constitutional provisions. Before Independence the Government used the term “depressed classes”: this term was replaced by Scheduled Castes in government of India Act 1935 when these castes were placed on a Schedule as qualifying for special rights. In the arena of competitive politics, Ambedkar also preferred the term Scheduled Castes. It was evident when he used this term for establishing the political party- Scheduled Caste Federation.¹⁷ Although this term has been used as a nomenclature in the present Constitution of India, it is not explicitly defined.

Mahatma Gandhi an ardent champion for removing untouchability within the Hindu-Chaturvarna frame-work called the untouchables as Harijans-men of God.¹⁸ Basically Harijan

word was first used by Narsinha Mehta but later propagated by Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi himself clarified this in one of the issues of the weekly Harijan. He argued that, 'it is not a name of my coining-some year ago, several untouchable correspondents complained that I used the word *Asprishya* in the pages of Navjivan, 'Asprishya means literally untouchable: I then invited them to suggest a better name, and one of the untouchable correspondents suggested the adoption of the name Harijan, on the strength of its having been used by the first known poet saint of Gujrat.¹⁹ But Ambedkar believed untouchables do not regard Gandhi as being earnest in eradicating untouchability.²⁰ According to him "Saints never carried on a campaign against caste and untouchability. The saints of the Bhakti sect were not concerned with the struggle between man and man. They were concerned with relation between man and God".²¹ Later, a section of Scheduled Caste leaders rejected the term Harijan considering it an insult rather than an honour.²² The term Dalit, in Gail Omvedt's opinion, provides a militant alternative to the Gandhian term Harijan.²³ All those who have been converted to Buddhism use the term Buddhist and rejected all other nomenclature, including their original caste names.

In the mid 1970s, again, the Dalit leaders coined a new identity in the name of 'Bahujan' with the emergence of Backward And Minorities Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF).²⁴ Kanshi Ram used the term Bahujan to encompass Dalits, Adivasees, OBCs, and minorities together for a greater alliance. In recent years the term Dalit has been discarded as a social reactionary category by a section of the community who prefer Bahujan with both the Buddhist as well as Dalit categories.²⁵ Kancha Ilaiah in his book 'why I am not a Hindu' (1996) used the term 'Dalit-Bahujan' to maintain the special identity of Dalits while expressing a broader alliance.

What is most important to emphasize at this point is that Dalit is the term which down trodden people have given to themselves. This helps to account for the popularity of the term among Dalit people of different protest movement in India. Dalit is thus not a mere descriptive name or title, but an expression of hope for recovery of their past identity.²⁶ They were realized of themselves as Dalits, the very acceptance of the state of Dalitness is the first step on the way towards their transformation into full and liberated human beings.²⁷ With the trend of Dalit assertions becoming stronger many Dalit organizations have started propagating and popularizing the term Dalit more vigorously. One the other hand the word “Chammar” which is one of the sub-castes in the Dalits has come out openly as a separate entity and formed “All India Maha Chammar Sabha”. They put up posters and banner all over the Punjab recently declaring “” say with pride that we are Chammar.²⁸

3.3 Political Awareness and Political Participation

Political participation is an indicator and an outcome variable of political awareness. However, political mobilization can be an outcome of something other than political awareness. In fact it can be a result of lack of political awareness, such as, lack of knowledge regarding real issues, lack of the knowledge of the decision making process, lack of sensitivity towards larger interest of the nation.

Not only mobilization in general sense but even political participation can also be a product of simply mass hysteria. Though voting is an indicator of participation, yet increase in voting percentage during a particular election could be attributed to wave phenomena. For

instance high voter turnout after Indira Gandhi's assassination had nothing to do with the rise in political awareness.

In political participation, we do not confine ourselves to the act of voting alone, since there are other political activities which are important indicators of political participation. We include a wide range of activities covered under the term political mobilization like participation in rallies, becoming members of different political parties or the other pressure groups, forming their own political party or raising issues of political importance through different mediums-radio, television, newspapers etc. or participating in elections at all levels-voting, campaigning or contesting.

As Aristotle said, man is a political animal by nature and his political activity may take place either explicitly or implicitly within his own group. But that state structure has undergone great transformation from city state to modern democratic nation state, from his time to present. As a result, the nature of political participation of human beings should be qualitatively different from that of Aristotelian times. The political participation in present nation state has to be highly conscious and constant in order to establish democratic institutions which are useful for each and every individual.

In these days everybody accepts the wisdom and need of people's awareness about various state activities. People's involvement in setting the goal and implementing the policies is considered highly essential. The necessity or desirability of such awareness and consequent participation by the people has thus assumed much importance and with it, political participation which gives the people a chance to shape their destiny, has also become a matter of political importance.

Political awareness leading to participation (which is always of positive nature; political violence is not political participation; it is not a product of political awareness to indulge in unlawful methods of demonstration and protest) plays a significant role in the survival of an ongoing democratic political system. Lack of political awareness and passivity of the general masses make the political system irresponsible and ultimately non-functioning. It is political consciousness and political awareness which brings the sense of interest articulation among the general masses. When the interest is articulated as a result of political awareness and consciousness, it leads to interest aggregation. When the interest is aggregated, the resultant is mass mobilization. When the masses are mobilized the outcome is effective participation of the masses in the affairs of the political system.²⁹ In this framework the significance of political participation acquires a paramount importance. The process of political participation refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society show active interest and play a role in the selection of rulers. It includes voting, seeking information, discussing, attending meetings, contributing financially, and communicating with the representatives, enrolment in a party, canvassing and registering voters and working in campaigns. It is clear that the term political participation draws our attention to political activities rather than attitude and behaviour of private citizen to those who are professionally involved in public affairs.³⁰

Social scientists broadly define political participation as being the process through which an individual plays a role in the political life of his society, has the opportunity to take part in deciding what the common goals of that society are, and the best ways of achieving these goals. Political participation refers to actual participation in those voluntary activities by which members of a society show interest in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public polity.

To understand the issue involving political participation, firstly, it becomes necessary to discuss what political participation is. Secondly to see what are the factors in making people participate in politics, or what are the different environmental factors that can influence the political behaviour of individuals or groups.

Participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that affect their lives. People may, in some cases, have complete and direct control over these processes - in other cases the control may be partial or indirect. The important thing is that people have constant access to decision making and power participation in this sense is an essential element of human development.³¹

To define political participation is a very complicated problem and to decide what activities constitute political participation is no simple a matter, because it is a product of various factors.³² Some people devote their full time and energy in politics, others choose to remain deeply interested as passive spectators. For some, politics is a matter of continuous and responsible attention, for others, political activity is episodic or emerges only in time of crisis. Thus, the political participation ranges from most passive and sporadic, to the most active and consistent.³³

Political participation is a civil duty and it is a good sign for political health of country. The term political participation has very wide connotation. Political participation can be regarded as the principal means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in the democracy and the rulers are made accountable to the ruled.³⁴ Political participation implies participation by the various people in the politics of the country.³⁵ Political participation is a necessary ingredient of every political system.³⁶

Defining political participation Myron Weiner says ‘The concept of political participation refers to any voluntary action, successful or unsuccessful, organized or unorganized, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods intended in influencing the choice of public policies, the administration of public affairs or the choice of political leaders.³⁷

Dowse and Hughes say that people participate in politics in many different ways, with different degree of emotional involvement and at different levels of the system.³⁸ According to Verba, Nie and Kim political participation refers to "those legal activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and/or the actions they take."³⁹ According to Milbrath and Goel, political participation may be defined as "those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence or to support government and politics." This definition is broader than most others; it includes not only active roles that people pursue in order to influence political outcomes but also ceremonial and support activities.⁴⁰

McClosky views political participation as "those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers, and directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy."⁴¹

Rush & Althoff explain that political participation consists of voting, membership or activity connected with political groups such as movements, parties, pressure groups, office holding in political institutions, informal activities such as political discussions or attendance at political meetings, political persuasion of authorities or members of the political public.⁴²

Though political participation has been defined in various ways, yet in nutshell it refers to the participation of individuals in the political process, and that it ensures that individuals are able to take part in deciding the common goals of the society and the best ways of achieving it.

Activities related to political participation typically include, voting-discussing and changing options, attending meetings, contributing financially, and communicating with representatives.

Lester Milbrath⁴³ brings these activities under the following three categories-

- (i) Gladiatorial activities
- (ii) Transitional activities
- (iii) Spectator activities

Gladiatorial activities:

Gladiatorial activities are carried out by a small number of party activists through active association with party activities like:

- (a) being a candidate for office,
- (b) soliciting political funds,
- (c) holding public and party office,
- (d) attending a caucus or a strategy meeting,
- (e) becoming an active member in a political party,
- (f) contributing time in a political campaign.

(ii) Transitional activities: Transitional activities are following:

- (a) attending a political meeting or rally,
- (b) making a monetary contribution to a party candidate,
- (c) contacting with public officers or leaders.

(iii) Spectator activities: Spectator activities are following:

- (a) voting,

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- (b) wearing a button or putting a sticker on the car,
 - (c) making and joining a political discussion,
 - (d) influencing others to vote in a particular way.

From the above, it is clear that political participation is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by a variety of factors. Some of the most researched studies of political behaviour concern themselves with the association between political participation and various social and environmental factors. There are a number of variables, which work behind the concept of political awareness.

3.4 Variables of Political awareness

Although participation appears to be a complex phenomenon that depends upon great many variables of different relative weights, according to Milbrath the variables which determine the pattern of political awareness can at-least be grouped into three categories 44:

- (i) The Psychological variables
- (ii) The Social variables
- (iii) The Political variables

- (i) **The Psychological variables:** Psychological, involvement refers to the degree to which citizens are interested in and concerned about politics and public affairs.⁴⁵ Men participate politically because they detest isolation and want to have the association of others. Again one of the fundamental psychological traits of man is that he is a curious animal. This pursuit of meaning also serves as an important psychological reason for one's political participation. Individual becomes politically

involved because he is keen on deriving meaning from the political environment in which he is living. All these however are a conscious psychological grounds of political participation. Thus, psychological involvement is a central variable determining exposure to political stimuli, so it is a control attitudinal variable relating to participation in politics.

- (ii) **Social variables:** Political awareness is constantly influenced by social environment. A person's social characteristics such as his socio-economic status, his social ethnic group, his education, age, sex and religion whether he lives in rural or urban or whether he belongs to voluntary organizations, and so on, are likely to influence his political awareness. **Occupation:** A person's socio-economic status is likely to influence his political awareness. People with high occupational status, high income earnings and having high exposure to mass media are likely to be more participative than those who have less of the above. It has been seen that the people who are, economically sound, take active part in political activities. For a hungry man, politics has no meaning.

Age: The age factor also has been playing an important role in this field. Many studies over the world have found that awareness increases steadily with age until it reaches a peak in the middle years and the gradually declines with old age. For conventional activities other than voting, a similar curve has been reported in the five nation survey of Austria, India, Japan, Nigeria, and the United State.⁴⁶ In each nation, awareness rises in the early years, reaches a peak in the middle years, and decline in old age. At the young age due to lack of stability and security they are unable to understand the conflicting situations. Similarly the sense of political efficacy starts dropping at the old age. Such persons normally approach the retirement which makes an end of

active life. In the meantime, this saps his self confidence and in turn it affects his life and the rate of political awareness. **Education:** Understanding the relationship between education and political awareness requires an important qualification. Education is one of the most important variables which promotes political consciousness among the people. The higher the education, the greater are one's sense of civic duty, political competence, interest, responsibilities and also self-confidence and articulateness. The more educated are better able to transmit their political interest and knowledge to their children and hence, to perpetuate the relationship between education and participation.⁴⁹ The educated citizen is more likely to engage in political process than the uneducated person.

(iii) Political Variables: If the social environment is important for understanding the character of political participation, political environment is no less important in influencing political participation. Political participation is open competition for power in a society and more is the competition based on established and accepted forms of procedures, the greater will be the tendency to participate. The overall government programmes are also important. People may be so disappointed with inefficiency of the government of different political parties that they tend to become indifferent. The fact of indifference to politics by many citizens should not be taken to mean that government would function well if citizens ignore it completely. In order to keep public actions responsive to the wishes and desires of the people, citizens must at least participate in the choice of their public officials.⁵⁰ Of all political influences on participation, the party is probably the most potent. A political party performs wide range of important functions. Political parties were invented, among other reasons, to help citizens interpret political information and events and to organize and channel their political participation.⁵¹ The political

variables in respect of participation are, no doubt, important, but it should be noted that, as far as participation is concerned, the same political variables are often found to produce different results and this may be because the operation of the political variables is very much limited by the psychological and social variables.

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Chapter 4

Political Awareness: The Concept and its Application for Dalit

Politics

4.1 Introduction

Awareness simply means to have knowledge about certain things or phenomenon, meaning there by to be aware of certain happening through any mode of information. In other words we acquire information by contact with an individuals or group or people or through media. Similarly, we create awareness about so many events, incidents, happening of a phenomenon or phenomena. Awareness means knowledge or perception of a situation or fact.⁷⁰ Hence it is obvious that the awareness is a result of two way interaction, which includes give and take. Though this give and take process we acquire and create awareness about anything like environment awareness, save of water awareness, social awareness, and political awareness.⁷⁰ Awareness means consciousness about any issue or happening. Awareness means mindful or heedful: Awareness implies knowledge gained through one's own perception or mean of information.⁷⁰

Eternal vigilance has been stated to be the price of liberty⁷⁰. It emerges as a natural corollary from this statement that eternal vigilance is the price for democracy as well. That means democracy as a system will thrive only if the people of the country are vigilant. However, for being vigilant, people must be aware; aware about their political environment i.e. about the incidents, events and happenings, institutions along with their structures and procedures, decision-

making processes as also about their rights and duties etc. in the section that follows, an effort has been made to understand the meaning of political awareness.

4.2 Political Awareness

Any endeavor to understand and define the term ‘Political Awareness’ should be preceded with an attempt to understand the term ‘awareness’. As it is stated above the meaning of ‘Awareness’ is to know or to have knowledge about ‘something’; this something means our surrounding. Awareness about our surroundings is basic not only to the human beings but to the all living organisms including the plants and trees. In fact, it is basic instinct inherent in all the living organisms since their birth and is directly related to our survival; if we do not remain aware about our surroundings, our existence may be endangered. And to that extent, the animals and birds remain more aware about their surroundings because they always face the danger of life from the stronger and bigger amongst them due to the prevalence of the jungle raj.

Taken in this sense, the humans have to remain less aware because of prevalence of rule of law, they face less danger from other humans; of course they have to safeguard themselves from some of the animals and insects. But humans have to remain aware for some other reasons as well, among humans, awareness is a tool of empowerment; thus the more aware we are, the more empowered we would be. Meaning thereby, the higher level of awareness will ensure to develop the competitive spirit within themselves. In other words, in addition to ensure their survival and existence, humans have to remain aware to compete among themselves. Humans have a natural inclination to grow at a faster rate in comparison to the others. But our growth and development depends upon our knowledge of our surroundings, therefore, awareness is of great importance

among humans due to some other reasons in comparison to the animal world. Among humans, awareness may relate to the society, the economy, the polity, the nature etc.

‘Political awareness’ may mean to be aware of the salient features of the constitution and the important laws; incidents, events, and happenings; its different structures and their functions; decision-making processes and procedures in these structures; relationship between different structures; person at the helm of affairs and their personalities; rights, obligations and compulsions of various functionaries; rights, duties and expectations of the citizens etc. in the field of politics.

In context to political awareness we acquire knowledge about political activities, which occurs at different political fronts. The Political awareness means to know about different mechanism of political activities of different political hierarchy. We acquire this awareness through different day to day political activities which begin at the local level for example, the functioning of local self government like Gram Panchayats, Block Sammitties, Zila Parishads at rural front. On the other hand the local self government related to urban local bodies which include Municipal Committee, Nagar Parishad and the Municipal Corporation and at the apex level the political awareness about state assembly, parliament and different structures of government and different functionaries of the government.

Similarly political awareness is also associated with different social groups like rural groups, urban groups e.g. awareness associated with different castes, economic groups, professional groups, community groups, civil society groups’ etc. Their involvements are varied and different, depends upon the levels of requirements of the information required from time to time. The level of awareness acquired in accordance with the objective laid by different groups.

