

CHAPTER - I

I N T R O D U C T I O N



1. INTRODUCTION.
2. METHDDOLOGY.
3. PLAN OF THE WORK.



CHAPTER - I

1. INTRODUCTION:

Ever since the introduction of modern values of freedom, equality, brotherhood, etc, the lower caste people in India are struggling for their upliftment. At national level we come across organized movements for the eradication of the practices like untouchability, bonded labour, land tenure system and others. These movements have been, atleast to some extent successful in changing the traditional society in India. At village level also, a gradual change is being observed in the earlier traditional Balutedari and hierarchical caste system. At many places the change was and is being brought about by a hard and protracted struggle between the concerned sections are castes. One such case of a conflict between Mahars on the one hand and the upper castes on the other in a village is the subject matter of the present study. This is a typical case of conflict bring about change in social relationships.

2. METHODOLOGY:

Scientific research consists in specific method of studying the facts and finding their relationships. The techniques may change but the overall method remains the same.

THE PROBLEM:

Any scientific research must begin with the statement of problem. In our study we are concerned with the changing

intercaste relations in the Indian society. One of the factors leading to such a change is the conflict between the two or more castes.

Ever since the introduction of modern values of equality and individual freedom the down trodden sections in Indian society are struggling of their Socio-Economic upliftment. The pace has increased since Independence. This 'Dalit' movement has many times caused serious and bloody clashes between the 'Back Ward' sections and 'Forward' sections, at different places all over India. It was thought that the study of such a conflict would throw light on the changing inter caste relations.

We have a very specific case of a village where the conflict between a backward caste (Mahar) on the one hand and remaining castes on the other has ostensibly led to change in their traditional relations. We propose to study the nature and the consequences of the inter-caste conflict in village Malikwad on the back drop of the traditional Indian village where caste and Balutedari systems dominate the social relations.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The specific objectives of the present study are:

- 1) To present the Socio-Economic profile of the village Malikwad.
- 2) To narrate the Social tension, Conflict, and the subsequate strained - relations between Mahars and the Savarna People in Malikwad during the period - 1972-1979.

3) To point out the probable causes of why the Mahars were not supported by the other 'untouchable' castes - viz. Mang and Chambhar.

4) To trace the favourable factors which enabled the Mahars in giving a protracted fight with the savarnas.

5) To study the nature of social change resulting out of the above mentioned conflict.

DEFINITIONS:

As the study is confined to the changing nature of intercaste relations in a small village the use of complicated terms does not arise. However the following terms and their specific connotation may be noted.

1) CASTE:

The term is used in its usual sociological sense of an endogamous group of families and clans.

2) SVARNA:

Those castes which are traditionally regarded themselves as superiors and also belonging to the first three varnas in the fourfold division of Hindu society.

3) ASAVARNA:

The so-called untouchable, castes, which in the present case, include Mahar, Mang and Chambhar caste.

4) HARIJAN:

The word here is used to denote the Mahars, as the villagers also use the word with the same meaning.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTIONS:

The nature of present study required a deep probing into the minds of the people belonging to different sections in the village. Hence methods of questionnaire or structured interview were of no use the research itself is from the same village. This fact was both favourable and unfavourable in eliciting response from the interviewees. In this situation all available sources were tapped for collecting information and contents were carefully analysed. The sources were - 1) Leaders and other prominent persons belonging to different age groups from Mahar other Asavarnas and Savarnas. They include Ningappa, Shinde, Ratnappa Mane, Thalu Sanadi, Madhukar Lakole and Nanaso Mane etc. And from Savarnas namely Shri. Chandrakant Patil, Annaso Patil, N.Y. Deshpande, Vyankatesh Deshpande, Sarjerao Deshpande, Ramchandra Sutar and Vilas Patil, Abdul Jamadar and Shrimant Appasaheb alias Baba Nimbalkar Desai (Nanadikar Sarkar).

2) Concerned Government Officers, viz. The Police Sub-Inspector (Sadalga) and his Staff, Tahasildar, Assistant Commissioner, Revenue Officer, the president T.D.B. The Government prosecutor and the village Accountant.

3) The Youth leaders from Nipani, namely Prof. Achyut Mane, Bapu Tahasildar, Mohan Budake, Advocate Avinash Katti, Ajit Sagare, Yashawant Chavan, Shashikant Mane.

4) The reports published in newspapers from time to time.

The information received from one source was verified about its reliability from the remaining sources also.

While eliciting information the concentration was mostly on the Mahar and Savarna conflict and their mutual relationships before, during and after the conflict. Hence the scope of inter-caste relationships in this study is actually limited to Mahar - Savarna relationship. The relations of Mahars and other Asavarnas (Mang and Chambhar) are taken into consideration wherever necessary.

HYPOTHESIS:

Modernizing forces like spread of modern education, increased means of transport and communication, industrilization, urbanization and progressive social movements bring about social changes in attitudes of the people in the traditional society. But the sections enjoying a superior status in the caste hierarchy do not easily giveup their enviable position and prēvileges, and accept their - 'inferiors' as their 'equals! Those sections who are deprived of their legitimate rights and treated as inferiors have to struggle hard and unitedly to achieve the desired goal of equality of status. The conflict if the situation is favourable brings about change in social relations, eventhough it causes - sufferings to the involved sections. This is witnessed in the conflict between Mahars and Savarnas in Malikwad village.

PLAN OF THE WORK:

In the present chapter we have introduced the subject matter and methodology of the research work.

The second Chapter deals with the salient features of Indian villages, the main characteristics of caste system and Balutedari system.

A brief profile of the village Malikwad with the necessary details regarding the village social organization is presented in the third chapter.

All the important details of the conflict between Mahars and Savarnas in Malikwad are described in the fourth Chapter.

The fifth chapter analyses the nature of changes that have taken place in the Mahar - Savarna relations since the conflict.

The last chapter presents the summary and conclusions.