

**BALMIKI COMMUNITY IN DARJEELING HILLS:
A STUDY OF POLITICS OF MIGRATION, DEPRIVATIONS AND
EMPOWERMENT**

A Thesis submitted to the
University of North Bengal

For the Award of
Doctor in Philosophy

In
Department of Political Science

By
Lekhraj Balmiki

Under the Supervision of
Dr. R. Dural

**Department of Political Science
University of North Bengal
April 2018**

Dedicated to my Daughter

'Salvya Raj'

Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**BALMIKI COMMUNITY IN DARJEELING HILLS: A STUDY OF POLITICS OF MIGRATION, DEPRIVATIONS AND EMPOWERMENT,**” submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science is my original work under the supervision of Dr. Ramesh Dural, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal. I also like to convey that the work presented in this thesis has not been submitted previously, anywhere fully or partly to any other University or Institution for award of any academic degree or diploma.



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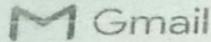
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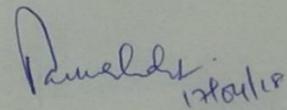
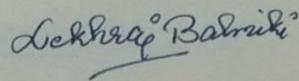
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Acknowledgements

At the very outset I convey my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Ramesh Dural, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal, for his constant support and guidance for preparing my Ph.D Thesis, for his patience, inspiration and gigantic knowledge. Without his guidance this thesis could not see the light of the day. Besides, my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my teachers in the Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal, for their insightful comments and encouragement.

I pay my homage to my senior colleague, Mr. Chandranath Saha, Associate Professor, Calcutta Girls' College, for his enthusiastic gesture that always encouraged me in the accomplishing my research work. My friends Prof. Debashis Biswas and Prof. Arkojyoti Jana, Calcutta Girls' College, for their insight in arranging the data, collected throughout my research.

The names of two teachers, Dr. Anup Shekhar Chakraborty and Dr. Padam Nepal, must be mentioned here, to whom I am indebted, since my undergraduate studies in the St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling, who taught me at the beginning why and how I should pursue my thesis paper. Especial thanks should go to my friend Prof. Tanwir Arshed, Presidency University, for his constant support.

My sincerest thanks go to the entire Libraries which were accessed during my research work, including National Library, Kolkata, Ramakrishna Mission Library, Kolkata, Central Library, University of North Bengal, Departmental Library, Centre for Ambedkarian Studies, Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal, Departmental Library, Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal, Departmental Library, Department of Nepali, University of North Bengal, Central Library, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling, Departmental

Library, Darjeeling Government College, District Library, Darjeeling, for providing me with a good number of literature which acted as one of the major sources of information for enhancing my studies.

It is less worthy to mention the names of my beloved parents Shri Dayaram Balmiki and Smt. Bimla Balmiki, not only they brought me in this world but they have reared me with love, affection, care and were also equally concerned about my academic studies throughout my life, in their hard days. I am also thankful to my brothers Manoj Balmiki and Krishan Balmiki for supporting me spiritually throughout my writings. I am also grateful to my wife Manju Tamang (Balmiki), who took the entire responsibility of my family during my absence from home for the persuasion of my research work. Despite her day-to-day domestic engagement, she took the pain of missing my services towards the family quiet gleefully.

I must confess my indebtedness to my sweetheart Salvya Raj, my 7 years old daughter; virtually I could not spend time for her since I began my research work. Whenever and wherever, she meets me with her smiling face pushes me hard to complete my thesis in the earliest.

I also, acknowledge the contribution made by the respondents to whom I interviewed during my entire studies, most of them knowing fully well that they won't get any fiscal benefit in spending time with me. Yet, they gave me much time for persisting with my studies. Often some personal questions might have irritated them, but I tried best to avoid such question and they too cooperated with me all along.

Last but not the least I must mention the name of my binder who helped me a lot in designing and binding this huge research work.

I have taken the very few names only, but there must be some more, people who coveredly and overtly enabled me to bring out this research work into its final shape.

Kolkata, April 2018.

Lekhraj Balmiki

Preface

The great scholars and academicians do not show any excuse regarding the time frame, economic constrain, lack of literature in the field but while doing my research studies, had to face crop lot of such huddles which perhaps no great academician could speak out in public. There is no gain in saying the fact, that Darjeeling is a '*Diaspora*,' since the colonial days under the British regime. Many small and big communities made their permanent residence in Darjeeling, although the *Lepchas*, were the original domiciles of Darjeeling. *Bhutias* and *Nepalese* came in number and the Nepalese in particular have over shadowed the permanent settlers there.

Many researches have been done regarding the *Gorkhaland*, *Nepalis*, *Bhutias*, *Lepachas* and other tribal as well. But many tiny groups of inhabitants remained untouched. Belonging to such a small immigrant community, i.e., I have come across the hopes and despair, dreams and desires of the community, which provoked me to take up such a topic for my research. To my beliefs it would through some light about the immigration problems in different cities and towns of India, how to overcome from such difficulties in general and the Balmikis residing in Darjeeling in particular. It could perhaps be treated as a small humanitarian duty towards once own community who have been suffering from ignorance, superstitions, illiteracy and poverty for which they, themselves are never to be blamed. The problem of untouchability is an age old disease in India, which annihilates the social physic of our nation, more than 1/3rd of its population are direct victims of such destructive disease, for which we must find out the panacea for it. If my endeavour can create any impression upon it, I would be ever grateful to such communities.

The problem of immigration today covers many aspects of communities under different given circumstances, it has often made the global map upside down. Darjeeling is located in such a fundamental position that the lives of many nationalities are intimately and intricately related to it. Darjeeling issue is not confined within the periphery of district or state. Neither it was confined within the territory of West Bengal, nor was it national issue alone, rather it may be taken into consideration as an international issue. Due to its strategic location. Darjeeling enables us to study both micro and macro level for a positive outcome. The issues of Balmikis are fairly significant simply because of the fact that it represents one of the poorest of the poor community.

In pursuing my studies my studies, I have received lot of encouragements from my fellows, colleagues, and teachers and from the community itself. I like to convey my gratitude to them.

Abstract

The study aims at bringing in the forefront the history of the Dalit community, especially of the Balmikis in the hills of Darjeeling. The community has thrived for its existence and has always attempted to shatter the norms and unethical beliefs of the society and to rise above the abhorrent behaviour of the upper caste. The hierarchical caste system of India, the upper stratum of the society always push the downtrodden, the dalits, the so called the lower castes who were already at the bottom down further. These downtrodden masses are still hated; hence, they are striving hard to get prominent position in the society.

The history of the dalits is as old as the history of human civilisation. So, is it full with riches. But unfortunately the scholars always remained reluctant to show the contribution made by the dalits in history. The dalit literature in India is although huge in number but these are remained in dark. This study has highlighted on those precious property of age old India, especially the literature of the Balmikis.

Even in scriptures and so called sacred books in the Brahaminical system of Hindu religion, the dalits have been depicted as nasty, heinous, dreadful creatures. The study purposes to reconstruct the history of the Balmikis, by throwing some light upon their deeds and actions, culture and heritage, religion and morality, pride and prestige, society and organization.

The study further, historicises the Balmiki migration to the hill station of Darjeeling. The Britishers brought them from different corners of central and north Indian states. To maintain the sanitation of Darjeeling. Like the Balmikis Nepalese are also immigrants in Darjeeling, but immediately they have over shadowed the Lepachas who were incidentally residents of Darjeeling. as a result the smaller immigrant groups had hardly any space remained for them, in the historico-cultural, socio-economic and political spheres.

One way to uplift the conditions of the dalits is to improve their political scenario of Darjeeling. Usually the politics of Gorkhaland being highlighted there and the minority politics unfortunately failed to make any mark in the hill polity. Due to this, supra-natural phenomenon the Balmikis has become the victim of identity crisis. The Balmikis have tried to retain their own culture, but due to the scare of insecurity they have also attempted to merge with the mainstream of the society. The study thus focuses the dilemma that the Balmiki community suffers from is to mingle with mainstream or to safeguard their own identity at the lieu of being subservient to the Gorkhali aggression. The study tried to find out the solutions to this dilemma, the study has been provided with some answers to the following questions to my mind, very much pertinent to the Balmiki issue, is the condition Balmikis really improved? Or, are they still used as only voters? Are they treated equally with the other communities?

This thesis has been carried out purely from the Ambedkarian epistemology, based on the politics of inclusion and exclusion. My whole endeavour was to pull the subalterns up to the main stream. The high sounding words being philosophised in the preamble to the constitution of India, *Liberty, Equality and Justice* of all kinds, *Political, Social and Economic*, in a word the long cherished dreams and desires of the masses to be accomplished in near future.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1: Introduction

Indian social structure exhibits disparities in castes, differences in class, untouchability, disdain and the like. The questions that lie before us are; where are the roots of such disparities? Why an upper caste Brahmin bears hatred for a Dalit? Cannot there be any mutual understanding amongst the upper castes and the lower castes? Does caste and caste system stand above the laws of land? In his book *Manu Smriti*, Sir William Jones (1794) stated that because of that ideology millions of Indian were ruled by a few Britishers.¹ They took the advantage of the divided Indian society on the lines of castes, and used the caste system to benefit them. However, this did not have affect on the Indians; as they were engrossed in classifying superior and inferior beings in the lines of castes. To explain these questions, it is essential to understand the social structure of the Indian society.

The Indian social system is stratified on the basis of caste, and the Indian social hierarchical system stands as: *the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas* and *the Shudras*, in descending order. In Purush Sukht's 10th Mandala, 12th Hymn Trigdev has mentioned:

Brahmotasya Muhmaasid Baahu Rajnya Krith I

Uroo Tasya Yad Vaishya Padbhaya Shudro Ajayat ll²

This means Brahmins generated from God's face, Rajanyas from his hands, Vaishyas from his thighs and *Shudras* from his legs.

¹ Sharma, Ramsharan. (1992). *Sharma, Shudron Ka Vikaas*. New Delhi: Rajkamal Publication. Pp. 9. Also See. *Institutes of Hindu Law*, Role, Page XIX.

² Trigdev. *10th Mandala, Purush Sukt*. 12th Hymn

In the 11th hymn of the same book he states, “When God made human beings how many parts did he divide them into? What was his face, his hands, his thighs and lastly, his legs?”³

Dr. Ambedkar in his arguments states that, “If there were really four stages in the society, then the Varna system principles would have been easier but it is far more complicated. The four different stages of the society have changed their principles which have set their way of life. It has categorized the system. This is illogical and punitive. In the four Varna systems, Shudras were placed in the lowest position so that they cannot raise their voice against any injustice, which is completely unfair. In reality, when Dalits were not given place in the fifth stage, Shudras were treated the worst.”⁴

There are some stereotyped Hindu people who consider the caste system to be of highest order. They willingly ignore the fact that generations after generations, Dalits or Shudras were mistreated, ignored from their rights. For these stereotypes, “Nationalism” is a myth. For them, caste system is more important than the upliftment of the society.

According to Vedas and other religious text books, Brahmins are respected more than other people because these people create belief and faith among the people. All these religious texts were created by Brahmins to make people around them believe that they are superior to everybody. Dr Ambedkar gave his opinion on these religious books and stated that “These books which were called holy are full of repulsiveness of the society. It just gives birth to the feeling of inferiority among people, which is why there was always a clash between two different Brahmins. No one found this weird during that time. If someone realized that he was

³ Ibid. 11th Hymn

⁴ Ambedkar, Dr. Bhimrao. (1998). *Sampurna Wadmay*. 13th Part. Welfare Department, Indian Government: Dr Ambedkar Enterprises.

not a Brahmin and also that he was untouchable, then my indifference towards these holy texts won't be any less."⁵

The caste system brought forward by Purush Sukt was promoted by believers, committees. They have contributed a lot in keeping this system alive. This system is considered almost equivalent to God, which is termed as exemplary condition, so that people follow it. The holy book, *Aapatstamb* states that, "*There are four castes-Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Among these, the first mentioned is better than the other.*"⁶ *Except Shudras and other lower castes, everyone has the right to perform yajnas, wear the holy thread, or recitation of the Veda.*"⁷

The same has been repeated in *Vashisht Holy Text*, "*Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras are the four different castes of the society. Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya are born two times, first from their mother's womb and then by adopting the Yagyopavit.*"⁸

Manu in Purush Sukt put forth certain principles stating that the principles are equivalent to God. He stated, "*For creation, God used his face for Brahmins, hands for Kshatriyas, thighs for Vaishyas and legs for Shudras.*"⁹ It also stated, "*Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are born twice, whereas, Shudras are born only once.*"¹⁰ He also said, "*Vedas are the only basis.*"¹¹

Since the four caste system was developed, there were other two developments as well. First, below the *Shudras*, a new class was introduced called *Asprishya* or *Atyanj*. Second, *Shudras* were distinguished from the other three castes. Because of this development several new

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Aapatstamb Dharmasutra-Question* . Table 1, Segment 1, Part 4-5.

⁷ *Aapatstamb Dharmasutra-Question 1*, Table 1, Segment 1, Part 6.

⁸ *Vashisht Dharmasutra*.

⁹ Manu. *Chapter 1*. Shloka 31.

¹⁰ Manu. *Chapter 10*, Shloka 4.

¹¹ Manu. *Chapter 2*, Shloka 6.

words came into being, *sawarn-awarn* and *dwij-adwij*. *Sawarn* meant Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and *Shudras*. *Awarn* meant Untouchables, *Atyanjs*, were impure or illegitimate signifying casteless people. One question that arises here is these illegitimate people who do not belong to any caste, are they not Hindus? It is as if these people are outer castes but are still kept intact due to various reasons. Balmiki community had to face the same problem which will be discussed in the upcoming parts.

In Madhya Pradesh, '*Balayi*', a Dalit community were mistreated by the Hindu community. Dr Ambedkar discusses about this based on a report by Times of India that in Kaneriya, Bichauli-Hafsi, Bichauli Village and other parts of Indore, the upper caste Hindus which constituted Rajputs, Brahmans, Patel, Patwaris mistreated the *Balayis* in their villages and stated that if they want to stay with them, they will have to follow certain rules, which included:-

1. *Balayis* won't wear turbans made of golden threads.
2. Their dhotis won't have fashionable finishing.
3. They will inform the relatives of people about the deaths in the family of upper castes, irrespective of how far they live.
4. They will have to play instruments in the weddings of Hindus.
5. *Balayi* women won't wear golden ornaments. Also, they won't wear fashionable clothes.
6. *Balayi* females ought to help Hindu females in their chores.
7. *Balayis* would have to work for Hindus without asking for remuneration. Whatever Hindus pay, they will have to accept it.
8. If they don't agree to these conditions, they might leave the village.

Balayis refused to accept these conditions and Hindus took a strong step against them. *Balayis* were denied their basic rights. They were refused water from the village well. They weren't allowed to let their animals graze in the fields. *Balayis* were completely excluded.¹²

In the book, '*A Book of Jentu Lodge*' (1776) which was written during the starting of Indian Society it was mentioned that one can do business in India and control Bengal's government only when the country accepts all the flaws and tries to correct it, because it isn't against the cause and winner of the law.¹³

God has differentiated the Hindu society from varying parts. All these different castes have their own identities. This is the command of God for them to be different from each other. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and *Shudras* can never be brothers. There is no question of *Shudras* or *Atyanjs* being related to any upper caste, no feeling of friendship can develop among them. This mutual feeling of kindness leads to the development of society and the system resists this feeling. This is the reason why Manusmriti advises to maintain the differences. It states, '*After birth, Brahmin fathers on the 8th year of their sons, Kshatriya fathers on the 11th year and Vaishyas on the 12th year, announce their sons as their successors.*'¹⁴

Based on their caste, students would wear clothes. They could be either of Krishnasar deer, dappled deer or of goat's skin and inner garments would be made of hemp or wool.¹⁵ 'The sacred thread of Brahmins should be made of cotton, that of Kshatriyas should be of hemp

¹² Dr Ambedkar *Jati Pratha Unmulan*. Times of India. 4th January, 1928.

¹³ Sharma, Ramsharan. (1778). *History of Shudras: Introduction*. Pp. 9.

¹⁴ Manu. Chapter 2, Shloka 36.

¹⁵ Manu. Chapter 2, Shloka 41.

and that of Vaishyas should be of wool. All these threads should be linked in three parts in its upper section'.¹⁶

Above mentioned rules were meant for students. But this difference was the introduction of Hindu trend, which instigates a feeling of discrimination in the society. This feeling of separation in Hinduism was comprehensive and wanton which made the caste system even more strong. Castes were further divided into sub-castes. Brahmins have 1886 sections. Punjab has 469 sections of Brahmins itself. Describing this sectionalisation of the species Dr. Ambedkar states that these castes and their sections have differences in standards, business. There are changes due to social conditions, pollution, rights of the upper castes. People also change their castes. All these changes lead to dispersal of the society.¹⁷

Blunt says that it is necessary to understand the fact that kitchen is the main module of food and drinks, and anyone can be the caterer. This symbolises that the upper caste Hindu can eat food from every caste's house but the caterer will be of one specific caste. This is why most of the cooks are Brahmins. It is only a proper Hindu who can differentiate between the food made of water and food made of ghee. This is so because it is believed that ghee is made of all pure substances and hence there is no question of impurity. Due to this social recognition, food made of water is considered to be less convenient than that of food from ghee. Food made of ghee is given more preference because of the conservative mentality. Hence, these conservative people limit their boundaries.¹⁸

According to Dr Ambedkar, the nutrition of Indian society's orientation is based on three principles. The first being, step by step differentiation. This difference is the main principle apart from all controversies. The four caste system was not made on the levelled floor which

¹⁶ Manu, Chapter 2, Shloka 44.

¹⁷ Ambedkar. *Sampurn Wadmay*. Part 6. Important principles of Hindu Society Orientation. Pp. 131.

¹⁸ Blunt- The Caste System of Northern India. Pp. 89-90.

remains same even after being different. This is like a step wise floor, where not only the caste but their behaviours too are different and one considers itself to be above another.¹⁹

Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, *Shudra* and *Asprishya*. The difference between them is not only conventional; it is also because of how the view of Hinduism, spirituality, morality and legislative orientation works. In every sphere of life, this difference is prevalent and the main principle behind everything is that *Shudras* and *Asprishyas* are lower castes and untouchables.

Shudras are kept in the fourth position but Dr. Ambedkar believed that *Shudras* were Kshatriyas. In his argument he put forward these statements:

1. *Shudras* belonged to the tribes of Aaryans.
2. *Shudras* didn't have any class. They belonged to the Kshatriya class during the time of Aaryans.
3. There was a time when Aaryan tribe gave importance to only Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas.
4. There was a constant struggle between *Shudra* kings and Brahmins. As a result, Brahmins used to face a lot of insult from the part of *Shudra* Kings.
5. Annoyed of the mistreatment by the *Shudra* Kings, Brahmins stopped paying respect to them and denied them calling the King.
6. Since these *Shudras* lost their position of being considered a Kshatriya, they were mocked by people. Hence, they were placed below the Vaishyas and were counted in the fourth class.²⁰

¹⁹ Dr Ambedkar- *Sampurn Wadmay*, Section 6, Pp. 136.

²⁰ Ambedkar. *Sampurn Wadmay*. Section 13. Pp. 165.

Disagreeing to the above mentioned conclusions of Dr. Ambedkar, Ramsharan Sharma says that the only composition about the *Shudras* is by Dr Ambedkar, which is limited to the emergence of *Shudras*. The writer had gathered all the necessary information from translations. Apart from that, the worst fact is that these compositions makes one realize that all his efforts were to prove that *Shudras* belonged to the upper caste. This mentality is an indication that has recently developed within the educated people of the backward society. ‘*Shanti Parv*’, a section in Mahabharata, stated about a portion where *Paijvan*, a *Shudra* conducted a Yajna from which it was confirmed that *Shudras* were actually Kshatriyas.²¹

But according to Routh, ‘Sudras did not belong to the Aryan Clan.’²² According to Trigdev, Asthavedas showed that Indra won over ten gods. It is said that Indra forced all the ten ignoble Gods to live as servants under him in caves, “*Yenema Vishwa Kritani, yo Daas Varnamdhar Grihaak.*”²³ “*Yatha vans naiti das marya.*” (According to Vishwaiyanta, it is the responsibility of the one to make them dependent).²⁴ *Das Vesham Chav.* (It is requested to him to destroy these evil servants)²⁵. Therefore, in Sayan’s comment’s steps to destroy these evils are mentioned.

Trigdev in his praises has continuously requested Indra to demolish the servant class.²⁶ The destruction of these servant classes has been mentioned in the Vedas. It is said that by killing these servant classes, Indra protected Aryans, *Hatvi Dasyun Arya Varna Mavat.*²⁷ This symbolises that Dasyuns and servant class weren’t the same.

²¹ Sharma, Ramsharan . *History of Shudras*. Pp. 31.

²² Routh, R. *Brahmad Di Brahmanen*.

²³ Trigdev II, 12.4.

²⁴ Trigdev V, 34.6.

²⁵ Tridev II, 13.8.

²⁶ Trigdev II, 11.4, 25.2, X, 1.48, 2.

²⁷ Tridev III, 34.9.

Rules were created by Manu related to slavery. He puts a prime focus on the life of Shudras but this only focuses on the lives of Brahmins and Shudras. Manu says that whether a Shudra is bought or not he ought to serve the Brahmin class and be his slave because that is his ultimate destiny, '*Shudrantu Karyed Dasya Kritamkrit mev wa Dasyayev hi Sritose Brahmasya Swayambhuva.*'²⁸ '*Na swamina ni srishtitopi Shudra dasya dwi muchtaye, nisgranj hit tasya kastasmaat tampohate*', this meant that Shudras can never withdraw from serving the Brahmins because they are born with this job of serving the Brahmin class.²⁹

In Manusmriti, four stories are mentioned. In Naradsmriti there are five sections. IN Hindu culture, slavery for Shudras is statutory. According to Naradsmriti, If caste system is reserved, there is no space for reservation for lower caste, except for the fact that when a man disrespects his responsibilities because of his caste, slavery becomes equivalent to a consort.³⁰ According to Yagyavalkya in the ranks of society, slaves are in declining order and not in developing order."³¹

From the above mentioned examples the conclusions indicates towards the roots caste system. There are a Brahmin can never be a servant to a *Shudra* or *Asprishya*. On the other hand other classes can never be served by Brahmins. A Brahmin can serve another Brahmin but he can never serve other classes.

Rules have been made to make slaves the most inferior. It is said in Gautam Sutra That Should the slaves are bound to use the thrown away belongings of upper caste. (Jirna nyupaarchatrawaas Kuchini).³² Earlier it was said that defiled foods of upper caste must be

²⁸ Manusmriti VIII, 413.

²⁹ Manusmriti VIII, 414.

³⁰ Narad Smriti, 5.39.

³¹ Yagyavalkya Smriti, 16.183(2).

³² Gautam Sutra-X, 58.

kept for shudras.³³ Even in Aapatstamb, it is also mentioned that students must kept their defiled Foods near the servants of their teachers, symbolising the fact that Shudras where given defiled foods.

In his book ‘The History of India’, James Mill describing the caste system reaches to the conclusion that in Hindu culture, the destruction of caste on the basis of their ranking is the most compared to others. He also said that this outrage still prevails in the Hindu society.³⁴

Hence, it is pretty much essential to discuss the conducts for a proper social life. This will eventually help in understanding the caste divided society.

Given the context, the present study focuses on one such untouchable community of Indian society, the Balmikis. The Balmiki community (also known as Bhangi³⁵) of the Darjeeling Hills had migrated from the various regions of Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, etc.³⁶ Balmikis are very firm and rigid in their general behaviour. They are very rigid towards the caste they were born into and believe in marrying the people within the same caste (endogamy). They were also restricted in their occupation of their choice as well as in keeping contact with members of the opposite caste. They were identified by their caste in the society.³⁷ The Balmikis believed in the two main ideals of Hindu belief, Samsara or reincarnation and Karma signifying action or deed. They believed that if the people of their

³³ Gautam Sutra-X, 59.

³⁴ James Mill, *The History of India*, Page-166.

³⁵ Bhangi”, is another widely used Hindi term to denote the ‘Balmiki’ meaning ‘one addicted to drinking bhang’ (a drink made from marijuana leaves). See, Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). “*The Balmiki Community In Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness.*” in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications. Also see. Sharma, Rama. (1995). *Bhangi, Scavenger In Indian Society: Marginality, Identity, and Politicization of the Community.* New Delhi: M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd.

³⁶ C.f. Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). Ibid. Also see. Sharma, Rama. (1995). Ibid.

³⁷ Shyاملal. (1992). *The Bhangi: A Sweeper Caste, Its Socio-Economic Portraits: With Special Reference to Jodhpur City.* Bombay: Popular Prakashan. C.f Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). “*The Balmiki Community In Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness.*” in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications. Also see. Sharma, Rama. (1995). *Bhangi, Scavenger In Indian Society: Marginality, Identity, and Politicization of the Community.* New Delhi: M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd.

caste are true to their caste, i.e., followed all the rules and regulations, they would achieve salvation and would be born into a higher class family in their next birth. It is because of such beliefs that Balmikis abide by the rules and regulations of their community and do not disobey them. Also, they do not rebel to rise above their caste and develop any relation with the other communities.³⁸

The caste system is very rigid and one of the causes for protests within the country. Nowadays, the foremost endeavour of the government is to remove the existing obstacles of caste system within different communities. However, during the British rule in India, the caste system was almost crushed down.³⁹ There was no compulsion for the son to follow the footsteps of his father and the people of the lower caste ranked in the higher positions as well. From time to time, efforts are being made to curb down the practise of caste system. This became more prevalent ever since the rise of Buddhism, which strictly criticised the practise of bondage of people or a whole community due to the abhorrent practise of the caste system.⁴⁰ Since the past few years, efforts are being made to abolish and eradicate the unjust practise of social and economic untouchability and caste system which is prevalent in India, through educational and social reforms.⁴¹

However, even though many efforts were undertaken by the government to curb the menace of casteism in India, the Balmikis still remain one of the oppressed communities⁴² and are

³⁸ Sachidananda. (2002). *People At The Bottom: A Portrait Of The Scavengers*. Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.

³⁹ Mathew Atmore Sherring, *Hindu Tribes And Castes as Represented in Benaras*. 3vols. Calcutta: 1872-1881. *The Tribes and Castes of the Madras Presidency*. London:1909.

⁴⁰ Jaideva, Paramanshi. (2002). *Dalits In Early Buddhism*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications. Also see, Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. "Buddhism and Communism", National Seminar on *Marx, Ambedkar and Polarization of Oppressed and Exploited Classes in India*. New Delhi: Sanjivayya Institute of Socio-Economic Studies, 1991. Also see, Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. (1957). *The Buddha And His Dhamma*. Bombay: Siddharth College Publications.

⁴¹ Rajawat, Mamta. (2006). *Dalits: Role of Education*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. Also see, Wilfred, Felix. (2000). *Dalit Empowerment*. Bangalore: NBCLC.

⁴² Ambaikar, B.M. "Contribution of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to Evolution of Jural Postulates in India: in K.N. Kadam (Ed.). (1993). *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: The Emancipator of the Oppressed*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan

placed at the bottom of hierarchical order of the caste system. In order to earn wages and livelihood, they were assigned jobs like skinning of animals and cleaning the skin, sweeping and cleaning of public toilets along with manual scavenging. What people refuse to accept that Bhangis are just contributing to the society by doing all the filthy work and helping the civic system survive, the harsh conditions. However, their efforts are not being appreciated by the people as well as the government. Instead of treating them with dignity and honour, the society treats them as inferiors and polluting. The Balmiki community appears in headlines only when the higher class of the Hindu caste system attacks them. Whereas, rest of the time, their existence is not taken into consideration and their voices go unheard as if they are invisible.⁴³

With the advancement of time, the conditions of the Balmiki community are changing and advancing too. The children of the community are being admitted to schools because the people of this community wish for their children to be educated too and hence, the community now has a number of college going students too. But when it comes to negligence and hardships, the practise is still continuing and hateful. Yet the community is hopeful towards the fact that the growing education and awareness among the people would help in demolishing the practise and also bring changes in their life.⁴⁴

⁴³ C.f. Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). “*The Balmiki Community In Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness.*” in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications. Also see. Sharma, Rama. (1995). *Bhangi, Scavenger In Indian Society: Marginality, Identity, and Politicization of the Community.* New Delhi: M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd. Also see, Gurung, Madan Kr., & Bhutia, Passang. (Ed.). (2000). *Souvenir: Darjeeling Municipality 1850-2000.* Darjeeling: Darjeeling Municipality. pp. 87-90.

⁴⁴ C.f. Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). “*The Balmiki Community In Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness.*” in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications.