The level of awareness is determined by large number of factors, awareness indicators through which the awareness phenomena operate. It always varied from place to place and time to time. Some groups (individual) are better equipped than others to render political judgments, to political decisions and to process political information. In other words some individuals or groups are better equipped to exercise the duties of citizenship and hence to play a meaningful role in the deliberations of democratic politics. Others focus on the importance of partisanship and strong partisan orientations.⁷⁰

Hence, Political awareness means people must have conscious or aware of their government's functions and functionaries e.g. they must aware of elections, vote, parliament and political safeguards of democracy and they must aware of all types of political process and activities. Some studies of public opinion indicate that most of the people are ignorant about the detail of politics and are simply unable to arrive at a considered vote. They hold that voters are ignorant about the ideological substance of politics, since their opinions do not appear to be constraint and are unstable over time. John Bartle further says that the opinion of more aware voter are subject to greater constraint and are more stable over time that those of less aware voters.⁷⁰ Hence it reveals that if a common person or a uncommon person, it is necessary to have consciousness about their political system, political process of the country. We must have aware of all the functions which are performed by government and also political parties, the functions and importance of elections and importance of vote in democracy. These all questions are related to the political awareness⁷⁰.

4.3 Political Participation and People Participation

Political participation is positively correlated with the political awareness. Meaning there by, voluntary activities by which the members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy is influenced by the political awareness. The political activities which include voting, seeking information, discussing and proselytizing, attending meetings, contributing financially and speech making, working in campaigns are all depend upon the political awareness of the people and it cumulatively affected the levels of political participation in the society.⁷⁰ All these are essential elements for democratic system which are as consent accountability, majority rules, equality and popular sovereignty in the present democratic system in India. Why do social scientists study political participation? To begin with, participation is an ingredient of every polity, large or small. Whether the society is an oligarchy or a democracy, someone must make political decisions and appoint, uphold and remove leaders.⁷⁰ Those who fail to participate whether out of neglect or exclusion, are likely to enjoy less power than those who are or have more political participation. People participate in politics whenever they do something to affect public policy. Although not all who participate possess or enjoyed effective power but those who do not participate cannot exercise or share power. It is possible to have a democracy when most people participate in politics only in a ritual fashion.⁷⁰

Participation is the principal means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in democracy and rules are made accountable to the ruled. Since men can be equal and free only if they share in the determination of their own affairs, participation has been viewed as a mean for realizing these democratic objectives.⁷⁰

Political awareness is best explained by political factors such as political information, Education, economic condition, a feeling of political efficacy and holding of certain belief. It may well be noted that non-participation is also best explained by these political factors. We have seen that people who participate in the electoral process are better educated, wealthier and in general, better off than those who do not. But we have also seen that social and economic factors affect participation directly. They are mediated and shaped by political awareness.⁷⁰

From Aristotle to John Dewey, Political philosophers have extolled popular participation as a source of vitality and creative energy, as a defense against tyranny and as a mean of enacting to collective wisdom. By involving the many in the affairs of the state participation should promote stability and order and by giving every one the opportunity to express his own interests, it should secure the greatest good for the greatest number.⁷⁰

4.4 Citizen Participation

With few exceptions, the political problems of government are connected to the ignorance of and myths about politics which keep away the public from understanding the nature and cause of those problems. Ignorance and myths keep citizens estranged from politics when the only cure for the ethical problems of politics can come when there is increased participation. Only increased public participation will help. The need for a citizen of a democratic society is to understand generally what is going on in his government and to participate to some degree in its decision making processes.⁷⁰

His needs for understanding the world in which he lives and for having some sense of control of his position in that world tend to be less than satisfied. The only way of satisfying these

needs in contemporary society is through increased participation in some nationwide organization with power that can both interpret the large-scale events affecting the society and give him same share in dealing with these events. Participation in political organization can also serve needs for companionship and identification which participation in other kinds of organization equally well serve.

4.5 Democracy and Political Awareness

When we think about democracy, then question raised in our mind..... That what is Democracy? In simple wording we can say, “To protect the fundamental rights of individual and of the society is called democracy”. It is a rule of law, elections, vote and parliament, in other words a person who is well politically aware can protect the rights of individuals and of the society. This person or citizen can protect the society and democracy. Every step of political participation is taken by the people should be accordance with within the framework of rule of law.⁷⁰ In order to fulfilling the objectives laid by the people should be obeyed the rules, framed by the Indian constitution or the legal authorities. Only when we shall be in position to enjoy our democratic system in the society and it will lead to democratic stability too. It is possible to have a democracy when most people participate in politics only in a ritual fashion. There is a good relationship between political participation and democratic theory, public policy and public opinion.⁷⁰ Hence we can examine that Democracy is a system in which the rights and life of an individual and of the society would be secured by rule of law. Hence a well educated and well politically aware person can do the best for the society. So democracy or liberty of a man correlated with the political awareness of a citizen.⁷⁰

4.6 Significance of Political Awareness

Decision-making is at the core of all government activities, i.e. all government activities are directed to take decision relating to one matter or the other. But all the decisions taken at the political level affect the people at large though the intensity of the effect would certainly vary depending upon the nature of decision and the level of government at which the decision has been taken. Since the decisions are about us and affect us, we have both a right and duty to know what these decisions are; how these have been arrived at, whether they serve/harm our interests and how do they serve/harm our interests and the extent to which they serve/harm our interests. In a democracy, in case the decisions taken at the level of the government harm our interests, we are also provided opportunities to represent our case even before the decisions taken. Even after the decisions have been taken, there exist in a democracy adequate mechanisms for redress of our grievances. There is a system of approaching that mechanism and by following that procedure we can get our grievances redressed. But we can take advantage of all these opportunities only if we are politically aware. Alternatively, it can be said that if we are not aware, we are jeopardizing our survival, existence, growth and development.

If we are not aware about the decisions taken by the government, we may be deprived of the opportunity to raise voice against those decisions in case the decision has been harming our interests. Further, in case we remain aware about the time when the decisions are being taken and the persons who are at the helms of affairs in taking these decisions, we may be in a position to

articulate and safeguard our interest. But all this can happen only when we are politically aware and know what is happening around us.

It is also a fact that present era is the era of specialization in which all of us specialize in some branch of knowledge. It may be concluded from the above that we cannot excel and specialize in all branches and fields of knowledge. Therefore, it becomes our responsibility to utilize the knowledge we possess for the good of the society. It is, in fact, a reciprocal relationship; we contribute to the society and the society will contribute to our well-being. It is quite possible that the decisions taken or being taken at the political level are going to affect us only remotely and distantly. If we have some knowledge about that specialized field in which the decisions are taken or are being taken, then we are duty bound to contribute. From this standpoint also political awareness is crucial.

There are some people who would be inclined to political participation, i.e., they would more inclined to participate in political activities be it contesting elections or be it interest articulation. But the path to political participation is routed through political awareness because unless we are politically aware we will not be in a position to analyze the political environment and find out the most conducive opportunity, level and nature for participation.

Political awareness has a vital significance in different walk of life. It has paved the way to know our rights and duties which experience in different front. Political awareness can be proved beneficial as follows:-

Firstly- Political awareness can be proved very significance for knowing and understanding our rights and duties towards society, individual and nation.

Secondly- Political awareness among the citizen belongs to rural and urban society has enabled to take political participation at different levels. The levels of active participation in the political activities depend upon the level of political awareness or acquiring of knowledge gained from our surroundings. As a result the participation can be proved conducive to get the desired results.

Thirdly- Different levels of political awareness or political awakening has positive strong correlation with the development. It helps to develop a collective bargaining and public opinion formation for formulation a pro-public development policy at a different administrative hierarchy, e.g. at grass root level to state/National levels. It has been observed especially at village levels due to considerable political awareness of the villagers can often be beneficial for raising funds for development in their respective villages.

Fourthly- it is political awareness which helps to set the different targets for the development oriented ‘action plan’, which can be proved helpful to get the desired result at different levels. The citizens who readily think about politics in partisan or ideological terms are better able to employ these points of orientation as useful heuristic devices in making sense out of the complexity chaos of politics.⁷⁰

Fifthly- A periodic feedback given by the villagers and the members belong to civil society depend upon the levels of political awareness among the people. If there is an adequate awareness among the people, as a result, they give a good periodic feedback to the policy makers. As a result, it can be benefited for the policy makers to formulate the policy in accordance with the local condition at the grass root levels.

Sixthly- Different studies indicate that the more political aware ‘civil society’ is more responsive to the development work, executed by the public authorities and it is vice-versa. That is why the

political awareness has become a chief corollary of development administration at different administrative hierarchy. If one would observe the progress of social change and mobilization in Nepal over the past five decades, it would be noticed that the traditional caste rigidity no longer prevails. In spite of caste hierarchy those who have been able to attain economic, educational and political achievement have received greater acceptability in the society.⁷⁰

Seventhly- The Political awareness has also paved the way to develop more transparency in execution system of the development projects, undertaken by the administrative technical authorities. It has also been observed that the political awareness among the people, belong to rural and urban society have been proved a good vigilance to have a ‘constant watch’ and watch dog for multi leveled transparency e.g. village/Block/District and micro and macro levels. And ultimately proved helpful to develop multilevel transparency, accountability and responsiveness at multiple levels. On the whole the political awareness has been proved ‘panacea’ for having a constant vigil at multiple levels.

Eighthly- It has been noticed that the political awareness has paved the way to make the judicious use of financial and human resources to get the targeted result. It has also been observed that the people who are more aware of different political activities, get best utilize their resource with ‘cost-effective’ way to fulfill the oriented development target.

Finally- Political awareness among the people, belong to rural and urban society has been playing a vital role for setting target oriented development work. It has paved the way to developing ‘constant vigil’ and multi-level transparency in the functioning different ‘development authorities’ working at different administrative level. It has also proved conducive to have fully transparency at formulation and execution of ‘social and development policy.’ The level of

political awareness of the masses of development countries is very high because they take active participation in political activity, development programmes, decision making policies and they take active part in administrative and political administration.⁷⁰

4.7 Factor Affecting Political Awareness

There are numerous factors which determine the level of political awareness of an individual. Here are some factors which always plays an important role to determine the level of political awareness of an individual as well the masses as a whole. These factors may be analyzed as follows:

The Education- The Education is most prominent factor that influence all the political activities and many other activities of a man in the society. A politically illiterate person might unconscious who the president is or perhaps the governor of their State but they usually ignored things. They do not watch the news. They have no knowledge of the issue and do not know the difference between a republic and Democrat. These people have no interest in vote.⁷⁰ On the other hand the educated persons have more consciousness of their political system. They are aware of the rules and regulations, elections, parliament which are the basis of democracy. An educated person can take active participation in policy formulation and decision making process. Further, the level of political awareness of a more educated person is likely to be greater in comparison to a less educated person.

Economic Condition- Political awareness of a man depends upon education as well as economic condition of a man. The person or a group who is economically sound they have full interest in politics and political activities. The level of political awareness is usually low of the

economically weaker section or groups or strata in the society. On the other hand, the level of political awareness is usually high in a developed society or strata or group. So, it is clear that the level of political awareness is depends upon the economic condition of any groups or strata in the society. In the electoral process the Indian masses, particularly the poor and the socially disadvantaged, take a less more participatory role than in advanced industrial democracies.⁷⁰

A person who is economically weak, he always remains in stress. He cannot think about politics, political process and political incidents of the country. Professor Laski said that “there is no mean of social freedom without economic equality. A man cannot eat social freedom”. Dr. Ambedkar always said that an economically weak person cannot progress socially and politically, so it is compulsory to uplift the weaker section of the society. If they are economically sound then they will take interest in politics, political activities and political power.⁷⁰ Hence we can say that a person, group or strata who is economically sound in society, they take active part in politics, government and political system and they are more awared, than that of those people, who are economically in weak position. For instance, in India the poor people do not cast their votes at the time of elections.

Profession:- Profession of an individual, group or community in the society is most important factor to determine the level of political awareness, e.g. the Teacher Association, Association of Trade Unions, Commercial Association, Bar Association, Govt. Employee Association also affect the political activities of a man. All these profession, related to different professions or groups also help to create political awareness among the man belong to different strata or groups or profession. The people belong to scheduled castes, have found the opportunities of social and occupational mobility not only in their traditional occupations, but

have also ventured into same other entrepreneurial activities which were earlier, reserve for higher castes. Therefore, it is predominantly the better off amongst the scheduled castes who have become businessmen and industrial entrepreneur.⁷⁰ On the other hand, there are certain professions, where the people are more likely to be politically more aware. In fact, in some professions such as Journalism, it is obligatory for those who are involved in these professions to remain politically aware otherwise they will be not in a position to cope with the highly competitive environment. It has been observed that the children of those persons who are indulge in politics are naturally more politically aware than those of the children whose parents are not indulge in political profession.

Social and Cultural Environment- Culture is a vehicle of civilization, there are various traits of culture such as architecture, folk and festival, language, castes, race religion, dance and drama, literature, arts and paintings, food habits, norms and values, attire for men and women, style of living and the traits of urbanism of an area. All these 'cultural traits' affect the 'political awareness' of the people, who live in an area.

Social and cultural environment also affect the political activities, political system and political interest of a man. The social environment also help to create political awareness among the masses. For example, we can see the recent example of 'Misazpur-Violence' in Haryana, which helps to create political awareness among the masses, particularly in weaker section (Dalits) of the country. Social hierarchy in terms of caste, occupation, caste barriers and untouchability are some of the distinct features of a Hindu society found now here in other parts of the globe. The roots of the caste system are so deep that, apart from its symbolic value, any caste does not have functional importance in the society.⁷⁰ In case of social equality, people may be inclined to be

politically more aware. On the other hand a socio-culturally disadvantaged person such as dalits in India, are likely to be politically less aware. And secondly, the *cultural factors* also affect the level of political awareness of an individual as well as community as a whole. The relevance of cultural factors may be more effective in case of the people, who always tend to shift them from one place to another. As a result, they are not aware of political system rather than the people live a settled life. So, they have no much interest in politics and political activities because their culture and society do not allowed them to take active participation in politics and political activities. And third thing is their occupation which also affect their level of Political Awareness. There are numerous of communities belong to different culture i.e. the Tribals and Luhar (Rajasthani Luhar-Rajput from Rajasthan), these communities and their culture do not develop the favourable conditions to take an active participation and show no more interests in politics and political activities of the country. The occupation, where the people, belong to this society is differentiated them from the civic society..

The tribals, which are often lag behind the mainstream of the society with ‘cultural lag’, indicate a low level of awareness about political system and political activities due to their ‘isolated location’ give an adverse affect .

It has been observed from the several studies from the areas, where the ‘cultural diffusion’ has taken place, the voting behaviour is prone to change in according with changing cultural environment. In the metropolitan areas, where the ‘plural society’ has been developed at a massive scale. That is why, the percentage of polling of this type of residential areas are often lesser as compare to the areas where the ‘Cultural homogeneity’ is found at a large extent and it is Vice-Versa.

Hence, it is obvious that the cultural factors also determine the 'Voting behavior' of the people, who live in a particular area. It has also been observed that the 'homogeneity' and 'heterogeneity' of culture affect the level of political awareness too. In case of 'heterogeneity of culture' which indicate a least probability of 'political awareness', as it has been noticed among the people, belong to 'plural society'.

Availability of and exposure to political information- The level of political awareness of any society, community, groups or strata depends upon availability and exposure to political information. Most of Americans get what political information they receive from the television. The percentage of obtaining information from newspaper and magazines has remained relatively constant. The percentage for which radio was main source of political information has declined from 31.9% in 1952 to 3.7% in 1968. In the same time the percentage getting most of their information from television rose 36.2% to 66.0%⁷⁰. Hence the exposure of political information is major factor to create the political awareness among the masses. The second thing is availability of information. There are many regions like remote areas, hill areas which always lag behind political environment of the country because of the lacking of the education and better economic condition. These areas are always remains cut off from the main incidents, and events which occur in political arena and politics of the country because of the problems of availability of information. Then the level of political awareness of the remote areas would naturally be relatively low.

The Mass Media- In present era the print and Electronic Media played an significant role to increase the level of political awareness among the masses. Today mass media is a valuable source of public opinion formation. As a result, the mass media provide a "catalytic force" for

creating political awareness among the masses to air the views of different political parties too. The different and multiple services rendered by different mass media indeed played an important role for creating political awareness among the people. If there exists an unbiased, free and effective media it will not only generate political awareness among the people but will also lure them to be politically more aware.

Social Media and Political Awareness

The role of social media has a vital significance for creating political awareness among the masses. In this context, the specially the electronic media, now a days is playing a notable role for creating public political awareness for their opinion formation on their views on various current issues.’ As we observe that the leaders of almost every political party have uploaded their photos with their events from time to time in various ‘social websites’ such as ‘face book’, ‘twitter’ etc. These websites act as a engine to expedite the views from one place to another. These web sites disseminate and give a ‘world-wide’ exposure of the views from one person to another person.

It has been observed that the ‘social sites’ have been paved the ways for ‘quick opinion formation’ on various issues occurring during different successive periods. As we are well aware of the facts that the leader like ‘Arwind Kejriwal’ who regularly make contact, especially with the youth, become most responsive for the views on socio-economic and political views and try to acknowledge individually for their latest political activity and action plan for raising the burning issue.

Similarly, the BJP leaders like Narendra Modi, has a million of followers on his social website 'facebook'. The congress leaders like Depender Hooda, M.P. of Rohtak constituency, Ajay Chautala, The Rajaya Sabha M.P. from Haryana have a considerable number of followers on their social websites. The national leader such as Rahul Gandhi, has also a million of followers especially the youths, who have joined him from different parts of India and abroad. The social sites act as a true reflector to exchange the views on various subjects and issues in the changing scenario.

The Social sites, formed by Obama, the president of United States have been played a significant role for re-election of him as president. The issue such as occurred against Osama Bin Laden leading to killing him has been a major issue of the President election. As result, the 'Social Media' based action plan has been proved conducive to make a strong public opinion formation during last U.S. President Election. Similarly, his stand on 'international terrorism' has gained a world-wide support through 'social media' only. He has been airing his views on his some of selected 'web-sites' in the country. These sites have been given a 'chain reaction' throughout the world, as a result a 'worldwide response' has been received by the president Obama.

Hence, it is true that the 'social sites' (networking web) like face-book or twitter have been playing a vital role for creating political awareness. It has also been observed that such websites have a 'pernicious effect' too. The youth community which is very sensitive to not take the things seriously becomes a matter of serious thinking. It has been observed that the 'youth community' is occasionally misled by the shrewd politicians and follows the fallacious ways of political thinking on various sensitive issues. The 'blind follow' tendency of youth is some time

blindly supported for the ‘vested political interests’. As a result, the shrewd politicians take a undue advantages of their ‘blind followers’.

Keeping in view, multifaceted problematic areas of ‘Social internet web sites’, it become imperative to be rational, so that a judicious and rational views may be disseminated through the ‘social websites’ and make best use of this ‘social media’ to inculcate the right things into the wrong minds, which may prove conducive to inculcate the ‘factual picture’ of the political awareness of the people, belong to different strata of society.

In this context, it also becomes very essential to follow the ethics and the values of media, so that the true information may be shared between the leaders and the followers. It also becomes imperative to work the people within the jurisdiction of ‘cyber laws’ laid down by the Indian Penal Codes. It is also needed some of constitutional amendments and legislative measure to have a ‘constant vigil’ on the information which are ‘uploaded’ on the social websites by the leaders as well as by the public, so that a fully transparency may be mentioned for functioning of ‘Social websites’ in the country. It is expected to pave the way for true opinion formation through different ‘social websites’ used by the leaders, belong to different political parties in India. Hence, social media is playing a very prominent role for creating the general awareness and Political Awareness among the masses.

Political Environment- Political environment play a significant role to create political awareness among the people. A progressive political environment always provide a ‘supporting force’ to the people, who are engaged in different political activities. As a result this ‘supporting force’ always producing a ‘centripetal force’ for developing good governance, which is a permanent indicator of political environment. Hence it is obvious that the factors which are well

knit cohesive and integrated political environment provides an environment, which suits most for creating political interests to achieve the desired results. The political environment was begun at the national level before independence in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi to create the political awareness among the masses for the freedom struggle. The political environment was created at the national level by Jaiparkash Narain in 1975 to 1977 against Indra Gandhi Government at the time of emergency. The political environment was created again at the national level with BJP leader L.K Advani by organizing a Rath Yatra at national level to cultivate majority vote bank by exposing the cause of Ram Mandir Issue.⁷⁰ Prevailing political environment provide conducive conditions in generating political awareness among the people. In contemporary time the political rallies which are organized by BJP to win the election of Lok-Sabha of 2014 are creating a conducive political environment to create political awareness among the masses at large extends.

Personal Inclination

Political awareness of an individual is also a function of our personal inclination and interest. If an individual is more interested in politics and has interest for develop surrounding environment, then the individual is likely to be relatively politically more aware rather than those persons whose personal inclination remains in other professions. There are certain sections of society which usually have more inclination in politics and political activities in comparison to the others. It is usually seen that the women in rural area have less inclination to politics and political activities.⁷⁰ Therefore, the level of their political awareness is likely to be relatively less. There are many examples of many peoples who belong to political family but they have no personal inclination in politics, their interest lies in other professions.

4.8 Political Awareness in India

Before the advent of the British, substantial majority of population used to live in villages, which were self-sufficient units as most of their needs used to meet within their village. There was rarely any flow of information as means of communication and transportation were very slow. The State being authoritarian and dictatorial, except for collection of land revenue and taxes, there was hardly any connection between the state and the subjects. Further, mass illiteracy prevailed and whatever system of education existed, it was very traditional and destitute and different from western liberal ideas of liberty and equality. Obviously, political awareness among the people at that time was almost non-existent. But the establishment of British rule in the country changed the scene gradually and led to the creation of political awareness among the people of this country.

Political Awareness before Independence

Some of the reason for the generation of political awareness during British period, has been discussed as follows:-

Liberal Education -In the beginning of nineteenth century, the British replaced the traditional system of education based on theology with the system of education based on the western liberal thought. It was done with a view to popularize the western way of living and thinking, to transform the mind set of people, belong to different parts of India. The spread of western thought which has affected the religious and social aspects and social reformation, romanticism, enlightenment and rationalism in outlook were due to the study of English literature, philosophy and science.⁷⁰ However, this helped people to understand their rights and what are the duties of

the State. In other words, the spread of western education thought increased political awareness among the masses of India.

System of British Administration -With a view to rule India in a better way, they unified this country by creating a network of transportation and also by providing means of communication. Postal system and the railways may be mentioned in particular in this regard. They also created a unified system of administration in this country. As a result interaction among the people of different parts of the country increased and they came to know what is happening in different parts of this country as also in other parts of the world. This led to the generation of political awareness of the people of India.

Impact of Freedom Movement -During independence struggle our leaders had created an environment conducive for political awareness all over the country. Our leaders like Lokmanaya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Maulana Azad, Madan Mohan Malviya and Pt. Nehru played a significant role for creating political awareness during independence struggle period.⁷⁰ As a result of the efforts of the leader of freedom struggle and environment of political awakening and awareness was generated. So, freedom movement played an prominent role in increasing the political awareness among the masses of India.

Impact of Western Culture -The changing condition in the country, modern literature, the growing influence of the west, social and religious reforms, new forms of associations, the changing outlook of modern education and the pressing demands of new life developed national consciousness. The formulation of fresh social norms and political ideals made a profound impression upon the mind of the new Indian people.⁷⁰

British Economic Policy Impact on Indian Economy -The British did not intend to bring any industrial development of the country; whatever industries were set up was the result of their compulsion. Trade, transport, communications were undergoing transformation but agriculture remained stagnant. The population continued to increase and the Indian masses were the periods of scarcity and famine. The new economic methods introduced by the British in India were not regenerative as their benefit was raped by the foreign rulers, industrialists and inventors. The poor population was affected by rising prices. The burden of taxation grew heavier though the national income increased.⁷⁰ Such a complexity trend in the Indian economy caused great distress among the poorer classes of population and discontent among the middle section of the society especially the educated and thus frontward political awareness in the whole country.

4.9 Political Awareness in post Independence era.

After independence, the process of political awareness among the masses has further expedited. In the post-independence period, there are numerous of factors which have contributed in increasing the level of political awareness among the masses. Some of these factors have been discussed as follows.

Education- As it has been discussed earlier that the education is prominent factor that has the capacity of increasing the level of general awareness and political awareness among the masses. Post-independence India has seen vast expansion of education in various parts of the country. We have achieved 100 per cent gross enrollment ratio in the case of students up to fifth standard since the year 2004-05 and since 2007-08 we have achieved 100 per cent gross enrollment ratio in the

case of students up to eighth standard.⁷⁰ This vast spread of education has been proved very helpful for increasing the level of political awareness in this country. It has been observed that the illiterate person cannot understand the functioning of Government bodies, political system, political leadership, about constitution and many incidents and happening, which are usually happened in political field.

Mass Media - Independent India has witnessed phenomenal growth of mass media, both print and electronic. In fact, the electronic media has been revolutionized the field of sharing and exchanging the information. Now, the electronic media is making all kinds of information instantly available to the people in part of the country. Internet has also a great role to play in the field of information generation and its spread amongst the people, which is just a click away from the users. All these have helped tremendously in increasing the level of political awareness of the people in the post-independence era.

Urbanization -India is presently witnessing rapid urbanization and it has been projected that by 2025, about half of India's population would be residing in urban areas. Urbanization is usually associated with increased level of awareness. Thus, increased urbanization has contributed to the increase in level of political awareness of the people. The main reason of increasing Political Awareness in urban areas is the exposure and availability of the information.

Increased Interaction -There has been tremendous growth of science and technology in India and this growth is also perceptible in the field of communication and transportation. This technological advancement in the field of communication and transportation has resulted into increased interaction among the people. In fact, the advancement in the means of communication and transportation has removed the boundaries of the world. As a result of increased interaction,

both physical and through means of communication not only within India but with the outside world, there is considerable increased in the level of political awareness of the people.

The Role of Public Relation Department Of Government-Government has also been making efforts to increase the level of political awareness of the people. The Public Relations Departments of the state governments generate awareness among the people by way of their various programmes which are specifically aimed at this purpose. The government also gives wide publicity to the various programmes and schemes launched by it with a view to generate awareness about them. Besides, before the enactment of any statute in parliament or state legislatures, public comments are invited thereon. Further, after the enactment of the statutes also, government makes efforts to make the people aware about their features. Role of Public Relation Department of the State Government has a vital significance for creating political awareness. It has been observed that the mass media used by the personnel of public relation department play a significant role by acknowledging the public policy to the masses. It also includes the awareness of various development schemes and the action plans for execution at various administrative hierarchy. The mass-media, often used by the Public Relation department are film show, lectures, exhibitions and the public meetings for creating awareness about development work to be executed in the rural and urban areas.

In this connection, the vernacular media, like 'puppet show' make the show more interesting which helps to create a live 'demonstration effects' on the mind-set of the people, belong to different strata of society. The political leaders organize a public meeting and give their views on various socio-economic and political issues, faced by the masses. All these are

helped by the public relation department and facilitate to create the favourable environment for pulling the public to hear their views on various burning issues.

In order to make the public more responsive to the development policy to be implemented in accordance with the prevailing local conditions, the role of public relation department become more significant and inevitable. The public meetings, organized by the public relation department has been giving an insight to the 'public opinion formation' on various political issues raised by the public. It also help to give a periodic feed back of the masses which may prove-conducive to formulate the public policy in an effective way. The role of civil society, which give a periodic review of the public policy, play a significant role for making the public policy more responsive and transparent for the people, belong to different strata of society. The relation between the public relations and the public should be harmonions, so that an adequate feedback way be given in an effective way. A well awareness on political issue are expected to pave the way to form a good 'pressure groups' which help to develop a effective 'collective bargaining' for decision making on public crucial maters to protect the rights of the people, belong to urban and rural society.

Hence, we observe that the role of public relation department in creating political awareness among the public has been remarkable. It is because of the role of 'public relation' gives a 'Multiplier effect' on solving the various socio-economic and political issues of the people, belongs to various strata of society.

Right to Information Act and political awareness-One such effort of the government, which needs special mention, is the enactment of the Right to Information Act, 2005. Under this Act, any citizen of India can seek information about any government decision by applying to the

Public Information Officer (PIO) of the concerned department. The PIO has to provide the information sought within a period of thirty days from the date of application. This Act is providing a great source of information generation and is thus a great tool of generating political awareness among the people. Right to information Act 2005, has been playing a vital and significant role for creating more political responsiveness for the people living in rural and urban areas. Since implementation of RTI, the public administration has become more responsive to the public. It has paved the way to create mass public awareness for the development policy, formulated for socio-economic upliftment for the people, belong to different strata of rural and urban society. The RTI has opened the door for the people to have a 'constant vigil' on the functioning of government and non-government organizations. The RTI Act has been proved conducive to protecting the human rights. The Act has devolved the power to the farmers, women, children, students, teachers and the professionals, belong to different streams to know the information, which is directly or indirectly affect him/her.

It has been observed that RTI Act has made the political leaders more responsive and answer able to their deeds. The political leaders belong to different political streams are supposed to answer each and every question related to development works under RTI Act. All these become possible with emergence of RTI Act for protecting the right of the people. In this context, the political leader's under the executives deal with RTI, has to finalize the matter within one month. As a result, the RTI has expedited the administrative system and reduced the 'Red Tapism' from the 'Bureaucratic system'. All these become possible, when the people have become aware of their right through RTI Act.

The annual reports of various departments indicate the number of cases of RTI Act, have been finalized. On the basis of these reports, it has been observed that the every department has been become more responsive with the implement of RTI Act for their concerned department. For the political leaders, now it become more answerable for his speech and the works which he has implemented in accordance with the speech, made earlier. Hence, it is obvious the RTI and the political awareness of the people has narrowed the gap between said and done by the political leaders.

In this context, various information receive from various department has paved the way to evaluate the development programme by pointing out the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat of the public scheme, implemented by the government machinery. It has also been paved the way to reform the social and economic public policy and eliminate all the ‘pitfalls’ in the public policy, so that the public policy may attain a TQM (Total Quality management) position for the services, rendered by the public authorities. In order to attain the TQM, it become essential to have a fully awareness on political agenda. Only then the people may get the full return for their tax, paid for formulation of concrete public policy and full utilization of natural and human resources, meant for welfare of the people.

Hence, it is obvious that the RTI Act has been playing a significant and vital role for creating political awareness of the people. It has been observed that the RTI has a indirect benefits too. It has a ‘multiple effects’ on the functioning of the political leaders, the administrative machinery, public representatives of local self governments of ‘Panchayati Raj’ and Urban local bodies. It has paved the way to have a fully insights of the functionaries of various bodies, engaged in implementing the public policy. It has paved the way to maintain

fully transparency and constant vigil on the functioning of the officials belong to different administrative hierarchy. It is also expected to maintain the total quality management of the development works, executed by the executive officials at various administrative hierarchy.