1.2: Statement of the Problem

The ‘*Balmiki*’, a Dalit community numbering 6,300⁴⁵ is one of the socially stigmatized groups in Darjeeling district⁴⁶ and totaling 529,000⁴⁷ in the state of West Bengal. They were first brought by the Britishers from the city of Alwar⁴⁸ (Rajasthan) to get rid of human manure and to maintain sanitary of the town of Darjeeling. Thus the migration of the *Balmiki* from their native villages to the hill station of Darjeeling overlaps with the growth of the Municipal body post 1850s.⁴⁹

The history of the *Balmiki* in Darjeeling is as old as the establishment of the Hill station itself. Their migration to the Hills parallels the migration of the *Marwari* business community to the Hills. The *Marwari* as a community have exhibited strong communitarian solidarity geared towards upliftment of their *Samaj*. Naturally the Marwari community in the Hills through its control of resources and politics has been constantly moving towards prosperity with its influence on the decision-making centres. Contrarily the *Balmiki* have been invisible in the socio-political and economic dynamics in Darjeeling. Not a single member of the community

⁴⁵ People-In-India Profile. <http://www.joshuaproject.net/south-asia-districts.php?rog5=IN2801> Accessed: 31.08.2012.

⁴⁶ Currently Kalimpong Sub-division of the old Darjeeling District has emerged as an independent district since 14th February 2017, after splitting from Darjeeling District as the 21st district of West Bengal. It consists of Kalmipong Municipality and three community developments blocks: Kalimpong I, Kalimpong II and Gorubathan. The district has its headquarter at Kalimpong. *Also See* District Census Handbook- Darjiling, Directorate of census Operations, West Bengal. Retrieved 30th March, 2017. *Also See, Carved out of Darjeeling, Kalimpong a District Today*, Times of India. Retrieved 14th February 2017.

⁴⁷ People-In-IndiaProfile. <http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopleprofile.php?peo3=16399&rog3=IN> Accessed: 31. 08.2012.

⁴⁸ Gurung, Madan Kr. “*Darjeeling Municipality: Then And Now*” in Gurung, Madan Kr., & Bhutia Passang. (Ed.). (2000). Souvenir: *Darjeeling Municipality 1850-2000*. Darjeeling: Darjeeling Municipality. Pp.29.

⁴⁹ Lekhraj Balmiki. (2012). ‘*The Second Wave of Gorkhaland Movement and the Marginalized: A case study of Balmiki Community in their Diaspora*’, paper presented at UGC sponsored National Seminar: Regional Movements: Identity Question And National Integration: Contextualizing India’s Growing Regional Assertions. SAP (DRS Phase-II) University of North Bengal 15th -16th March, 2012.

has been represented as Commissioners or Councillors in the Darjeeling Municipality till date.⁵⁰

The community adheres to the strict norms of the Caste ridden society and has retained the *Chaudhury system* of caste organization even in contemporary times. Being a subaltern community,⁵¹ the *Balmiki* represents a strange case of community yet to come out of the traditional strangle hold.⁵² Moreover, the community suffers from customary crease, such as child marriage, desire of male child, discrimination between male and female, *Ghoongat* for the women, dowry, and restriction on inter caste marriage etc.

A long period of suppression, subordination and exploitation has seriously handicapped the community in terms of its capability and placed them at the peripheries of everyday life of the Hills, diminishing their aspirations and motivations. As migrants, the community shows strong yet fused linkages to the roots of the community in north-western India. For instance, post 1986 first generation Gorkhaland movement the community has developed the notion of returning back to their 'homeland' (*Desh*) after superannuation from their services. This to an extent has snipped the chances of articulating the community solidarity in an alien territory.

Although the community experiences a sigh of relief with whatever the state politics of positive discrimination entitles them to, yet the resultant capability is a reduced self esteem of the community. The above mentioned internal problems have limited the growth capacity of the community. However, the *Balmiki* community under the auspices of *Balmiki Harijan*

⁵⁰ Gurung, Madan Kr., & Bhutia, Passang. (Ed.). (2000). *Souvenir: Darjeeling Municipality 1850-2000*. Darjeeling: Darjeeling Municipality. pp. 87-90.

⁵¹ Guha, Ranjait. (1989). (Ed.). *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. (Volume I-IX). Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁵² C.f. Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). "*The Balmiki Community In Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness.*" in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). *A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal*. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications.

*Sangh*⁵³ is mobilizing the disposition of progress to protect their rights and raise their concerns.

The present study is an attempt to argue in lines of Ambedkar's ideas for the upliftment of the subaltern community which is essential for the smooth functioning of Indian democracy. Paradoxically, this constitutes for profound complicities involving individuals which negligible Ambedkar's connotation because a reflective and pioneering intellectual of democracy, on the one hand, and those who would solidify his being plus representation for Dalit further. As a substitute, this revision search Ambedkar's affability, his continuous invocation of humankind authentic actions, and the political deliberation of liberation, the same as enabling his evaluators of caste, resources, and the Hindu history.⁵⁴ This research thus has tried to investigate the inclusive historical dimensions of Ambedkar's verbalization of Dalit political deliberation.

Inspite of the existence of a bulk of literature on the society and politics in the Hills, the literature is conspicuous by the absence of any study on the *Balmiki* community in the Hills. Therefore, the present research enables to study the migration, deprivations and moves towards empowerment of the community in the Hills, seen from the perspective of Ambedkar's idea of economic equality and social justice.

1.3: Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework

The notions of equality and justice are the two focal points of political philosophy. Western political tradition from Plato to Post-Modernism via Marx centre on the notions of

⁵³ Balmiki Harijan Sangh was established in 1948.

⁵⁴ Das, Bhagwan (Ed.). (1980). *Untouchable Soldiers: The Mahars and the Mazhbis*. Banglore: Ambedkar Sahitya Prakashan. Also see, Das, Bhagwan. "Ambedkar's Journey to Mass Conversion", in Devendra Swaroop (Ed.). (1986). *Politics of Conversion*: Delhi.

exploitation men by men, necessity of liberty and equality, establishment of human dignity and social justice. However, the oriental philosophical theory has not been able to negotiate a comprehensive and acceptable framework of social justice, in the spectrum of oriental cultural tradition.

In India, the political philosophy of Baba Sahib Bhimrao Ambedkar possibly facilitate new world in renegotiating the predicament of Western Political Theory in particular and leading spectacular encounter of emotional down trodden masses⁵⁵ in broad-spectrum.⁵⁶

One may be capable of considering Ambedkar's alliance with the magnificent political streams such as noninterventionist, fundamental or conventional throughout his chirographies and speeches.⁵⁷ By the side he differentiates himself with the above three prevailing political traditions.

Ambedkar's thinking is predominantly identified with ethics religion. For him, social anticipate the political. Social integrity is the pivotal in the direction of his political idea. He cannot be fully regarded as fierce individualist nor can he be taken into consideration as conservative communitarian. His understanding democracy conceptualizes the principles of egalitarianism, liberty and fraternity in the true sense of the term.⁵⁸ Although many attempts were made to locate his philosophical disposition, but one may find hardship to identifying him in dominant political traditions. Often it may often lead to misunderstanding and confusion regarding Ambedkarian philosophy doctrine.

⁵⁵ Socially backward castes and class including the untouchables *Harijans*.

⁵⁶ Chalam, K.S. (1993). *Relevance of Ambedkar in India*. Raipur: Rawat Publicatins.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Din, Mata. "Ambedkar: The Architect of Constitution ", in *Ambedkar and Social Justice*, Vol. I, New Delhi: (Director, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1992), (On behalf of Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Birth Centenary Celebration Committee, Ministry of Welfare, Government of India). Also see, Dewey, John. (1980). *Democracy and Education*. Carbondale and Edwardville, IL: The Illinois University Press.

Ambedkar's political deliberation requires fresh dimensions of knowledge to comprehend the difficulty of his theory. However, taking Ambedkarian framework of understanding into account, social inequality and societal exploitation on the one hand, and, his ideas on social justice and empowerment via positive discrimination is apt to provide us a framework to analyze the lived experience of the weaker sections of society and their aspirations for development and empowerment on the other.⁵⁹

There is no gainsaying the fact that, Ambedkar, championed the cause of the down trodden.⁶⁰ But to imprison him simply as a dalit leader would do immense prejudice to him as well as to his thoughts. To my mind on his own right, he himself was a revolution. He was the most accomplished political leader, genuine seer, great social reformer and true philosopher among all his contemporaries.

Since, our endeavor is to bring into light the socio-economic, and historico- political position of subalterns; it is evident that without the detailed discussion on the understanding and thoughts of this outstanding scholar like Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, no dalit discourse in India could even be touched upon.

While analyzing Ambedkar's thoughts and the assumption on the Caste System, we will have to specify in the direction of the arguments or the contention so as to his work dealt with. Earlier codifying his theory of origin, method and advancement of castes in Indian context, Ambedkar vehemently criticized and resolutely superfluous an enumerable prevailing theory

⁵⁹ Bhagwan, Das. (Ed.). (1973). *Thus Spoke Ambedkar* (Volume I-V). Bangalore: Ambedkar Sahitya Prakashan.

⁶⁰ Kadam, K.N. (1991). *Dr. Ambedkar and the Significance of His Movement*. London: Sangam Books. Also see. Keer, Dhananjay. (1954). *Dr. Ambedkar Life and Mission*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

on the subject. For him Caste in the singular number is an unreality.⁶¹ Likewise, much reduction in the civic look at the everyday breaking down of the spirit that countless *Balmikis* in this country regularly experience.⁶² The regular and everyday disgrace of the human force with the aim of coming in a thousand ways.

Making the Dalits children sit alone at the midday meals, to the discouragement of the Dalits and further nominated representatives.⁶³ These practices indicate absurd encroachment of civil liberties and prestige of individuals further sidelined.⁶⁴ Instead of stressing these concerns at the media and the elite society, the offender progressively concludes that they are sufferers rather than comparatively oppressors.

In this direction Ambedkar puts up a struggle that individuals inner voice means conscience that emerges as heard voice at every misguided, no matter who is the suffers and who motivates these sufferings for the down trodden, and this explains that individuals, whether he suffers that peculiar wrong or not, is inclined to adhere him in arranging to get him reassured in India, captivating up the grounds of the Scheduled Castes and combating, since at hand public conscience is absent. Aforementioned context seeks to pursue Ambedkars' contention as an initial position to inspect the 'absence of public conscience' particularly amongst the Hindus.⁶⁵

An early activist, Gopal Baba Walangkar, worked to liberate the untouchables of India, against their historic socio –economic coercion, as such considered to be the pioneer of the

⁶¹ Aloysius, G. (1998). *Nationalism without a Nation in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁶² Valmiki, Omprakesh. (2003). *Joothan: A Dalits Life*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁶³ Pal, R.M. and Bhargava, G.S. (Ed.). (1999). *Human Rights of Dalits Societal Violation*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.

⁶⁴ Valmiki, Omprakesh. (2003). *Joothan: A Dalits Life*. New York: Columbia University Press.

⁶⁵ Chalam, K. S. (2008). *Modernization And Dalit Education: Ambedkars Vision*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

movement. He has been a relative of both Jyotiroa phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar. In the voice of protest, claiming social status and dignity for the untouchables. For some Ambedkar became a God, for some a Boddhisattva and for some he was a brilliant cricketer, for some he was a great lawyer, and for many others, he was architect of the Constitution of the newly independent India.

If we look after him in terms of literature, Ambedkar's writings adhering to the social movements, he initiated to launch, were of immense importance thereby the untouchables enabling them to raise their voices in protest in number of occasions. Ambedkar himself was a great orator and literary person, his first newspaper entitled 'Muknayak' (the voice of the dumb) began its journey in 1920 and carried under its name an 'Abanga' by Sant Tukaram (a Bhakti saint), in which the poet sent a reminder to the people that the shy, the dumb and the bashful were hardly noticed.⁶⁶

India got her independence on 15th August, 1947. Yet, by 1950, Babasaheb Ambedkar realized in his heart of hearts that Brahminical religion could never ever eradicate the conception of custom pollution and caste ladder commencing the mindset of its upper castes. He therefore went back to an idea he had dwelt upon almost a decade earlier – even if it was destined for him to be born a Hindu, he would not die a Hindu – together with an estimated three million Mahars, Ambedkar converted to Buddhism in the year 1956. It was not only a rejection of untouchability per se, but an entire belief system was systematically erased which combined the belief in Gods, myths, reincarnation, pollution and caste. Buddhism was considered to be an extra realistic and human religious conviction, which promised equality to its followers. Therefore, he went back to an idea which he cherished upon almost a decade earlier “*even if it was destined for him to be born a Hindu, he would not die a Hindu*”

⁶⁶ Eleanor Zelliott *From Untouchable to Dalit – Essays on the Ambedkar Movement* Manohar, New Delhi, (2005), pp. 11

With the conversion of Dalits into Buddhism, they also gave impetus to a Buddhist counter-culture which had flourished in the Maharashtra province rapidly in the beginning of 20th centuries, in places like Amravati, Ajanta and Ellora, after the primary centres of Buddhism had shifted outside the country – to Sri Lanka, China, Japan and Southeast Asia. In the words of Baburao Bagul⁶⁷, Dalit writing begins with the Dalit conversion of 1956; these events formed the necessary backdrop for Dalit literature.

1.4: Brief Overview of Literature

Dalit literature dates back to the time of history. Despite being so rich and old, it was never encouraged or considered because the caste system was prevalent in the literary production field too. Dalits began to identify themselves and emerge as political powers due to the influence of literature. The nature of Dalit writings are being spread across the various regions of the country. The problems Dalits have to face have been a matter of concern over the course of history. It calls for actions to be taken. It has been existing since years but the level of oppression is increasing day by day. Social reformer, Dalits as well as non-Dalits have been trying since many years to eradicate the abhorrent practice of untouchability from the society.

Sociologists and anthropologists have been carrying out the study of Dalit literature with whatever left materials they have. It is old and rich but the materials are missing, hence the study often remains incomplete. Though Dalit literature has an important field in the society, it has not been considered a part of the Indian historiography. The Dalit literature offers for an insight regarding the identity and relation of the Dalits with the several contemporary movements. There is a lack regarding the historical and written documents about Dalit literature. Most of the historical works have showed about the rise in realization of the Dalits

⁶⁷ A prominent Dalit fiction writer

during the 'Her Majestic' episode. There are several works of Indian history which gives details about Dalits of specific region or their existence in the whole country and also their ancestry. There are many studies based on the historic movement of Dalits too, which is analytical and significant. The belief that the shadow of Dalits would spoil the individual is still prevalent and painful for them. They are considered as outcasts. The need for the recognition of Scheduled Castes/Tribes on a social level still calls for an acceptance, meaning they should be considered equal to the other communities in the democracy.

Due to the miserable condition of Dalits, they have always been a subject of study by various social historians and anthropologists ever since the beginning of the late 19th century, though at that time they were available in pieces and did not have much material. The literatures about Dalits were a result of the missionaries' travel records and personal accounts⁶⁸. They were also based on official paper, district Gazzetteers as well census reports and various kind of reports which provided an insight to their being and the conditions they lived in. Some of the writers who wrote about the background, occupation, habits and practises of the Dalits include **Risley (1891, 1902)**⁶⁹ **Crooke (1903)**⁷⁰, **Enthoven (1920)**⁷¹ **Sherring (1872, 1909)**⁷², **Thurston (1909)**⁷³, **Rose (1919)**⁷⁴, **Russell (1916)**⁷⁵ and **Iyer (1912)**⁷⁶. Their writings also provided information regarding the regions they resided in late 19th and early 20th century.

⁶⁸ Perhaps first in its kind was of Abbe J.A. Dubois, a French Missionary's experiences of early decades of 19th century of Indian people, society and culture. In Chapter five of his work contains one of the earliest documented description of Dalits. This was originally written in 1815, (translated by Henry K. Beauchamps). See Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies. London: 1953.

⁶⁹ Herbert Hope Risley, The Tribes and Castes of Bengal, 4 vols., (Calcutta:1891), also see his, The Peoples of India,(Calcutta:1909).

⁷⁰ William Crooke, "Chamars" in Census of India, vol. 1, India: Ethnographic Appendices, Edited by H.H. Risley, (Calcutta:1903), pp. 167-175 and also see his, The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh 4 vols., (Calcutta:1906).

⁷¹ Reginald Edward Enthoven, The Tribes and Castes of Bombay, 3 vols., (Bombay:1920).

⁷² Mathew Atmore Sherring, Hindu Tribes and Castes as Represented in Benaras, 3 vols., (Calcutta:1872-1881); The Tribes and Castes of the Madras Presidency,(London:1909).

⁷³ Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of Southern India, 7 vols., (Madras:1909).

⁷⁴ Horace Arthur Rose, A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier of Provinces, 3 vols., (London:1911-1919).

During the colonial period, most of the Indian authorities were related to the operations carried out for census reports. The life conditions of the Dalits can be well understood by these census reports presented by various governmental organizations. Based on these census reports, we also get information regarding the customs, practises and organization of various communities. The census report of 1931 talks about the backward classes in a tabulated form, which put forth the emergence of studies of Dalits during the colonial period. It was during the post-Colonial period, that studies regarding the problems and miseries of Dalits emerged. Most of the studies dealt with the problems of their social structure, their socio-economic conditions and the influence that the development strategies had on their upliftment. **Briggs (1920)**⁷⁷ was among the earliest to give a systematic study regarding the Dalit caste. He provided information regarding the socio-economic and religious life of the Chamars of United Provinces. He also focused on the private and domestic arenas of their life. Apart from Briggs, **William Hunt (1924)**⁷⁸ also wrote about the Dalit caste. William Hunt in his book mentioned about the untouchables in India during the early decade of this century. **Issacs (1976)**⁷⁹, **Desai (1976)**⁸⁰ and **Lakshmana (1973, 1977)**⁸¹ also dealt with the studies regarding the problem in the social structure of the Dalits.

Some people came up to solve the problems of Dalits and bring about a social change. Some limited it to the village areas while some took it even on the urban level. Some even put forth the Dalit society in the hierarchy for their own motives and also due to the influence of modern forces such as constitutional, legal, political, industrialization and also urbanization.

Some studies have even depicted the occupational, customary practises and behaviours and

⁷⁵ Robert Vane Russel, *The Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces of India*, 4 vol., (London: 1916).

⁷⁶ L. Anantha Krishana Iyer, *The Cochin Tribes and Castes*, 2 vol., (Madras: 1909-12).

⁷⁷ George Weston Briggs, *The Chamars*. (London:1920).

⁷⁸ William Hunt, *Indian's Outcastes: A New Era*. (London: 1924).

⁷⁹ Harold R. Issacs, *India's Ex- Untouchables*. (Bombay: 1976).

⁸⁰ I.P. Desai, *Untouchables in Rural Gujarat*. (Bombay: 1976).

⁸¹ Chintamani Lakshmana, *Caste-Dynamics in Village India*, (Bombay: 1973), also see *Harijan and the Social Discrimination*. (Hyderabad: 1977).

the aspirations among the Dalit society. People who contributed to the studies for the social change in the Dalit community are **Epstein (1962)**⁸², **Beteille (1965)**⁸³, **Alexander (1968)**⁸⁴, **Lynch (1969)**⁸⁵ and **Zelliot (1970)**⁸⁶.

The edited volume of **Michael Mahar's** 'The Untouchables in Contemporary India'⁸⁷ is one of the best article collections regarding the Dalits. Though the title says that it deals with the problems of the untouchables of the contemporary period, but the book deals with the problems right from the time of Ambedkar and Gandhi. A brief view about the methods adopted by the leaders to bring about a social change in the conditions of the Dalits has been portrayed by **Eleanor Zelliot**⁸⁸. **Lelah Dushin** assessed the role that public welfare departments had for the development of the backward classes but the results showed that there was no such development in their condition.⁸⁹ It is clearly justified by the factor that the images of them being partly dependent and also suspected that they had the grounds of special privileges.

There are a number of strata in the Indian society which portrays the feeling of inequality among the different classes of the society. Dalits and the tribal classes belonged to the lowest strata of the society. It was because of the caste system, that the Dalits were segregated from the society. Also, due to this, even their basic human rights were denied by the society and sometimes even their existence. The caste system has created the unequal opportunities based

⁸² G. Scarlett Epstein, *Economic Development and Social Change in South India*. (Manchester:1962).

⁸³ Andre Beteille, 'The Future of the Backward Classes: The competing demands of Status and Power' in Philip Mason, (ed.), *India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity*. (London: 1965).pp 83-120.

⁸⁴ K.C. Alexander, 'Changing Status of Pulaya Harijans of Kerala', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. III, July, 1968, pp. 1071-74.

⁸⁵ Owen M. Lynch, *The Politics of Untouchability: Social Mobility and Social Change in a City of India*. (New York:1969).

⁸⁶ Zelliot, Eleanor. (1970). *Learning the Use of Political Means: The Mahars of Maharashtra*. In Rajni Kothari (Ed.). *Caste in Indian Politics*. New Delhi: Orient Black Swan. Pp. 29-69.

⁸⁷ Mahar, J. Michael. (Ed.). (1972): *The Untouchables in Contemporary India*. Arizona: Tuseson.

⁸⁸ Ibid. Pp. 69-95.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp.165-226.

on their order which is prevalent even today. Despite being a democratic government, the caste system has yet not eradicated and is a cause for the suffering of the lower classes. The worst of all is that with time, the lower classes are denied their rights and being more oppressed, whereas the upper classes of the society are enjoying more and more benefits. It has been five decades since efforts were made to change their economic and social conditions but still, there are no changes, their conditions are degrading.⁹⁰ In the hierarchical category, the Dalits are placed in the lowest strata and are continuously being oppressed, just to make sure that they cannot move to the higher position. Hence, according to the “Varna” system, all the power and privileges were bestowed on the upper caste and they had all the wealth and resources. As the upper classes had all the power, privileges and resources, they used the resources and considered themselves as the ultimate power.⁹¹ Every sphere of life, education, authority, status, privilege and others were controlled by these upper castes.⁹² On one hand, the upper castes enjoyed so many rights whereas on the other, the lower class and the Dalits were denied even their basic rights and were considered complete outcastes. They were deprived and denied from all economic, social, political and cultural spheres of life.⁹³

The ranks in which the castes were placed were based upon their education, occupation, social position, economic conditions and other such variables defined their position in the society.⁹⁴ The socio-economic condition of the backward classes affected factors like accessibility, availability and various factors available within the society. Several attempts are being made since the ages to determine their ranks within the society based on their socio-

⁹⁰ Mungekar, B.L. (1999). *State, Market and the Dalits: Analytics of the New Economic Policy*, in S.M. Michael (Ed.). *Dalits in Modern India: Culture and Vision*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp.287-302.

⁹¹ Louis, Prakash. (2003). *The political sociology of Dalit Assertion*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House. Pp. 53.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid. Pp. 54.

⁹⁴ Tiwari, S.C., Kumar Aditya, Kumar Ambrish. *In Development & standardization of a scale to measure socio-economic status in urban & rural communities India*. Indian Journal of Medical Research, 122, October 2005, Pp 309-314.

economic conditions. The psychologists were among the earliest to have attempted to determine the social class of the individuals.

Cattell mentioned about rating of prestige, intelligence quotient, income, occupation, and educational term as the five most essential factors which determined the primary social status of an individual, in his work *The Concept of Social Status*⁹⁵. He also explained of these factors being inter-correlated to 25 different occupations. Based on Indian studies, the earliest classification based on occupation was done by the British Registrar General. Next came **Prasad (1961)**, who classified the status on the basis of the monthly income of an individual in his work *Social Classification of Indian families*⁹⁶, which was later on modified in 1968 and has been in use since 1970.

Pareekh (1981) in his work *Manual of Socio-economic Status (Rural)*⁹⁷ dealt with the social status in the state of Assam. He said that the social status in Assam was based up on nine factors. The factors being caste, occupation of family head, education of family head, level of social participation of family head, land holding, housing, farm power, material possessions and the type of family. **Bhadra** also gave a brief study of the characteristics of social structure of Assam based on his theoretical, empirical and historical basis, in his work, “Caste and Class: Social Stratification in Assam”⁹⁸. On the basis of his study, it can be determined that Assam had various castes and Hindu as well as semi-Hindu tribes in their social structure. All these three groups came together and intermingled the three different traditions: Orthodox Hinduism, Vaishnava sectarianism and tribalism. This intermingling led to the modified tradition within Assam and was based on egalitarianism, mobility, flexibility

⁹⁵ Cattell, R.B. *The Concept of Social Status*. Journal of Social Psychology, 15, 1942. Pp. 293-308.

⁹⁶ Prasad, B.B. (1961). *Social Classification of Indian Families*. Journal of Indian Medical Association. Pp.250-251.

⁹⁷ Pareekh, U. (1981). *Manual of Socio-economic Status (rural)*. Delhi: Mansayan.

⁹⁸ Bhadra, K. ranjit. (1991). *Caste And Class: Social Stratification in Assam*. New Delhi: Hindustan Publishing Corporation. Pp 1-173.

and rigidity. All these factors have been affected since the past few years due to modernization.

Singh (1995)⁹⁹ in his work *Social Justice and Reservation Policy* said that though Uttar Pradesh formed the core centre for Indian politics, the Scheduled Castes, Tribes and OBCs were completely alienated and treated inferior and as outcastes. The government has implemented reservation of seats for SCs and OBCs to promote their welfare, but the number of these people in the public sectors is very less compared to those of the higher castes. The important aspects of social justice are political and economic development. If the oppressed and the backward classes do not get to voice their opinion and take part in these developments, the social justice on the basis of quality would not be achieved.

Lakshmaiah (1995) in the study *Programme For Scheduled Caste Labourers*¹⁰⁰ also stated that if the group for whom the development is targeted, is getting any benefit and also examined up to how much the programme for development is beneficial. **Michael (1999)** also talked about the changes in the contemporary Indian society in his edited version of *Dalits in Modern India*¹⁰¹. According to him, one of the most important changes in the Indian society was the realisation among the Dalits regarding their own identity. The Dalit Movement discards all the ideas regarding untouchability and impurity and envisions the formation of a new Indian society, where they aren't treated as indifferent and almost equal to the higher castes. It also revolves around the social, economic and political conditions of the Dalit society and how much they are prevalent in the society. **Women: Socio-economic Status and Issues**¹⁰² by **Singh (2000)** highlighted the problems that the SC and ST women scavengers and sweepers had to face in Uttar Pradesh and their economic conditions in the society. He

⁹⁹ Singh, A.K. *Social Justice And Reservation Policy in Uttar Pradesh*. Contemporary Social Work, Lucknow: Vol. XII, April, 1995.

¹⁰⁰ Lakshmaiah, T. & Reddy, S. (1995). *Programmes for Scheduled Caste Labourers*. Jaipur: Printwell.

¹⁰¹ Michael, S.M. (Ed.). (1999). *Dalits In Modern India: Vision And Values*. New Delhi: Sage Publications

¹⁰² Singh, S.K. (2000). *Women: Socio-economic Status and Issues*. Lucknow: New Royal Book Comp.

criticised the poor condition of the female scavengers in the society and their rehabilitation too. **Jogdand's (2000)**¹⁰³ edited version of *New Economic Policy and Dalits* stated that macro-economic policies said that state government must stop interfering in the public sectors. The proofs have also suggested that these factors had a lot of effect on the marginal sectors. The edited volume consisted of papers related to economic reforms brought about for Dalits and also the effect that it had on their economic condition and status.

The Indian Constitution has made provisions to promote the welfare and social justice for the backward and weaker sections of the society. The steps taken by the constitution in favour of the weaker sections are divided in three sections and listed below:

- Development
- Protective
- Positive discrimination

The central government has sponsored the measure taken for their education, economic and cultural upliftment. In 1970-80 The Special Component Plan was adopted in order to promote the welfare and development of the backward classes such as Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and OBCs. In 1979, the Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation (SDFC) were adopted with the aim to promote and encourage the entrepreneurs of the scheduled castes and tribes and help them financially for their economic development. The National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation was also developed in 1989 with the same aim of promoting self-employment and skill among the people of scheduled castes and tribes so they can start up any business. The National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers and their Dependents, launched in March

¹⁰³ Jogdand, P.G. (Ed.). (2000). *New Economic Policy And Dalits*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.

1992 also extended the period of its Eleventh Five Year Plan. The National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation have been in action since 24 January, 1997 in order to encourage the economic development and self-employment among the backward classes in order to help them in their technical field. It also offered loans to the students who wished to pursue higher education. These steps were taken by the committees in order to promote the welfare and development of the workers who are deprived and backward classes of the society in order to promote equal importance. Every sphere and studies talks about the steps taken in order to promote the development of the backward classes but there is a difference on the basis of location, time and the results and reports of the various programmes.

Sharma (1995) in his work, *Bhangi, Scavenger in Indian Society: Marginalization, Identity and Politicization of the Community*¹⁰⁴ briefly explained about the socio-economic status of the Bhangis in the society and their efforts of identifying themselves. He also talked about the efforts that Bhangis made for escaping the crisis they had to face in the society. This feeling of being deprived and oppressed has created a wide range of unification and politicization within the country and forms a core of the democracy.

Prasad (2000) also talked about the manual scavengers and sanitation workers in India's capital, Delhi in his work *Untouchable Freedom: A Social History of a Dalit Community*¹⁰⁵. It can be called a tradition of the higher class Indians to assign the members of the lower class, whom they called as untouchables, for the job of cleaning dry latrines, sewage, disposing garbage, sweeping and all other jobs related to scavenging. This formed the

¹⁰⁴ Sharma, Rama. (1995). *Bhangi, Scavenger in Indian Society: Marginality, Identity, and Politicization of the Community*. New Delhi: M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd., Pp.1-268.