Caste Mobilization and Political Awareness -After Independence, there was a considerable change, which was experienced by the people, belong to different castes, religious groups & different class. Different political parties carve out their vote bank among different communities and champion of one's own community. In fact they are champions of their own political interests, rather than community's interest.⁷⁰ These political elites which assumed power in 1947, were drawn from the upper castes. The key institution that shaped political power, social status and economic privilege were hold by upper caste peoples in India. The national movement, the educational system, the bureaucracy and the system of land ownership were largely in the dominant caste's hand. After independence, various regional political parties came into existence and had a regional influence on the mind of the people belong to different strata of society. These regional parties have been influencing with their leaders particularly to their own people. Even as the upper caste leaders of congress created caste vote banks even though they spoke out against 'casteism'. Many congress leaders imagined an India free from the rancor of communal identities, caste politics and linguistic fervor. The democratic system created an incentive for political mobilization along the lives of caste, religion and language. Politicians mobilize caste grouping and identities in order to organize their power. Caste and community provides an extensive basis of r organization of democratic politics.⁷⁰

Socio-Economic Status of States and Regions -It has been observed that the political awareness in India has been influencing by three major factors- the literacy rates, economic status and the

level of information technology availed by the people. All these indicators have been working singularly or together, and determined the level of political awareness among the people, belong to different strata of society. All these indicators had a positive correlation to the level of political awareness and vice-versa. In addition, the socio-economic levels of state/regions also influenced on the level of awareness of the political activities, for the people who live in that region. It has been observed from different studies which indicate a sharp difference in political awareness, especially the tribal areas where the general backwardness, isolation and the local disadvantages of the regions, have given rise to low level of 'political awareness' as compare to the areas which have been enjoying good locational advantage of good educational and communicational infrastructure which indicate a higher level of political awareness of the people. As Ramchander Guha points out 60 years after Independence they (tribal) have been unable to effectively articulate their grievances through the democratic and electoral process.⁷⁰

73rd Constitutional Amendment and Panchayati Raj Institutions -After Independence the 73rd constitutional Amendment has brought a radical change in the politics at a gross root level. There is now active political participation has been increased by many folds of people through 'Panchayati Raj Institution.' There is considerable growth of Dalits and woman has been experienced since its implementation at gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitti and Zila Parishad levels. It is because of growing trends of awareness of political activities at grass root level. Active participation of the people at the grass root level through decentralized democracy is a true democracy. It is all due to the traits of growing political awareness among the villagers who have been influencing by the different socio-economic indicators. Thus since the 73rd constitutional Amendment, a change has been engineered in the democratic rules governing panchayats which now have great power and resources to design implement anti-poverty programmes.⁷⁰

Rising Pressure Groups and Political Awareness -Various studies carried out for political awareness for urban as well as rural society, indicate a considerable resource mobilization has been taken place through these political and pressure groups. These pressure groups have been playing a very important role for creating the political awareness in different strata of the society. These 'political groups' acts as a pressure groups for raising funds from the governments for their respective areas. And their 'collective bargaining' also proved conducive to formulate a 'social' and 'economic' policy in accordance with the demand crated by majority of the people, who live in different areas.⁷⁰

Thus we observe that the political awareness has been played a 'vital' and significant role in pre-independence and post-independence period for the masses. During pre-independence period a simple political awareness among different strata of society, have been playing a significant role for getting independence, and after independence, various leaders belong to different regional parties have been proved conducive to create a high level of political awareness among the masses. As a result, it has assisted to develop more transparency in the political system. It has brought more responsiveness for the masses and ultimately become conform to democratic system for country. For creating political awareness, Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir also advocate for urgency of political awareness among the masses.⁷⁰ It is because of it provide a cementing force for bonding, between various regions and sections in the states.

Keeping in view some of constraints which become a 'wet blanket' for political awareness in the country should be tackled with some of remedies suggested by some of political activists. The activists, who are blessed with good grasping power for political issues and well informed

with abundance of information wherever possible, they can make aware of the people who seek active participation in the political activities.⁷⁰ In addition they can get help from the experts, who can understand the language of diplomacy and can strategize with institutions and community organizations when necessary.

In order to enhance the political awareness among the people, it is imperative to understand the political behavior to identify a citizen feeling about the effects of the person's belief that political change can be effected or retarded and that his efforts, alone or in concern with others can produced desired behavior on the part of political authorities.⁷⁰

Hence, it is quite obvious that behavior of the people regarding political awareness for the pre-independence period and the post-independence period indicate a considerable change with passage of time. There have been numerous of socio economic indicators, which have been determining the nature and direction of political awareness of the people belong to different contemporary societies. In the present scenario, there are some of constraints about 'political awareness' which can be tackled through some of remedies, suggested by the political experts. Only then, the people belong to different strata of society may attain full awareness on different political issue in India.

4.10 Political Awareness among Dalits in India

In order to analysis of political awareness among 'Dalit' we have to review the multi-dimensional aspect of 'Dalit' participation in different political activities in India. The Dalit have faced exploitation since ages. They have been widely discriminated and as a result are the disadvantaged group of Indian society.⁷⁰ As a result, they have been socially, culturally,

economically, educationally and politically deprived. They could not grow with the rest of the society and lagged much behind it and thus could not become integral part of the society. During the Indian renaissance, several social reformers tried to ameliorate their conditions. The British government during the pre-independence era also took certain steps for this purpose.

After India gained independence, several provisions were incorporated into the constitution to ensure equality for this section of society. Besides, a number of statutory provisions have been made by the Parliament and state legislature with this end in view and the executive has also initiated some efforts. There is no denying the fact there have been some positive results of these efforts. However, still the dalits have not been provided equality with the other sections of society, particularly in rural areas; they are facing discrimination in various forms. Consequently, it is widely believed that the level of awareness and political awareness of the dalits is relatively low in comparison of non-dalit.

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⁷⁰ The American Heritage (A) Dictionary of English Language, IV Edition (c) 2000.

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Chapter 5

The Study Area and Survey Sample

5.1 Introduction

Mahendragarh is a town and a municipal committee in Mahendragarh district in the north Indian state of Haryana. It takes only 2 hours to reach Mahendragarh and is 115.0 KM away from Gurgaon and comes under National Capital Region (India).

Mahendragarh is located at 28.28°N 76.15°E. It has an average elevation of 262 metres (859 feet). It is bounded on the north by Bhiwani and Rohtak districts, on the east by Rewari district and Alwar district of Rajasthan, on the south by Alwar, Jaipur and Sikar districts of Rajasthan, and on the west by Sikar and Jhunjhunu districts of Rajasthan. It has 2 tehsils of Narnaul and Mahendragarh.

It is named after Maharaj Mahendra singh who was the ruler during the Mughal era. It is situated at the bank of Dohan river (which was a seasonal river), which is at the verge of extinction.

With various leading schools and colleges, Mahendragarh has become as the education hub of India. Central University has been established in Mahendragarh having campus area of 488 acre. Mahendragarh has various engineering colleges as well. Mahendragarh is hub of international level schools with ultra modern amenities with high class of study level where students from Delhi, Rajasthan, UP, Panjab etc getting education to achieve their dreams. Mahendragarh have maximum no. of education college in Haryana state.

As of 2001 India census Mahendragarh had a population of 23,977. Males constitute 53% of the population and females 47%. Mahendragarh has an average literacy rate of 67%, higher

than the national average of 59.5%: male literacy is 76%, and female literacy is 57%. In Mahendragarh, 14% of the population is under 6 years of age. Hindus constitute 98% of the population.

In spite of being a district headquarters, there is no administrative office. All the relevant work is done in Narnaul. The very first *guggul* (*Commiphora wightii*) *vatika* (place where medicinal plants are planted) was established here.

Now many government offices have opened in Mahendragarh near Government Boys college in new Court. According to Haryana District Gazetteers: Mahendragarh Ahirs and Rajputs form the agricultural backbone of the district. However Yaduvanshi Ahirs are in majority in the district.^{[6][7]}

5.2 Socio-Cultural Environment

Significant social groups in the district are Ahirs, Brahmans, Rajput, Baniyas, Gujjars, Aroras, Khattris, Rahbaris, Balmikis, Chamars, Dhanak, Kumhars, Khatis, Jats and Lohars. Rahbaris have been mentioned because of their particular features but they are few. Aroras and Khattris comprise the displaced population who settled in the district as a consequence of Partition in 1947. Ahir, Jat, Rajputs, Gujjars and Brahamans are the agricultural backbone of the district.⁷⁰ The area composed of the districts of Mahendergarh and Rewari is known as “Ahirwal”, the land of the Ahir. The two main castes are Ahirs and Yadavs. Ahirs are said to be descendants of Lord Krishna and hence milkman.⁷⁰

According to H.A. Rose (ICS) Ahir is derived from the Sanskrit Abhira a milkman. The traditional view is, however that Lord Krishna was an Ahir and they are his descendents. Besides Ahir of the district call themselves Yadav or Yaduvanshi, the claim to which Krishna belonged.⁷⁰ They are good cultivators and are the same social standing as the Jats and Gujjars. A very large numbers of them are in defence services. They are good agriculturists and herdsmen of the first rank. The people of the district celebrate major festivals. The most significant festivals are Diwali, Dussehara, Ram Navmi, Holi, Teej, Janmashtami, Shiv Ratri, Raksha Bandhan etc. Traditionally people of the district lived in joint families variously known as Kutumbh or Kunba. People in the villages had a simple way of living. Most of the houses were built of stone slabs and have attached roofs. Things are changed now. The food typically is Roti made of Bajra and wheat eaten with Karhi and Chutney made of Kachri along with Buttermilk.

The literacy rate is 69.89 for the district as a whole which is above the state average of 67.91. Male literacy rate is 84.72 and female literacy rate 54.08 in the District shows the gap between the level of literacy among male and females.⁷⁰ About two third of the total urban population of the district is concentrated in Narnaul town. It is least urbanized district of Haryana and speaks general lack of economical, industrial opportunities.

In the beginning of 20th century, there was a school at Narnaul where Arabic was taught. Important institutions are Government College, Narnaul which began functioning in 1954, Government College Mahendergarh started in 1966 and the Oriental College at Narnaul set up in 1877.⁷⁰ As far as technical education is concerned the district has ITIs is for both Narnaul and Mahendergarh. The first Industrial Training Institute was one for girls which was set up in Narnaul in 1955.

5.3 Geographic Location

Mahendergarh district is situated in the extreme south west corner of Haryana State. It lies between 27⁰ 48' to 28⁰ 50' north latitude and 75⁰ 56 to 76⁰ 52 East longitudes.⁷⁰ The district is bounded by.

North:	Bhiwani and Rohtak districts
East:	Rewari District
South:	Alwar district of Rajasthan
West:	Jhunjhunu and Sikkar districts of Rajasthan.

Tehsil Narnaul of Mahendergarh district concentrated so deeply into Rajasthan that it appears like a part of Rajasthan.

Narnaul is located at 28⁰ 02' N 76⁰ 07' E 28.04⁰ N 76.11⁰ E. It has an average elevation of 298 meters (977 feet). The Narnaul area in Haryana is rich in Mineral resources such as iron, ore, copper, beryl, tourmaline, muschovitemica, albie, calcite and quartz.⁷⁰

District Mahendergarh has five blocks named Ateli Nangal, Kanina, Mahendergarh, Nangal Chaudhary, and Narnaul. There are three sub tehsils i.e. Ateli, Kanina and Nangal Chaudhary. The total area of the district is 1,683 square Kms.

Climate

The district represents arid and semiarid climate, characterized by hot dry and windy summer, cold winters and humid warm monsoon months. The average annual rainfall of the district was 315 mm during 2006 and average of 5 years (2006-09) is 346.9 mm. The minimum

average temperature remains around 5.6⁰ C during the month of Dec. and January whereas the mean maximum temperature reaches up to 42⁰C during May and Jun.⁷⁰

Demography

Population of the district according to the census of 1971 was 7,34,143. According to the census of 2001, the population is 8,12,521 among which 4,23,578 are males and 3,88,943 are females. Mahendergarh district contains 3.84 percent of the total population of the state.⁷⁰

According to the provisional data regarding Census 2011 and Electoral Roll 2011 of district are as under:⁷⁰

Table-3.1

Census Population (Prov)			Census	Electoral Roll 2011			Elector	Electoral Poll Ratio		
Male	Femal	Total	Sex	Male	Femal	Total	Sex	Mal	Femal	Tota
	e		Ratio		e		Ratio	e	e	l
48612	43512	92168	894	27842	24731	52574	888	572	568	570
7	7	0		8	0	8				

According to census of India 2011, Provisional “Population Totals Haryana Data Sheet, the growth rate (Total Population) between 2001 to 2011, percentage 0-6 population, sex Ratio 0-6 and literacy rate are given as under:⁷⁰

CENSUS INDIA – 2011

PROVISIONAL POPULATION TOTALS – HARYANA DATA SHEET

Dist t. Code	State/ Distt.	Census Population (Prov)			Growth rate (Total Population 2001-2011)	Sex Ratio	Percentage 0-6 Population	Sex Ratio 0-6 Population	Literacy Rate Total	Literacy Rate Male	Literacy Rate Female
		Total	Male	Female							
06	Haryana	25353081	13505130	11847951	19.9	877	13.0	830	76.6	85.4	66.8
16	Mahendergarh	921680	486553	435127	13.4	894	11.9	778	78.9	91.3	65.3

Source: Seies-7, Provisional population Tables Paper-1 of 2011

Next table is showing child sex Ratio, Literacy of Haryana districts 2001 and 2011 as under.

State/ Distt.	Sex Ratio		Percentage 0-6 population		Sex Ratio 0-6 Population		Literacy Rate Total		Literacy Rate Males		Literacy Rate Females	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Mahendergarh	918	894	15.8	11.9	818	778	69.9	78.9	84.7	91.3	54.1	65.3

*70

According to revenue department record of Mahenedergarh the total area of the District is 1683 Sq. Km. According to the census of the district total population of the district is 812521, which is 3.84 percent of the total population of Haryana and density per Sq. Km is 428 persons.⁷⁰

5.4 Economic Profile

The economy of the district is primarily based on agriculture. The main kharif crops are Bajra and Guar. The main rabi crops are wheat, gram and mustard. The area gains a good output on mustard.⁷⁰ The major problem here is the declining water table coupled with very scanty rainfall, absence of rivers and sand soil. As far as canals are concerned, they are not able to fulfill the water needs of the people whose fields are at the tail end of the canal. Since there is no streams and scanty rain, there is no recharge of grounder water. Till about 1500 feet *also* water is not available. The soils are deficient inorganic matter and require heavy doses of manure but heavy manuring is not possible without abundant water supply which is not available. The soil is also bedded with lime, Kankar, stone, rock. According to Revenue Department 35 thousand Hectares area (18% of district area) was not available for cultivation. 22 thousand Hectares was put under non agriculture and 13 thousand hectares was barrani. Hence total cropped area is 274 thousand hectares.⁷⁰

Nothing the day land agriculture family income is supplemented through animal husbandry. The district is known for its, Murrah and Haryana breeds of buffaloes. There are two chilling centers in Narnaul. It has also been told that the district has a good catch of fish from its ponds.⁷⁰

Agriculture is basically rain based. The years with a good rain are able to give a high productivity and most crops. The district is also experimenting with crop diversification to the ongoing National Horticulture Mission. The Government is also trying to reach an agreement with neighboring states to enable it to complete the Hansi-Butana Link Canal. Once this link

canal System becomes operational, the district will become one of the most prosperous district in the state.

The biggest irony is that this district has the maximum tourist places but Haryana Tourism has no business here, no office and no Hotel.

Industry

Mahendergarh district has been declared industrially backward under New Industrial policy 2005 and the following schemes are being provided to the new industrial units. Prime minister's Employment Generation Programme, Haryana Industrial promotion Rules, 2007, Incentives for Mega projects in backward Area Incentives for Food Processing Industries, Small scale industrial undertaking registration of Firms and societies.⁷⁰

There are some mines and minerals in many villages around the Narnaul. Calcite are the main products used for the construction of buildings. Banking institutions are sufficient in the area and a potential is there for the industrial growth.⁷⁰

Municipal committee was constituted in 1950 in Narnaul. In 1994 it was made municipal council. It has 23 wards represented by 23 municipal commissioners. Municipal council Narnaul earned an income of Rs 507.71 Lakh during 2006-07 and spent Rs. 711.97 Lakh for the development of town. Day to day city is being modernized and all type of facilities is being arranged by the district administration.

Commercial Banks as on 31 March, 2008 in the district are total 72 in number. Cooperatives Societies are 250 in number in the District⁷⁰ and provide necessary services to the peoples.

Hence the economic condition of the people is not very well due to some natural problem and due to some political problems. People of this area are living a simple life but they are not advance in politics and this is the main reason of their backwardness. Shortage of water and rainfall is second main reason for their backwardness. Industry are very few in this area.

5.5 Administrative Set Up

Mahendergarh District with its head quarter at Narnaul comprises of two sub-divisions, two Tehsils and Five blocks. There are four constituencies in this district which are Ateli, Mahendergarh, Narnaul and Nangal Chaudhry. The structure of the District administration is as follows:-

Sub Division	Tehsil	Sub Tehsil	Blocks	Villages
1. Narnaul	1. Narnaul	1. Nangal	1. Mahendergarh	370 Villages
2. Mahendergarh	2. Mahendergarh	Chaudhary	2. Kanina	
		2. Ateli Nangal	3. Narnaul	
		3. Kanina	4. Ateli	
			5. Nangal Chaudhary	

There are four constituencies in Mahendergarh District as follows:-

1. Mahendergarh
2. Narnaul
3. Ateli
4. Nangal Chaudhary⁷⁰

Narnaul became a class-III Municipality in 1950 and Mahendergarh, Ateli, and Kanina in 1956. With the passage of the Haryana Municipal Act 1973, Kanina, Mahendergarh and Ateli were declared notified areas.⁷⁰ The Zila Parishad at the district level was abolished in 1973. Now again the district has a Zila Parishad in 1977-78 there were 566 Panchayats with 670 SC panchas and 566 women panchas.

There are total 370 villages in district Mahendergarh out of which 221 villages are under administration of Narnaul Tehsil 149 villages are under administration of Mahendergarh Tehsil.⁷⁰ There are total 339 Panchayats out of which 3109 Panch and 339 Sarpanch are elected. There is one Zila Parishad and three municipality council and four market committees are existence in the District.

District at a Glance

Administrative Structure

Deputy Board	2
Tehsil	2
Sub Tehsil	3
Development Section	8
Village	370
Panchayats	344

Area and Population -2011

Area	1938.46 square kilometers
Population	921 680
Men	486 553
Women	435 127
Population in rural areas	-
Population in urban areas	-
The literacy rate in the district	80.8%
Men	89.4%
Women	71.0%

General Information

Deputy Superintendent's Office	2
Police station	7
These must Home	10
Telegraph Office	2
City Council	1
Municipal	3
Market Committee	4
Assembly area	4
Lok Sabha constituency	1

Agriculture

The total cultivable land 158 695 hectares

Area & Populations

Title	Unit	District	Haryana State
Area (2001)	Sq.K.M.	1899	44212
Total Population (2011P)	Thousands	921	25353
Male	Thousands	486	13505
Female	Thousands	435	11848
Rural Population	Thousands	788	16531
Percentage of Urban Population to total Population	Percentage	14.61	34.79
Density	Per Sq.KM	485	573
Literacy rate	Thousand	640	16904
Literacy rates	Percentage	69.49	76.64
Scheduled Caste (2001)	Thousand	133	4091
Percentage (2001)	Percentage	16.31	19.20

District Administration

Title	Unit	District	Haryana State
Sub Division	Nos	2	57
Tehsil	Nos	4	74
Sub Tehsil	Nos	2	44
Development Block	Nos	8	119
Towns(2001)	Nos	5	154
Villages (2001)	Nos	370	6955
Inhabitant Villages	Nos	368	6764

Education (2010-2011)

Title	Unit	District	Haryana State
Colleges	Numbers	58	776
High/Sen.Sec.School	Numbers	245	6771
Middle School	Numbers	152	3439
Primary school (including preprimary)	Numbers	539	13094
Students in recognised schools	Numbers	148975	49.78(Lacs)
Teachers in recognised schools	Numbers	6240	143057

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CHAPTER 6

Political Awareness Among Dalits And Non Dalits In Mahendergarh

6.1 Introduction

In Indian society virtually the higher echelons of power are dominated by the upper castes. Despite the prominence of a few Dalits who have gained high political positions in our country, the political status of Dalits has changed much less than what the individual successes show.

Discrimination on the grounds of caste is morally, legally and democratically wrong. But caste equality can come about only when Dalits make use of the full array of political weapons available to them to achieve it, that is political activity is essential to the struggle for Dalits' liberation.

Political awareness takes several forms and varies in spirit in different countries and in different constituencies within a country. As stated in the introductory chapter, political participation refers to these acts intended to influence the behaviour and actions of political decision makers and it embraces various activities designed to achieve this end.³⁰ It is intended to influence the choice of political leaders and the choice of public policies. The levels of participation are not uniformly distributed throughout the population. Various studies have shown that political participation is directly related to class or income level, educational qualifications, occupational status, caste and religion³⁰. It has also been associated with a variety of other factors.

Lester, W. Milbrath³⁰ (1965), on the basis of a study of recruitment patterns among local party officials in the United States, has suggested four levels of political participation. The first level consists of "Apathetics" who are literally unaware of the political situation around them. They do not even vote or show any interest in voting. Some studies, however, show that non-voting or non-participation arises from many causes and has many different implications for the political system. Non-voting, in fact, may be a participatory act—an act of protest or in effect a negative decision³⁰. An Indian study of 1972 Assembly elections in Bihar has also indicated this aspect of non-voting³⁰. The second level of participation is formed by those who are involved in "spectator activities".

This corresponds to what Angus Campbell has called "the peripheral voters"³⁰ They may have some interest in politics and some knowledge about it but their participation does not go beyond the activities of voting. The third level is composed of those involved in transitional activities which include attending a political meeting, participating in campaign activities or making a contribution to a political party. The final level consists of those who enter the political arena and participate in "gladiatorial activities" such as standing for and holding public and party offices.

Levels of political participation of Indian electorate have been analyzed by Bashiruddin Ahmad³⁰ (1971). He has taken into account the involvement of the electorate in thirteen political activities which ranges from voting to raising money for a party and/or a candidate. On this basis, he has suggested five levels of participation or group voters, viz. Apathetic, Peripherals, Spectators, Auxiliaries and Politists. The first, second and the fifth levels correspond almost exactly to the same levels used by American scholars (Palmer, 1975). The other two levels form the third group "Transitional activities" of Milbrath. According to Ahmad, 'Spectators' are those

who only vote and have interest and information as well as those who vote with moderate level of motivation and engage in some other activity. Auxiliaries embrace those who vote and engage in one or two other activities with medium levels of interest and information. According to his estimate, nearly 12% of Indian electorate are high Polilists. Auxiliaries and high Politists, according to him, are the groups in the electorate to which special attention will have to be given. "It is these two groups constituting about 29% of the electorate, who together shape and influence political outcomes."³⁰

Political participation is a process of growth of citizenship. The main thrust in Dalits' participation is how far they have assumed the role of citizens beyond their traditional roles and to what extent such a role has been legitimized to the political structure. Participation of the Dalits in politics is so much important that social movements, Dalit movements for Dalits' rights started with a demand for equality in caste based structure. The right is considered to be essential in the present-conditions for entering the caste dominated society of political decision making. The right to vote and reservation in political posts provides an individual with an important indirect opportunity to be the ruler of his own fate.

In India, the nationalist movement, social movements, Dalit movements and the Indian Constitution all have a deep influence on Dalits' political participation. The role of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi and Kanshi Ram is worth mentioning in this context. They all put emphasis on bringing Dalits from the caste bondage to active politics.

It is often held that political participation is the index of democracy. The higher the terms of participation, the healthier is the democratic system. Participation is a process which associates

individuals with the political system. In a society where certain groups are traditionally lagging behind the others, where they can be categorized as the weaker section or disadvantaged group wider participation and mobilization at higher levels is necessary for their upliftment and that in turn is healthier for the democratic system.³⁰

Most of the people participate in politics during the election period. But participation through voting is only seasonal and cannot bring out the total significance of political participation.

Participation in between the election period could be much more significant. Although the volume of participation is great in elections, electoral participation is not equal to voting which in addition to voting includes other participation such as attending election meetings, campaigning in the election or collecting funds etc.

The extent of participation has been analyzed here in two parts - in terms of voting participation and in terms of political participation other than voting. Since all acts are but a subset of the same phenomenon, knowing about a person's participation in one activity enables us to assess at least to some extent how far he/she is likely to participate in another activity. Those persons who participate in the most demanding form of participation will probably also participate in the less demanding ways. For example, it may be expected that a person who has taken an active part particularly in campaigning would also cast his/her vote.³⁰

As this chapter attempts to gauge the level of political awareness and political participation of the Dalit respondents numbering 300 from Mahendergarh of Punjab, a number of variables were selected. On the basis of the responses the analysis is given below :

6.2 Level of Political Awareness

(i) Respondents' Interest in Politics

To begin with it is important to know how far the respondents have an interest in politics. Accordingly they were asked to indicate their interest in the political affairs. An effort was made to assess the intensity of political interest of the respondents on the basis of their answers.

Not everybody is interested in politics; the majority of our respondents (61%) expressed that they had no interest in politics. Mostly people get interested in politics only during election times; and lesser number of people take occasional interest apart from elections. In our sample only 39% of the respondents displayed interest in politics.

It may be expected that younger people would have a higher degree of interest in politics. But the researcher has found no uniform pattern of relationship between age and interest in politics. Still it has been noticed in this study that *interest in politics sharply declined from the age group of 60 and above.*

This observation may be interpreted in the light of personal comments of some of the respondents. Some elderly people appeared to have lost their interest in politics possibly due to the fact that they found hardly any resemblance between the professed ideologies and the actual politics of the existing political parties.

But the young people appeared to be more guided by practice than by ideologies and, therefore, they were found to be more interested in politics compared to the aged people. In the context of female respondents the degree of interest was found to be much lower than in the case of the male respondents.

(ii) Knowledge About M.P. and M.L.A. of the Area

To test of the political awareness of respondents they were asked very simple questions. For example, they were asked the names of the candidates in previous Lok Sabha polls, the name of the MP and MLA of their area and their respective party affiliation. It has been observed that only 27.7% of the respondents were well informed on the question of MP, while majority of the respondents did not have any knowledge about this. On the other hand, in case of information about MLA's, majority of the total respondents (71%) were well informed. Only 29 per cent of the respondents did not know the name of their local M.L.A. Similarly, about the BSP candidate of the area, only 32.7 per cent of the overall respondents knew. Thus, it is clear that more respondents knew about the MLA of their area than the M.P. The reasons for this are not far to see; first, the electorate are more directly concerned with the MLA than with MP in terms of development benefits and political patronage. Secondly, the area of an MLA's constituency, is smaller than that of an MP's constituency. The campaigning tends to be concentrated and consequently more intensive in the former than in the latter which in turn accounts for greater knowledge about MLAs than the MPs. Finally, it is normally through the MLAs, that MPs do their campaign, unless of course, a certain candidate for Parliament is so important as his/her umbrella may help the MLA's in their political campaign.³⁰

(iii) Perception Towards Dalit Issues

The Dalit respondents were asked to give their opinion to a basic issue i.e. whether the Dalits should participate actively in politics or not. Interestingly a majority of them (57% overall)

agreed to the idea of participation. Around 20 per cent from both the districts did not think it necessary where as some felt that it depended on the situation. A small percentage did not have any idea. Not much difference was found in the responses from the Mahendergarh. In order to understand the awareness level of the respondents more specifically, they were asked to record their opinion on the question of the Dalits having a separate party. When asked if the Dalits should have a separate party almost all the respondents in both the districts nodded positively. Only a miniscule number felt that there was no need to have any political party separately for them.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is an important player in Indian politics. In addition to having been the ruling party in Uttar Pradesh, it play a crucial role in national politics also. Bahujan Samaj Party claims to be the only political party representing the interests of the Dalits in the state. Regarding the knowledge of the Dalits about the existence of their separate party, it was found that only around 50 per cent of the respondents were aware of it. In Non Dalits, Dalit respondents were better aware of the existence of their separate party than the Dalit respondents from Dalits district. The rest of the respondents did not know anything about the existence of any special political party of the Dalits, which points to their low level of political awareness.

Further it is important to state that all those who knew about the Bahujan Samaj Party as a party of the Dalits, were not found to be satisfied with its working. In fact almost more than two third stated that they were dissatisfied with the working of the so called Dalit party. Only a few respondents were satisfied with its working.

(iv) Voting as an outcome variable of increased political awareness

The first question that faces a citizen at the time of an election is whether he should exercise his franchise or not. For many individuals the act of casting his/her vote is the only

important occasion for political activity. The act of voting may bring to some people satisfaction in the sense that through voting they feel to be part of the political system, and think that their contribution to the system is of vital importance. Many people regard voting to be so important that they would not dream of staying away from the polling stations. There are some people who have no such strong feelings about voting. Their decision could be tilted this way or that way by some minor factors. Many people vote merely because their friends, relatives and family members also exercise their franchise that is, primarily as an imitative activity. Again there are some who think that the time spent at the polling station is sheer wastage.³⁰

The majority of the respondents cast their vote in the last elections. This indicates the respondents' enthusiasm for voting. Only 12 per cent respondents did not cast their vote. Some of the reasons reported by the respondents behind not casting their vote were apathy towards voting and being busy in their other jobs.

In order to know what does the voter have in mind while casting the vote the respondents were asked to recall what they had uppermost in their mind while voting : Party, candidate, caste or religion. The responses are tabulated below.

On the basis of data it seems that 70 out of three hundred (26.5%) respondents had the candidate in mind while voting. Only a small percentage of them i.e. 6.1 percent and 4.9 percent kept the caste and religion in mind respectively. But the large majority of the respondents (62.5%) had the party in mind. This is inevitable because the voters are trained that way. The propaganda is conducted in terms of party more than in term of candidate and religion or caste. It is also convenient for the voters. The voters take less time to find out the symbol of a party at the time of polling. To find out the name is also difficult for many because of illiteracy. But the symbols of parties are prominently printed on the ballot paper and during electioneering the

campaigners make efforts to bring home to the respondents' mind the symbol of the party rather than any other thing.

In studies on political behaviour in India, it has been observed that high status people play an important role in shaping the political attitude of Dalits. Impact on a person during and on the day of voting is necessary to identify.

Upper caste influence on Dalits' voting behaviour is evident from the table given above. 26.5 per cent respondents admitted that they voted as per the wishes of higher castes. 37.1 per cent respondents reportedly cast their vote according to their family wishes. The family head enjoys a high status and exerts a dominant influence on the family. The family head guides the political behaviour of the members. Mostly women are under this category. It has been noted that for married women, the important influential males are their husbands, while for single women, fathers play important role in opinion change.³⁰ It is interesting to note that, in principle, most of the respondents agreed with the proposition that the right to vote should be exercised by Dalits in absolute freedom, but in practice most of respondents admitted that Dalits are influenced mostly by the upper caste members or by their own family members. This gap between professed ideal and actual belief is a great obstacle to the participation of the Dalits in politics.

Though election results are keenly watched and discussed by the people in general but out of our sample only 31.7 per cent of the respondents reported to have shown interest in election results and the rest of the respondents i.e. 68.3 per cent stated that they had no interest in such results.

As stated earlier, though voting is the most viable form of participation there are other important forms of participation as well. It is essential to find out the participation of Dalits in

other political fields because voting turn out alone cannot explore the effective and genuine participation of Dalits as a whole. So, an attempt has been made to examine Dalits' political participation in other fields of the political structure in addition to voting. In order to examine the participation of the respondents in political fields other than voting, they were asked whether they had participated in the election campaign, contested any election, discussed politics, attended political meetings etc. Here, only the actual voters have been taken into consideration that is those who did not exercise their vote have been excluded. It must be kept in mind that the number of respondents who did not vote is extremely small. One may point out in this context that giving election funds is normally done by the influential party elite or the core supporters of an independent candidate and normally the ordinary elector is not involved in this work. This is reflected in Table no. 6.16 & 6.17 as only 28.8% of the active participants answered in affirmative as far as contributing to election funds was concerned. Majority of them did not contribute financially. The percentage of respondents contributing funds for party/candidate is almost the same in both the districts. In fact, many of them were involved in the collection of fund. The Table shows that in both the districts nearly fifty percent of these respondents (80) were involved in raising funds for the party/candidate in both the districts.

(v) Interest in Election Meetings as an outcome variable of political awareness

Election meetings are one of the important modes for approaching the electorate collectively. This is used to inform the electorate about the party, its programme and symbol, as also for introducing the candidates to the electorate. This is also important because it gives an opportunity to the candidate and the party to demonstrate to the rival candidates their strength and the support that they command. It is for this reason that efforts are made to mobilize large

number of people to attend a public meeting. Here again two activities are involved as far as participation in election meeting is concerned. One is that the persons are only attending an election meeting and second is that he or she not only attends the meeting but also plays a role in organizing the election meeting.