¹⁰⁵ Prasad, Vijay. (2000). *Untouchable Freedom: A Social History of a Dalit Community*. New York: Oxford University Press.

mentality of the hierarchical Indian society. Since 1930s, the people from the community named Valmiki are being assigned as the job of manual scavengers, sweepers in Delhi. This community was named after the composer of the epic Ramayana, Valmiki. Prasad begins his work with the question as of why Valmikis have always been active for the violent protests that were directed towards the minority group such as Sikhs and Muslims. He further asks that why do these Valmikis work for those middle-class and upper-class Hindus who are the significant protectors of the law and order which subjects them to such a degraded position where the Valmikis and other small castes people are subjected to being outcastes and called untouchables. The answer of these questions can be found in the treatment since the past century. In the British colonial period, they were transformed from a group of landless agricultural farmers to a group of people who were made forced labour as sanitation workers. This way they were stigmatized and forged with the leading political workers who controlled the condition of their work. This mentality transformed them into strong Hindus and their religion was organized in a Hinduized manner, and led them to realize their identity. **Prashad** used history to explain about these people who were placed in the lowest strata of the Hindu caste order and were continuously engaging in activities, which were completely opposite to their interests. The historical books have chronological traces regarding the formation of sanitation system in the Delhi municipality and the importance of Valmiki community in the development. Prashad also says that the disposing of scum and waste materials wasn't the main occupation of these people, but was imposed on them by the British. The British made the people of this community, the forced labour with the aim of keeping the city, especially the areas they resided in, clean and hygienic. This became prevalent since ages and a time came when they were unable to quit their job, made bonded labours and strived for an increase in their wages. With this tradition, they became a part of scavenging in the governmental associations and were subjected to public service. If any developments were

proposed in the field of scavenging such as introduction of machineries, they were discarded in exchange of the Dalit labours who were ready to work with hand brooms, metal scoop, carry basket full of scum on their head for very small sum of money as their wages. Prashad brought in front of the people both conventional and historical records (documents of the Colonial and post-Independence period) obtained from the oral interviews of the members of the Valmiki community. He puts focus on the literature of the Colonial British officials, anthropologists, and political scientists and also which gives details about the points observed by the accounts of the various folk tales, stories, proverbs and sayings.

Jaffrelot (2005) also talked about the life of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891-1956) in his work *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*¹⁰⁶ and how he emerged to power as a strong leader in the modern history of India from the untouchable caste. His biography of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar showed him as an eminent figure of high ideals and pragmatism. He established himself and made a mark in the history as a scholar, activist, journalist and educator. His most significant mark was that of being a part of forming the constitution of India as the law minister of the first cabinet of Nehru. Ambedkar is one of the prominent figures from the Dalit community who still stands as an inspirational figure among the Dalits. **Jaffrelot (2005)**¹⁰⁷ published another work in the same year regarding Ambedkar where he puts focus on the three different pictures, as a social theorist, eminent politician and statesman, and as an eminent figure who strongly criticised and opposed the Hinduism and encouraged Buddhism, in order to free people of the social oppression. While talking of Ambedkar's life history, Jafrelot put forth the argument in each case that he was the first to be a symbol of political and powerful strategy among the Dalits. **Nagaraj (2012)** followed

¹⁰⁶ Jaffrelot, Christophe. (2005). *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*. (The CERJ Series in Comparative Politics and International Studies). Columbia University Press.

¹⁰⁷ Jaffrelot, Christophe. (2005). *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability*. Delhi: Permanent Black.

Ambedkar's steps and mentioned in his work *The Flaming Feet and Other Essays: The Dalit Movement in India*¹⁰⁸ that Dalits disregarded the traditional Hindu methods and also the past of them being considered as untouchables but he doesn't fail to mention that rebels in order to fight back need cultural memories too. Through this book, the author envisions the caste system related to Dalit politics. The book talks about the caste system of being the root or centre which is completely based on dignity, entitlement and the religious beliefs of the person. **Nagaraj's** works are important because it put forth the suggestion regarding the framework of the caste system which would provide equal opportunities to the oppressed class all over the country. His work included firstly that the ideas of Ambedkar and Gandhi must be reconciled, secondly, technocratic artisans formed because of modernity and lastly, regarding the history about the Dalits being outcaste and oppressed and humiliated, yet possessed some cultural domain. Similar kind of ideas are found in the works of Iradayam, **Mangubhai and Lee, Joel (2011)**¹⁰⁹, **Rao (2009)**¹¹⁰, **Thorat (2009)**¹¹¹, **Janagan (2010)**¹¹², **Krishnan (2009)**¹¹³, **Chalam (2008)**¹¹⁴ and **Ram (2009)**¹¹⁵.

Randhawa (2010) in his anthology *Dalit Literature: Contents, Trends and Concerns*¹¹⁶ discloses the complexity of the Dalit Literature which gradually becomes a fusion of textuality and contextuality, activism and aesthetics. He also puts forward the fusion of

¹⁰⁸ Nagaraj, D. R. (2012). *The Flaming Feet and Other Essays: The Dalit Movement in India*. Delhi: Permanent Black. Pp. 1-276

¹⁰⁹ Iradayam, Aloysius S.J., Mangubhai, P. Jayshree and Lee, Joel G. (2011). *Dalit Women Speak Out: Violence Against Dalit Women In India*. New Delhi: Zubaan Books.

¹¹⁰ Rao, Anupama. (2009). *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*. California: University of California Press.

¹¹¹ Thorat, Sukhadeo. (2009). *Dalits In India: Search for a Common Destiny*. New Delhi: Sage Publication.

¹¹² Janagan, Emmanuel. (2010). *The Status And Problems of Dalit In India*. Vdm Verlag

¹¹³ Krishnan, P.S. (2009). *Empowering Dalits For Empowering India: A Road Map*. Delhi: Manak Publications

¹¹⁴ Chalam, K.S. (2008). *Modernization And Dalit Education: Ambedkars Vision*. Jaipur: Rawat Publication

¹¹⁵ Ram, Nandu. (2009). *Beyond Ambedkar Essays on Dalits in India*. New Delhi: Har-anand Publications

¹¹⁶ Randhawa. Harbir Singh. (Ed.). (2010). *Dalit Literature: Contents, Trends and Concerns*. Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers.

perception and understanding of the concepts of the etiological, sociological, economic and literary history of the Dalits which contributed to develop the method of socio-political-cultural literary to understand their strategies and tactics in order to bring about a transformation in their literature, social status and economic as well as political background. The contents and trends of literature regarding the Dalits help to get a view of the mind-set of the people in the society. One specific perspective cannot be regarded to draw the conclusion about the literature; rather it is a collusion of various schools of thoughts that came up to form this emerging literature. Every contributor to this literature, a Dalit or a non-Dalit tried to analyse the studies and put forward the strong causes of all forms of abuses which the backward classes were subjected to be it social, economic, physical, verbal, racial caste, literary and so on. Buck and **Kannan's (2011)** edited *Tamil Dalit Literature: My Own Experience*¹¹⁷ talked about the Dalits of India and how the class which was the most oppressed and discriminated most badly, had no literary voice. Both on the national and international level, the literature of Dalits had a significant place. Most of this literature was translated from Tamil to English is contained in the volume with a precise introduction. All the nine authors who are mentioned in the book have somehow contributed their personal experiences as Dalit writers in the literary field. Seven of them had also written unpublished short stories and poems. Most of their works had harsh, brutal yet real characters, but most of their works were drawn from careful situations and characters. Dalit Literature is old and yet at the same time is fresh and new, and is a vivid description of the experiences of the Dalit people in the unfair world. In order to write about the oppression and hardships of the Dalits, the writer must have a strong conviction along with ability to criticise the society. Based on the Tamil context, it is described that the moment, a Dalit writer tries to free himself he is

¹¹⁷ Buck, David C. and Kannan, M. (Ed.). (2011). *Tamil Dalit Literature: My Own Experience*. (Translated). Pondicherry: Institut Francais De Pondicherry

arrested and the moment he opposes his criticism, his voice is lowered down and is strangled. The situation is such that he can't even escape the situation because if he tries to, his legs are broken and he is made a cripple. These writers are now lost in the files and pages who had a determined heart to achieve freedom but they were stabbed right in the heart, crushing down their hopes. They were repeatedly stabbed until they lost all their hope. Despite so many negligence and struggle, the Dalit descendants have somewhere been able to voice their opinion which is still prevalent in various echoes. While moving down the lane of bringing out the stories of the struggles of the Dalits, the writer himself takes up the challenges of the situation which comes to his way.

The most appropriate work which should be taken into consideration regarding the Balmiki community is that of **Valmiki (2003)**¹¹⁸ of his famous autobiography *Joothan: An Untouchable's life*. In the book, Valmiki describes the life courses of an invulnerable or the Dalits in the recently independent India of 1950s. "Joothan" means the defiled food left on the plate, usually left for an animal to be eaten or thrown away. Over the centuries, the untouchables or the Dalits are forced to eat the defiled food and the very word shows the pain, humiliation and poverty they were subjected to for living in the lowest strata of the society. Despite being abolished in 1949, untouchability was a bit prevalent in the Dalit society and they were subjected to discrimination, violence, deprived of the basic human rights and were a matter of ridicule. In the autobiography, Valmiki talked of his experience and transformation from a small caste deprived person into a strong political leader under the influence of the most prominent Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. *Joothan* perfectly describes the transformation of the Dalit community. They were silent for long and their sufferings had no end but his autobiography was the contribution to history of Dalits and manifesto of the transformation which led to human consciousness and social belonging. Similar kind of more

¹¹⁸ Valmiki, Omprakesh. (2003). *Joothan: A Dalits Life*. New York : Columbia University Press.

prominent texts are those of Aiyar (1923)¹¹⁹, Das (1985)¹²⁰, Goswami (1994)¹²¹, Jha (1997)¹²², Lal (1997)¹²³ (1999)¹²⁴ (2001)¹²⁵, and Vivek (1998)¹²⁶.

The review of above literatures reveal that many studies have been undertaken in the context of the Indian caste system, Dalits or lower castes and their marginalisation, deprivation, discrimination, etc. However these studies fail to address the issues of Balmiki Community in the hills of Darjeeling, who forms a part of the marginalised lot.

1.5: Research Questions

The review of literature reveals certain gaps. The following research questions have been designed to bridge the existing gap. The researcher has identified the following research questions:

1. What have been the nature, pattern and process of Migrations of the *Balmiki* community to Darjeeling and surrounding areas?
2. How has the *Balmiki* as a migrant community resorted/responded to the push and pulls of migrations?
3. What has been the role of the *Balmiki* Samaj in consolidating the community's hopes and aspirations, dreams, desires and demands?

¹¹⁹ Aiyar, T.S. (1923). *Problems of Depressed Classes*. Madras: M. Subrahmanya.

¹²⁰ Das, Debi Prasad. (1985). *The Untouchable Story*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers.

¹²¹ Goswami, Bonomali. (1994). *Untouchables: A Novel*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.

¹²² Jha, Ganganath. (1997). *Conditions of the Bhangis in the 50th Year of Independence*, in Makhan Jha (ed.), *Scheduled Castes Today*. New Delhi: M.D. Publications.

¹²³ Lal, Shyam. (1997). *Separate Reservation- A Must for Sweepers*, in Bindeshwar Pathak (ed.), *Social Justice And Development of Weaker Sections*. New Delhi: Inter India.

¹²⁴ Lal, Shyam. (1999). *The Changing Bhangis of India: A Study of Caste Association*. Jaipur: Sublime Publications.

¹²⁵ Lal, Shyam. (2001). *Untold Story of a Bhangi Vice-Chancellor*. Jaipur: University Book House.

¹²⁶ Vivek P.S. (1998). *The Scavengers: Exploited Class of City Professionals*. New Delhi: Himalaya Publishing House.

4. Is it possible to trace the haunting of the Ambedkarian visions among the *Balmikis* in Darjeeling? If yes, how far his vision can be implemented to bring about this dalit community into the main stream? What time frame is required to marginalize the gap between the main stream and the dalit Balmikis?
5. Whether the Balmikis are socially, economically and politically deprived? If yes, what measures may be taken to empower the Balmikis of Darjeeling hills?

1.6: Significance of the Study

The literature on Dalit is vast, ever increasing and emerging in large quantities. However, the present research work looks into the complex ways in which the identity of the Dalit has been constructed within the ambit of the organisations and culture of the district of Darjeeling. Unlike most other works on Dalits, the present work brings forth the ‘agency’ that Dalit Balmikis exhibit due to the fact of their being ‘dalit’, being ‘downtrodden’. This aspect of their lives, i.e. being Dalit, and downtrodden has not propelled them into further misery; rather they have made use of this condition and twisted their circumstances to their own advantage leading to disadvantage in many sphere of life in the hills – this is what sets my work totally apart from others. The significance the work also lies in the two-fold approach it adopts:-

On the one hand, an examination of the challenges faced by Dalit Balmikis while encountering everyday cultural practices and on the other an evaluation of how culture as a whole absorbs, marginalizes and/or throttles them. In this process, what kind of an identity emerges is important for analytical purposes. The work will have a “identity approach” that will question the division of labour; herein lies the point of departure from most other previous Dalit Balmiki research. Moreover, significant contribution to literature is hoped to

be made by looking into location-specific studies.

As with all mainstream social science theory and discourse, the Dalit discourse has been largely confined to analysing and illuminating the lives of Dalit men, ignoring or negating the gender dimension. It may also be emphasised to facilitate the immense and multifaceted narrative on caste has similarly remained unvoiced on the Balmikis' issues. Dalit political affairs and research has also remained largely regional blind. Last but not the least; my work is a critique of all dominant ideas about Dalit writings degradation. True, dalit Balmikis are at the receiving end of antagonism from three structures – caste, class and patriarchy... But, as stated earlier, they are not accepting life as it is – they are fighting, struggling, and deriving an agency for themselves.

In an attempt to deconstruct Dalit Brahminical discourse oppression and discover the sense of agency and worth in their lives, my thesis is a critique of erstwhile notions of '*equality among the unequals*' where Balmikis are passive victims; not agents of change. My work is significant because it has a committed approach to understanding Balmiki lives from a post modernist approach exploration of their experiences as migrant in Darjeeling; this produces more complete and less distorted knowledge than that produced by Darjeeling researchers.

This brings us to the question of 'Dalits epistemology' – which says that dalit Balmikis go ahead lives to facilitate the extensively different contours and patterns to those of upper caste, and adopting the dalits standpoint may reveal the subsistence construction of human relationships. Says Harding, an epistemology is a theory of knowledge. It answers questions about who can be a 'knower' (can Dalit Balmikis?); what tests beliefs must pass in order to be legitimated as knowledge (only tests against caste experiences and observations ?) ; what kinds of things can be known (can 'subjective truths' count as knowledge ?), and so forth.

Dalit discourse have argued that traditional epistemologies, whether intentionally or unintentionally, systematically exclude the possibility that Balmikis could be ‘knower’s’ or ‘agents of knowledge’; they claim that the voice of science is a masculine one; that history is written from only the point of view of men (of the dominant class and race); that the subject of a traditional sociological sentence is always assumed to be a man. They have proposed alternative theories of knowledge that legitimate Dalits as knower’s.¹²⁷ Researching Dalit Balmikis in Darjeeling Hills has proved that Balmikis are the ‘agents of knowledge’... their voice is also one that can lay claim to reason... and finally, their history (so far neglected) deserves to be studied. Dalit Balmikis has already emerged as an alternative theory of knowledge; and this is what my work asserts.

Related to this comes the vast and novel domain of post-modernism. This along with other variants of post-modernism is crucial of universalistic impressive theories and discards the existence of an authentic self. Its focal point as an alternative is on fragmentation, multiple subjectivities, pluralities and flux.¹²⁸ Dalit lives tell us a similar tale – here, emphasis is not laid on any grand meta-narratives, but on micro-narratives (includes popular stories, myths, legends and tales) that bestow legitimacy upon social institutions. Not only that, dalit stories that form the foundation of this research are a means through which the individual’s relationship to the community, the community’s relationship to itself and its environment is woven together and this is what makes my work all the more unique.

An approach is almost definitional one which starts out from dalit experiences. This debate throws light on the recent controversy between feminists as to who can represent whom? Dalit feel marginalized by upper caste, Brahminical – they feel that at platforms, workshops, seminars and conferences organised for them, it is not their voice that is heard, but that of the

¹²⁷ Sandra Harding. *Is There A Feminist Method ?*, in *Social Research Methods A Reader* (ed) Clive Seale, Routledge, London and New York (2004), Pg. 458

¹²⁸ Mary Maynard. *Methods, Practice and Epistemology – the debate about feminism and research*, in *Social Research Methods A Reader* (ed) Clive Seale, Routledge, London and New York (2004), Pg. 467

Brahminical. Thus, what is urgently needed is a Dalit standpoint epistemology.

The nature/characteristic features of this epistemology will be such that :-

- Attention will be given to the specific needs of Dalit, which are widely different from those of other early writings.
- Their voices (be it through oral sources, or written forms) should be attentively heard and efforts should be made to bring them out into the wider field of accepted literature. (Today, this work is being done on a wide scale, Dalit Bhangi/Balmiki literature is getting translated and reaching out to the middle class, upper-caste public on an unprecedented scale)
- Harding says, that despite the fact that studying subalterns is not fresh, studying them from the standpoint of their personal experiences as a result that they can comprehend themselves and the world can maintain practically account all. The major requirement of a Dalit standpoint epistemology is that Dalit Balmikis should be studied from the perspective of their own experiences so that they develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them.
- Another requirement of a Dalit standpoint epistemology is that the gap between the ‘anthropologist’ and the ‘other’; between the familiar ‘we’ and the exotic ‘they’; between the ‘researcher’ and the ‘Dalit women’ should be eradicated. Clifford Geertz quotes Loring Danforth in his introduction of the book *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* and stresses on this sensitive, but vital relationship between the ‘we’ and the ‘they’... Danforth writes in the introduction called ‘Self and Other’, “*The gap between a familiar ‘we’ and an exotic ‘they’ is a major obstacle to a meaningful understanding of the Other, an obstacle that can only be overcome through some form of participation in the world of the Other... If, however, it is possible to reduce the distance between the anthropologist and the Other, to bridge the gap between ‘us’*”

and 'them', then the goal of a truly humanistic anthropology can be achieved."¹²⁹

Thus the research on Dalit Balmikis can be rightly fitted into the contours of what might be termed as 'Dalit standpoint epistemology', and this is what adds newness to it.

1.7: Methodology

After taking into consideration, the nature of the problem, a brief descriptive and analytical study of the methods are presented below.

The books, newspapers, documents, clippings, newsletters and every other means of the study were thoroughly analysed. A number of families belonging to the community were interviewed in order to arrive to the answers of various questions. To collect the primary information and data, the following processes were adopted: Clear and specific interviews (semi-structured and informal as well as structured), narration of the stories by individuals, observations of the participants and discussions with the groups. This is done in order to present to the readers a mixed method of study where both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study are synthesised and verified. Based on the mixed method, three types of interviews were conducted- structured, semi-structured and lastly, informal or unstructured. (Morse and Field: 1995). The research consists of the primary qualitative information as well as the statement of interviews gathered over a period of time. The study highlights all the necessary questions such as why the tradition of scavenging are linked to only a particular caste. It also explores the condition of men and women sanitation workers of this community in the hills of Darjeeling. The quantitative information (demographic structure, income status,

¹²⁹ Clifford Geertz "Being There" in *Social Research Methods A Reader* (ed) Clive Seale, Routledge, London and New York (2004), Pg. 238-239

occupational structure) about the Dalit community in the hills of Darjeeling was gained via the household surveys which were conducted.

A Dalit post-modernist perspective is required in order to conduct such a research. By using the method of personal interviews (open-ended) the researcher attempts to portray the histories and lives of the Balmikis met during the field study

As per the statement of a social science researcher, *we cannot give voice, but we do hear voices that we record and interpret*. All the recorded interviews were translated and interpreted in local dialect. During analysis of the transcripts, the stories were reconstructed in order to match the action of the statement. In this research, interpretations are represented to the maximum. However, most of the times, a group leader (of any Dalit organisation or women welfare association) or a local non Balmiki was present before the researcher during the interview. One of the most important aspect of the interview was that a number of Dalit women came up in order to tell about their hardships, miseries and past experiences. They shared their story and this made them believe that their voice was getting heard and a medium through which they would be helped. This gave them a ray of hope that someday they would be respected.

Their personal experiences and narratives played a major role in helping the researcher understand their way of life which was analysed through qualitative research technique. Through this method, it was possible to focus on their subjective experiences and meaning. For interviewing, semi-structured and the informal technique was adopted. It was difficult to gain all the necessary information through empirical means but the method was beneficial as they highlighted more on the personal experiences rather than the external life. As far as the questions regarding the Balmiki agencies are concerned, traces could be detected only

through the lengthy sessions of listening to them, recording and trying to understand their standpoints.

Mary Maynard¹³⁰ claimed that quantitative research (surveys and interviews) were the sub-alternate forms of knowing the truth whereas the researcher and the collected data as well as the social fact which aren't dependant on data collection are detached in quantitative research. The qualitative method of research gives a brief view regarding the personal experiences. Hence, the qualitative form of research is more appropriate for research among the Dalits as it helps them in voicing their opinions, and is also significant in Dalit politics. Often the informal and semi-structured method of interviewing is considered in the field of Dalit interview as it is more appropriate and helpful regarding the Balmikis. As the Balmikis were degraded and oppressed, they are suspicious and doubtful of any outsider to interview them.

1.7.1: Data Sources

The process of data collection has been as follows:-

Field studies in Darjeeling Hills (Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong and other hills adjoining areas) were conducted.

Perusals of sources have been both at Darjeeling Hills and some parts of Rajasthan and Haryana. Nepali, English, Hindi, and Rajasthani and Haryani (Khadi Hindi Language) sources have been tapped for the research.

Literature on the Dalit has been acquired from Central Library, North Bengal University, Centre for Ambedkar Studies, Department of Philosophy, North Bengal University, National Library, Kolkata, and Ramkrishan Mission Library, Kolkata.

¹³⁰ Mary Maynard "Methods, Practice and Epistemology – the debate about feminism and research" in Social Research Methods A Reader (ed) Clive Seale, Routledge, London and New York (2004), Pg. 465

Works of Dalit Balmikis writers in Hindi, autobiographical accounts, short stories, poems and plays; testimonies; musical songs, has been collected from Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi.

Conversations with Professors of Political Science, History and Nepali at the North Bengal University and also conversations with Activists of Manual Scavenging Movement, Haryana have proved to be of great help.

Intensive and In-Depth interview of Dalit Balmikis, their family members, their community leaders, executive members of Balmiki Harijan Sangh, representatives of the Governmental and non-governmental organisations has been conducted alongside participant observation.

Interviews with voluntary organisations at Haryana (Vimal Kumar, MSC) and interactions with all-India based Dalit organisations and their leaders (NDHR & Safai Karmaachari Andolan) assembled at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, on Manual Scavenging has greatly influenced the work.

1.7.2: Data Collection

While the interviews were spread out over different parts of Darjeeling Hills, Rajasthan and Haryana, places where contacts could be made and people where Balmiki population have settled, were visited. Language had been one great obstacle because many had spoken in their mother tongue either in Rajasthani or in Haryani. Translation were very slow; most of the time, even translators had difficulty in understanding various Dalit dialects. Secondly, the enormous distance between the field and resercher's native place sometimes made the collection of data an arduous task.

The respondents were diverse and varied. The criteria for selection of respondents weren't fixed and clear. The only fact that was to be fixed was that the interview was to be open-

ended; the selection of respondents was itself to be a process. Cultural, social and political variety was to be the driving principle underlying the selection of respondents; however, the choice of actual persons and individuals within these broad parameters was dependent on the collaboration and co-operation of our grassroots connections at all places.

1.9: Limitation of the Study

The present research is based on an exploratory method which includes interviews with members of the community. There is no written history of the community in the Hills, and therefore, recourse to oral history becomes important and unavoidable. Under such circumstances, the study is likely to suffer from possible biases but my desperate endeavor was not to be undermined or over estimate the respondents while interviewing. Moreover, the limitations with the present study have also been due to non availability of enough literatures. Whatever limited literature were there, were in Hindi, there was hardly any English translation of that literature which was no doubts a serious constrain for the researcher to carry out his studies. This constitutes the limitations of the present study.

The Balmikis leaving in the three subdivisions of Darjeeling under the jurisdiction of my research are residing here and there sporadically. It was difficult to identify and to have their interview in ease.

Furthermore, the community lacks homogeneity, as it has been further sub divided into many minor sub castes, which made the research limited to locate them according to their titles. Here, we cannot pronounce that every family member of the community has been covered under this research. Apart from this there have been many mixed family groups which have been more Nepalese than Balmikis in their socio cultural practices.

The migration of the Balmikis, from different states of India has created the sense of belongingness of their native states. The people those who have migrated from Bihar, use the

title Rawat or Routh, though their Caste Certificate issued by the Government of West Bengal, as assigned them with the sub title of '*Methor*', some of them had refused for household surveys, as such they have been excluded from the study. Moreover, the people those who have re-migrated to their native places in the late 1980s and post 2011s because of the separate statehood agitation in the hills could not be contacted except very few, and those who could be contacted, could not come out with the answers, or were not interactive in the discussions to the questions of the schedules.

During the interviews the participations of the male member in compare to their female counterparts was larger in number. It was also observed that the male members of the Balmikis families were more enthusiastic then their female counterparts. The females in many cases hardly made any contribution in the discussions, because of the traditional folds to mingle with an outsider. As a result of which the feedback from the female section of the society has restricted the research to a certain level.

As far as knowledge goes this research work being the first ever work in the hills on the Balmiki community has added the new dimension in the dalit literature but simultaneously, due to speedy changes in the socio-economic processes of the hills have weaken the study to some extent . In the same direction to the aforementioned, the second wave of Gorkhaland movement post 2007-17 have greatly diverted the issues from the grassroots level to the political one, because of which the recent information of the targeted group could not be touched upon due to the time constrain, which may raise question regarding the reliability of the study.

In those hay days of the Gorkhaland movement during its second phase it was very difficult to make a balance between the political at the core (centre) and community at the peripheries. It was even harder to convince them to provide with proper data to which one may opts for the concluding remarks.

1.10: Chapterisation

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Historicising Balmiki Migration

Chapter 3: Empowering the Balmikis: The Limits of Constitutional Mechanisms

Chapter 4: Socio-Economic and Political Processes and Balmiki Marginalisation

Chapter 5: On the possibility of Balmiki Consciousness: Unaddressed Aspirations of the Marginalised

Chapter 6: Summary and Concluding Observations

Historicising Balmiki Migration

2.1: Introduction

Migration is a common phenomenon which means movement of an individual or a gathering from one place to another. Migration was triggered by growing problems such as increase in unemployment and existence in regional imbalance in the country. Migration usually occurs when the region of origin fails to fulfil the requirements of the people inhabiting, fails to address their issues and problems like social, economic, or otherwise, and fails to provide the opportunity of equality, on the one hand and on the other hand, the economic opportunities, social change and other related attraction on other regions causes' migration. Hence, it can be said that migration is a mixture of push and pull factors. People usually migrate to regions that provide them with job opportunities due to varied economic development.¹ This migration of people from one place to another brings about economic development, changes the social condition and also organizes the political structure.²

Modernization and industrialization is usually leading to the rapid growth of the urban towns and cities. The globalization leading to rapid growth has led to investment in various regions, which is contributing towards the fast growing cities. The side effect is the slums, in these urban areas, which are growing four times faster than that of the city. The rapid growth demands for several employments around the sectors that of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labours, which is just darkening day by day, and is a primary bad effect of the globalization, liberalisation and modernization. Migrated people often have to work for long hours; their condition of living is poor as well as the social conditions. They are considered as

¹ SVD, Stanislaus, L. and SVD, Joseph, Jose. (Ed.). (2007). Migration and Mission in India. Delhi: Ishvani Kendra. Pp. Viii.

² Jackson, J.A. (1969). (Ed.). Migration. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-10.

out-castes and do not even get access to the basic requirements of life. In the destination, the migrant labours often help to increase the market by reducing the cost of labour. The place of origin of the migrants is also affected due to migration. Not only is this, even the income, investment, pattern of expenditure, and relations of household and community level also affected. The bargaining power for the migrants is low as well. In the urban industries, a number of these migrant labours are employed, where any lack of loss just adds up to their poor condition.³

Sociologists are also concerned about these migrants who have moved from one place to another. The study of the migration has a sharp variation between ‘before’ and ‘after’ chronologies. The systematic study regarding the disassociation or desocialization is present in very less numbers, about the movement of these individuals from one place to another. While migrating, the migrant carries with himself the memories of the past and also is a bit dependant on socialization, age, and the situation which caused his departures, his personality. He brings other such factors into his new environment. The migration is equivalent to a child moving out of the house for the first time for school or any such situation where he moves into a new environment.⁴ The often disregard and rejected memories of the past have a significant role to play while describing the experience of migration. Two important can be drawn here. The first is the common myth that the migrants have forgotten their old traditions and stick to their new ones. The next being that full descriptions of the past of the migrants wasn’t taken into much consideration, and is described as the ‘progressive idea’. It has always been assumed that present experiences were more significant. The society into which the people migrate, rather the receiving end has no idea about the condition of these people. The society accepts the immigrants based on their

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

present conditions, and usually the social scientists have looked to them in the same manner for showing the concern regarding these immigrants.⁵

The number of immigrants in today's world is abruptly increasing. Most of them live far away from their native land/ birth place in order to earn money and return home occasionally, and finally move into a new place altogether without even indicating towards it. The movement of such immigrants was termed as 'transients' by Richmond⁶ in his study where he talked of the British migrants returning to Canada. There are other stories too which talk about the return of the migrants as those by Appleyard⁷, Hernandez⁸ and Wilder-Okladek⁹ OECD¹⁰ talked about the futilities of assuming that migration was only a one-time process.¹¹

In the receiving society, the migrants are often the minorities, as they are present in very less number. The attention/focus is often moved from the process of migration and settlement as these minority groups face a number of problems in the receiving society such as linguistic, ethnicity and also the problem due to social background which leads to exclusion from the society. Most of the studies regarding the social problems of the migrant have failed to explain the concept of the society as a whole. Studies of Malzberg¹², Lee¹³, and Rex¹⁴ suggest that the immigrants aren't the problems but their past experiences probe the social problem

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Richmond, A.H. (1967). *Post War Immigrants in Canada*. Toronto: N.P.

⁷ Appleyard, R.T. *Determinants of Return Movement*. The Economic Record, 38. September 1962. Pp. 352-368.

⁸ Alvarez, J. Hernandez. (1967). *The Return Migration to Puerto Rico*. Berkeley.

⁹ F. Wilder-Okladek, 'The Return Movement of Jews to Austria' (M.Sc. Thesis, London 1965).

¹⁰ OECD, *Emigrant Workers Returning to their Home Country*, Final Report and Supplement (Paris, 1967)

¹¹ Jackson, J.A. (1969). (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-10.

¹² 'Mental Disease among Puerto Ricans in New York State', The Psychiatric Quarterly, Supplement, 22 (1948), Pp. 300-308.

¹³ E.S. Lee, 'Socio-Economic and Migration Differentials in Mental Disease', Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly, XLI (July 1963), Pp. 249-268.

¹⁴ Rex, J. and Moore, R. (1967). *Race and Conflict*. London.

for people of particular age, occupation, housing, marital status, social issues of given area at given point of time.¹⁵

Migration theory was first formulated by E.G. Ravenstein in the two papers of 'The Law of Migration' of 1881 and 1889 respectively. The representation of the beginning of attempt which relates to the factors in a systematic way is determined by the demographic and economic variables of the law in relation to the respective representations. These factors thus help in understanding the difference of temporary and permanent residence changes. Lee and other developers have suggested that to completely understand the distance movement, be it long or short complete analysis of factors like origin, destined area, obstacles on the way and decision of moving must be done.

The researchers are further being drawn towards the new area of the assimilation of migrants into the new society. The immigrants have a major contribution towards the social change as they shape up the ideas of the new society in which they reside.¹⁶

Despite the presence of so many materials regarding the process of migration, scholars can only produce the generalized, subjective and sketchy study of the process because the exact information, current situation and statistics isn't present. Apart from the vital statistics, the statistics of the migration process too is a bit unsatisfactory which requires a lot of improvement.¹⁷ Hence, in the current world, manpower is drawn towards economic as well as better social opportunities.¹⁸

¹⁵ Jackson, J.A. (1969). (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-10.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Beijer. G. (1969). *Modern Pattern of International Migratory Movements*. In Jackson, J.A. (1969). (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Also See, United Nations, working Group on Social Demography, Report (1968)Pp.13

¹⁸ Beijer. G. (1969). *Modern Pattern of International Migratory Movements*. In Jackson, J.A. (1969). (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Also See, International Labour Office, Human resources for Industrial Development. (1967). Pp. 187 ff.

Migration is an old process, prevalent since the history of man and scholars are digging in to find out the general theory of migration. Migration has been a demographic problem of mankind. It has an impact on the population of both, the place of origin as well as that of destination, and the economy. The shift in population often leads to economic problems of the area and consecutively causes apolitical problems which are due to the restrictions implied on the international immigrants, tending to cross the political boundaries. The people involved in the migration also needs to have social psychology as it requires the procedure of making decision, which may help him as he moves into the new society. Migration can as well be considered the sociological problem as it affects the social structure and cultural system of the place of origin, as well as that of the destination, and it also affects the immigrant.¹⁹

2.2: Motivation of Migration

The most frequently asked and the least answered question is ‘why do people move/migrate’. The reason for migration is not known by the immigrants themselves. Most people (migrants) often answer to these questions as ‘work’, ‘family reasons’, ‘studies’ and others, but these answers do not contribute towards the psycho analytical process of understanding the motive of migration. It does not even provide an insight as in what their mental conditions was while making the decision.²⁰ The ‘push- pull’ theory often covers up all the motives behind the migration. This theory suggests that people often migrate due to the socio-economic conditions which ‘pushes’ people from their place of origin while the destinations attracts or ‘pulls’ these immigrants towards them.²¹

¹⁹ Jansen, Clifford. (1969). *Some Sociological Aspects of Migration*. In Jackson, J.A. (Ed.). Migration. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 60.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid. Also See, Thomas, D. S. (1941). *Social and Economic Aspects of Swedish Population Movements*. New York.

The geographical movement of the people have been described by P.George²² in two reasons:

- i) Movement because of necessity.
- ii) Movement due to the economic needs of the destination or receiving country.

The first one characterises usually the political and religious cause, due to which the population is pushed towards the receiving country, as the racial, religious and national groups where they aren't required. And in the second case, the receiving country 'pulls' the population towards themselves in times of economic needs, when they are 'pushed' by their place of origin.

2.3: Integration of Migrants

Milton M Gordon²³ very specifically represents the problems of ethnic groups in migration. His work is directly related to migration. He says that the groups assimilate after the seven sub-processes:-

- i) Cultural pattern changes.
- ii) Entrance in relation with the receiving society in terms of large scale primary group or societal system of gatherings and establishments or societal structure.
- iii) Inter-marriage.
- iv) Development in sense of ethnicity or people hood in the receiving society.
- v) No discriminatory behaviour of the receiving society towards new people.
- vi) No prejudiced attitude towards the new group of people.
- vii) Lastly, lack of conflict between the host society and new group in terms of value and power in both, civic and public life.

²² P. George, '*Quelques types de migrations de populations suivant la composition Professionnelle et Sociale Des Migrants*', International Population Conference, Vienna, 1959.

²³ Gordon, M.M. (1964). *Assimilation in American Life*. New York.

- The following stages of assimilation are attributed by the seven sub-processes.
 - i) Cultural/behavioural
 - ii) Structural
 - iii) Marital
 - iv) Identification
 - v) Attitude reception
 - vi) Behaviour reception
 - vii) Civic

Any of the two variant goal systems can help in analysing the process of assimilation.

- 1) The migrants adapting to the cultures of the receiving society.
- 2) The theory of ‘melting pot’ was cultures are exchanged between the host society and the new group of people. This develops a new cultural system which does not belong to any of the two groups.
- 3) The ‘cultural pluralism’ is the goal system where the individual identity will be pertained despite the existence among several groups. In such a case, the groups aren’t disappeared behind the communal identity.²⁴

According to the hypothesis of Gordon²⁵, the first among all the assimilation (acculturation). He believes that when none of the assimilations occur, cultural assimilation would continue to take place and would be the only one existing. He also believes that if cultural assimilation occurs, the other kinds of assimilations would occur to.

²⁴ Ibid. Also See, Jansen, Clifford. (1969). *Some Sociological Aspects of Migration*. In Jackson, J.A. (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 68.

²⁵ M.M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*, (New York, 1964). Also See, Jansen, Clifford. (1969). *Some Sociological Aspects of Migration*. In Jackson, J.A. (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 68.

Another feature that contributes towards the integration of migrants is the role played by families and friends who migrated into society and were a part of the established community of immigrants. Joseph P. Fitzpatrick²⁶ considers this role to be pretty essential because the individuals who suddenly migrate into a new area without any known community or individual will become a subject to disorganized society. Immigrant community suddenly appears to be weak and lesser in strength in the new society. The new migrants follow chain migration; signifying that they move into the same place, their ancestors migrated in. This also explains the reason of settlement into the similar areas as that of the migrators before them. Both, international and internal migrations have provided evidences regarding the above mentioned factors.²⁷

2.4: Narration of Migration

As per the modern history, when the land routes between Asia and Europe was blocked by the Ottoman Turks when they annexed Constantinople in 1453, the European rulers found out sea routes across Atlantic and Indian Ocean, and began the trade. Eventually, the Europeans developed their colonies in America, Asia, Africa and Australia. The forced migration first originated in America due to its tradition of slave made in the economy of plantation and mining. Slave trade lasted for four centuries which eventually arose in 16th century as that from Africa by Portuguese, French, British, Spanish and Dutch. Millions of slaves were deported Africa and this still remains one of the greatest forms of forced international migration (Hassan 2005:294). However, the longest migration in the course of history was that of of Europeans to America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, several of Indians migrated to different parts of the world in order to work for British. Some migrated to Burma, Malaysia and Singapore to work in British rubber

²⁶ J.P. Fitzpatrick, *'The Importance of "Group" during the time spent Immigrant Assimilation'*, The International Migration Review, I (Fall 1966), Pp. 5-16.

²⁷ G. Fofi, *'Immigrati a Torino'*, Ponte, 18 (7), (1962), Pp. 940-951.

plantations. Some migrated to Caribbean region to work in sugar plantation while some went to South Africa to do the work of mining. All these kind of factors such as coffee, tea and rubber plantation industrial revolution in England in 18th century, national and internal migration became important all over the world due to the attraction and increase of capitalist economy. Various skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labourers migrated from the internal regions or villages of labourers migrated from the internal regions or villages of India once the enterprises of British were set up in various cities and ports of India, such as Surat, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. (Matthew 2005: 1-2)

2.5: Theories of Migration

There is no particular theory of migration, as a complex factor. Although there are various writers and scholars who have contributed to it by bringing out the social, political and economic causes of migration.

2.5.1: The Classical Theory of Labour Migration

Classical economists have brought forward the assumption of labours being homogenous who can remain mobile within one country in the course of long run. The classical economists take into consideration, the labours as much as the capitalists, as they help to meet the immediate demands. The dependant variable always remains to be the supply of labour whereas the independent is that of the demand. The labour migration model can be drawn the assumption of maximized profits is added to that of demand. The labour migration model can be drawn the assumption of maximized profits is added to that of the above mentioned assumptions of the classical economists. The different geographical factors also have a contribution to make to the varied range of production in different areas. The classical theorists believed the cause of varied productions to be fertility of land but later on it was found that the size of the market and mineral resources within the area also contributed

towards the productions. Due to these advantages, a number of employees were drawn towards it which also led to increase demand of labour. The advancement of technology and growing advantages, contributed to increased demand of labour which further as per the assumptions of classical economists led to increased supply of labour. The labour is usually drawn towards the offer of higher wages in case of short-term but in long-term scenarios, the equalized wages over the nation would be severely affected by the movement of labour.²⁸

According to the first model, if the number of people is diminished by emigration without affecting the natural division of location would lead to increased wages and will assume an essential part in halting and switching the impact of displacement. However, the second model believes, due to emigration the economy of the place of origin is severely affected and chances of employment/wages are thus reduced, and emigration is continuous at an even higher rate.²⁹ Hence, it can be concluded that in case of both the models, the level of employment was considered to be proportional to the determinant of migration. Hence, the question of migration being cumulative or self-correcting takes a turn towards the impact of migration on the upcoming wages and employment opportunities. Often people move into the new locations in search of better job opportunities overlooking the distance of existing job opportunities. However, the models would be applicable only if the migration was determined by wages and employment opportunities. But as per the proofs or evidences provided above, such simple relationships do not exist.³⁰

If the fact of migration not being necessarily connected to employment is accepted, it will gradually become clear as in why the classical economists fail to answer the questions regarding financial causes and effect of relocation. A brief understanding of the economic

²⁸ Lind, Horold. (1969). *Internal Migration in Britain*. In Jackson, J.A. (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 74-75.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

factors (infrastructure of an area within the state), geographical factor (distance from the populated area), psychological factor (image of area) and political factor (newly development policies) will give a precise knowledge regarding the causes of migration.³¹

The new approach about the questions concerning the trends of migration is only recognised when all the complex problems regarding the population of governance in certain geographical areas (internal part of the migration). The trends may usually be related to self-correction, efficiency of the economic which may be cumulative or undesirable. Recognition of the factors helps to encourage the other phenomenon once the role of employment in the process of migration is devalued. Movement regarding residence and retirement is also involved in the process. Although the economists ignored both these trends. The private decisions regarding the migration of the individuals aren't much different but yet considerations influence employment in industries. However, even after presentation of all these points, the definition regarding migration is unclear, and destination regarding migration is completely dependent upon the size of the area. The distance towards the migration is also regarded genuine as per the choice of the individual.³²

The three approaches are openly confronted by the people who are interested to understand the motives of migration only if the sociologist are more interested than, 'a summed up articulation of how occasions happen' and also those who aren't prepared, 'to consign the journey for intentions to the limbo of antiquated superstitions.'³³ There are two possibilities, first, by understanding the motive of migration by the statements of the migrants and next that we develop the objectives of migration only by imputing the statements of the migrants

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Lundberg, G.A. (1939). *Foundations of Sociology*. New York. Pp. 260.

with that of the objective structural study. The last one being, the descriptive motive of migrant is mixed with that of our own account of based objective interference.³⁴

Each approach regarding the study of migration has a number of problems associated to it. The structural factors influence these imputes motives and the differential perception and evaluation which are denied is also constituted in the studies. It also puts emphasis on purposive rational behaviour. The limitations of the factors have been well described by the economic model of 'push-pull'. The motivation is thoroughly analysed with the help of this model of 'push-pull'. In this model, the socio-economic conditions constitute for the 'push' factors whereas the opportunities and prosperity constitute for the 'pull' factor. Usually there is a problem associated with the approach of push-pull and a difference is drawn between the factors of 'push' and 'pull'. It can be said that the 'push' and 'pull' effect comprises for all the factors. A significant example can be providing housing for the motive of migration. In the mentioned case, the 'push' factor is that of the unsatisfactory supplies for the housing, whereas the 'pull' factor is comprised of the factor of improving the housing. The maximization of wants/satisfaction is also directly related to the motive of the approach of 'push-pull'. The balance between external and impersonal forces is also effective for reducing the complex decision of migration.³⁵

With the introduction of new pattern of economic development for money, new employment opportunities also came. The demanded of labours also exceeded the supply in case of colonial administration, plantations, a mission as well as traders frequently. This was essential in the early days of colonial rules when the money economy did not have significant impact on the administration. The demand for the goods bought by money wasn't much prevalent in the era. The more frequent matter wasn't that of money not being attractive but

³⁴ Taylore, R. C. (1969). *Migration and Motivation: A Study of Determinants and Types*. In Jackson, J.A. (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 99-133.

³⁵ Ibid.

that of the attraction of sufficient members due to low wage. In the era, the tool of cheap labour was that of forced labour.³⁶

2.5.2: Ravenstein's Theory of Migration

The theory of inter-country migration with a set of generalization in century was proposed by E.G Ravenstein, founder of modern migration research and analysis with the help of data regarding the birth place. He proposed laws or generalizations of migrations, the most famous of these are 'relocation increments in volume as ventures and trade create and transport makes strides', and the 'major cause of migration are economic' (as quoted by Sheldon 1997:19). The principles proposed by him about migration still have an important aspect in the study of migration.

2.5.3: Push and Pull Theory of Evert Lee

The economic basis of migration is well constituted in the 'push-pull' theory proposed by Evert Lee. He explained the factors affecting volume of migration, eight years after Ravenstein, in 1966. He tried to explain, the pace of origin 'pushing', while the destination or receiving 'pulls' the immigrants. The major cause for the migration is the lack of job opportunity in the rural areas. The growth of population in the rural sectors led to pressure on agriculture resources (Malthusian pressure), which led to people moving out from their place of origin and setting into new cities due to newly developed economic forces (Hassan 2005: 290-93). There are number of problem and decision making process involved in the process of migration, except from those factors related to that of place of origin and of the receiving society. Usually in less developed countries like India, migration between rural and urban

³⁶ Gugler, Josef. (1969). *On the Theory of Rural-Urban Migration: The case of Subsaharan Africa*. In Jackson, J.A. (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 134-155.

areas, migration usually occurs due to the 'push' factor because of lack of employment opportunities and poverty and not because of 'pull' factor by the urban areas.

2.5.4: Michael Todaro (1969)

Attempts were made to distinguish between the growing employment opportunities in urban areas and that of the growing/increasing rate of rural-urban migration. The potential migrants would 'consider the different market openings accessible to them as between the rustic and urban segments and pick one which amplifies their normal pick up from relocation' (Sheldon 1997: 21). The unemployment period would surely be ignored by the potential migrant, who would certainly move into a new area/ urban area if the job is assured for a longer period of time. This movement would allow increase gain in a period of unemployment in the rural areas. People usually migrate to urban areas from rural areas, in the expectation of better job opportunities in the urban areas.

2.5.5: The Marxian School

According to the Marxian school, migration is a result of the capitalist productive sector. Rapid industrialisation and accumulation of profit led the poor class of people to migrate into the cities. As argued by Karl Marx and F. Engels, the working class are forced to move from their place of existence of origin due to the pressure of 'productive power' of capitalism. People not only move from rural to urban areas but also from less developed to more developed countries.

2.5.6: Post Modern Theory

In the postmodern period, the focus of migration from certain areas was moved to that International a global migration. This usually happened in the last quarter of century when the neoclassical and economists provided a new approach to the study. The concern for the

new study was that of the people relocating from poor nations to rich nations like that of Europe, North America, Australia and South East Asia. The modern approach focuses on the movement from one area to another and that from one culture to another. Global migration often leads to intermingling of cultures which forms the new culture. The basic features of migration literature are that of exile, new identity, new lifestyle and experience of new value systems. The postcolonial migration approach focuses more on the universal experience than that of national experience. 'One of the paradoxical gifts of imperialism, according to Esaid (1993), was that it created a global interdependent community while at the same time, allowing people to believe that they belong to only one part of that community as White or Black as Oriental or Westerners (quoted by Sheldon 1997:38) Pp 4

2.6: Issues in Migration

Due to low level of education, traditional values, Indians were considered to be a mobile during the colonial period. They couldn't adapt to the problems associated with migration for transport and facilities of communication full stop other factors which added to the low mobility of Indian joint family, child marriage, caste system and diverse culture and languages, along with religion. It is an accepted fact that the early 20th century or its first half India witnessed very less migration. The percentage living outside the birth place or place of origin was only 3-4% in India during the period of 1891 to 1951. (Base 1980:186)

The rural urban migration grows during the post-independence period. Does rural-urban migration occur due to explosion of population and lack of employment by backward economy which ultimately leads to poverty? How can environmental degradation be prevented and the quality of life is improved at the place of arrival? Will the conflicts arise between outsiders and people of the place of origin which is often instigated by movement? Some of the examples of conflicts are that of Shivsena in Mumbai, Gokak Movement in

Bangalore, Nihalhhakva in Orissa and the conflict between Bengali and Marwari in Kolkata and the conflict between North and South Region of Delhi. Another factor which leads to migration is periodic famines, droughts, floods and other natural calamities. In case of such natural calamities in the rural areas, people migrate to the urban areas of towns and cities.

Since the post-independence period, migration has been increasing, while people only move to the shorter distances. Most of the migrants, about 62% of them migrate within the boundary of the same district, while the other 26% moves into different districts within the same state. As per the Census of 1921, the migrants who cross the state boundaries that of 12%. (Hassan 2005:305-07). A part from this, over 700 million people migrate within their own country.

Though they are a number of disadvantages related to migration, the Indian cities will continue to migrate from the rustic zones to urban zones in search of job opportunities. Most of the people migrate because of oppression and the caste system apart from poverty and unemployment. These people feel that in the big cities or towns, the world is based upon the income and not on caste identity or religious identity. The caste system is often engraved in the minds of the rural people.

2.7: Development Model of Towns and Cities in India

The religious, military (cantonment) administrative and commercial functions were related to the urban towns and cities at the time of Pre-Independence and the relation of trade and export was developed along the coastal regions with the empire of the British. The prominent examples of developed relations are those of Kolkata (Calcutta), Bombay and Madras. With the development of railway networks, another category of towns was added apart from riverfront and lakefront towns. (Ramchandrasen 1996:156)

During the post-independence period in India, there was growth in urbanisation which continued for a period of time and then eventually slowed down from 1951 to 2001; the population in the urban areas grew from 62 million to 300 million. This period of urbanization was marked by three phases. The capital intensive marked a product of industrialisation in cities, Western products was produced at for example, Bokaro, Bhilai, Durgapur and Rourkela. The second stage was set apart with little scale work serious industrialisation such as in Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Ludhiana, and Kanpur which started from the period of 1960. The third phase was marked with that of globalisation related to service economy was began in the later part of the 1980, the most important ones being Bangalore, Pune and Hyderabad. Most of the important ones were absolutely virgin in origin during the pre-colonial period and developed in the post-colonial period.

The only thing common to all the cities and towns was the sudden increasing demand of labourers in the secondary and tertiary sectors the Urban populace in India, in the same way as other different regions in the south half of the globe are sorted out around tremendous vagrant and normally expanding populace composed into a casual economy ruled by uncertain work with straddles both rural and urban centres as per the predictions of the 1995 report on UN migration. In the new future of 2020 approximately 41% of Indians will be resulting in urban areas amounting to 600 Million. (Shiva Ramakrishnan 2005:56-58)

Women have been a significant part of migration in the period of history as per the National Sample Survey of 1983 (January - December) 27% of men migrated into the urban areas whereas 36% women were a part of the Migration. 25.7% of men followed the modern trend of migration as per NSS (July 1999 to June 2000) whereas those of women were 41.8% (Shivaramakrishnan 2009:32). With the development of towns and cities during the pre independence and post independence, the lower caste population got bigger opportunities to

earn their livelihood. They started too, migrated to towns and cities to earn cash. Balmiki community have been migrated from north to different parts of India.

Both in past and present, the same feeling of disgust insult exist for this migrant Balmiki community. With time they had to swap places, strong differences were made and they were still called untouchable creatures. A large section of Balmiki Bhangi, Chura, Valmiki, Lalbegi of Uttar Pradesh migrated to Maharashtra, Bengal, Assam, Burma, Mauritius and Andhra Pradesh. They also migrated to foreign lands.

Malkani says that it is a very astonishing fact that one cannot find a local Bhangi in Maharashtra. They all come from Gujarat to Andhra Pradesh. Hence, there is a possibility that these Bhangis might have migrated to Southern India with their masters from Punjab and Rajasthan.³⁷

It is also mentioned in Bombay Gazetteer that Bhangis are residing since 2000 years.³⁸ This is an answer to all those conservative Hindus who said that Bhangis came to India during the Muslim rule. Even in Buddhism there is mention of Sunit Bhangi. Dharmanand Kosambi in his book *Boudh Sangh ki Vijay* and Ambedkar in his book *Lord Buddha and his Dhamma* discussed about it.

We study the number of people who migrated from Bombay to Gujarat in search of jobs then the results are very strange.³⁹

Table: 1

Balmiki Migration from Bombay to Gujarat

Year	No. of People
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³⁷ Malkani, *Clean People and Unclean Country*, New Delhi, 1965, Page-134

³⁸ Bombay Gazetteer, Segment-8, Page-157

³⁹ Arun Thakur and Mohammed Khadas- Narak Safaie, Page-41

1881	32568
1891	39055
1901	45531
1911	58775
1921	72435
1931	53288

Source: Om Prakash Valmiki, Safai Devta.

The mentality behind these migrations was presented by Chitra Sony in his book. He stated that even after making these decisions it was tough to migrate to Bombay. Caste system was prevalent everywhere, inferior classes were chained down with everything. By the grace of foreigners, trains were launched but backward classes were not provided with tickets. He narrates one of his experiences, he went to take the ticket and he was denied of that. After a lot begging his request was accepted. For a ticket, to be given, the official needed to be bribed. After giving a bribe of 30 rupees to the official, they threw some holy water on the money and accepted it and just after that threw the ticket towards him.⁴⁰ Balmiki women migrated into the newer region either due to marriage or movement of family. Marriage was not the main cause for migration.

2.8: Religious and Ethnic Character of Towns and Cities

Most of the Indian cities and towns were the melting pot where diverse cultural and religious pluralism intervening led in order to understand the realities of dynamic as well as that of leaving. Before independence, there was no existence of pluralism in India and if they existed, it was mostly due to isolation without any dynamic interaction. Just as an example, how did the Tamilians of the south and the Punjabis of North interact? How did the Gujaratis

⁴⁰ VS Sohni- Ek Dhed na Dukhi Kahani, Bombay, Bharat Sevak Samaj, 1921.

of the Western Coast and Bengalis of the eastern coast interact? Based on practicality, nothing. Even the concept of Melting Pot is often questioned.

Rather, the image of salad pot is more preferred. The religions in India differed as per the degrees of urbanization. Hindus were present in 26.38 % Muslims in 35.75% whereas Christians in very less percentage over all. The Christians were present in less than 3% nationwide and this is recorded as one of the highest trend for migration and urbanisation this also contributed towards the high literacy rate.

2.9: Migration in West Bengal

Calcutta was the capital of India till 1912. Calcutta was one of the largest cities of India till 1911, which was renamed as Kolkata in 2004. The landlords dominated the economy of Bengal by introducing system of land tax and zamindari system imposed by the landlords and moneylenders. The famine of 1943 saw many refugees coming into Bengal. Then the partition of India occurred which led to the refugees moving into city and 26% of people migrated from East Pakistan to Kolkata. The population of Calcutta rose from 2.8 million to 9.19 million from 1961 to 1981 and then it further Rose to 11.6 million in 1991. The number of migrants in 1991 was 71 million from which 0.32 million migrants were from within the state. The Balmikis migration to Calcutta started with the introduction of railways during the colonial encounter. They were forced to migrate from northern India to the East as cheap sanitary workers in the railways and in the Municipalities.⁴¹ With the flow of urbanization, these Balmikis started migrating to different parts of West Bengal. Ambedkar had recommended the dalits to migrate to towns and cities from villages. He illustrated to facilitate the practice of migration as ‘new life movement’ for dalits. Ambedkar’s quotes “the

⁴¹ Balmiki, Lekhraj. *Understanding Change in the Lives: A Case Study of Balmiki Migration to Darjeeling District*, in Sharma, G., & Islam, N. (Ed.). *Rural Out-Migration in India: Problems and Prospects*. Cooch-Bihar: Sitalkuchi College.

love of the intellectual Indian for the village community is of course infinite, if not pathetic... what is a village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow mindedness and communalism.”⁴²

About 55% of people migrated from Bihar (amounting to 0.17 million), then came 18% from Uttar Pradesh (amounting to 57000) and 7% of the population of Orissa migrants (22000). This comprised for the interstate migrants. 72% of male migrated from rural Bengal to Kolkata, whereas the percentage of female migrants was 70.28% of male and 30% of female also were a part of migration from the region of urban Bengal to that of Kolkata. (Mukherjee 2006:83-86)

2.10: Migration in Darjeeling

Located in the lower Himalayas, at an elevation level of 6710 feet (2050 m), Darjeeling forms a major travel destination in Bengal Darjeeling is located between the northern part of Bengal in proximity to Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal⁴³. It likewise fell under the control of British East India Company in day and age between 1828 - 1835 that involved a number of treaties and negotiations and was also a part of contending actors in region.⁴⁴

The region further developed as a Sanatorium as well as military depot due to the encounter of British colonies educational centres and areas of plantation for tea was also developed into these regions due to the intervention of colonies of British. Darjeeling became a core centre for the various colonial activities of the British. The Lepchas and Bhutias of the Darjeeling

⁴² Prasad, Chandra Bhan, *Urbanisation ends Caste Order*. In the Pioneer, Sunday, 16th March 2014.

⁴³ Cf., Pinn, Fred, *The Road of Destiny: Darjeeling Letters 1839*, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1986; O'Malley, L S S, *Bengal District Gazettes: Darjeeling*, Logos Press, New Delhi (1985); E,C, Dozey, *A Concise History of the Darjeeling District Since 1835 with A Complete Itinerary of Tours in Sikkim and the District*, Jetsun Publishing House, Varanasi/Calcutta, 1989. C.f, Balmiki, Lekhranj. *Understanding Change in the Lives: A Case Study of Balmiki Migration to Darjeeling District*, in Sharma, G., & Islam, N. (2013). (Ed.). *Rural Out-Migration in India: Problems and Prospects*. Cooch-Bihar: Sitalkuchi College.