When the 80 respondents were questioned regarding participation in election meetings they were almost equally divided with a slightly more percentage of those not participating. The overall percentage being 47.3 of those who participated. The percentage of those participating in election meetings was slightly lower in Dalits but Non Dalits compensated for the lower percentage in Dalits. The corresponding percentage for Non Dalits and Dalits was 51.2 and 43.2 respectively.

Regarding the preparation of election meetings, the majority of the respondents did not take active part. However, around 35 to 37% of the active respondents claimed to be involved in organizing the election meetings.

6.3 Mass Media and its impact on Political Awareness

Apart from studying the problem of political participation an effort was made to assess the influence of different communication modes on the minds of the respondents. In fact, the communication media (both print and electronic) in the past two decades has gained tremendous significance in influencing the attitudinal pattern of the individuals throughout the world.

Beginning with newspapers, films and radio, then with television and presently with satellites and other sophisticated delivery systems, modern communication system has been thrust in to

almost every corner of the world.³⁰ Lerner regards the developments of the mass media as the key in a society's march from a state of traditionalism to that of modernity. ³⁰ It may be expected that a rise in media exposure would be accompanied by a corresponding impact on the attitudinal pattern of the respondents.

i. Interest in Political News:

Three questions regarding political news were - whether they were interested in political news or not, second, what was the source of collecting the news and third, did they discuss the political issues with others. As far as the responses to the query about interest in political news is concerned the table 6.23 reveals that out of total respondents 47 per cent were found to have a high degree of interest in political news whereas 26 per cent were having a moderate interest in this type of news. As many as 26 per cent were found to be totally uninterested in political news. In identifying the source of political news, the respondents gave a variety of answers which is tabulated ahead.

An overall majority of the respondents were dependent on Television and Radio (39.6 and 38.9%) for getting political news. 20% of the respondents were found to be more interested in reading newspapers. 9% of the respondents gathered the news from party members whereas a few (just 3%) stated to be knowing it from party magazine.

ii. Discussion of Political Issues

Conversation is a good pastime of people in India, more so in the rural area. In rural areas gossip and conversation, that is, person to person or face to face dialogue is a very common pattern of communication of ideas, news, information, knowledge, and opinion. Political discussions have a

place of their own in a democracy. Besides, the family, there are friends and community members with whom a voter might discuss the elections. These groups might determine the political attitudes and influence voting decisions, because the individual look to them for guidance. If the responses to the question about discussing political matters with their friends and family members are analysed, the data reveals that only 26.7% of the overall respondents answered in positive. 33.3 per cent of the respondents indulged in political discussions only on special occasions. 40 per cent of the total respondents did not take part in political discussions with the family members or with the other members of the community. Thus it may be inferred that a substantial number of Dalits in the Mahendergarh avoided indulging in political discussions. The corresponding figure of those taking part in political discussions in case of Dalits and Non Dalits are 23.3 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. 34.7 per cent in Dalits and 32 per cent in Non Dalits come in the category of those discussing political issues only on special occasions. These special occasions usually are the times of elections.

iii Party Membership/Preference of Party or Leaders

Political participation takes place at different forms and levels. Voting, as stated earlier, is the most explicit mode of this which is undertaken by all or most of the citizens. However, party membership could be taken as indicative of active participation in politics.³⁰ The membership of all the parties, in India, is more or less liberally granted. Such membership demands merely the payment of a small annual subscription and a written acceptance of the principles of the party concerned. Under the existing rules, government servants and servants of semi governmental organizations are prohibited from becoming members of political parties.³⁰

Regarding the question of membership of any political party, only 37 out of the total 150 respondents from Dalits responded in positive which comes out to be only 24.70 per cent and the rest of the respondents (113) were not having membership of any political party. The corresponding figures for Non Dalits were 47 (31.3%) and 103 (68.7%) respectively. At aggregate level of the Mahendergarh, only 28 per cent respondents were found to be having political membership, whereas the majority (72%) of the respondents did not have membership of any political party. When the respondents having party membership were further asked about holding any party office, it was found that in Dalits district, only one person was secretary of Party at the block level. In Non Dalits district out of the 47 party holders, one was found to be holding the office of secretary of CPM at district level and another was President of CPM at block level. To further probe the interest and level of their involvement the respondents were asked to pick their favourite politician out of a list of some prominent political leaders of state. They were also asked to name the party which addressed the Dalit issues.

iv Perceptions towards Governance

An effort was made to find out the respondents' capability to understand the politics and complications of governance. More than 80 percent of respondents, admitted that government and its working was so complicated that they could not understand what was going on. More respondents (83.3%) in Dalits stated this as compared to respondents (80%) in Non Dalits. The slight edge of those who understood working of the government in the Non Dalits is indicative of the fact that the respondents in Non Dalits were slightly better aware. Because majority of the

respondents did not understand the intricacies of governance, they were not able to talk about the policies or programmes launched by government. However they still had some opinion about the overall working of the government. As a common man is affected on the day to day basis by the services provided by the government and expects a lot from it, the collective opinion of the public is of great importance in a democracy.

The stability and continuation of any government depends on the response and support it gets from the public, the opinion of the respondents was collected regarding the functioning of the government of the day. When the respondents were asked about the working of government 36.3% found it to be bad as there was a lot of corruption in the administration and the pace of development of the Punjab was low. 26 percent respondents reported the working of government to be good. However, a substantial percentage (37.7%) of respondents did not give their opinion because of lack of awareness. Here also there was not much difference in the perception of respondents from the Mahendergarh. When the respondents were asked a straight question regarding the impact of public opinion on government, 64 (21.3%) of the 300 respondents agreed that it had an impact on the government while 130 (43.3%) did not agree with the idea. The rest of the respondents 106 (35.3%) remained neutral. Comparing the respondents of the Mahendergarh, Dalits had a slight edge over Non Dalits in considering public opinion as a factor impacting government.

Thus in the present chapter an effort has been made to understand and probe the level of political participation of the Dalits in Mahendergarh of Punjab, as it is very important that the Dalits, who constitute a marginalized and oppressed section of Indian society participate actively in the political arena. Through the ages, oppressed people in different parts of the world have

fought for their right to participation in the political process. Participation helps the individual to be effective and it associates him with the political system.

By exercising this right an individual feels that he/she has become the master not only of his/her own fate but also of the fate of his/her fellow beings. The higher the rate and level of political participation, the more varied are its forms and the healthier is the democratic system, particularly in a society where certain groups are traditionally behind the others. Our data shows that the interest in politics varies with man's earning capacity. The poor people do not (perhaps cannot afford to) take continuous interest in politics. They are largely apolitical. The well-to-do people are somewhat more interested in politics: indeed a sizeable percentage of them take continuous interest in politics. This is quite understandable. The poor people have to worry more about their immediate needs. They are also uneducated and therefore do not understand the processes of democratic politics. However as far as voting is concerned those who are at the lower level of the society-whether class-wise or caste wise - the majority turns out to vote. In our sample also the majority of the respondents cast their votes though they exercised their right on the advice of family members and influential persons of higher castes. Very few of them exercised their voting right according to their own choice. Most of them were guided by the dictates of the powerful sections of the society. Another similar question as to what they had uppermost in their mind while voting. The large majority of the respondents had the party in mind. This is inevitable because the voters are trained that way. Here it is important to point out that it is so not because they understand the ideology or performance of the party but because they are persuaded to do so. In fact they are made to remember the party symbol. It is on the basis of such training that they exercise the voting right.

Turning to the participation in political activities other than voting, it has to be noted once again that though most of the respondents voted but they did not take an active part in politics.

The low-level of political participation was indicated by the small number of respondents' participation in election campaign and other election activities. The non-response of the Dalit respondents to many questions was indicative of their low level of political knowledge. It has been observed that only a small number of respondents had knowledge about the political parties and knew the names of the MPs and MLAs of their area. It is further observed that majority of the respondents did not understand the government's working and the policies and programmes of the government.

Today Dalits are present almost in all political parties but only as members. The higher positions are captured by the dominant classes in all parties (except the BSP). We found only 3 Dalit respondents out of our total sample of 300 from Mahendergarh holding party offices that also at the block-level. It has been observed that the Congress party and its leaders occupied a pre-eminent position in the minds of the Dalit respondents. The rest of the political parties or their leaders were not considered to be protecting the interests of Dalits. Thus on the whole it may be concluded that though the Dalits have been provided with constitutional safeguards and reservations, the common Dalit masses in Punjab are still not making complete use of the opportunities. Only an elite section of the Dalits is reaping the harvest. The poor, marginalized simple Dalit population still has not become politically aware and active.

They do turn up of in large numbers for voting but lag behind in other activities of political participation.

Table 1: Respondents Interest in Poltics			
Interest in Politics	No. of respondents (Dalits)	No. of respondents (Non Dalits)	Total
Yes	63 (42.0)	54 (36.0)	117 (39.0)
No	87 (58.0)	96 (64.0)	183 (61.0)
Total	150 (100.0)	150 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 2: Knowledge of the name or Party of MLA of the Area			
Knowledge of the name or party of MLA	No. of respondents (Dalits)	No. of respondents (Non Dalits)	Total
Yes	93 (62.0)	120 (36.0)	213 (71.0)
No	57 (38.0)	30 (20.0)	87 (29.0)
Total	150 (100.0)	150 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table3 : Knowledge of the name or Party of MP of the Area			
Knowledge of the name or party of MLA	No. of respondents (Dalits)	No. of respondents (Non Dalits)	Total
Yes	34 (22.7)	49 (32.7)	83(27.7)
No	116 (77.3)	101 (67.3)	217 (72.3)
Total	150 (100.0)	150 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 4: Knowledge of the name of BSP Candidate of the Area			
Knowledge of the name or party of MLA	No. of respondents (Dalits)	No. of respondents (Non Dalits)	Total
Yes	83 (55.5)	15 (10.0)	98 (32.7)
No	67 (44.7)	135 (90.0)	202 (67.3)
Total	150 (100.0)	150 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Table 5: Participation of Dalits and Non Dalits in Politics			
Should Participate	No. of respondents (Dalits)	No. of respondents (Non Dalits)	Total
Yes	83 (55.3)	88 (58.7)	171 (57.0)
No	31(20.7)	25 (16.7)	56 (18.7)
Depends on political situation	23 (15.3)	28 (18.7)	51 (17.0)
No idea	13 (8.7)	9 (6.0)	22 (7.3)
Total	150 (100.0)	150 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Type of Political Participation	No. of respondents (Dalits)	No. of respondents (Non Dalits)	Total
Only voting	135 (90.0)	129 (86.0)	264 (88.0)
Campaign	43 (28.7)	37 (24.7)	80 (26.7)
Contesting elections	21 (14.0)	18 (12.0)	39 (13.0)
No participation	4 (2.7)	3 (2.0)	7 (2.3)
Total	150 (100.0)	150 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Voted	No. of respondents (Dalits)	No. of respondents (Non Dalits)	Total
Yes	135 (90.0)	129 (86.0)	264 (88.0)
No	15 (10.0)	21 (14.0)	36 (12.0)
Total	150 (100.0)	150 (100.0)	300 (100.0)

Should Participate	No. of respondents (Dalits)	No. of respondents (Non Dalits)	Total
Party	86 (63.7)	79 (61.2)	165 (62.5)
Candidates	9 (6.7)	35 (27.1)	70 (26.5)
Caste	35 (25.9)	7 (5.4)	16 (6.1)
Religion	5 (3.7)	8 (6.2)	13 (4.9)
Total	135(100.0)	129(100.0)	264 (100.0)

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Chapter 7

ANOVA BASED Analysis of Data: Political Awareness among Dalits and Non Dalits in Mahendergarh

7.1 Introduction

Primary data has been generated from the respondents viz. the *dalits* in Mahendergarh town, through an interview schedule (enclosed as Annexure-1). Three geographical areas having predominant *dalit* population were identified in the town. Thereafter, a total of 120 households – 40 households from each of the three identified wards – were selected through random sampling technique. The Interview Schedule was administered to the person from the selected household available at the time of the visit of the researcher. However, it was ensured that half of the respondents from each of the wards were Dalit.

The interview schedule contained 25 items and each item had 4 sub-items. Each sub-item was assigned one score and thus each item was assigned 4 scores. The score of each item ranged between zero to four depending upon the number of correct responses. And thus the total score of 25 items contained in the interview schedule ranged between zero to 100. The score obtained by each of 120 respondents was calculated accordingly and their level of political awareness was determined on the basis of this five-fold categorization:

No.	Scores Earned	Level of Political Awareness
1.	1 to 20	Poor
2.	21 to 40	Low
3.	41 to 60	Average
4.	61 to 80	High
5.	81 to 100	Very High

Data so generated has been analysed on the basis of a three-fold classification of the respondents. The data has been classified on the basis of age of respondents, their level of education and their level of income. On the basis of their age, the respondents have been divided into five categories. Classification of the age group and the number of respondents belonging to the respective age groups is given in following table:

Sr. No.	Age in Years	Age group	Non Dalit	Dalit	Total
1.	Below 25	Young	19	15	34
2.	26 to 35	Lower Middle	14	13	27
3.	36 to 50	Upper Middle	13	14	27
4.	51 to 65	Old	11	14	25
5.	65 above	Advanced	3	4	7
Total			60	60	120

On the basis of their level of education also, the respondents have been divided into five categories. Classification on the basis of level of education and the number of respondents belonging to the respective level of education groups is given in following table:

No.	Classification on Education Basis	Non Dalit	Dalit	Total
1.	Illiterate	10	26	36
2.	Primary	10	5	15
3.	Matriculation	30	21	51
4.	Graduation	7	5	12
5.	Higher Education	3	3	6
Total		60	60	120

Similarly, on the basis of their level of income, the respondents have been divided into five categories. Classification on the basis of level of income and the number of respondents belonging to the respective level of income groups is given in following table:

No.	Annual Income	Classification on Income Basis	Non Dalit	Dalit	Total
1.	Below 50000	Poor	38	28	66
2.	50001 to 100000	Lower Middle	12	14	26
3.	100001 to 150000	Middle	4	10	14
4.	150001 to 200000	Upper Middle	3	3	6

5.	Above 200000	High	3	5	8
Total			60	60	120

7.2 ANOVA Based Analysis

In the present section, the primary data generated by the researcher himself has been analysed on the basis of one-way ANOVA. ANOVA is a tool for comparing the differences in means between various groups. There are three versions of ANOVA – one-way ANOVA, two-way ANOVA and n-way ANOVA. Since in the present study we have to ascertain whether Level of Political Awareness and the scores of respondents vis-à-vis their Age/ Level of Education/ Level of Income are individually “statistically different”, therefore, one-way ANOVA has been used. Results of ANOVA test are shown and analysed in the present section.

ANOVA Based Analysis of Political Awareness of Dalits and NON Dalits vis-à-vis their Age

The results of ANOVA analysis of political awareness of the dalits vis-à-vis their age are shown in Table-1 and analyzed thereafter.

Table 1 : Political Awareness among Dalits vis-à-vis their Age

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Mean	F-Ratio	Level of Significance
Young	34	49.24	10.23	Significant at 0.01 level
Lower Middle	27	52.56		
Upper Middle	27	54.89		
Old	25	40.36		
Advanced	7	38		

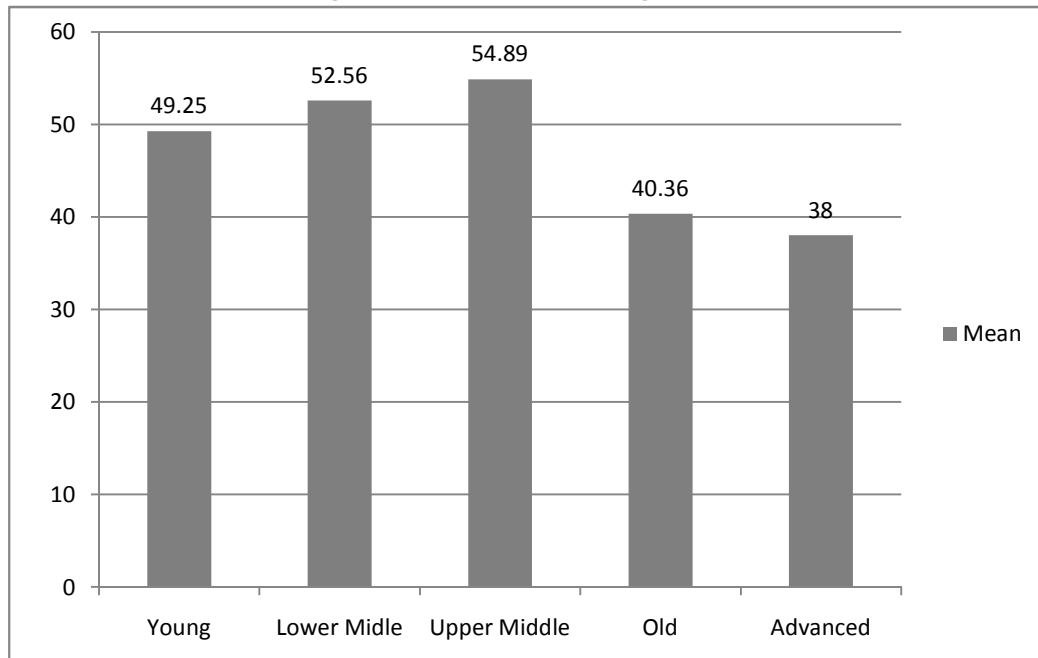
Table value of F-stastic corresponding to 4, 115 degrees of freedom and at 0.01 level of significance is 3.47. The calculated F-Ratio is 10.23 which is much greater than the table value 3.47 at 0.01 level of significance.

Therefore, the null hypothesis viz. “There exist significant difference in the level of political awareness among the *dalits* of Mahendergarh town vis-à-vis their age” is rejected. It reveals that there exists significant difference in the level of political awareness of the *dalits* vis-à-vis their age. It indicates that the *dalits* of different age groups are different from one another in respect of their level of political awareness.

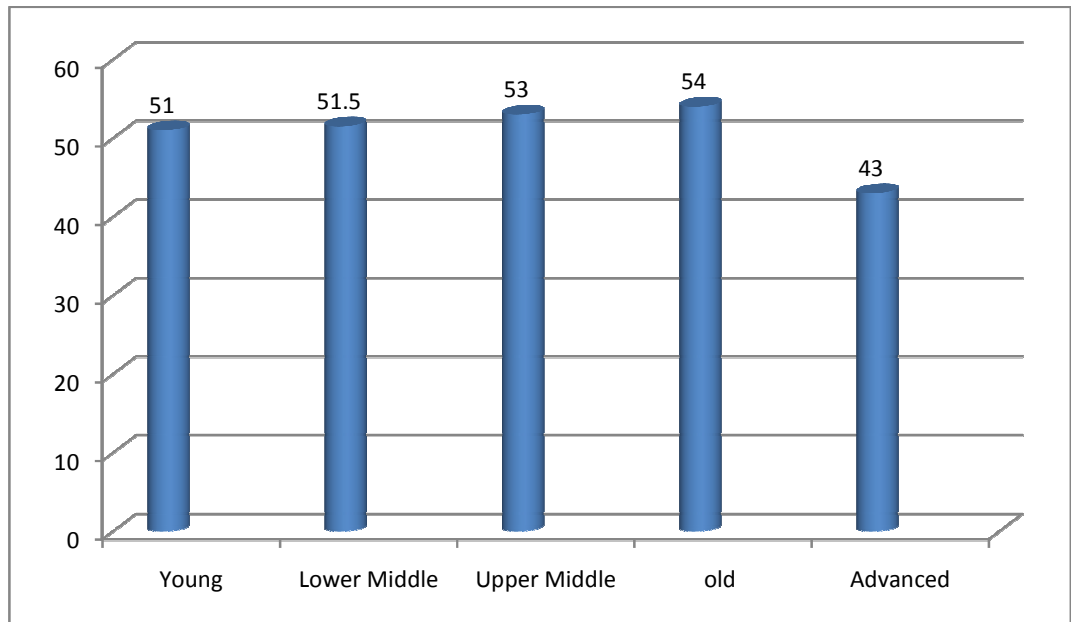
The mean scores of the different age groups of the *dalits* of Mahendergarhtown are shown with Figure-1.

Figure 1

Political Awareness among Dalits vis-à-vis their Age



Political Awareness among NON Dalits vis-à-vis their Age



The Mean scores of the political awareness of Dalits in respect to their age group such as Young, Lower Middle, Upper Middle, Old and Advanced are 49.24, 52.56, 54.89, 40.36 and 38 respectively. Among these age groups the Dalits of Upper Middle age group have comparatively high level of Political Awareness possessing the Mean score of 54.89. The level of political awareness of the Dalits of Lower Middle age group is better than all the other age groups except the Dalits of Upper Middle age groups. Among the Dalits of different age group, Young group Dalits possessing the Mean score of 49.24 are moderate in respect to their Political awareness. From the Mean score given Table-1, it can be concluded that Dalits of Old and Advanced age group has low level of Political awareness as compared to Dalits of other age groups.

ANOVA Based Analysis of Political Awareness of Dalits and NON Dalits vis-à-vis their Level of Education

The results of ANOVA analysis of political awareness of the *dalits* vis-à-vis their level of education are shown in Table-2 and analyzed thereafter.

Table 2 : Political Awareness among Dalitsvis-a-vis their Level of Education

Education Group	Number of Respondents	Mean	F-ratio	Level of Significance
Illiterate	36	27.05	25.24	Significant at 0.01 level
Primary	15	44.40		
Matric	51	58.15		
Graduate	12	65.25		
Higher Education	6	78.16		

Table value of F-stastic corresponding to 4, 115 degrees of freedom and at 0.01 level of significance is 3.47. The calculated F-Ratio is 25.24 which is much greater than the table value 3.47 at 0.01 level of significance.

Therefore, the null hypothesis viz. “There exist significant difference in the level of political awareness among the *dalits* of Mahendergarh town vis-à-vis their level of education” is rejected. It indicates that there exists significant difference among the level of political awareness of the *dalits* vis-à-vis there level of education. The above data reveals that the *dalits* belonging to different levels of education are dissimilar from one another in respect of their level political awareness.

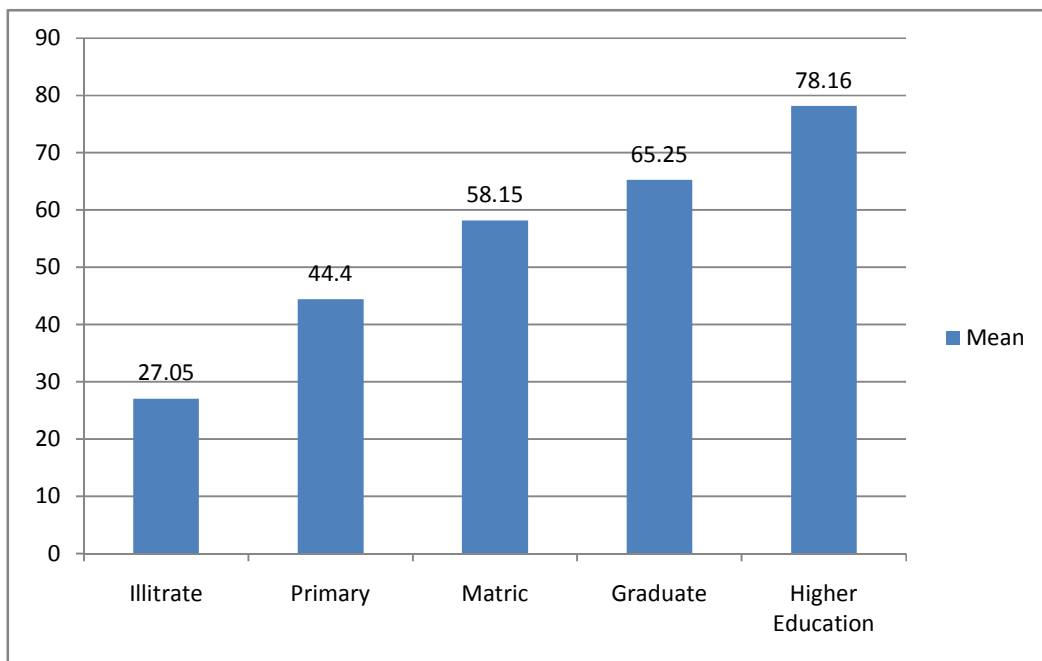
The mean scores of the different level of education groups of the *dalits* of Mahendergarh town are shown with Figure-2.

Table-2 also depicts the Mean scores of political awareness of *dalits* vis-à-vis their level of education. The mean score given on the table and corresponding diagram envisages that higher the level of education among the *dalits* better they are in their level of political awareness. According to the table the mean score of illiterate group is

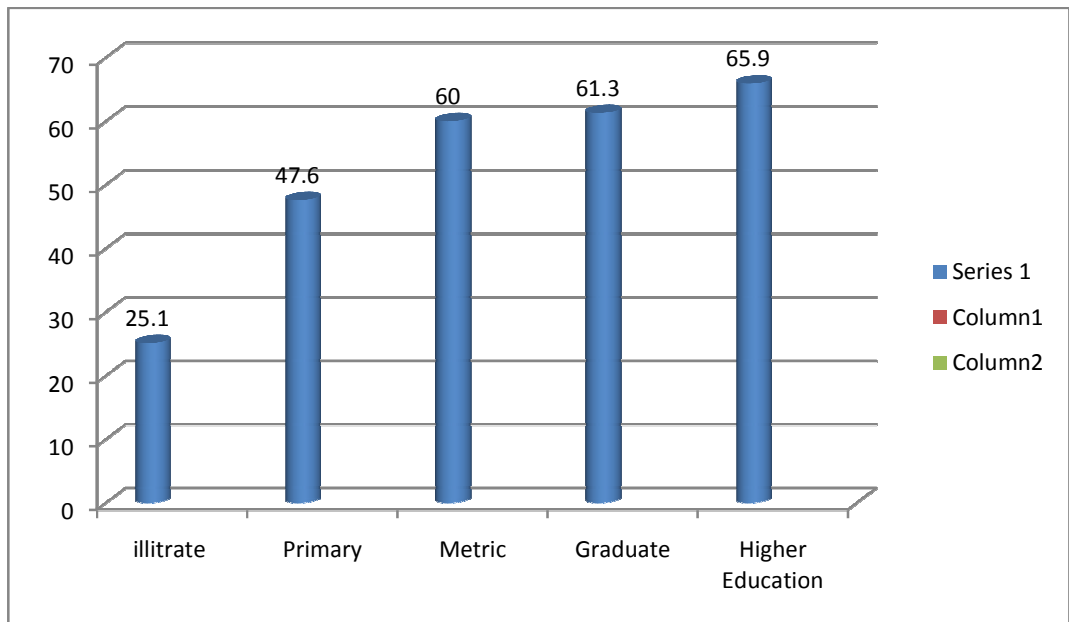
27.05 which is low level at the political awareness than all the other education groups. The mean score of political awareness of the graduate educated group is high than all other education group but it does not lead the Higher educated group which has 78.16 mean score and possess very high level of political awareness than all the other educated groups.

Figure 2

Political Awareness among Dalits vis-à-vis their Level of Education



Political Awareness among NON Dalits vis-à-vis their Level of Education



This table indicates that the mean score of metric educated group is 58.15 which shows that this educated group possess high political awareness than illiterate and primary educated group. The mean score of primary educated group is 44.40 which is at the fourth level of political awareness among these educated groups. Hence there is a significant difference between the levels of political awareness among different educated groups.

ANOVA Based Analysis of Political Awareness of Dalits and Non Dalits vis-à-vis their Level of Income

The results of ANOVA analysis of political awareness of the *dalits* vis-à-vis their level of income are shown in Table-3 and analyzed thereafter.

Table-3 indicates that the table value of F-stastic corresponding to 4, 115 degrees of freedom and at 0.01 level of significance is 3.47. It is also clear from the

table that the calculated F-Ratio is 13.18 which are much greater than the table value 3.47 at 0.01 level of significance.

Table 3

Political Awareness among Dalits vis-à-vis their level of Income

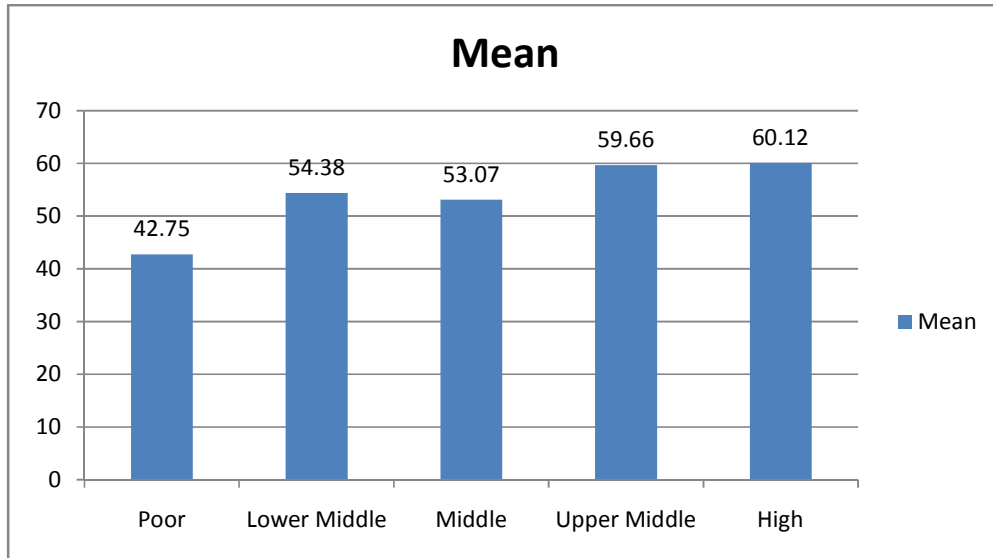
Income Group	Number of Respondents	Mean	F-ratio	Level of Significance
Poor	66	42.75	13.18	Significant at 0.01 level
Lower Middle	26	54.38		
Middle	14	53.07		
Upper Middle	6	59.66		
High	8	60.12		

Therefore, the null hypothesis viz. “There exist significant difference in the level of political awareness among the *dalits* of Mahendergarh town vis-à-vis their level of income” is rejected. It reveals that there exists significant difference among the level of political awareness of dalits vis-à-vis their level of income. The above data reveals that the *dalits* belonging to different levels of income are dissimilar from one another in respect of their level political awareness.

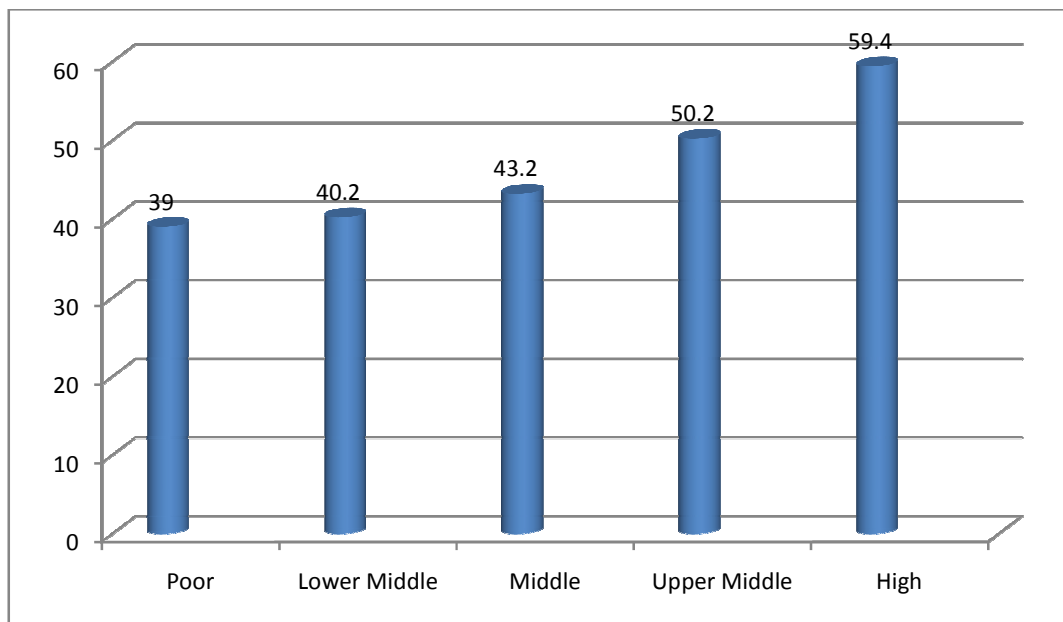
The mean scores of the different level of income groups of the *dalits* of Mahendergarh town are shown with Figure-2.