⁴⁴ Cf., Sunwal, B D, *Nepal and The East India Company*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965; Farwell, B, *The Gurkhas*. Allen Lane, London, 1984; Farwell, B, *Armies of the Raj: From Mutiny to Independence (1857-1947)*, NA, London, 1989; Smith, ED, *Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas*, Leo Cooper, London, 1973.

region were assigned the work of higher posts by the British whereas, due to the migration of new people, a new framework of system or setup also emerged in the surrounding areas. It is quite ironic that Darjeeling was created by British as a place they would relax, when they were far from Indians but the situation was completely opposed with the increase demand of labour because of native workers like hirelings, doormen, retailers, brokers, water carriers, Masons, butchers, washerman Gandhi siblings, bachelor's, batliwala, craftsmen, metal forger, development specialists, tea workers, center and privileged Bengali 'bhodroloks' alongside the Balmiki people group too began relocating to the Hills of Darjeeling. The Balmiki is Dalits who are identified with the working of rummaging and transfer of waste. Initially, the Balmikis were brought to work as manual scavengers in Darjeeling by the Britishers. Throughout the years, Balmikis have migrated into the Hills of Darjeeling and have become permanent settlers who are often categorised as '*Jamadar*' and are considered into the lowest category who are often termed as '*others*'. With due course of time this community have played a pivotal role in maintaining the beauty and hygienic of Darjeeling as a tourist destination, which has been the main source of income for the hill population. Over the yars he Balmikis has become the permanent settlers in the hills and presents a substantial population in the three sub-divisions of Darjeeling Hills.

Table: 2

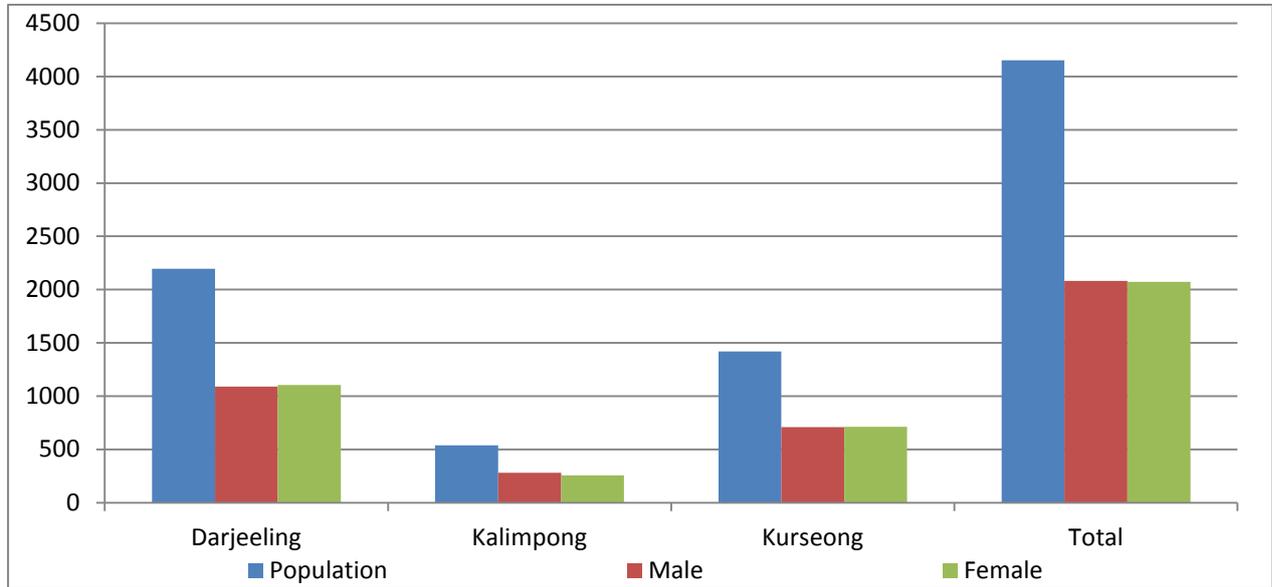
Balmiki Populations in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong

Sub Division	No. of Families	Population	Male	Female	Children below 6 Yrs
Darjeeling	367	2195	1091	1104	224
Kalimpong	108	538	281	257	46
Kurseong	230	1420	709	711	84

Total	705	4153	2081	2072	354
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Source: Primary Source

Figure: 1 Balmiki Population



The above table shows the distribution of the Balmiki community in hill areas of West Bengal. Darjeeling has the highest presence of them followed by Kurseong and Kalimpong respectively. It can be observed that the average household size in this community is around 6 except Kalimpong where it is 4.9. It is also quite noteworthy that the sex ratio in this community is equitable compared to many parts and communities in India. In fact, in Darjeeling and Kurseong, there are more females than males in Balmiki community. The overall sex ratio however is close to equality with the number of males slightly higher than females.

After independence, Darjeeling was merged and made a part of West Bengal with a separate district Darjeeling. The Darjeeling district consists of four sub divisions i.e., The Darjeeling-Sadar, Kalimpong (before Kalimpong emerged as separate district in 2017), Kurseong and Siliguri (Terai region). The Nepalis had always resided in the hill regions of the Darjeeling

district, to which the region of North Bengal was a bit sensitive. These Nepalis migrated into Darjeeling during the rule of British and also resided in few regions of the plain occupied by Bengali, Santhali and Kanthapura communities. The reports of 2001 census stated 14.72 million was the population in the six districts (Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar) which comprise 18.35% of the total population of the community. The growth rate of population in these areas was comparatively higher than that of the state average because people moved into those districts from nearby countries of Bangladesh and Nepal.⁴⁵ The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes formed from a major part of the population. The Census of 1991 stated that the percentage of SC was 29 which was 5% more than that of state average. The population of SC was mainly focused in the regions of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, West Dinajpur and Darjeeling. In Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri regions, the tribal population was a bit higher with the state average of 5.6% whereas that of in Jalpaiguri was 21% while that in Darjeeling was 13.8%.

2.11: Exposure of the Balmiki Migration

With the establishment of Darjeeling hills and to maintain health and hygiene of the hills, the Britishers brought Balmikis from Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi etc., to work in the Conservancy Department of the Municipality and Cantonments.⁴⁶ Bitthal Ram Shinde says '*after the foundation of municipalities in Maharashtra, Balmiki where brought from Gujarat and*

⁴⁵ Chakraborty, S, Anup. (2014). Darjeeling: A Glimse. Basu, Sibaji, Pratim. (Ed.). *Forced Migration and Media Mirrors*. Kolkata: Frontpage. In Pp. 6. Also see, Balmiki, Lekhraj. *Understanding Change in the Lives: A Case Study of Balmiki Migration to Darjeeling District*, in Sharma, G., & Islam, N. (2013). (Ed.). *Rural Out-Migration in India: Problems and Prospects*. Cooch-Bihar: Sitalkuchi College.

⁴⁶ Gurung, Madan Kr. "*Darjeeling Municipality: Then And Now*" in Gurung, Madan Kr., & Bhutia Passang. (Ed.). (2000). Souvenir: *Darjeeling Municipality 1850-2000*. Darjeeling: Darjeeling Municipality. Pp.29. and Balmiki, Lekhraj. (2016). *Exclusions As 'Lived Experience' Across time & Space: The Balmiki Community in Darjeeling Hills*, in Chakraborty A.S. & Nepal, Padam. (Ed.). *Politics of Exclusions and Inclusions in India*. New Delhi: Authors Press. Also see, Balmiki, Lekhraj. (2013). *Understanding Change in the Lives: A Case Study of Balmiki Migration to Darjeeling District*, in Sharma, G. & Islam, N. *Rural Out-Migration in India: Problems and Prospects*. Cooch Behar: Sitalkuchi College.

Punjab because no caste agreed to do the work of cleaning', which proves they must have originated from North India.⁴⁷

Balmikis and some other backward classes of the society were forced to migrate to this hill station during the colonial period. Britishers were well aware of Balmiki community who were skilled labourers in relation to cleanness. As their main occupation was to clean roads, lanes and to work in cemetery grounds, the colonisers found cheap labour force for the hill station.

Balmiki migration to Darjeeling was not voluntary migration rather it was forced migration. But this in reverse paved a way for better livelihood in an alien territory, from their native places where socio-economic conditions were not favourable for their upliftment. The regularised subjugation, suppression and humiliation contributed to the 'push' factor in their migration. Better opportunities and prosperity in the hill, played the 'pull' factor, to their migration which the Balmikis did not want to lose. Based on these it can be stated that Balmiki community, who do cleaning have evolved during the course of time in the hill station. Their names and others must have been differentiated but their identity is still the same. All the people related to cleaning kept on changing that places they kept migrating from one place to another from one town to another from one slum to another and kept on making new groups. Ancient names such as Doom, *Chandal*, *Shwapak*, are still prevalent even today in the names like Balmiki, Chura, Lalbegi, Mehtar and they still migrate from one place to another. People who were called Lalbegi in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh are now known as Balmiki, after migrating to Darjeeling.

The Balmikis were a victim to oppression because of a number of other such issues. They were subjected to problems due to political and apolitical reasons, stated own machineries,

⁴⁷ Bittthal Ram Shinde, *Questions on Indian Untouchability culture*, Mumbai, Maharashtra, Social Welfare Council, Social and Travelling department, 1976

voluntary organizations, academics as well as philanthropist responses in the national as well as international arenas. The response of the non-Dalits also gradually began varying as with the advancement of time, the indifference towards the Dalits changed to matters of concern, scary deaths were changed into harmless idioms, the rejection and negligence was gradually transformed to winning accommodations. These efficiently led to the creation of new milestone and stories of success which gave a textual outcry.

Despite all these the issue of Balmikis are still continuing which doesn't seem to have any end and calls for immediate action. Most part of their concern are just confined to the unilateral delivery because they believe, the louder the slogans, the punches in return will be more severe. The condition is same, whether in case of origin or place of migration. The topic regarding the Dalits migrants would help to understand what makes the Dalits. The question about Dalits in general and the non-migrants is a field of interest for anyone who wishes to explore more about this community. The question often that needs to be answered is 'When will the Balmikis' experience the change? And 'who need to change the paradigm on Balmiki dalits?' The main motive here is to find/diagnose the issues that surround the Balmikis because of migration.

While migrating into the new environment, the Balmikis carry with them, a part of the old along with the age depending factors, socialization, causes for departure, personality of the person and many such factors. The experience of the immigrants is often analysed through their '*memory of things past*' but most of the times it has been neglected and over looked by the society. This often has two main reasons. First bring the popular myth of perpetuation of *tubula rusa*, which proposed the fact the old traditions were removed by the migrants, who socialize into the new society and bring in new traditions.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Jackson, J.A. (1969). (Ed.). *Migration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-10.

The second reason accounts for the failure of the described ‘*progressive ideas*’, which states the present experience to be the more important one. The receiving society isn’t accustomed to the rule and tradition of the past or the place of origin of the migrants. The receiving society accept the migrants in his present condition, which is often considered the perspective of the various social scientists, who have handles all the problem regarding the problems of the migrant face in the society.⁴⁹ Ironically this Balmikis migration is unrecorded by the governmental system. The government have not been able to reach these dalits as the policy framers have no idea regarding the processes of the Balmiki migration in the hills. Moreover, the policies drafted by the authorities, does not fulfil the aspirations of this migrant community as they are overshadowed by the majority population of the local communities, who have been claiming the major share in the policies implementation. Hence, they lack behind in comparison to the Nepali Scheduled Castes population.

Table: 3
Balmikis Migration in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong

States	Rajasthan	Haryana	Uttar Pradesh	Bihar	Delhi	Dehradun	Coochbehar (West Bengal)	Total
Nos. of Families in Darjeeling	205	98	29	10	07	04	14	367
Nos. of	19	23	36	11	03	-	16	108

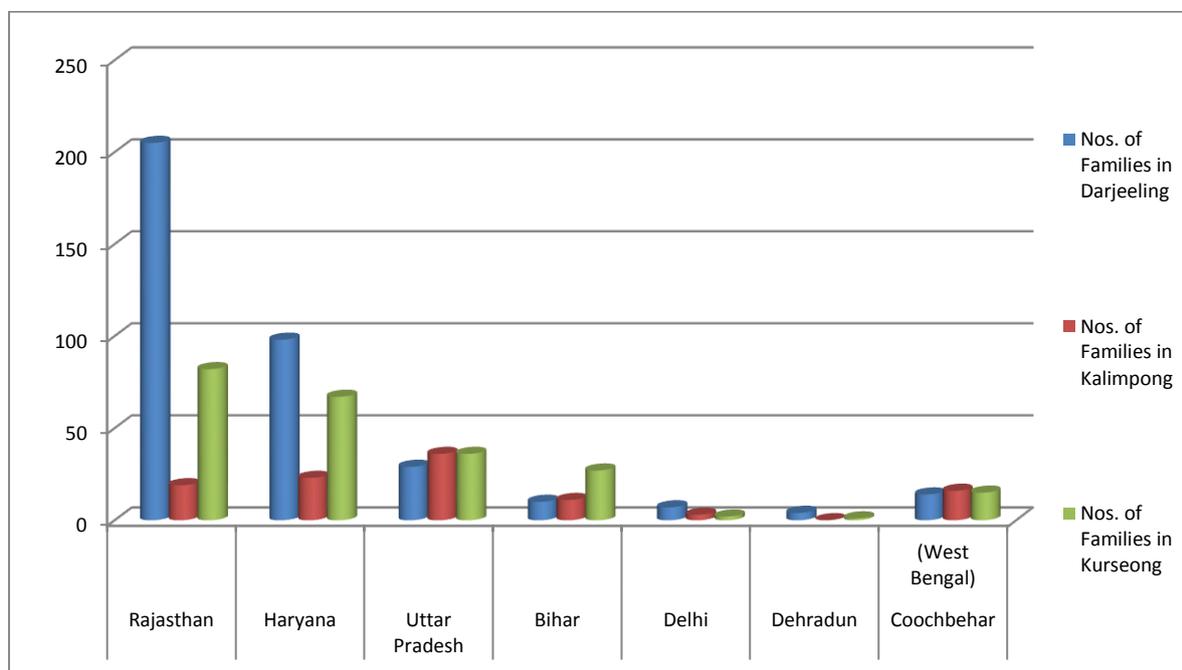
⁴⁹ Ibid.

Families in Kalimpong								
Nos. of Families in Kurseong	82	67	36	27	02	01	15	230

Source: Primary Data

As per the data collected from October 2013 to October 2016 a number of families migrated into Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong from all over the Northern India. A total of 367 families migrated into Darjeeling, 205 from Rajasthan, 98 from Haryana, 29 from Uttar Pradesh, 10 from Bihar, 07 from Delhi, 04 from Dehradun and 14 from Cooch Behar. 108 families migrated into Kalimpong, 19 from Rajasthan, 23 from Haryana, 36 from Uttar Pradesh, 11 from Bihar, 03 from Delhi while 16 migrated from Cooch Behar. As far as Kurseong is concerned, 230 families migrated there from various regions, 82 from Rajasthan, 67 from Haryana, 36 from Uttar Pradesh, 27 from Bihar, 02 from Delhi, 01 from Dehradun and 15 from Coach Behar.

Figure: 2 Balmikis Migration



The table above shows that Rajasthan has highest contribution among all the states in migration towards hills of West Bengal. Haryana comes second followed by Uttar Pradesh. In Darjeeling alone, migration from Rajasthan contributes more than all other places put together. In terms of total migration, Kurseong comes second to Darjeeling followed by Kalimpong. The figures show that members of a community tend to stick together and settle down in groups of households. For example, families from Uttar Pradesh decided to settle mostly in Kalimpong. Likewise, Rajasthanis and Haryanis chose Darjeeling and Kurseong.

2.12: Balmiki Community: Location and Locale

There had been a permanent change with the Balmiki migration. They often moved to urban areas where they hope for better lives. They moved from country to urban territories in search of employment to the hills. Some moved from one part of the country to another; while some

moved from one part of the state to another; which added for the major shift of population from the Northern part of India to the North-East parts.⁵⁰

The fact about urbanization and caste has been clearly pointed out by Y.B. Damle in his work, “The nature of urbanization of India”. According to his statement “In regarding to caste, there is no doubt that there has been a great deal of reduction in caste taboos regarding commensality the type of food one eat, the social intercourse, etc. Yet it would be hazardous to state that caste is a system of inter-relationship has broken down in urban areas.” In order to achieve freedom from the abhorrent practice in caste system, most of these Dalits migrate from the rural regions of India to the urban regions, which they could not achieve. Even in cases of urban-rural migration, there are number of limitations regarding the way of life, caste and economy, mainly the urban-rural continuum (R.K. Mukhrjee). Migration occurs in India often, however that to the urban areas is considered associational as some come in a like whereas the other move out to seek emotions as well as practical assistance on reaching the destination. (Sylvia Vatuk 1972; 194) These migrants often prefer to live in the nearby areas in form of group or colonies due to the likeness between them. Hence the colonies are often identified by the people as Dalit colonies.

In the villages and rural part of India, the Balmiki community is often out-casted and have to live outside the village as the higher classes do not wish to live with the Dalits. The migration of Balmikis to Darjeeling hill station was not different from their native villages. During the colonial period, a particular colony was created for them just below the main town area. This area is situated near the dumping ground of Darjeeling Municipality, popularly known as

⁵⁰ Ibid. See, Balmiki, Lekhranj. (2016). *Exclusions As 'Lived Experience' Across time & Space: The Balmiki Community in Darjeeling Hills*, in Chakraborty A.S. & Nepal, Padam. (Ed.). *Politics of Exclusions and Inclusions in India*. New Delhi: Authors Press. Also see, Balmiki, Lekhranj. *Understanding Change in the Lives: A Case Study of Balmiki Migration to Darjeeling District*, in Sharma, G., & Islam, N. (2013). (Ed.). *Rural Out-Migration in India: Problems and Prospects*. Cooch-Bihar: Sitalkuchi College.

'Jamadar Line' or 'Methor Line'.⁵¹ Even for interaction, the part is very much professional and not personal, hence their life can be said to be semi-separated within their own limits/walls, the community is free completely from the attitude of the Brahmins, but behind their walls, and they were abused by the upper castes socially and as well as politically. The Dalits were enforced certain language on them by the Dalit associations in relation with the traditional professional activities, lifestyle of the traditional community and psychology of the rural ancestors. They believed that the urban way of life, education and economics improvement along with political awareness and significant impact of the Sanskrit would change their language.⁵²

However, there is not much difference between the Bhangis of Dalit origin and the migrant because the response of the social formation of the society is in the similar old fashion of the hardship prevalent since the old time, which is still prevalent after moving into the newer areas. Though on the superficial level, all the operation and mistreatment appears to be different, but a closer interview just provides the better understanding the prevalent different. Hence, to properly understand the Dalit migrants, a brief analysis of all the migrated caste groups must be done.

In all shade and levels, the problem and issue of Dalits have been brought in the forefront. However, I thought it more than timely to involve participation of the people concern in the study. Hence, all the literature that highlights the problem of Balmiki Dalits must be discussed. The present study has focused on serious issues in consultation with migrant Balmiki Dalits personally in Darjeeling hills, individual were interviewed within the community.

⁵¹ Balmiki, Lekhraj. *Understanding Change in the Lives: A Case Study of Balmiki Migration to Darjeeling District*, in Sharma, G., & Islam, N. (Ed.). *Rural Out-Migration in India: Problems and Prospects*. Cooch-Bihar: Sitalkuchi College.

⁵² http://www.academia.edu/755526/Dalit_migration_Urbanization_and_language_change Accessed on 10.11.2017 15:14 hrs

The interview highlight all the issues of Balmiki Dalits residing in the hill of Darjeeling such as spiritual, mental, economic, political and socio cultural problems. Is being a Balmiki, in the receiving or host society is still a problem and the reason behind it? What is the difference in the problem that exists between the place of origin and destination or host society? What is response of the neighbours toward the migrated people? How would they be comforted and up to what extent? In answer to the question raised above, the responses have been equally summed up.

During the interview, the interviewer were pretty vocal about their problem and despite migration, a Dalit Balmiki would remain a Dalit. They were subjected to subtle yet limited suppressive mechanism. They were insulted, yet they coped up with it, due to support of the family members. In the hilly region of Darjeeling, they were subjected to cheap labour, lack of space to live, the municipalities called for child labour which was prevalent in sectors of hotels and primary schools. Abduction and gender abuse was a common phenomenon, they were also discriminated due to their political association and gender belonging. Due to the lack of job opportunity most of the school drop-out were assigned the work of cleaning in various sectors, and were hired in different workplaces. There are other form of operation too, to which these people are made victim of but neither do they speak of it, nor does anyone take notice.

Therefore in other word it can be said that their past relations had been intensified due to social oppression, political, powerlessness, cultural discrimination, economic, backwardness and religious deprivation.

Many must have gone through this evil social practice which may have gradually become a history to some, but when the issue of it pops up in the nearby neighbourhood and news, the evil become clear and significant even do those who had pushed away the thoughts into the

horizon of history. These bring back their personal memories regarding the atrocities of land, cultural, political and social rights. Such haunting memories are sure to remain intact to the folklores of Balmiki for about three to four generations. Even after many efforts, Balmikis would not be able to escape the treatment hence it will remain prevalent for the untouchable aka Dalits.

The in-depth interviews give details about how they have to face never challenges into the place they've migrated, which wasn't their place of origin. They were made aloof from the family as well as the society most of them are dependent on their fellow migrants in order to loom for food they eat and place to stay in the initial phase of their migration. They are often in debt due to borrowing excess from the neighbour in order to feed the family. The women of this community are often forced to take up jobs in unhealthy condition like cleaning in office in public places, so that they can help their family member in making the ends meet. Whatever they earn is shared among the family so as to overcome starvation and be an affective consoling relationship. These people also get addicted to alcohol and become drunkard. The feeling of past also migrates from the older society to the new host society and vice-versa. Even small provocation can severally anger the Balmiki as they are pretty intolerant towards injustice regarding their ethnic identity. The locals do not believe on the fact of birth place/ place of origin due to their anti-Balmiki Behaviour

Either the sceneries presented above is a continuum or the results/after effect of being a Dalit. The reason for the migration of Balmiki can well explained by the profile of migrant. It can vary from one factor to another such as lack of employment, and job opportunities lack of orientation and chances of self-employment, trouble with neighbour no participation in struggle of parents, cant exercise their freedom and creativity ; being considered negative with all the aspiration crushed down. These just include negative thoughts in the mind of

people. As the Balmikis and Dalits, they are out casted from the society, yet placed in the position of conflict of social structure.

2.13: Balmiki Migration: Context and Contours

From the above proof it can be concluded that the condition of Dalit Migrant wasn't different from that of the Dalits in the place of origin. As far as the mental, psychological, socio-cultural and economic condition of these, Balmiki migrants is concerned; it didn't have much of a difference as compared to that of their homeland, or place of origin. The Balmikis carry the characteristics of being a Dalit with them, which is a bit influenced by the external factor, this keeps them intact to their culture which marks for their plural belonging it appear that the characteristics of being a Dalit was nurtured by them, which later on contributed towards their lack of education, skills, overall support, as well as the counselling, which is left for them to handle in order to make themselves feel as Dalits.⁵³

To really analyse the issue, one must think of the problem from the bottom to the above, if there are no Subaltern group the identity to the higher classes too, wouldn't exist. The non-Dalits must join hand with the Dalits in order to help them and eradicate the problem. The higher castes just listen to the problem, hence, the socially privileged can contribute a lot towards bringing the change for these individuals as far as history dates back, and the effort of the dalits to fight single-handedly in order to get the right result had just more negative results.

The dalits and non-dalits are the two side of coin that have a role to play. Thus the system has contributed a lot towards patterned, producing and patronizing the way of life and the condition of dalits. Hence, being at the place of origin or the destination of migration, the

⁵³ Massey, James. (1998). *Dalits: Issues and Concerns in India: 50 years of Independence 1947-1997*. Status, Growth and Development Series, 20. New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation. Pp. 172-176.

caste system for the rural area for the dalits cannot be considered as dead on one hand and living and prevalent on the other in the region of migration.

Due to globalization and urban living pattern of these individuals, the identities of the individuals have differed and people with multiple identities live in today's world. It is the same for migrant Balmikis too, who move in and out of different roles in a daily basis. Although in the urban areas the religion and the caste system does not have a much significant role. Therefore one individual can definitely be with several identities. Hence, this proves that a number of communities exist in India, which are both Christian and Hindu while other who are both Muslims and Hindus, for this reason, dalits too have learnt to identify themselves differently. However, we do not have any control over the non-Dalits who do not take over the claim.

Like other part of India, a number of scheduled castes and schedule tribes too have migrated to the hills of Darjeeling. The region of settlement of the scheduled castes in Darjeeling had been characterized as '*Sano Jat*'. The migration process is still prevalent and continuous in India. Here I do not limit my focus to the economic factor as well, especially the way in which these schedule caste and tribes are offered a place to live in as a whole different identity. The towns of Darjeeling in which the Balmikis have migrated, showed a mix of squalor and despair, but it was a bit more comforting as they were free from the rigid system of villages. The Dalits are often out casted and made to the hills, they are welcomed, but just like their villages, and the hills too offer them limited space near the dumping ground. The ward number 18 of Darjeeling is the space offered to these migrant Dalits which is popularly known as '*dalit basti*' or '*Jamadar Line*.'⁵⁴ This place is a bit different from their place of

⁵⁴ Ward No. 18 of Darjeeling is located just below the Darjeeling town area, during the British time this area was garbage dumping ground. Britishers had kept the Balmikis at this place in the Municipality Quarters for the Scavengers workers. As the majority of the population is from Balmiki Community this ward is also known as Jamadar Line or Harijan Barrick. For details see, Balmiki, Lekhraj. (2016). *Exclusions As 'Lived Experience'*

origin though comprising the Harijan Barrick. The geography of the urban areas, where the Balmikis are offered a place to live is pretty different from the conditions of that of Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The secondary relations and heterogeneity which offer mobility to the various aspects forms a major part of life of the migrant.⁵⁵ The Jajmani system⁵⁶ also known as Balutedari is marked for specific occupations for certain castes which make for the patron client relationship in relation to pattern of the village. When the relationship of the modern text was mixed up with that of the Brahman and religious texts, the system of hegemonic developed in many villages of India in regard to the labouring class which constitutes for the 'untouchable' class for India.⁵⁷

2.14: Balmikis in Darjeeling: Adaptations and Acculturation

The cross culture psychology has always focused to explain the impact of various cultures that enhanced the development and display of the human behaviour of the individual. It has been concluded by many researchers of the people who worked in this field that no specific evidence about the culture- behaviour relationship is present, but the individuals often act in response to cultural influence and expectations. Consequently, my emphasis is on how Balmikis have created in one social setting figure out how to adjust to new settings that outcome from movement. Acculturation refers to the process of employed cultural changes which usually occurs because of the intermingling of various cultures, while adoption refers

Across time & Space: The Balmiki Community in Darjeeling Hills, in Chakraborty A.S. & Nepal, Padam. (Ed.). *Politics of Exclusions and Inclusions in India*. New Delhi: Authors Press. Also see, Balmiki, Lekhraj. (2013). *Understanding Change in the Lives: A Case Study of Balmiki Migration to Darjeeling District*, in Sharma, G. & Islam, N. *Rural Out-Migration in India: Problems and Prospects*. Cooch Behar: Sitalkuchi College.

⁵⁵ M. T. Joseph, SVD. *Migration and Identity Formation: A Case Study of Dalit Assertion in Aurangabad, Maharashtra*. In SVD, Stanislaus, L. and SVD, Joseph, Jose. (Ed.). (2007). *Migration and Mission in India*. Delhi: Ishvani Kendra. Pp. 99.

⁵⁶ The dual power of the king and the priest determined the nature of the balutedari, the social structure of the so-called 'village republics' in India. This power was represented by the secular power of the king and the ritual notions of 'purity and pollution' constructed and maintained by the priest and king together under the force of sacred texts like the dharma sastra and the code of Manu.

⁵⁷ M. T. Joseph, SVD. *Migration and Identity Formation: A Case Study of Dalit Assertion in Aurangabad, Maharashtra*. In SVD, Stanislaus, L. and SVD, Joseph, Jose. (Ed.). (2007). *Migration and Mission in India*. Delhi: Ishvani Kendra. Pp. 99.

to the collective psychological changes simultaneously experiencing acculturation. The three factors of acculturation which are inter-related include psychological, socio-cultural and economic.⁵⁸

Because of migration, a number of colonies of Darjeeling have become culturally plural, which signifies that people from varied cultural backgrounds live as one cultural entity into a society. A number of times it happens that these cultural groups vary in terms of power such as numerical, economic and political. The power difference among the group arises because of the popularity of social science terms like 'minority', 'mainstream', 'ethnic groups' etc.⁵⁹ As time is moving, the 'minority' of Darjeeling is gradually moving towards becoming a part of 'mainstream' culture. It can be said that by the time Balmiki becomes a part of the process of acculturation it can already be said that acculturation started when these people migrated into the Hills of Darjeeling and started settling there. So Balmiki varied in these regions based on permanence and voluntariness.

Acculturation must be dealt in both the predominant and non-overwhelming situation by both the individual members and cultural groups in case of a plural society. The groups and individuals come together on a daily basis in order to solve the major problems. The major problems are: cultural maintenance (characteristics which define the importance of cultural identity and characteristics) and contact and participation (which determine the extent and involvement of cultural groups and if they should remain themselves).⁶⁰

The changes in places of residing due to the individuals in groups usually refer to adaptation. Adaptation may vary it may be quick or take longer period of time. There may be negative impacts on the characters due to short term adaptation. The individuals who were a part of the

⁵⁸ John W. Berry. *Immigration, Acculturation and Adaptation*.

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Ibid.

acculturation, after a long term adapt to the new cultural contexts. The adaptations may occur in various forms depending on the various factors. Sometimes the acculturated individual and the new context are involved in a fit (when the strategy of integration is pursued while the attitude in the prevailing society is tolerating the acculturated individual and gathering). But the fit sometimes does not arise (due to marginalisation and separation) and the groups settle in a conflict which is the result of the acculturative stress or psychopathology.

Empowering the Balmikis: The Limits of Constitutional Mechanisms

3.1: Introduction

Being Balmikis, Dalits are the casualties of hardships in various circles of life. To defeat chronicled segregation of Dalits, India has found a way to engage the Dalits through Constitutional arrangements, ensures, authoritative authorizations, and strategy measures and so forth. Strengthening is the improvement of the political, social, monetary or profound quality of people and groups. Strengthening encompasses creating and constructing limits of people, groups to influence them to some portion of the standard society. Instruction is the methods by which social orders have been known ever, to become out of persecution to vote based interest and inclusion. It is an effective apparatus for strengthening of person. It is characteristic for human identity. It conveys both characteristic and in addition instrumental esteems. This strengthening ought to be there for all. Talking decisively, the underestimated group has been the most influenced in the entire procedure. It isn't so much that the legislature has not done anything besides rather what can be the exceptionally base is the way that the usage at the very ground level is extremely poor. Today, with the landing of Panchayati Raj framework it has by one means or another given different sorts of opportunities to the minimized group. Yet at the same time they are influenced by the endless loop of the general public.

3.2: Constitutional Provisions

The Indian Constitution, in its bill of rights certifications of all nationals' essential common and political rights and key opportunities. Likewise the Constitution has unique arrangements

disallowing separation in light of rank. These arrangements are found under the privilege to fairness (Article 15, 16 and 17). The Right Against Exploitation (Article 23) social and instructive rights (Article 29:2) and disallowance against disappointment in decisions in light of one's religion, race, position or sex (Article 325).

Article 330 and 333 allow Center and Bidhan Sabha to keep the seats reserved for individuals from the backward communities i.e., SCs and STs in light of their populace in every supporter.

Article 338 and 338A provides for the establishment of two separate national commissions for SCs and STs.¹ Article 341 provides for the President in consultation with the Governors of units concerned specifying the Scheduled Castes in respect of each State by public notification. The notification cannot be varied except by Union Legislature.² The Indian Constitution opts for the establishment of a clean and neutral or unbiased social appeal. It has built up a peculiar characteristic of legislation. It is itself a fundamental rule.

Indian Constitution is a brilliant tranquillity of social building, which gives unique, defends of backward communities namely STs and SCs, keep up just and adjust in the general public and certification of social harmony and to fill in as a compelling means for societal blue printing.

In its endeavour that the State has committed to advance the welfare of the discouraged communities and protect the social demand in which social, economical and political to meet balance with various spectrum of society. The privileges and immunities of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are seen to be secured to begin with, the needless rights. These

¹ Kashyap. Subhash C. (2001). *Our Constitution: An Introduction to India's Constitution and Constitutional Law*. New Delhi: National Book Trust.

² Ibid.

rights apply out and out to each and every citizen and also to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes however this to be done by hook and crook.

Various particular arrangements has likewise been fused in the Constitution, defending particularly the social, fiscal, enlightening and political opportunities of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For safe guarding different financial interests give, that remained in reverse, abused, immature and to shield them from misuse and barbarities, being done in our constitution. Giving certain advantages to the groups, under our purview to empower them to rise to the occasions with whatever remains of the general public in all kinds of different backdrops.

3.3: Legislative Enactments

To satisfy the sacred arrangements relating to Scheduled Castes, the country has enacted different laws to ensure their rights which incorporate the insurances of Civil Rights (Anti-untouchability) Act 1955, the Bonded Labour Abolition Act 1989, and Rules 1995, The Employment of Manual Scavenger and Construction of Dry Latrines Prohibition Act 1933, and the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and the Rehabilitation Act 2013, and diverse land change ways to redistribute assemble land to the landless. Finally, to screen usage of same to these laws, the Central government built up the National Commission for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes and the National Human Rights Commission in the mid-1990s³ in its last century.

3.4: Implementation and Authorization of Laws

Absence of agrarian land for development is a noteworthy obstruction to advance among Dalits. They turn out to be financially helpless, they are passionately is abused by upper and

³ Ibid. Pp. 114.

center position arrive rulers, their absence of portrayal in political space. From 1970s to 1984, 34.9 million sections of land were ceded to agriculturists but out which only 0.5% was conferred to under privileged Dalits (NCDHR, 2006). The NCDHR investigate rank, race as well as the earth conderence against bigotry (WCAR) demonstrates that out the expected 30 million hectares of surplus land, just 705 million sections of land have been announced overflow, and just a little segment has been imparted to the down trodden Dalits masses. Huge tracts of land are being sold well underneath showcase incentive to multinational partnerships and the World Bank, which has brought about the relocation of numerous Dalits and adivasis from their own particular habitation (NCDHR, 2006) Shah, Meander Thoat Desphande and Baviskar (as refered to in NCDHR, 2006) found that Dalits in 21% of the towns studied was denied access to normal property assets (CRPS, for example, lands and completed wetlands.⁴ The restricted access to land and capital because of the progressing victimization Dalits has brought about of more prominent levels of neediness among these gatherings. For instance, the level of destitution was accounted for to be 60% among agrarian workers, a larger part of whom, are Dalits.

3.5: Extraordinary Provisions

The Constitution of India has acknowledged the goals of correspondence plus equity in the socio- political field. On the basis of religion, race, or place of birth, no segregation was being annulled by it. It is in conformity with the constitution has rejected the its part in the legislature based on caste, religion etc.

In Chapter IV under the Directive Principles of State Policy, to be more precise, Article 46 of Indian Constitution took adequate care for the progress of the backward feeble segments of

⁴ Ibid. Pp. 114-115

the general populace particularly STs and SCs and shield this section of people from the fasten of societal treachery.

Whatever arrangements made by the State can't be tested on the grounds of being segregation. Part III of the Constitution ensuring crucial rights containing numerous arrangements in the insurance of minority rights.

Article 14 assurances to each individual the privilege not to be denied equity, under the careful gaze of the law or identical security of laws. Article 15 forbids separation by State on the grounds just of religion, race, rank, and so on, concerning access to open spots. Nothing in this Article should keep from making any special courses of action for the progress of socially and informatively in turn around classes of locals or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Article 16 ensures correspondence of chance in issues of open business. It forbids segregation in regard of open work on grounds just of religion, race, rank and so forth however the State can reserve a spot of arrangement of posts in favour of any retrogressive class of natives not sufficiently spoke to in the administration under the State. Here it is imperative to call attention to that after the arrangement of Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal under the authority of Miss Mamata Banerjee, as Chief Minister more opening has been topped off under the State Government which were saved for the SCs and STs, since 2011, it is to be specified that before her administration, i.e., under the residency of the CPI (M) drove Left Front Government, these posts were continued pending.

The most exceptional element of our Constitution with respect to the upliftment of the Dalits is the incorporation of Article 17 which sets down '*Untouchability*' is prohibited and its training in any shape is illegal. The implementation of any inability emerging out of '*Untouchability*' *might be an offense culpable as per law*, in the Constitution. The commentators may have other feeling not to fuse this article in the arrangement to Right to

Equality in light of the way that it didn't ensure any privilege to the retrogressive classes and groups of the general public in the genuine feeling of the term yet there is no pick up saying the reality, that, the illness like untouchability is the more unsafe than disease which kept a sizable part of the people from the standard. In this sense the incorporation of Article 17, has prepared for appreciating rights to the alleged untouchable from a negative perspective. In spite of the fact that the act of untouchability is restricted yet it is still practice in either shape. Article 19(6) approves the State to force sensible limitations on the key rights ensured by conditions (d), (e), and (f), of Article 19 for the assurance of interests of any Scheduled Tribes.⁵

Article 330 and 342 makes exceptional arrangements for safe-guarding interests of Scheduled standings and Scheduled Tribes. The Constitution does not characterize with reference to who are the people who have a place with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Article 341 and 342, in any case, engage the President to draw up a rundown of these positions and clans. Under Article 341 the President after discussion with Governor of the concerned State, determine the ranks, races, or clans of gatherings inside positions, races or clans for the reasons for their Constitution. In the event that such notices is in regard of a State it should be possible after interview with Governor of the State concerned. Any consideration or prohibition from the President's as notice of any rank, race, or clan cause done by the parliament by law.⁶

3.6: Formation of National Commission for reserved Caste

The Amended Article 338 accommodates the foundation of a National Commission for the Scheduled Caste. The Commission should comprise of a Chairman, Vice Chairman and three different individuals. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and individuals from the Commission

⁵ Pandey, J.N. (2005). *Constitutional Law of India Forty*. Allahabad: Central Law Agency. Pp. 662-663.

⁶ Ibid. Pp. 663.

should be named by the President of India. The states of administration and residency of office of the individuals from the Commission should be, for example, President may by run decide Clause (2) and (3.)

Elements of Commission:

It should be the obligation of the Commission to-

1. Explore and screen all issues relating to the secure for SCs and STs under the Constitution and some other law or demand of the governing body and to survey the working of such protects.
2. Inquire into particular protests concerning the hardship of rights and protects of SCs and STs.
3. Participate and counsel on arranging procedure of financial improvement of SCs and STs to assess the advance of their advancement under the Union and State.
4. Present to the President reports upon the working of those shields yearly and at such others times as the Commission regard fit.
5. Make proposals for the measures that ought to be taken by the Center and State for the successful usage of those shields and different measures for the assurance, welfare and financial improvement of the SCs and STs.
6. Discharge such different intersections for assurance, welfare and improvement and progression of SCs and STs as the President may subject to the arrangements of any law made by parliament, by govern indicate Clause (5).

The President should make every single such report be laid before every place of parliament alongside an update clarifying the move made or proposed to be gone up against the

suggestions identifying with the Union. Comparative move will be made by the Governor of the State in the event that it is worried about any issue identifying with a reason to a State, Clause (6) and (7).

While examining any issue under such Clause (a) and (b) of Clause (5) the commission should have all the energy of a common court and specifically in regard of the accompanying issues

- Summoning and upholding the participation of any individual from any piece of India and looking at him on pledge.
- Requiring the disclosure and creation of any report.
- Receiving confirmation on davit.
- Requisitioning any open record or duplicate thereof from any court or office.
- Issuing Commissions for the examination of witnesses and archives.

Some other issue which the President may, by control, decide Clause (8).

The Union and State governments should counsel the Commission on all significant strategy matters influencing SCs and STs, Clause (90). The Commission might have energy to manage its own particular method, Clause (4).

In this Article reference to the Scheduled Castes ought to be made an interpretation of as incorporating references to such in switch classes as the President may, on the report of a commission chose under Clause (1) of Article 340 by decide and moreover to the Anglo-Indian Community, Clause 10.⁷

3.7: Constitution of Commission

⁷ Ibid. Pp. 665-66.

The Commission should comprise of a Chairman, Vice Chairman and other three individuals. The individuals from the Commission might be named by the President. The states of administrations and residency of the individuals from Commission should be, for example, the President might decide to run for Scheduled Tribes. The obligations and energy of the Commission for Scheduled Tribes are the same as the Commission for the Scheduled Castes, under Article 338 of the Constitution.

The President numerously whenever and might at the termination of ten years from the initiation of the Constitution. Choose a Commission to give an account of the organization of the booked territories and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the State, Article 339 (1). The request of the President may characterize the organization, power and methodology of the Commission and may contain such coincidental or subordinate arrangements the President may think about important or alluring. The social government is likewise approved to offer headings to a State with regards to the illustration up and execution of planned determined toward the path to be basic for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in the State, Article 339(2).⁸

The arrangement and protections for Backward Classes and particularly for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) have been consolidated in the Constitution of India. The protections are in the field of social, financial, political, instructive and administrations under the State for the general population having a place with these groups for their advancement. Who constitute Scheduled Castes and how the Castes booked are contained under Articles 366 (24) and 341 of the Constitution.

3.8: Safeguards for Scheduled Castes

The protections gave to Scheduled Castes and assembled in the accompanying wide heads:

⁸ Ibid. Pp. 666.

- Social Safeguards
- Financial Safeguards
- Instructive and Cultural Safeguards
- Political Safeguards
- Administration Safeguards

3.8.1: Social Safeguards

Articles 17, 23, 24 and 25(2) (b)

Articles 17, 23, 24 and 25(2) (b) of the Constitution charges the State to give social protections to Scheduled Castes. Article 17 identifies with annulment of untouchability being polished in the public eye. The parliament sanctioned the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 to handle the issue of untouchability, which is being rehearsed against Scheduled Castes.

Article 23

This Article disallows movement in individuals and '*begar*' and other comparable types of constrained work and gives that any repudiation of this arrangement might be an offense culpable as per law. In spite of the fact that there is no particular says about the Scheduled Castes in this Article however lion's share of the reinforced work originate from SCs. Subsequently, this Article has unique hugeness for them. The parliament established Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 for recognizable proof, freedom and recovery of reinforced workers.

Article 24

Article 24 gives that no youngster beneath the age of 14 years might be utilized to work in any production line or mine or occupied with some other dangerous business. Indeed, even in

this Article, there is no particular specify about SCs yet significant bit of youngster work occupied with unsafe business have a place with SCs.

Article 25 (2) (b)

The Article gives that Hindu religious foundations of an open character should be opened to all classes and segments of Hindus. The term Hindu incorporates people claiming Sikh, Jain and Buddhist religion.

3.8.2: Economic Safeguards

Articles 23, 24 and 46 frame some portion of the financial protections for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled clans. The arrangements of Article 23 and 24 have just been talked about in before passages.

Article 46

This Article States that, "The State might advance with exceptional care the instructive and monetary interests of the weaker areas of the general population, and specifically, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and should shield them from social foul play and all types of misuse'.

3.8.3: Educational and Cultural Safeguards:

Article 15(4)

Article 15(4) and Article 46 of the Constitution enables the State to make exceptional arrangements for the progression of any socially and instructively in reverse classes of nationals and for Scheduled Castes. The bearings revered in the Constitution have been reflected in different five year designs which have tried to raise the level of instruction among

the Dalits in the first and second five year designs. The instructive plans presented for Dalits were as follows.

1. Scholarships (pre-matric and post matric)
2. Opening of schools in Dalits territories.
3. Grants of books, inns expenses.
4. Opening of private schools, balwadis, group focuses, and so forth.

Bit by bit the extent of projects for instructive improvement in the different five year design periods expanded. A mid-term evaluation of the fourth arrangement uncovered that almost 50% of the regressive classes' division allotment 48% was for the most part spent on instructive program alone. The example of instructive projects for the Scheduled Castes of the administration of India and of the State governments is given underneath.

Under Union Government

1. Post matric grants
2. Pre matric grants for the offspring of those occupied with unclean occupations
3. Boys and young ladies lodgings
4. Book banks
5. Upgradation of benefits of SC/ST understudies
6. Coaching and associated plans
7. National abroad grant and passed gifts for higher examinations abroad

8. Grants in help to deliberate associations in increments to these, two plans in the focal area have likewise been affirmed, viz.

9. Educational complex in low proficiency pockets for advancement of ladies' education in Dalit regions

10. Special instructive improvement programs for Scheduled Caste young ladies having a place with low instructive level.

These projects are notwithstanding the exceptional pushed given to the weaker areas in the general projects for instructive advancement like opening of schools, running of non-formal training (NFE) focuses and grown-up instruction focuses plans of activity writing board, upgradation of value of the Dalit understudies and so forth with the exception of the national abroad grant plot, all other are of the sort was similarly sharing premise between the centre and the States.⁹

Under State Government

1. Scholarships and stipends at different levels
2. Supply of course books, stationary, hardware, sports materials
3. Administration of balwadis, grade schools, center schools, higher auxiliary schools and utterance prize to understudies
4. Residential schools
5. Amenities to sheets in private inns and money related help for sharing rental lodging
6. Hostels and reservations of seats as a rule lodgings

⁹ Rajawat, Mamta. (2005). *Dalits Role of Education (Encyclopaedia of Dalits in Series)*. New Delhi: Anmol Publication. Pp. 161-162.

7. Merit grants
8. Expanses of those concentrate in state funded schools
9. Reimbursement of examination charges and educational cost expenses at various level of instruction
10. Excursions
11. Mid day Meals
12. Loans to understudies for carrying on instruction
13. Vocational specialty classes
14. Introduction of present day exchanges and preparing habitats for independent work
15. Coaching and think about focuses
16. Awards to instruct
17. Houses for instructors

What's more the priests of instruction, work and agribusiness and the University Grants Commission have additionally been giving different offices to Dalit understudies to be specific-

Reservation of seats in Educational Institution including Engineering and Medical College's, Technical Institutions, Sainik Schools and Navodaya Vidyalaya Kendriya Vidyalayas.

Unwinding grants and cooperation's

There is no different program for honour of Scholarships/stipends to the Dalits understudies under the service of training. Be that as it may, reservations have been made for the Dalit

understudies at pre matric level under the two after plans of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.¹⁰

3.8.4: Political Safeguards

Reservation of seats for SCs and STs in the neighbourhood assemblages of the States/UTs, Legislative Assemblies of the State and in Parliament are given in the Constitution of India as takes after:

Article 243D Reservation of Seats

(1) Seats might be held for (a) the Scheduled Castes; and (b) the Scheduled Tribes in each Panchayat and the quantity of seats so saved should bear, as almost as might be, a similar extent to the aggregate number of seats to be filled by coordinate decision in that Panchayat as the number of inhabitants in the Scheduled Castes in that Panchayat zone or of the Scheduled Tribes in that Panchayat territory bears to the aggregate populace of that region and such seats might be apportioned by turn to various voting demographics in a Panchayat.

(2) Not Less than 33% of the aggregate number of seats held under Clause (1) should be saved for ladies having a place with the Scheduled Castes or, as the case might be the Scheduled Tribes.

(3) Not short of what 33% (counting the quantity of seats saved for ladies having a place the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the aggregate number of seats to be filled by

¹⁰ Ibid. Pp.192-163.

coordinate decision in each Panchayat should be saved for ladies and such seats might be designated by pivot to various electorates in a Panchayat.

Article 243T Reservation of Seats:

(1) Seats might be saved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in each Municipality and the quantity of seats so saved should bear, as about as might be, a similar extent to the aggregate number of seats to be filled by coordinate race in that Municipality as the number of inhabitants in the Scheduled Castes in the Municipal territory or of the Scheduled Tribes in the Municipal region bears to the aggregate populace of that region and such seats might be distributed by revolution to various voting public in a Municipality.

(2) Not short of what 33% of the aggregate number of seats saved under statement (1) might be held for ladies having a place with the Scheduled Castes or, all things considered, the Scheduled Tribes.

(3) Not short of what 33% (counting the quantity of seats saved for ladies having a place with the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the aggregate number of seats to be filled by coordinate race in each Municipality might be held for ladies and such seats might be allocated by turn to various voting demographics in a Municipality.

(4) The workplaces of Chairpersons in the Municipalities might be saved for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and ladies in such way as the Legislature of State may, by law, give.

(5) The reservation of seats under Clauses (1) and (2) and the reservation of workplaces of Chairpersons (other than the booking for ladies) under Clause (4) might stop to have impact on the termination of the period determined in Article 334.

(6) Nothing in the Part might keep the Legislature of a State from making any arrangement for reservation of seats in any Municipality or workplaces of Chairpersons in the Municipalities for in reverse class of subjects.

Article 330 Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People:

(1) Seats might be held in the House of the People for –

(a) The Scheduled Castes;

(b) The Scheduled Tribes with the exception of the Scheduled Tribes in the independent regions of Assam; and

(c) The Scheduled Tribes in the self-ruling areas of Assam.

(2) The quantity of seats saved in any State or Union Territory for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes under Clause (1) might bear, as about the same number of be, a similar extent to the aggregate number of seats apportioned to that State or Union Territory in the House of the People as the number of inhabitants in the Scheduled standings in the State or Union region or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or Union Territory or part of the State or Union domain, all things considered, in regard of which seats are so saved, bears to the aggregate populace of the State or Union Territory.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in Clause (2), the quantity of seats saved in the House of the People for the Scheduled Tribes in the independent regions of Assam should bear to the aggregate number of seats allocated to that State an extent at the very least the number of inhabitants in the Scheduled Tribes in the said self-ruling areas bears to the aggregate populace of the State.

Clarification:- In this Article and in Article 332, the articulation "populace" implies the populace as found out at the last going before enumeration of which the important figures have been distributed:

Given that the reference in the Explanation to the last going before registration of which the important figures have been distributed should, until the point that the applicable figures for the main statistics taken after the year 2000 have been distributed, be translated as reference to the 1971 Census.

Article 332 Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States:

(1) Seats may be held for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes except for the Scheduled Tribes in the self-overseeing region of Assam, in the Legislative Assembly of each State.

(2) Seats may be held furthermore for the self-overseeing region in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Assam.

(3) The amount of seats held for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assembly of any State under Clause (1) may bear, as about as may be, a comparative degree to the total number of seats in the Assembly as the quantity of tenants in the Scheduled Castes in the State or of the Scheduled Tribes in the State or part of the State, everything considered, in respect of which seats are so spared, bears to the total people of the State.

Article 334 Reservation of Seats and uncommon portrayal to stop following sixty years:

Despite anything in the previous arrangements of this Para, the arrangements of this Constitution identifying with:-

The reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the State; and

The portrayal of the Anglo-Indian people group in the House of the People and in the Legislative Assemblies of the States by selection, might stop to have impact on the lapse of a time of sixty years from the beginning of the Constitution:

3.8.5: Service Safeguards

Administration Safeguards are contained in Article 16(4), 16(4A), and 335. In the year 2001, the Parliament through Constitution (Eighty-fifth Amendment) Act, 2001 changed the courses of action contained in Article 16(4A) for the words: "in issues of progression to any class" the words "in issues of headway, with extensive status, to any class" has been substituted. The effect of this redress is that the SCs/STs propelled sooner than their accomplice when all is said in done grouping by morals of reservation procedure ought to be higher positioning than general arrangement in the propelled scale/post.

3.11.2: Provision of Reservation:

It is sensibly trusted that the uncommon shields gave under Article 15(4) and Article 16(4) are the major privileges of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution of India. Accordingly they are compulsory, sacred and unalterable.

Reservations and Facilities in Educational Institutions

Along these lines, far as reservation in instructive foundation is concerned the important arrangements under the Constitution are as under:

Article 15(1): the state might not oppress any national on grounds just of religion, race, position, sex, and place of birth or any of them.

Article 15(4): Nothing in this article or proviso (2) of Article 29 should keep the state from making any exceptional arrangement for the headway of any socially and instructively in reverse classes of resident or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.¹¹

3.9: Legal Rights of Dalits

Uncommon social establishments have come into compel every once in a while for SCs with a specific end goal to maintain the sacred order and shield the interests of Dalits in India. The major lawful establishments at the national level are: (I) Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955; (ii) Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 was instituted in promotion of Article 17 of the constitution to annul untouchability and its training in any shape.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 was brought into constrain from 30th January 1990 to check and stop violations against SCs/STs by people having a place with different groups. These authorizations have expanded the positive segregation for SCs and STs to the field of criminal law in as much as they recommend punishments that are more stringent than the comparing offenses under Indian corrective code (IPC) and different laws. Extraordinary Courts have been set up in real states for expedient trial of cases enlisted solely under these Acts.

Classification of violations:

The wrongdoings against people having a place with Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes are extensively ordered under two noteworthy heads:

¹¹ Added by the 1st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1950. Also see, Kshirsagar, R.K. (2013). *Reservation: A Quest for Justice*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications.

1. Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC): (I) Murder (ii) Hurt (iii) Rape
2. Kidnapping and snatching (v) Dacoity (vi) Robbery (vii) Arson
3. Others (other grouped IPC violations)

Under Special Laws (SL)

(I) The Protection of Civil Rights Acts, 1955 (ii) The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

The infringement under IPC, for instance, `murder', `hurt', `rape', et cetera or under Special Acts, for instance, "The Protection of Civil Rights Act" and "The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act" are presently consolidated into general bad behaviours uncovered under IPC and SLLs independently and have been discussed in detail in the previous parts. The specific infringement against SCs/STs discussed in the going with entries are a fundamental piece of total bad behaviours however separated freely for better comprehension of bad behaviours submitted against SCs and STs.

The data on infringement against SCs/STs are being joined with course of action for area astute specifying of these bad behaviours with affect from the year 2001. Cases under the Protection of Civil Rights Act and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act have been disengaged for SCs and STs to have clear photograph of the impressive number of infringement against each class. Total aggregates of data open on month to month introduce were used for examination till 2000 which did not perceive honest to goodness or false cases, thusly, the event of bad behaviour itemized in the year 2001 and later years may not be for all intents and purposes indistinguishable with figures of earlier years. The 'Bad behaviour Rate' for infringement submitted against SCs and

STs, has been processed using only the quantity of occupants in SC and ST independently in light of the Population Census 2011.

Effectiveness of the Legal and Administrative System to manage Atrocities on Dalits:

Given the generally more incessant event of outrages on dalits in the rustic belt, the capacity of the group to encounter upward versatility is influenced altogether. Not exclusively do these episodes influence the financial existence of the dalits yet the nonappearance of auspicious discipline of the guilty parties makes a tolerant domain for comparable cases in future. The state could assume a noteworthy part in this circle by improving the level of viable administration, to be specific, by fortifying peace hardware. A quick transfer of cases is the essential necessity for limiting violations on the group.

3.10: Human Rights Perspective

3.10.1: Caste and the Human Rights Treaty Bodies

The human rights course of action checking bodies have attracted with the issue of standing, especially since 1996, when CERD communicated that rank based partition was a kind of plunge based isolation concerning India's state report. The going with territory looks response to the reports got from the South Asian countries that assistance a position system by four sheets of trustees: the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and studies their sense of duty regarding the recognizing evidence of standing based isolation as a significant wellspring of human rights encroachment. The region moreover takes a gander at what cures the Committees have proposed towards the transfer of station based isolation. The keep going subsection on

standing and value examines the specific issue of position favouritism in the police and in the legitimate.

3.10.2: The Human Rights Committee

India endorsed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on 10 April 1979. The Covenant guarantees against isolation of any kind in its article 26, incorporating partition in light of 'social source'. In 1997, the Human Rights Committee (HRC) found that India was dismissing its responsibilities under the ICCPR through its treatment of the Dalits.

It is noted that:

*with worry that notwithstanding measures taken by the administration, individuals from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and in addition alleged in reverse classes and ethnic and national minorities keep on enduring serious social separation and to experience the ill effects of numerous infringement of their rights under the Covenant, including between alia between station savagery, reinforced work and segregation of various types. It laments that the accepted propagation of the rank framework settles in social contrasts and adds to these infringement.*¹²

The HRC endorsed that India get furthermore measures including informative tasks at the national and state levels to fight a wide range of exploitation these powerless social events, according to article 2(1) and article 26 of the Covenant.

The HRC must continue denouncing rank based division under article 26 of the Covenant through the state declaring philosophy. Since 1997, the Committee has not had the occasion to review a report from India or Nepal, and at the period of its idea of India's 1997 report, the overall advancement against rank based division was tolerably young. Exactly when such an

¹² Concluding Observations. India. (1997). CCPR/C/79/Add.81. Para. 15.

occasion emerges, the Committee must supplement made by the other settlement checking bodies and the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights by perceiving remaining as a vital wellspring of the foreswearing of normal and political rights, notwithstanding formal non-partition laws.

The Committee should recognize and rebuke particularly the encroachment of the benefit to 'approach protection of the law' in India under article 26 of the Covenant. Since the 1990s, brutality against Dalits in India has raised definitely as a result of creating Dalit rights advancements. In the region of 1995 and 1997, an aggregate of 90,925 cases were enrolled with police the nation over as bad behaviours and barbarities against Scheduled Castes. The UN Sub-Commission's Working Paper on Work and Descent-based Discrimination saw that: 'the hulks submitted – slaughter, strike, mutilation, incendiarism et cetera – are segregated goes about and in addition could even be shows of mass violence presented by volunteer armed force packs used by the higher stations.

India's National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has uncovered that these cases consistently can be sorted as one of three classes; cases relating to the demonstration of 'untouchability' and attempts to challenge the social demand; cases relating to arrive question and demands for minimum wages; and examples of horrifying presences by police and boondocks experts. Position Hindus and non-Dalits can utilize a great deal of utilization over adjacent police, area associations and even state governments. This utilization in a general sense hinders the capable execution of the statutory game plans of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989.

The control of the 1989 Act, and the failure to charge barbarities against Dalits under its terms, is outlined in the Supreme Court example of *State of Kerala v. Appu Balu*, where the

court found: 'More than 75% of the cases under the [Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) 1989] Act are completing off with pardon at all levels.'