Figure-3

Political Awareness among Dalits vis-à-vis their level of Income



Political Awareness among Non Dalits vis-à-vis their level of Income



The level of political awareness of Dalits is highlighted in Mean scores according to their level of income in the Table 3. The mean scores of level of political awareness of Poor, Lower Middle, Middle, Upper Middle, High Income groups are 42.75, 54.38, 53.07, 59.66 and 60.12 respectively. The mean score of Lower Middle Income group is 54.38 and possess a moderate level in respect of the political awareness among these Income groups. The mean score of Upper Middle income group is 59.66 and it shows that the level of political awareness of this group is High than other Income groups except the level of political awareness of the High Income group. The level of political awareness of High Income group according to this graph is high than all the other income groups which have 60.12 mean score. The level of political awareness of Middle Income group is high than the Poor Income group which is at the low level of the political awareness than all the other Income groups.

7.3 Detailed Analysis

With the help of ANOVA we can ascertain how two or more groups are related but it does not facilitate detailed analysis of data within the respective groups. For this purpose, the researcher has adopted the tabular and percentage method and the data on that basis has been analysed in detail in the present section.

Level of Political Awareness vis-à-vis Age of Respondents

Age is an important determinant of an individual's personality. With the advancement of age, an individual attains maturity. Also, with the advancement of age, we learn a considerable deal and thus, even if illiterate, level of our awareness is likely to increase. Therefore, the researcher tried to ascertain whether level of political

awareness of the respondents is related with their age. The data arranged in these terms is presented in Table-4 and analyzed in this section.

Table-4 shows that on the basis of Age of respondents, 8.33 per cent of the total respondents possess Very High Level of Political Awareness and all these are Non Dalit respondents. 50 per cent of them belong to Lower Middle Age Group, 20 per cent each belong to Young and Old Age Groups, and the remaining 10 per cent belong to Upper Middle Age Group. None of the respondents belonging to Advanced Age Group possess Very High Level of Political Awareness.

Table-4: Political Awareness Among Dalits vis-à-vis Their Age

N=120

Age Group	Level of Awareness											
	Very High		High		Average		Low		Poor		Total	
	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit
Young	2 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	7 (23.33)	2 (40.00)	5 (55.56)	7 (33.33)	3 (33.34)	4 (23.52)	2 (100)	2 (11.77)	19 (31.68)	15 (25.00)
Lower Middle	5 (50.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (13.33)	1 (20.00)	3 (33.33)	6 (28.58)	2 (22.22)	2 (11.77)	0 (0.00)	4 (23.52)	14 (23.33)	13 (21.67)
Upper Middle	1 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	11 (36.67)	2 (40.00)	1 (11.11)	5 (23.80)	0 (0.00)	6 (35.29)	0 (0.00)	1 (5.89)	13 (21.66)	14 (23.33)
Old	2 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	6 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (14.29)	3 (33.33)	3 (17.64)	0 (0.00)	8 (47.05)	11 (18.33)	14 (23.33)
Advanced	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (6.67)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (11.11)	2 (11.78)	0 (0.00)	2 (11.77)	3 (5.00)	4 (6.67)
Total	10 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	30 (85.71)	5 (14.29)	9 (30.00)	21 (70.00)	9 (34.61)	17 (65.39)	2 (10.52)	17 (89.48)	60 (50.00)	60 (50.00)
Grand Total	10 (8.33)		35 (29.17)		30 (25.00)		26 (21.67)		19 (15.83)		120 (100.000)	

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

The table also exhibits that on the basis of age of the respondents, 29.17 per cent of the total respondents have High Level of Political Awareness and of these, 85.71 per cent are the Non Dalits. Amongst the Non Dalits, 23.33 per cent are from Young Age Group, 13.33 per cent are from Lower Middle Age Group, 36.67 per cent belong to Upper Middle Age Group while 20 per cent belong to Old Age Group and the remaining 6.67 per cent hail from Advanced Age Group. Amongst 14.29 per cent Dalit respondents who have High Level of Political Awareness, 40 per cent each belong to Young and Upper Middle Age Groups whereas the remaining 20 per cent hail from Lower Middle Age Group. None of the Dalits from Old and Advanced Age Groups possess High Level of Political Awareness.

It is also obvious from the table that on the basis of age of respondents, 25 per cent respondents have Average Level of Political Awareness and of them 30 per cent are Non Dalits and 70 per cent are Dalits. Amongst the Non Dalits, 55.56 per cent belong to Young Age Group, 33.33 per cent belong to Lower Middle Age Group whereas 11.11 per cent belong to the Upper Middle Age Group. Amongst the Dalits who have Average Level of Political Awareness, 33.33 per cent belong to Young Age Group, 28.58 per cent belong to Lower Middle Age Group whereas 23.80 per cent are from Upper Middle Age Group and the remaining 14.29 belong to the Old Age Group, but no Dalit of Advanced Age Group possesses Average Level of Political Awareness.

The table also shows that on the basis of age of the respondents, 21.67 per cent respondents have Low Level of Political Awareness and out of them, 34.61 per cent are Non Dalits and 65.39 per cent are Dalits. Amongst the Non Dalits 33.33 per cent belong to Old Age Group, 11.11 per cent belong to Advanced Age Group and 33.34 per cent are from Young Age Group. The remaining 22.22 per cent Non Dalits belong to Lower Middle Age Group. No Non Dalit from Upper Middle Age Group possess Low

Level of Political Awareness. Amongst the Dalits possessing Low Level of Political Awareness, 35.29 per cent are from Upper Middle Age Group, 11.77 per cent belong to Lower Middle Age Group, and 23.52 per cent hail from Young Age Group whereas 17.64 per cent and 11.78 per cent of them belong to Old and Advanced Age Groups, respectively.

The table also exhibits that 15.83 per cent of the total respondents have Poor Level of Political Awareness and 10.52 per cent of them are Non Dalits and 89.48 per cent are Dalits. All the Non Dalit respondents who possess Poor Level of Political Awareness belong to the Young age group. Dalits possessing Poor Level of Political Awareness include 47.05 per cent from the Old Age Group, 23.52 per cent from the Lower Middle Age Group, 11.77 per cent each from the Young and Advanced Age Groups, while only 5.89 per cent of them belong to Upper Middle Age Group.

Level of Political Awareness vis-à-vis Level of Education of Respondents

Education is an important factor that determines the level of awareness of an individual. An educated person also starts viewing the phenomena critically. Education broadens our horizon and we become aware about the environment be it social, cultural, political, economic. And the level of awareness increases with the increase in the level of our education. Therefore, the researcher tried to analyse the level of political awareness of the respondents on the basis of their level of education also. The responses obtained are shown in Table-5 below and analysed in this section.

Table 5 highlights the level of awareness of total respondents according to their level of Education. This table indicates that out of the total respondents, 8.33 per cent respondents, all of whom are Non Dalits, possess Very High Level of Political Awareness. 40 per cent of these respondents are educated up to Matriculation Level, 30 per cent are educated up to Graduation Level and the remaining 30 per cent belong to

the Higher Education Level. No respondent from Illiterate category and educated up to Primary Level possesses Very High Level of Political Awareness. Also no Dalit possess Very High Level of Political Awareness.

This table also shows that on the basis of level of education, 29.17 per cent respondents have High Level of Political Awareness and out of these respondents 85.71 per cent are Non Dalits and 14.29 per cent are Dalits. Amongst those Non Dalit respondents who possess High Level of Political Awareness, 13.33 per cent are educated up to Graduation Level, 66.67 per cent respondents are educated up to Matriculation Level, 10 per cent respondents are Illiterate and another 10 per cent are educated up to Primary Level. Amongst the 14.29 per cent Dalits who possess High Level of Political Awareness, 80 per cent are educated up to Matriculation Level and the remaining 20 per cent have got Higher Education.

On the basis of level of education of the respondents, 25 per cent respondents possess the Average Level of Political Awareness and out of these respondents 70 per cent are Dalits and 30 per cent are Non Dalits. Amongst the Non Dalit respondents, 11.11 per cent are Illiterate, 33.33 per cent are educated up to Primary Level and the remaining 55.56 per cent are educated up to Matriculation Level. Amongst the 70 per cent Dalit.

Table-5: Political Awareness Among Dalits vis-à-vis Their Level of Education

N=120

Level of Education	Level of Awareness											
	Very High		High		Average		Low		Poor		Total	
	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit
Illiterate	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (11.11)	3 (14.29)	5 (55.56)	8 (47.06)	1 (50.00)	15 (88.24)	10 (16.67)	26 (43.34)
Primary	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (33.33)	1 (4.77)	3 (33.33)	3 (17.65)	1 (50.00)	1 (5.88)	10 (16.67)	5 (8.33)
Metric	4 (40.00)	0 (0.00)	20 (66.67)	4 (80.00)	5 (55.56)	10 (47.62)	1 (11.11)	6 (35.29)	0 (0.00)	1 (5.88)	30 (50.00)	21 (35.00)
Graduate	3 (30.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (13.33)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	5 (23.80)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	7 (11.66)	5 (8.33)
Higher Education	3 (30.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (9.52)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (5.00)	3 (5.00)
Total	10 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	30 (85.71)	5 (14.29)	9 (30.00)	21 (70.00)	9 (34.62)	17 (65.38)	2 (10.53)	17 (89.47)	60 (50.00)	60 (50.00)
Grand Total	10 (8.33)		35 (29.17)		30 (25.00)		26 (21.67)		19 (15.83)		120 (100.00)	

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

respondents who have Average Level of Political Awareness, 14.29 per cent are Illiterate, 4.77 per cent are educated up to Primary Level, 47.62 per cent are educated up to Matriculation Level, 23.80 per cent are educated up Graduation Level and the remaining 9.52 per cent have got Higher Education (Table-5).

On the basis of Level of Education, 21.67 per cent respondents have Low Level of Political Awareness and this includes 34.62 per cent Non Dalits and 65.38 per cent Dalits. Amongst the Non Dalits, 11.11 per cent are educated up to Matriculation Level, 33.33 per cent are educated up to Primary Level and the remaining 55.56 per cent are Illiterates. Amongst the Dalits who have Poor Level of Political Awareness, 47.06 per cent are Illiterates, 17.65 per cent are educated up to Primary Level and the remaining 35.29 per cent are educated up to Matriculation Level.

It is also clear from this table that on the basis of level of education, 15.83 per cent respondents possess Poor Level of Political Awareness and out of them 10.53 per cent are Non Dalits and 89.47 per cent are Dalits. Among the Non Dalit respondents 50 per cent are Illiterates and the remaining 50 per cent are educated up to Primary Level. Amongst the Dalits possessing Poor Level of Political Awareness, 88.24 per cent are Illiterates whereas 5.88 per cent each are educated up to Primary Level and Matriculation Level.

Level of Political Awareness vis-à-vis Level of Income of Respondents

Income of an individual has an indirect bearing on the level of awareness of an individual. A poor person would be more involved in earning the livelihood and the surrounding socio-cultural, economic and political environment would not matter much for that person. With the increase in the level of income, when there arises the security of our livelihood, the individual would be more keenly involved in surroundings. Therefore, the researcher tried to analyse the level of political awareness of the

respondents in terms of their varying levels of income. The responses so obtained are shown in Table-6 and analysed in this section.

Table-6 shows the level of Political Awareness of the respondents according to their Level of Income. This table indicates that 8.33 per cent respondents possess Very High Level of Political Awareness and all of them are Non Dalits. Among these respondents, 40 per cent belong to Lower Middle Income group, 10 per cent belong to Middle Income group, 20 per cent each belong to Poor and High Income groups whereas 10 per cent each belong to Middle and Upper Middle Income groups. No Dalit possess Very High Level of Political Awareness.

Table-6: Political Awareness Among Dalits vis-à-vis Their Level of Income

N=120

Level of Income	Level of Awareness											
	Very High		High		Average		Low		Poor		Total	
	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit	Non Dalit	Dalit
Poor	2 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	17 (56.67)	2 (40.00)	8 (88.89)	7 (35.00)	9 (100.00)	6 (33.33)	2 (100.00)	13 (76.47)	38 (63.33)	28 (46.67)
Lower Middle	4 (40.00)	0 (0.00)	7 (23.33)	1 (20.0)	1 (11.11)	3 (15.00)	0 (0.00)	7 (38.89)	0 (0.00)	3 (17.64)	12 (20.00)	14 (23.33)
Middle	1 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (10.00)	1 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	6 (30.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (11.11)	0 (0.000)	1 (5.89)	4 (6.67)	10 (16.67)
Upper Middle	1 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (6.67)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (5.56)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (5.00)	3 (5.00)
High	2 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (3.33)	1 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (11.11)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (5.00)	5 (8.33)
Total	10 (1000)	0 (0.00)	30 (85.71)	5 (14.29)	9 (31.03)	20 (68.97)	9 (33.33)	18 (66.67)	2 (10.53)	17 (89.47)	60 (50.00)	60 (50.00)
Grand Total	10 (8.33)		35 (29.17)		29 (24.17)		27 (22.58)		19 (15.83)		120 (100.00)	

Note: Figures in Parentheses indicate percentages

This table exhibits that on the basis of Level of Income, 29.17 per cent respondents have High Level of Political Awareness and out of them 85.17 per cent are Non Dalits and 14.29 per cent are Dalits. Amongst the Non Dalits, 56.67 per cent are from the Poor Income group, 23.33 per cent are from the Lower Middle Income group, 10 per cent are belonging to the Middle Income group, 6.67 per cent belong to the Upper Middle Income group and the remaining 3.33 per cent are belonging to High Income group. Amongst the Dalit respondents who possess High Level of Political Awareness, 40 per cent belong to the Poor Income group, 20 per cent each belong to Lower Middle, Middle and High Income groups. No Dalit of Upper Middle Income group possess High Level of Political Awareness.

This table also highlights that on the basis of Level of Income, 24.17 per cent respondents possess Average Level of Political Awareness and 31.03 per cent of them are Non Dalits and 68.97 per cent are Dalits. Amongst the Non Dalit respondents, 88.89 per cent belong to Poor Income group and the remaining 11.11 per cent belong to Lower Middle Income group. Amongst the Dalits with Average Level of Political Awareness, 35 per cent are from Poor Income group, 15 per cent are from Lower Middle Income group, 30 per cent belong to Middle Income group and 10 per cent each belong to Upper and High Income groups.

This table further shows that on the basis of Level of Income, 22.58 per cent respondents possess Low Level of Political Awareness and of them 33.33 per cent are Non Dalits and 66.67 are Dalits. All the Non Dalit respondents possessing Low Level of Political Awareness belong to the Poor Income group. Amongst the Dalits, 33.33 per cent belong to the Poor Income group, 38.89 per cent Dalits belong to the Lower Middle Income group, 11.11 per cent each are from Middle and High Income groups whereas 5.56 per cent belong to Upper Middle Income group.

This table also indicates that on the basis of Level of Income of respondents, 15.83 per cent respondents possess Poor Level of Political Awareness and of them 89.47 per cent are Dalits and 10.53 per cent are the Non Dalits. Interestingly, all the Non Dalits belong to Poor Income group. Amongst the Dalits possessing Poor Level of Political Awareness, 76.47 per cent are belonging to Poor Income group whereas 17.64 per cent and 5.89 per cent belong to Lower Middle and Middle Income groups, respectively.

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