In its August 2000 Resolution, the UN Sub-Commission on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights requested that legislatures ensure: *Suitable lawful punishments and assents, including criminal approvals, are recommended for and connected to all people or elements inside the ward of the Governments concerned who might be found to have occupied with practices of segregation based on work and plunge.*¹³

The sacred and statutory bodies in India, for example, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and the National Human Rights Commission, have over and again affirmed the disappointment of her established and statutory laws intended to secure the Dalits. The UN Sub-Commission's Working Paper on Work and Descent-based Discrimination featured this, and expressed: *The laws are there, yet there is a reasonable absence of will with respect to law implementation officers to make a move attributable to station bias on their part or yielding appeared to higher-rank culprits.*¹⁴

It is anticipated from the Committee that it will perceive the pervasiveness of station, especially in India and Nepal, to a considerably more noteworthy degree than it did in 1994 and 1997, given the developing narrative proof indicating position as a perpetual wellspring of separation and refusal of common and political rights. Article 26 is by and large methodically disregarded in those states gatherings to the Covenant.

3.11: Position of Balmikis in Empowerment Process

Different ranks among the Scheduled Caste in various parts of India and inspected concerning their regions spread and local fixations. As per the 1971 statistics the Scheduled

¹³ UN Doc. E/CN.4/SUB.2/RES/2000/4. Para. 3

¹⁴ UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/16. Para. 26.

Caste populace India represented 14.6 percent of the aggregate populace of the nation. Be that as it may, the Scheduled Caste populace is a long way from being a solitary homogenous gathering there are upwards of 612 standings, each having a high level of word related specialization and likewise getting a charge out of an alternate status inside Scheduled Caste individuals. The quantity of positions fluctuates from at least three in the State of Sikkim. It is intriguing to take note of that a rank playing out similar capacities is referred to distinctively in various States as in the event of Balmikis or Bhangis. Truth be told, terminology of the Scheduled Castes appears to differ to a great extent because of the semantic assortment our nation has.

Strengthening is the upgrade of the political, social, financial or profound quality of people and groups. Strengthening conceals creating and constructing limits of people, groups to influence them to some portion of the standard society. Instruction is the methods by which social orders have been known ever, to become out of mistreatment to popularity based cooperation and inclusion. It is an intense apparatus for strengthening of person. It is natural for human identity. It conveys both inherent and in addition instrumental esteems. This strengthening ought to be there for all. Talking unequivocally, the underestimated Balmiki people group has been the most influenced in the entire procedure. It isn't so much that the legislature has not done anything other than rather what can be the extremely base is the way that the execution at the very ground level is exceptionally poor. Today, the approaching of Panchayati Raj framework has by one means or another given different sorts of chances to the minimized Balmiki people group. Yet they are influenced by the endless loop of the general public.

The possibility of strengthening in its present utilization is new, yet it is as often as possible utilized as a part of late talks on improvement. It might be conjured in essentially any specific situation: in talking about human rights, about fundamental needs, about monetary security,

about limit working, about ability development or about the states of an honourable social presence. This thought is additionally utilized as a part of the setting of the upliftment of the minimized, chaotic and other distraught areas of society. All things considered, persecuted gatherings, for example, chaotic specialists, poor workers, innate individuals, dalits and ladies are altogether occupied with a battle for power and judge the advancement procedure for their own encounters. Along these lines strengthening speaks to the deepest desires of the underestimated bunches for a social situation free of imbalances disfavouring them in various circles of life. The denied individuals and their associations at grassroots level are endeavouring persistently to understand their fantasies and trusts in a superior future and engaged life.

Strengthening alludes to making limits in the people or gatherings to take an interest effectively in their own welfare. Hypothetically, strengthening ought to be a procedure that causes individuals to pick up control over their lives through bringing issues to light, making a move and working with a specific end goal to practice more prominent control. As Jo Rowlands says, 'it is about the people having the capacity to expand utility and utilize the open doors accessible to them without or in spite of imperatives of structure and state'. As indicated by Gutierrez, 'it is the way toward expanding individual, relational or political power so people, families and groups can make a move to enhance their circumstance'. Accordingly strengthening alludes to building capacities among people and gatherings through which they end up independent and sorted out.

Strengthening is identified with certain setting in Indian culture. Basically, that setting is the logical inconsistency between various levelled social request and a just political framework. Verifiable in the possibility of strengthening is sure hypothesis of social change, specifically of progress from a various levelled to a populist sort of society or in a somewhat extraordinary dialect, from a highborn to a popularity based kind of it. In this way

strengthening assumes social change through the improvement of energy. Among the distinctive means proposed to accomplish this objective, strengthening through the development of the municipal, political and social privileges of citizenship is vital. It is a method for looking for strengthening inside the majority rule political process. Another path, as in our nation, is by giving as broadly as could be expected under the circumstances, shares based on group, position and sexual orientation. On the off chance that we break down strengthening of the weaker segments in the light of the previously mentioned ways, we find that the legislature and common society have regularly attempted sincere endeavours in ensuring these rights to them. Be that as it may, they keep on remaining weakened and one of the fundamental obstacles in their strengthening is the customary social ethos which limits their inclusion out in the open basic leadership process.¹⁵

Balmiki strengthening is multi-dimensional as in it happens inside social, monetary, political and social circles. These measurements don't really move together at a similar pace or even a similar way. Two investigations can take a gander at a similar marvel, yet think of various conclusions relying upon the measurements of strengthening they measure. In this way, one might say that enabling Balmiki people group happens at different levels, for example, individual, gathering and group itself.

3.11.1: Social Empowerment

The focal point of social strengthening is on working up social capacities, economic wellbeing and openings among Balmiki people, classes and groups who are denied access to these essential parts of social life. The source of Balmiki minimization in Indian setting is profoundly established in the social structure of Indian culture where segregation in view of position, class and sexual orientation is to a great extent pervasive from time immemorial.

¹⁵ Chaturvedi, Saransh. (2016). *Empowerment of Marginalized Section (Women, Dalit, Tribal) and their Participation*. The World Journal on Juristic Polity. August 2016.

Despite the fact that the Constitution has given a few arrangements to social protections of the Balmiki people group yet regardless it experiences the thoughts of virtue and contamination overseeing the social standings of various positions and genders; men and ladies were considered to be of unequal good worth just like the diverse Varnas; and the social chain of importance was supported by a lawful request in which benefits and handicaps were precisely regulated by station and sexual orientation.¹⁶

Social strengthening is gone for social change from a various levelled to a majority rule sort of society where the equivalent privileges of all people are perceived. It is about the change of the current social structure by giving better training, medicinal services framework, business openings, government disability measures and so forth to those individuals who are denied of these advantages.

3.11.2: Economic Empowerment

It is the procedure by which better financial development and access to monetary assets are produced and improved to this very group individuals. Without a doubt, being a financially in reverse group, they do not have each one of those dynamic characteristics that help and manage monetary development. As they have been the main Dalits in Darjeeling slopes they have been avoided the responsibility for assets, which have handed them to distraught area over the Darjeeling society. State goes about as the greatest office which oversees and activates assets including infrastructural and others for advancing and supporting development in the financial circle for the underestimated gatherings. In any case, even the state-supported, upheld and managed procedure of improvement has made just a slight gouge in the thick structure of disparity, misuse and abuse that have played devastation with the lives of minimized Balmikis for quite a long time. This circumstance calls for strengthening

¹⁶ Ibid.

of the weaker areas looked for inside the structure of law based process, as a solution for them to get their due offer out in the open financial assets.

Being a minority group in Darjeeling the Balmikis has not possessed the capacity to impact political and authoritative choices for profoundly changing their financial conditions to support them. Not just that, in the fair procedure, political assembly of this group has not demonstrated as a capable weapon in affecting political choices which can decide the methods of dissemination of riches.¹⁷

3.11.3: Political Empowerment

Political Empowerment is the procedure of outfitting the general population with political assets and empowering them to effectively take an interest in the forming and sharing of energy. It expands the capability of the general population to adequately control or impact the basic leadership procedure of the state. Truth be told, the center of the possibility of strengthening itself is its political measurement which features the idea of energy. In this sense, strengthening considered as a procedure which supplies people, gatherings and groups with control. They secure the ability to settle on free decisions and change them into wanted activities or results. It empowers them to impact the course of their lives and the choices that influence them. To the extent the strengthening of the underestimated bunches is concerned, their political activation has been considered the best method to tackle their financial, instructive or different backwardness. They ought to wind up politically sorted out as to practice their establishment for the strengthening of the group. It is a piece of the undertaking of the state to enable them that reservation of seats in Parliament and state Legislatures and in addition in neighbourhood bodies is guaranteed. The decentralization of energy to Panchayati

¹⁷ Ibid.

Raj Institutions by the 73rd and 74th changes of the Indian constitution is considered an endeavour to politically enable individuals at the grassroots level particularly the weaker areas.¹⁸

3.11.4: Cultural Empowerment

It can be said that culture has been portrayed as the natural entire of thoughts, convictions, qualities and objectives which condition the reasoning and acting of the Balmiki people group. Seen in this manner, culture finds reasonable articulation in morals, theory and law: emblematic articulation in workmanship, writing, myth and faction. It is the standardizing awareness of the Balmiki people group acquired from the past and transmitted, with or without change to coming ages.

Social strengthening is a procedure through which the Balmiki can secure and reproduce the social personality of their kin.

Seen from a subaltern point of view, social strengthening of Balmiki dalits is a testing assignment. In 2008 the 'Besh-Busha Andolan' of the Gorkhaland Movement has incredibly irritated the social arrangement of this group. The general population are compelled to wear their conventional garments. At the point when the Balmikis turned out with their Rajasthani clothing, they were isolated as untouchables. Therefore, they have adjusted to the Nepali social dress. Contrasted with the predominant culture which is administered by financial and political elites, the subaltern culture is a counter-social development and a challenge culture. It speaks to the threat of dalits against the predominant class structures and their battle to attest fairness and human poise. Strengthening of this underestimated bunches involves genuine interests for point of view perception and examination of the composite procedures of new personality development, concretization of these gatherings for the obliteration of the

¹⁸ Ibid.

structure of the subordination forced on them lastly the sharing of energy with this weak part.¹⁹

3.11.5: Educational Empowerment

The advancement of any country relies upon its instructive framework and it is demonstrated, and that training is the way to human advance and social change. Instruction is an effective device for reinforcement of person. It helps in creating trust in individual and group about their own abilities, innate qualities to shape their lives and along these lines upgrade the internal quality scholarly, political, social and monetary against persecution, prohibition and separation. The instruction shapes the most imperative and this is the specific thing which frames the base of the country's improvement.

On the off chance that think back in to the historical backdrop of India, instruction was never in reach of its whole individuals. Unequal access to instruction has been uncontrolled in India. Prejudicial request in the standing framework has been instrumental in sustaining this. Over the ages one area of the general public were delighted in the products of the instruction and remaining lion's share of Indian people group especially underestimated areas like Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), Religious Minorities and Women were denied the opportunity. Ideal since Jotirao Phule, Narayan Guru, early training developments to show day, instruction battles all are non-Brahmin in inception and they unequivocally trust that 'training is edification and illumination is strengthening'. It improves for a future society.

¹⁹ Ibid

3.12: Some Facts

Indian constitution perceives socially underestimated groups in view of the caste, they have a place with. Based on position, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and the religious minorities, and furthermore ladies are minimized in the field of training. As indicated by registration of India 2001, the aggregate populace of SC represent 16.2% of Indian populace, ST represent 8.1% of the aggregate. Despite the fact that there is no official set out tally toward OBCs the National Surveys propose that the number of inhabitants in OBCs shape 41% of the populace. Education information by social gathering are accessible from the 55th Round of National Sample Survey (NSS), which was led only 7 months before the Census, 2001. According to NSS, 55th round, the education rate of SCs in provincial India was 46.6%. In urban India, the proficiency rate was 66.2%. The proficiency rate of ST populace was 42.2% in provincial zones, and in urban territories, it was 70%. The proficiency rate of Other Backward Class (OBC) was 54.8% in country India. In urban India, the proficiency rate of OBC was 75.3%. The enrolment of SCs up to Class 8 was 19.87%; for STs It was 10.69%. Among OBCs, the figures were 42% in the essential classes and 41.23% at the upper essential level.

Instruction is an intense operator of social change. On the off chance that the advanced education framework isn't streamlined or enhanced by the requirements of the present day, the essential guarantee of equity social, financial and political, uniformity of status and of chance, freedom of figured, confidence and love will ever stay unfulfilled. Instruction should go for socialization and democratization in obvious feeling of the word. It is obviously apparent that Education in India is plating a crucial part in cooking the advanced education to the requirements of broadened gatherings of understudies including socially impeded segments. Minimized people group in India are enduring with absence of access to training in India for ages. For a very lengthy time span Dalits were not permitted to enter to the

doorsteps of instructive focuses and organizations. With various strategies in India working for conveying instruction for all intents and purposes to the entryway ventures of a few hindered segments including Dalits and ladies, the brighter days are coming. On the off chance that this framework has more available the underestimated groups particularly Dalits will liberate themselves from customary servitudes, misuses and mortifications.²⁰

3.13: Vision of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Touching this angle in this Chapter is essential in light of the reason that without a doubt the part of standing is still with us in this general public and we moving toward 70 years of autonomy have not possessed the capacity to destroy this. These are without a doubt not had been touched by any of the administration but rather in a genuine sense the position division is an incredible obstacle in the improvement procedure. We live in 21st century yet there are a few complexities which is hard to comprehend with regards to rank contrasts. Today, in India a tyke work is chosen before birth seeing his or her station. The inquiry is that whether we can envision a Brand India where still the standing framework is pervasive. The Branding in a genuine sense does not check the position of a man but rather on the ground level this is constantly asked upon. My entire observation lies on the suspicion that we live in Good Society and there is society where the work isn't characterized by station. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who led the Drafting Committee, is prominently considered as the Father of the Indian Constitution and assumed an exceptionally vital part in the constitution-production. Despite the fact that when the initiative in the Constituent Assembly chose him to be the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, B.R. Ambedkar was charmingly astounded at the decision and said that came into the Constituent Assembly with no more noteworthy yearning than to protect the enthusiasm of the Scheduled Castes extraordinarily amazed when the Assembly chose me to the Drafting Committee. I was more than shocked when the Drafting

²⁰ Ibid.

Committee chose me to be its Chairman. Through these words one can without much of a stretch mean the correct reason that drove Dr. Ambedkar thought. He definitely worked for the oppressed class and what he expected was the constitution with everyone co-activity and co-appointment since he realized that he can't dream of a brand India without the help of all and which was effortlessly comprehended by Dr. Ambedkar. The devil in this part is the unfeeling treatment given to the underestimated group despite everything we battle the evil presence.

Station framework in India relegates specific arrangements of capacities and parts even before one's introduction to the world, and furthermore gives particular financial, common, social and instructive rights to one without flexibility to change. It disregards along these lines an individual ability, inclinations and decisions.

In such manner, the social request win in the Indian culture gives no entailments, social and monetary rights and flexibilities to bring down stations, and in opposite, gives complex openings, benefits and rights to the higher standings, especially the Brahmins. Along these lines, the reality was much known to the Constituent Assembly that the constitution would have been presented in a profoundly unequal and biased society. This is most likely why its part incredibly discussed and drafted the constitution with the express motivation behind dislodging the status.

B. R. Ambedkar, without a doubt and observably, was the man who borne the obligation to battle against the untouchability and misuse in light of Hindu standing framework, and battled for the untouchables 'rights and cut for them a place in the Republican Constitution of India. B.R.Ambedkar however figured out how to incorporate certain arrangements in the Constitution of India for enabling lower positions, yet the reality was much known to him that building up break even with human and social equality for discouraged classes' was not

adequate in guaranteeing equity and welfare to them unless it would be joined by the legitimate arrangements and shields to maintain those rights on account of its infringement and dissent. He trusted that giving rights to all subjects would insufficient in light of the fact that the all the more intense, the very favored higher classes may have the capacity to deny them to bring down strata of society. Law thusly ought to give cures against the attack of key rights. B.R.Ambedkar said in the Constituent Assembly that every one of us know that rights are nothing unless cures are given whereby individuals can look to get review when rights are attacked. Inside this foundation, sacred cures have been masterminded in the Constitution of India. Article 32 gives the privilege to all subjects of the nation to approach the Supreme Court, if their principal rights and protected benefits are abused by any state establishment or person. This is maybe why B.R.Ambedkar thought about this arrangement as the very soul of the Constitution and its very heart. It is vital to take note of; the Supreme Court later has announced that Article 32 is a piece of essential structure of the Constitution.

The station division must be change when we change the attitude. At the point when a kid is huge and he begins understanding the circumstance then it ends up hard to remove the character of position framework since it blends with the blood. What is important is to have a framework where the training ought to be given at an exceptionally base level that the standing framework ought to be never thought about. The Brand India that we long for will be just conceivable when we are free from this reasoning of standing else it will without a doubt be an obstruction. Seeing the present situation, we can state that we have moved into the bearing where we don't give much significance to the standing however this condition isn't predominant wherever in the nation and our point ought to be to touch it all over the place.²¹

²¹ Ibid.

3.14: Empowering the Balmikis: The limits of constitutional mechanisms

The Balmiki Dalits are often deprived of the rights in the various spheres of life. The Government of India has made a number of provisions under the constitution which includes legislative as well as political measures which contributes towards the improvement of condition of the Dalits. Empowerment refers to the process of improving or rather enhancing the social, economic and political conditions of an individual or the community as a whole. In order to make the group or individual, a part of the mainstream society, the individual developing capacities is wrapped into one entity for empowerment. Through history, it is often observed that people move out of the evils of oppression with the help of education system.

The Constitution of India has provided ample scope for the development of the dalits but crux of the problem lies in the fact that the most of the dalits cannot avail of these opportunities for various reasons.

- Due to lack of education,
- Poverty in absolute terms along with the lack of education is the most seviar obstacle to the all round development of the dalits. They can neither take the resort of law nor could they receive the assistance of the administration when ever atrocities come in their way from the upper echelon of the society.
- Most such constitutional provisions are being caught in the red tape knot
- The lack of initiative on the part of both dalits and those who enjoy the right to implement the constitution provisions into reality
- The social stratification of India another hindrance for the implementation of these provisions because there is wide gap between the top three strata in the lowest stratum of the society

- Although the Constitution has led down certain provisions in regard to the improvement of the down trodden dalit masses, the constitution have kept some room for the punishment of the law breakers in this respect but in reality no such punishment is being observed properly.
- Religious dogmatism of the traditional Hindu society is another point of obstruction on the path of the subalterned people as they turn their faces towards progress in the one hand and subjection and oppression in the name of 'Dharma' on the part of the *Purohit* and *Pandits* on the other.
- The unwilling of the dalits to grab these opportunities is also taken into consideration.
- The weakness of the Constitution itself is note worthy to be mentioned here. For instance, the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes of the particular State may not be treated as the same in other States. This happens both in the educational and as well as employments sectors, under different state government. Having proper certificates of SCs and Other Backward classes have been denied of jobs in the University in West Bengal²² despite their required educational qualifications.
- Finally the attitude of the society towards the dalits has not under gone any change since long. The barbaric attitude of the middle age is less difficult to trace. Dilly-dally with the dalit issues is a common phenomenon in our day to day life. Delay takes place in the issuance of Caste Certificate by the municipalities, delay in the serving of Employment notice by the Exchange etc. if any complaints are being put forward by the dalits, challenges come in their way from the government from head to tail.²³

²² The name of the University is not being mentioned for confidential reasons.

²³ Letter to, Shri R.B. Rai, Member of Parliament, Darjeeling. *Subject: Grievances of the Harijan, Balmiki Community.* Ref. No. 57 (90-91) BHS. Dated: 05.04.1991.

Many a document has been received by the researcher when he visited from door to door in order to gather firsthand knowledge about the various aspects of the Balmikis living on and around the three hill sub-divisions of the erstwhile district of Darjeeling. While roaming about here and there the researcher could get a chance to have a visit in the office of Balmiki Harijan Sangh, and could xerox some corresponds or letters exchanged between the Sangh and the Government which has been furnished here in toto in support of the claims, he has brought into the lime light.²⁴

²⁴ Letter to, The Hon'ble Minister In Charge, Urban Planning & Development, Govt. of West Bengal. *Subject: Justice for the Poor Harijans of Darjeeling.* Ref. No. 14 (86-87) B.H.S. Dated: 26.06.1986.

Socio-Economic and Political Processes and Balmiki Marginalisation

4.1: Introduction

In different religions Balmiki community is known by different names, the leading is 'chusa' and 'Balmiki' from Punjab who were the one to first assign itself with Valmiki. In Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh all know them as 'Churhas'. Apart from this Balmiki Lalbegi, Malkana, Dom, Dumar, Hela are some other well-known Balmiki communities.

Where did the name 'Bhang' come from? It is a matter of research. How did they origin? It is hidden in past according to researchers the occupation of Balmiki were to clean toilets. This was assigned to them by Muslim rulers. These researchers are strong supporter of Hinduism. Based on this background the very famous Amritlal Nagar wrote "*Nachyo Bahut Gopal*" a novel where Nagar first introduced the idiom "*to make a Balmiki/Balmiki by Fortune*". But he never pointed toward the Untouchability issue prevalent in Indian Society. Not only Nagar, but many others had faced this condition this is evident because in some places Balmiki community resided in large numbers but in some areas like Kumayun, Maharashtra they had no existence.

Bhagwandas had same mentality. He says that Balmikis are large quantity towards west of Northern India. And when Brahmanism started originated in these lands, Balmikis were looked as if they were disgusting.¹ He further argues that sages were beaten to make Balmikis and then the monsters become rich.² He believed that the followers of Buddhism were made Balmiki, today some are called Balmiki, some Dom and some Der.³ The origin of the word

¹ Das, Bhagwan. (1973). *Valmiki Jayanti aur Bhangi Jaati*. New Delhi: Dalit World Library. Pp. 10.

² Ibid. Pp. 2.

³ Ibid. Pp. 6-7.

Balmiki is itself mind boggling for regional occupation, this word may be used. Arun Thakur and Mohammad Khadas in their book '*Narak Safai*' says that the people who make holders out of Bamboo in Gujarat are called Balmiki. It is applicable because one needs to hemp the bamboo so 'Balmiki' is appropriate.⁴

According to Enthovin's glossary, those who don't follow and respect the upper class are boycotted and made Balmikis.⁵ According to Sridhar Venkatesh Kathkar, due to the occupation of cleaning toilets, this occupation was made and it is very obvious that there will be people from different religions. The number of Balmikis in Mumbai is quite prevalent. Apart from them, Churha, Halalkhor are also the part of Balmikis. Balmikis are considered as the backward classes in Darjeeling. There may be several valid reasons as in why they accepted the occupation of cleaning.⁶ It is negligence, which is why this community is bound and to maintain this, scholars, writers and politicians play an important role.

It is mentioned in Bombay Gazetteer that Balmikis/Balmikis are prevalent since 2000 years.⁷ Based on Hindutva mentality there were no Balmikis prior to Muslim rule. This evidence are provided by scholars with full supports, they ignore the evidence of '*Surit Balmiki*' during area of Buddhism even in Jainism there is a mention of toilet cleaner '*Bansor*', which clearly depicts that this caste was there in India prior to Islamic rule. These Scholars had the confidence to ignore these facts.

Here it is the undeniable truth that English men in their troops give importance to Balmikis which is why they are spread in North India. According to Athovin dictionary, Balmikis must have arrived in Northern Indian with soldier troops.⁸ In Pune, there are different colonies and

⁴ Thakur, Arun., & Khadas, Md. (1996). *Narak Safaie*. New Delhi: Radhakrishna Publication. Pp. 23-24.

⁵ Enthovin, R. E.(1920). *Tribes and caste of Bombay*. 3 Vols. Bombay Government. Vol. I.

⁶ Ketkar , Shridhar Vyankatesh. (Ed.). *Maharashtrian Repository*. Segment- 4.

⁷ Bombay Gazetteer, 8th segment, Pp. 157.

⁸ Enthovin, R. E.(1920). *Tribes and caste of Bombay*. 3 Vols. Bombay Government. Vol. I.

panchayats of Balmikis/Balmikis. The head of all these panchayat is called '*Brigade Panchayat*', they got this name from army because of the growing number of soldiers, Balmikis felt the need of faster development.⁹

Dharmanand Kausambi also believes that they must have developed '*surits*'¹⁰ where Balmikis are born. There are mentioned about it in their stories characteristics and also there he says "I was born in a lower caste and the financial condition of my family was so pathetic that we could not afford food for ourselves. My job was fixed and it was Balmiki people mistreated me, still I behave nicely to them".¹¹

Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar has also briefly discussed about Surits. Apart from Surit, Shwapak,¹² *Chandals* were also allowed in Buddhist community.¹³ As mentioned earlier there were some castes which were restricted in Jainism. Dharmanand Kosambi in his book "Lord Buddha and his teachings" mentioned about Jainism not taking lower caste and States just like in case of caste, order and body are considered different from polluted. Similar, to it machua, jungit, and other backward classes are different deliberately. Whoever shows game with ropes, sticks and other animals are considered very low in order. Even if they are capable they won't be allowed in Jainism.¹⁴

The motive behind providing this is to make everyone aware of the fact that Bansors were related to rearing of pigs and are associated with Balmikis. Balmikis are still being found in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

⁹ Arun Thakur and Md Khadas- *Narak safaie*.

¹⁰ Hindi word, English translations means *good Knowledge*.

¹¹ Dharmanand Kausambi- *Introduction to Buddhist culture*, Mumbai, Mangesh Narayan Kulkarni, 1926. Pp. 254-286

¹² Shwapak is one who eats the meat of dog. Also see Mande, Prabhakar. (1983). *Gaongadyabaheer*. (Marathi). Aurangabad: Godavari Prakashan.

¹³ DR Bhimrao Ambedkar- *Lord Buddha and his religion*. Pp. 146.

¹⁴ Dharmanand Kausambi- *Bhagwan Buddha aur unke darshan*. Pp. 227.

In Indian culture what we are carrying as a winning sign of perpetual importance, it isn't that innocent. It is not a result of mutual understanding and love between two people. We can hear the screams of tortured, molested people. In the name of sacrifice several people were molested for several years, they were forced to sacrifice their life. They were made a victim of pride and were forced to become the slaves and worker of the upper classes.

Several Dalits and women were tortured mercilessly and force to believe them that they were considered as animals. These people had no right on themselves. They were born with no control on their body. They were forced to accept the fact that this was their way of life and had no scope for freedom. They were asked to fear God and threaten to make sacrifices. This is so unfair that some cruel men would control the life of other lower castes and were forced to accept this. These cruel men enjoyed this fact and satisfaction.¹⁵

Balmiki community originated from a bog of this cruelty. There is no sign of happiness, instead only pain for generation. No end to this story, so many lives were lost in this, still there was no discussion about.

If one focuses on the content of Indian literature, culture and other, then the condition is clear. Dr Govind Sadashiv Ghurvey writes, in Chandhyog Upanishad it is mentioned that if any person has given the leftover food of the yajna to the evil, then he is equivalent to whatever is sacrificed on contrary, it is disgusting to offer food to evil because they are degenerated and equal to dogs and pigs.¹⁶

As per the investigation regarding *Chandals* in Vedic literature, they are casteless people and it is necessary to further investigate about them to know Balmikis and their problems. This is an essential clan who is also called and 'Antya Vasayin'. Vashisht has said a Vaishya girl to

¹⁵ Rajendra Yadav- *Kaha ho raha hoga Suryoday*, Indraprasth bharti, July-September, 1991.

¹⁶ Ghurye, Govind Sadashiv. *Caste, Rank and Business*. Delhi: Rajpal and Sons. Pp. 194.

be daughter of *Shudra* man. According to the Manu, Antya wasayin is the illegitimate child of *Shudra* and Casteless women. Their job is limited up to the cemeteries. According to a research he/she is recognized as a *Chandal*. Both Boudhayan and Vashist mention about these two Clans.¹⁷

Patanjali, a sage who produced prominent theories some 150 years ago stated his explanation of *Swapach* Clan. However the occupation of *Swapach* during his time isn't stated. The Patanjali in his composition doesn't mention about *Swapach* based on the social backwardness in this example. In this example, he mentions about Mantripa Clan. We are also aware of the fact that Kautilya deprived *Chandal* of the rights. But Manu really mentioned that *Swapach* and *Chandal* should be kept in one clan and treated equally. Manu mentioned that these people should live outside the village, were the wrap of dead bodies, eat in broken utensils, and wear ornaments made of steel and use dogs and donkeys as their wealth. There were people who were restricted to enter the villages. These people cremated those dead bodies for which no one claimed.¹⁸

Not only did Manu throw them out of the villages, town and slums but he also made some rules and works, only specified for their clan. This is the reason why these people had to face social backwardness.

Vivekanand Jha accept the fact that *Chandal* were considered as the lowest in *Shudras* for which they were a victim to insults and the conventional society consider them as the lowest caste in the society.¹⁹ In the holy book *Aapatstamb* it is mentioned that the one who steals gold or kills a Brahmin in his previous birth is born as a *Chandal*.²⁰

¹⁷ Dr Govind Sadashiv Ghurye. *Caste, Rank and business*. Delhi: Rajpal and Sons.Pp. 194.

¹⁸ Dr Govind Sadashiv Ghurye. *Caste, Rank and business*. Delhi: Rajpal and Sons.Pp. 195.

¹⁹ Vivekanand Jha. *Origin of Chandal and Untouchables:History*. January. 1992. Pp. 24.

²⁰ Aapatstamb Dharmasutra-II, 1.26.

But according to other holy books like *Boudhayan Goutam* and *Vashisht* it was believed that *Chandals* were a result of coming together of two peoples or other two different Clans that was the *Shudra* men and the Brahmin women. These holy books stated that the kids born out of *Shudra* men and Brahmin women were considered *Chandal*. However, this principle is very contradictory. This is confirmed that *Chandal* as a clan can never be born out of *Shudra* man and Brahmin women.²¹

The only motive behind these principles and conclusions go to keep *Chandal* away from the Aryan Clan. Words like ‘*Antya, Antyoni, Antyavasin*’ were used to describe *Chandals*. From these entire words one can relate to the effective isolation of the *Chandals*. All this effective references and concept brought the isolation of *Chandal* in the society. These people were forced to believe that they were inferior and for this reason they were mistreated.

Mayin in his novel ‘Ancient Law’ had mentioned about the destructive caste system of the Indian society and it strongly opposed that.²² Similarly sharing in his novels Hindu tribes and castes had also strongly opposed the caste system.²³ In writing of Shruty, the word is used to refer slaves. Trigdev in his book had mentioned about the lower caste. These lower castes were actually the opponents of Aryan clans and they were badly defeated by Aryan, after being defeated by the Aryan, these lower clans were made to work for them. In Brahman books, it is mentioned that *Shudras* were created to serve the upper caste. The position of *Shudras* in the Brahmin books are equivalent to the position in other Holy text therefore this is quite exemplary of *Shudra* being eventually the serving Clan.²⁴

²¹ Vivekanand Jha. *Origin of Chandal and Untouchables-History*. January, 1992. Pp. 25.

²² Main. *Ancient Law*. (New Edition, 1930).Pp. 17.

²³ Shering. *Hindu Tribes and Castes*. Pp. 293.

²⁴ Dr Pandurang Vaaman Kale. *History of theology*. (3rd Edition. 1980). *Shudra tu kaaryed hasya krit ma kritmev. Dasyamev hi srishtosau brahmasya swayanbhava*. Also see, Manu-8.413. Pp. 112.

The Caste system has also been discussed in the book *Arthashastra* written by Kautilya. Kautilya also stated that *Chandal* should reside somewhere around the cemetery grounds. He says- "yatha *Chandalod* pansach *Chandalana* yevo pa bhagyō nanyeshaam" which means the water of the well of *Chandal* is only meant for them and not for someone else. Kautilya has also compared *Chandal* to two tribes like Baburico shabro and pulinda.²⁵ Kautilya has ranked them based on the property.²⁶ And it is from here that we learn that *Chandals* belong to the *adivasi* tribes. Prabhati Mukherjee has recognized Ptolemy's written 'condloy' as the *Chandals*. Eventually, the caste system is a result of disgusted feeling towards the other inferior people.

R.N. Dandekar has mentioned that the principle of Manu was a communal hatred and a feeling of revenge.²⁷ Actually, the main aim of Manu was to make *Chandals* the outer caste hence, he mentioned that they should live outside villages so that all their behaviours are just related to themselves. A Brahmin or a Kshatriya could anytime seal the properties of the *Chandal* and hence they were very insecure and helpless.

Valmiki in his *Ramayan* has stated that no one is a result of world Shankar meaning that no one is born out of two different caste. In holy books like Bhagavad Gita and others, efforts were made to put the backward classes into the 5th rank of the caste system.

Even in Buddhism, the *Chandals* are mentioned as the inferior class of the society. Also in the Vedic literature they are treated as disgusting and the inferior class of the society. They always resided outside the village and were made to live towards the west of the areas. Even today when the population of these people are growing we can find them residing outside the village of the town in small slums near dirty areas towards west. The occupation of *Chandal*

²⁵ Kautilya, *Arthashastra* II, 1.5-6.

²⁶ Kautilya, *Arthashastra* IV, 10.2.

²⁷ R N Dandekar. *The Age of Gupta and other Essays*.

since generation was to sweep.²⁸ There is a mention of *Chandal* in mythologies. W J C Rose has mentioned *Chandal* as the sleep in class. Chinese Traveller Fa hien had also mentioned about the *Chandals* in his book that when they entered the place to clean they used to make people aware of their coming by blowing whistle so that people would know about their entrance and move out in order to ignore being touched by them.²⁹ Manu says that *Swapach* and *Chandal* have the same occupation to clean the city.³⁰ In 12th century Hemchandra had mentioned that *Chandals* used to keep a stick on the hands to threaten people to stay out of the touch.³¹

It is necessary to mention here that Fa Hien came to India in 5th century and Hemchandra wrote about the conditions of the *Chandal* in 12th century. In both these eras the situations of the *Chandal* were the same which proves a fact that *Chandal* homemade inferior and their occupation movers limited since ages.

Historic Kashmiri Brahmin Kalhan stated that is King Chakraborty fell in love for a donga women and disputes arose. Both these women were masters in the art of singing. King was so madly in love with them that he gave *Hansi* the title of queen. Here, Kalhan expresses his grief and says that people and ministers forced themselves to work for the "*shwapaki*" or lower caste queen and also ate her defiled food. Kalhan expresses his heartfelt deep grief and states that maybe there wasn't any strong god during that era or else a lower caste woman would have never been able to attain such a position.³² This alone cannot be stated as the mentality of Kalahan but it is a result of the suppression that was faced by the Balmiki society which was mentioned in the Vedic literature. Kalhan also mentions about the bravery

²⁸ Dr Govind Sadashiv Ghurye. *Caste, Rank and Business*. Pp. 197.

²⁹ Records of Buddhist Kingdoms, Introduction, Laig, Pp. 43.

³⁰ Manu, 10.5-56.

³¹ Hemchandra. *Desi Naam Mala*..

³² Kalhan-Rajtaringini VI, Pp. 192.

of the *swapak* soldiers but with grief. He mentions about a *Chandal* and says that in *Suksh* region, he killed Jajja, a kidnapper in a battle in middle of 750 BC.³³

Kalhan also mentions about an engineer during the rule of Avanti Burman. He says that during the reign of Avanti Burman there was a problem and there was not anything that could be done to get out of it. It was during this time that engineer Suyya came to the rescue and built a dam across the river. It was from this instance that there were possibilities of irrigation. This protected the village from drought and also helped in the development of Kashmir.³⁴

According to Albruni, *Doms* and *Chandals* were meant to clean the villages and do other dirty works. However, the other occupation of *Doms* was to perform music.³⁵

In Punjab occupation of the *Doms* were to entertain people by performing music and dance. They also work with jute and fibre. However in regions of Garhwal and Kumaon they did the work of a farmer and used to earn their livelihood. Therefore in these regions they are also called as artisans. However in Bengal this, caste arose as the caste who used to do the dirtiest works. Even for their religious matters no Brahman would come to perform. No one works for them. In 1959 the number of *Doms* in West Bengal was 110000. Their main occupation was to clean toilets. However similar castes were there in Punjab known as *Churha*, in Rajasthan and Bombay known as Balmiki, Balmiki or Mehtar, in Bengal they were known as Hari, Mehtar, Hela and Balmiki and in Orissa they are called Hari.³⁶

Describing about domari and *Chandal* Arjuna said they were related to all the dirty work they were associated with cleaning the villages according to them due to their occupation they

³³ Kalhan-Rajtaringini VI, Pp. 475-477.

³⁴ Kalhan, Rajtaringini V, Pp. 71-120.

³⁵ Albruni, India.

³⁶ Ghurye, Govind Sadashiv. *Caste, Rank and Business*. Delhi: Rajpal and Sons.

were kept in a different cast.³⁷ Apart from Albruni, Muslim writers such as Marwadi and Gardezi have the same mentality that *Dom* and *Chandal* were of the same clan. Even Chinese Traveller Hieun TSang agrees to mentality of Albruni and says that during that era, backward classes were forced to stay out of the villages and when they used to enter the village they used to make loud noises so as to make people aware of their entrance. People use to avoid being touched by them.

If religious texts are to be believed then *Chandal* were born in lower caste that were considered inferior in the society and were forced to live out of the villages. They are still prevalent today but the situation today is kind of different. Even today when everything is so much developed, some educational institutions, medical colleges, engineering colleges force the Dalit students other backward class of the society to live in separate hostels. Hieun Tsang and Gandhi had the same argument for lower caste communities. The harshness towards the backward society is a result of the politics. It has been mentioned about this society in Bhanbhatt's words famous book Kadambari.

Albruni also provided one significant information, that *Doms* and *Chandal* were very much classified in the field of music and dance. He also stated about Hari's that they were better than others when compared to the cleanliness.³⁸ Even Kalhan doesn't deny the fact that these people were very much intelligent when it came to singing.³⁹ In the Vishnu *Dharmasutra* it is mentioned that the original occupation of the *Chandals* were to hang people.⁴⁰ Whereas Parashar states that these people had no such occupation, their main occupation was to clean the society.⁴¹

³⁷ Albruni, India.

³⁸ Albruni, India.

³⁹ Kalhan, Rajtaringini.

⁴⁰ Vishnu Theology.

⁴¹ Parashar.

Manu had compared *Chandal* and other backward classes of the society. He had made some specific rules and laws for them which were totally inhuman. According to him *Chandal* should wear clothes out of the wrap of dead bodies. They cannot enter the village during the day. They could only enter during the night.

Jai Prakash Valmiki, also known is a famous writer from Jaipur who believed that Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, and other places may have different cleaning classes who called themselves as Mehtar, Chura and Balmiki/Valmiki but they consider themselves to be one class because their 'gotra' matches to one another. The rituals are same their food habits are same, even their occupations are same. They are labourers in fields in villages, they make holders out of bamboo, and they rear pigs and are present in huge number in municipalities for cleaning work.⁴² Jai Prakash Valmiki believes that the *Diya* clan in Rajasthan is also of generation of dump. These people like other clean the roads, make bamboo holders and most of their behaviours are quite similar to that of Balmikis and Mehtars.⁴³

In 1931 the *Chandal* clan was recognized as scheduled tribes under Madras. However in 1935 Indian government recognized these people residing in Madras and Orissa as the scheduled tribes. Even in Rajasthan these people have been started to recognize as the scheduled tribes and castes.⁴⁴ Based on the evidences and conclusions it could be stated that this society was suppressed since ages but still it has been able to exist in such conditions . History has given inhuman behaviour towards this society. The upper class has done everything unusual to keep this people tied down to the ropes of inhumanity but still these people try to rose even when they are chained down. They aim to keep the society clean but

⁴² Jayprakash Valmiki, *Samyantar*, October 2005.

⁴³ Jayprakash Valmiki, *Samyantar*, October 2005.

⁴⁴ Shah, Vimal P. *The Education Problems Of Scheduled Caste And Scheduled Tribes School And College Students*. New Delhi: Pp. 42-43.

still they are treated with insult and disgust. And the feeling to come out of this hell of ill treatment is still there. They still aim to be free.

4.2: Balmiki Community and Saint Valmiki

Balmiki society accepts Valmiki as their God. Especially in Punjab there are several temples and *dharamshalas* (Spiritual dwelling) of Valmiki. Even in foreign countries where these people reside, they have made up temples and offered statues of Valmiki. 12 kilometres from Amritsar, a Valmiki ashrama (hermitage) is situated. It is said that in this place, Valmiki had taught Luv-Kush the art of arms. In this place, the kitchen of Sita is also situated. Discussions are made in different topics. Here, those questions need to be discussed which are often asked regarding Balmiki society and Saint Valmiki. It is often said that the Balmikis could never be successors of Valmiki, because he was the great composer of *Ramayana* while Balmikis belong to the lowest strata of society. The confidence of the people of this community had been crushed by the upper class. They are very talented, brave and hardworking, yet they couldn't establish themselves in the society. The one's who were able to do so, were criticized and neglected. Hence they started to move away from this culture and changed their identity. There are several international music composers, singers, actors, writers, who have kept their identity hidden. Hence, Balmiki community isn't much appreciated.

There is lack of information regarding the life history of Saint Valmiki, composer of *Ramayana*, and whatever is available, is too less for drawing a conclusion. There is no information regarding Valmiki in *Ramayana*. Although in different events of *Ramayana*, we get to know that Valmiki wrote *Ramayana*.

Dr. Jacobi says that *Ramayana* was written between 5th century, 6th or 8th century AD.⁴⁵ A.A McDonald believes that on the basis of the usage of Pali language and other evidences, Valmiki might have written *Ramayana* around 4th century AD.⁴⁶ AB Keith also believes that *Ramayana* was written in 4th century AD.⁴⁷ But M Winternitz says that it was composed before 3rd century AD.⁴⁸ Father Camille Bulcke says that there are high chances that *Ramayana* was written around 300BC. This can also be proved by that in Panini there is no mention of main characters like Ram, Dashrath, Bharat, Hanuman, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Vibhishan and others. He doesn't even mention about Valmiki. Although the story of Ram would have been popular that time due to the mention of Kaikeyi, Kaushalya and Shurpnakha. We also get other details.⁴⁹

In Taittiriya Pratishakya (1930) published by Madras university, the Valmiki has been mentioned in three distinct places. However this is quite different from *Aadikavi* Valmiki.⁵⁰ This is the opinion of A. Wecher and H. Yacobi. Hence, this proves that the name Valmiki was quite popular in the ancient era. Therefore, we should not be astonished if we get to hear the name of Valmiki belonging to different people in various places.

A.C. Das also believes that while Mahabharata was attempted, Guruvanshi, the followers of Vishnu made a list which has mentioned Valmiki. Hence, it can be said that Suparna Pedigree were the nomadic Aryan tribe of Sapta Sindhu (land of 7 rivers) region.⁵¹ Only in '*Drona*' feast and '*Shanti*' feast of Mahabharata, Valmiki is considered as poet. Apart from this in '*Shanti Parv*', Bhargav is mentioned as a poet while in '*Anushasan Parv*', there is a mention

⁴⁵ H. Yakobi, *Das Ramayan*. Pp. 101.

⁴⁶ A.A McDonald- *History of Sanskrit Literature*. Pp. 309.

⁴⁷ Father Camille Bulcke, *Ram Katha*, Hindi Council, Prayag University, Allahabad, 4th edition (1st edition-1905). Pp. 25.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ H. Wecher. *Ramayan*. Pp.17. Also see, H. Yakobi, *Das Ramayan*. Pp. 66.

⁵¹ AC Das, *Trigvedic*. India, Pp. 65, 148.

of Valmiki. Hence, in a number of occasions of Mahabharata, there is a mention of Saint Valmiki.

Some scholars believe that during the composition of '*Baal Kand*' of *Ramayana*, the identity of Valmiki spread. Hence he is considered the contemporary of *Ramayana*. In '*Bal Kand*', we get a distinct introduction of the origin. In Tapasavi, Muni, Maharshi, Valmiki listens about *Ramayana* from Narad. After that he converts it into a story and makes Kush-Luv learn it by heart. They praise *Ramayana* everywhere even in the court of Ram.⁵²

Similarly in (Uttarakhand) Lakshmana leaves pregnant Sita in the ashram of Valmiki and asks her to take rest there as he was a Brahman and friend of Dashratha.⁵³

Later, Sita gives birth to Luv-Kush in the ashram of Valmiki. There, they were taught *Ramayana* by Valmiki. They recited it at the palace of Ram. Rama called Sita after hearing this. In front of the assembly, Valmiki gives the proof of chastity of Sita. In this circumstance, he says that he was the tenth son of Prechta who had been meditating since many years.⁵⁴ He puts stress on the fact that he has never done any sin.⁵⁵ This proves that the story of Valmiki being bandit was completely false.

Valmiki mentions about Chyavan Rishi in two distinct parts of *Ramayana*, firstly in '*Sagar Katha*' of, Balkand) then '*Lavan Vadh*' of Uttarakaand. However, there is no evidence that the relation between the two in these parts but, in Uttarakaand, Valmiki has been related to the Bhargavas since he was the tenth son of Prechta. Later on, Valmiki got the title of Bhargav. In Mahabharat, Bhargav has been called the composer *Ramacharit Manas*. It

⁵² Valmiki Ramayan- Baalkaand, Canto 1-4, Geeta press, Gorakhpur.

⁵³ Valmiki Ramayan- Baalkaand, Canto 47.

⁵⁴ Valmiki Ramayan- Baalkaand, Canto 96.

⁵⁵ Valmiki Ramayan- Baalkaand, Canto 96, Shloka 20.

appears as if he is Valmiki because the verse in which it has been mentioned is somewhat similar to the verses in *Ramayana*.

In later compositions, Valmiki is mostly considered as Bhargav. For example, in Vishnu Purana and Matsyapurana, Bhrigu had been named Varun. In Shatpath Brahman, it had been mentioned that Bhrigu was the son of Varun. In Bhagwat puran, it has been mentioned that the wife of Varun (prechta), Charshni had two sons Valmiki and Bhrigu. Hence it can be said that due to the infusion of Valmiki and Chyavan genealogy, Valmiki got the title Bhargav. The origin of Valmiki was the formicary of termites. Hence, the rumor spread that Valmiki's came out of *Valmik*. Similar kind of story was popular about Bhargav Chyavan. In '*Aryanyak Parv*' of Mahabharata, it is mentioned that Bhrigu's son Chyavan was so lost in meditation that the termites covered his body and he was unaware of it. Princess Sukanya rescued him and also later on married him. These briefs are obtained from Bhagwat Purana, Padmapurana, Skandha Purana and Devi Bhagwat Purana.⁵⁶

It is believed in the cases of both Chyavan and Valmiki that they were covered by termites, hence their stories are also pretty similar. On one hand, Valmiki got the title of Bhargav, while on the other Chyavan was associated with the story of Ram. In Kritivas Ramayan, Valmiki was considered to be the son of Chyavan. Ashvaghosh in his book, '*Buddha Charit*' says that Valmiki completed the epic, which Chyavan had failed.⁵⁷

Another tradition is seen in Indian folklores, which says that Valmiki was a bandit. It is believed that before composing *Ramayana*, he was a bandit. Neither does this story have any proof, nor any argument. Even its antiquity is doubtful. Its origin is first found in Skandh

⁵⁶ Father Kamil Bulke- RamKatha, Pp.28.

⁵⁷ Ashvaghosh- Buddha Charit.

Purana. Most of the details in this are that of 8th century. A number of interpolations were added to it, whose era of composition is unknown. Even RC Hajara, agrees to it.⁵⁸

According to Manjula Sahdev, there is no evidence of Valmiki being a bandit in the literature prior to 6th century; Infact there was no mention of the word 'Valmiki'. She also says that during that time, Valmiki was a scholar, and revolutionary. After clear research of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, it can be said that Valmiki would have been a contemporary of Shankaracharya. He spent most of his time near the Tansa River where he composed *Ramayana* and also gave shelter to Sita.⁵⁹

Similar story is there in Mahabharata, where Valmiki said to Yudhisthira that during an argument, the Saints called him '*Brahmadhan*' which made him a sinner. Hence, he took refuge under Shiva who freed him from all, his sins and said that he could be famous.

There are four stories regarding Valmiki in '*Skanda Purana*'. In Vaishnav segment during the month of Baisakh, there is a mention of an unnamed person. He calls on to Ram and as a result, he gets a blessing that in his next birth, he would be born in Valmik genealogy and become Valmiki.⁶⁰

In Avantya nobility of Avanti segment, the story of Agnisharma is prevalent. It is said that he was a bandit, who once happened to meet seven saints. He wanted to kill them. The saints sent him to ask family, if they would like to be a part of his evil deed. His family members refused. Agnisharma returned to them and on their advice, started chanting. The seven saints

⁵⁸ RC Hajara- Mythical Records, Pp. 165.

⁵⁹ Sahdev, Manjula. *Maharishi Valmiki: Ek Samikshatmak Adhyayan*. Punjabi University: Patiala.

⁶⁰ Skand Puran- *Vaishnav Khand, Vaishak maas Mahatmay*, Chapter 21.

returned to the same place after 13 years and found Agnisharma's body covered with termites. They took him out, named him Valmiki and asked him to write Ramayan.⁶¹

In Naagar segment, there is the story of a Brahman named Loha Jangh. He was very responsible towards his family. In case of famine, to feed his family he became a bandit, then the same story of seven saints happens as in previous one. The saints advising him to chant and later become Valmiki.⁶²

Same kind of story is there in Prabhas segment. Vaisakh, the son of a Brahman named Shanimukh used to feed his family by theft. He met the seven saints, then his family refused to become a part of his sin, later on, he meditated continuously while his body was covered with termites. The seven saints on their return named him Valmiki and predicted that he would compose *Ramayana*.⁶³

The most popular of the tales is found in '*Ayodhya Kand*' of Ramayan. Ram, Lakshman and Sita reach Chitrakut, all tired took suggestion from Valmiki regarding their residing place. After solving their problems, he tells his own stories to them.⁶⁴

He used to live with Kiradits, and since he was always around shudras, he became a Brahmin only by birth. His sons were born out of the womb of a shudra. Under their influence, he also became a robber and always had bow-arrow with him; then same story of seven saints. Even Tulsidas describes it in two of his dohas.⁶⁵

We get a number of tales from '*Tatva Sangarha Ramayana*' about Valmiki which can be assimilated to a number of unworldly events. In '*Rajya*' of '*Anand Ramayana*,' we get a

⁶¹ Skand Puran- *Avanti Khand*, *Avantya nobility*.

⁶² Skand Puran- *Naagar Khand*.

⁶³ Skand Purana- *Prabhas Khand*.

⁶⁴ Adhyatam Ramayan- *Ayodhya Kand*, Canto-6, Shloka-42-88.

⁶⁵ Tulsidas- *Ramcharitmanas- Baal Kaand*, Doha 19 and 21.

number of brief stories in which we get an explanation of the previous three births of Valmiki. In the first birth he was a Brahman, in the second birth he was a huntsman, whereas in the third, he was the son of Krinu when he did meditation and finally became Valmiki.

In “*Kritivas Ramayana*”, we find an escalated form of “*Adhyatam Ramayana*”. The name of the Huntsman was Ratnakar, and he was the son of Chyavan. Instead of the seven saints, there was Brahma and Narad. On the advice of Bramha, Ratnakar took a bath in the river. As soon as he sees the river, he becomes still. Then, Bramha suggests Ratnakar to chant the name of Rama.

Based on another tale, W. Cook says that God had sent Guru Nanak to Valmiki. On the request of Guru Nanak, Valmiki asked his wife, if she would sacrifice her life for him. She refused. Valmiki then went to Gadha Mountains of Chandal Gadh (Chunar, Uttar Pradesh) and resided there as a hermit.⁶⁶

From the above mentioned stories, the relation between Valmiki and Balmiki community has been proved, which is being continued since many years. In Bhaktmaal, Valmiki has been termed as '*shwapach*'.

In 5th century, just like Ram, Valmiki is also considered as an incarnated form of Vishnu. Vishnu Purana was composed in 5th century. In the 5th segment of this, it has been mentioned that in Yetra era, Vishnu was to take birth as Valmiki and write *Ramayana*. In the third segment, there is a mention of worshipping Valmiki. In '*Pratibha Lakshman*,' the statue of Valmiki has been described.⁶⁷ In Vridambh Purana's (13th century) middle segment (Chapter-11), Sati blesses Vishnu that he would compose an epic in the form of Valmiki. The

⁶⁶ W. Cook- *Tribes and Castes*, Part-1, Pp. 262-263.

⁶⁷ Vishnu Dharmottar Puran, 1st segment, Third segment, Pratibha Lakshman, Shloka 64.

statue of Valmiki in the Valmiki temple of the Indonesia portrays it as an incarnated form of Vishnu. It is based on a belief of Indian mythology.

There are many arguments regarding the era in which *Ramayana* was composed. H. D Sankliya believes that *Ramayana* was composed in the 5th century.⁶⁸ But some scholars refuse to acknowledge it. Among them is D.C Sarkar who believes that it was composed during 3rd Century BC, the central segment whereas the '*Bal kand*' and '*Uttarakhand*' was composed in the 2nd century.⁶⁹

P.V Kane believes the *Ramayana* wasn't composed before 300 to 200 BC, and the Epic took its present form during 200 BC.⁷⁰ Winternitz believes *Ramayana* got its present form during the second century. B. B Lal, the head Indian History Researcher in his '*Naya Puratav*' 15th to 17th October, 1988 said *Ramayana* must have been composed round second century BC to 3rd Century BC, the events whereas of 700 BC.⁷¹

Dr Md. V. Shah says that it is mentioned in Skand Purana, Valmi despite being Brahmin, Valmiki grew up among Kiraat. In other places, his origin is said to be '*Triyagyon*,' but according to folk tales, he was Kiraat, later on he became Brahman. However, the shocking fact is that there is no mention of Valmiki in the '*Rishi Mandal*'. He was not librated, but he has been given the title of Aadi Kauri.⁷²

Hence, from the above mentioned stories, it clear was that Valmiki despite his achievements was scared of popularity and always tried to become small. If he was considered a Saint, then why wasn't he librated. Hence, this proves that he was kept out of Brahmin society. Whatever

⁶⁸ H.D Sankliya- The Ramayan in Historical Perspective, Delhi 1982, Pp. 173.

⁶⁹ D.C. Sarkar- I.S.R VIII, Part 1-2, July 1981 and January 1982, Pp. 172.

⁷⁰ P.V Kane- I.S.R-I, 2nd edition, Pune, 1968, Pp. 396, 402.

⁷¹ B.B. Laal- *Historicity of the Mahabharata and Ramayana: What has archaeology has to say in the matter?*

⁷² M.V Shah- *Bharatiya Sanskriti mein Shudro ka Yogdaan*, Consentience, Part 60, 1980, *Dalit Literature Special Issue*, Editor- Mahip Singh, Chandrakant Bandivedkar.

the stories are, reality is that he is given the stature of God in Balmiki society. His temples were made they celebrate ‘Prakat’. But there are some scholars who refuse to accept it. One such scholar is Bhagwan Das who says that for the backward classes and Balmikis, the word Valmiki was first used in 1935.⁷³ In *Valmiki Ramayana*, there is a verse,⁷⁴ in which he invokes God and says that he had been meditating for thousand years. He has never done any sin. He prays to make Sita, sinless, so that he can even be pure and he gains the results of his deeds. From this verse, what is doubtful is whether Valmiki was a bandit or not. How this tale became popular in the religious truth is a matter which is to be considered. It is possible that Valmiki was related to ‘Dasyu’ class, and later on the meaning of Dasyu, became contemporary, and the meaning changed to Bandit. Just like the tribes of the jungles, the holy texts and scholars played an important role to make it popular, which was used to spoil the reputation of Aadikavri. This belief came to be proved from the following facts. He is a saint but not librated. Secondly, in the whole history, only Valmiki has the guts to show ‘Shambuk-Vadh’. Even Tulsidas doesn't mention about this is Ramcharit Manas. This relates Valmiki to backward classes. The doubts of Bhagwan Das are portrayed in a different manner. He says that the Valmiki whom the untouchables accepted as their God, his identity is unknown. Maybe he belonged to the Balmiki and was related the job of cleaning. It is believed that he died in Thanesar near Kurukshetra, where there is the ‘Samadhi’ of Shar Balmiki Baba. To prove about Churha caste of Punjab and fill up the gap, Pandit Amichand Sharma in 1930 wrote a book named ‘*Valmiki-Prakash*’ which puts an effort to prove the relation of the Saint Valmiki of Churha caste.⁷⁵ According to many scholars, some people of Punjab accepted Valmiki, apart from tales, they have no written record. According to the census of 1891 &

⁷³ Bhagvandas- *Valmiki Jayanti aur Bhangi Jaati*, Pp. 18, Dalit World Library, Delhi 1973.

⁷⁴ Valmiki Ramayan, Uttar Kaand, Canto-96, Verse- 18,24.

⁷⁵ Bhagvandas- *Valmiki Jayanti aur Bhangi Jaati*, Dalit World Library, Delhi 1973, Pp. 34.

1901, there were only 6105 Balmiki, whereas Lalbegis were 163751. Total population was 414532, in which there were Hela, Dhanuk, and phatharfod, etc.⁷⁶

Shri Priyadas Prabhit wrote a composition Bhaktmaal (Shri Nabhaji) which was published in 1914 by Tejkumar Book Depot, Lucknow. Even an edition of it was published in 1951. Bhaktmaal was composed around 1639. In this composition, a comment was made of Shri Nabhaji that he belonged to Dom genealogy. In some places, he is also referred to belong in Balmiki society especially in Uttar Pradesh. But Priyadas Prabhit says that the saint Shri Nabhaji was born in a Dom family but in western countries, the people don't know what a Dom is. Those who don't know think that Dom is a synonym for Balmikis but calling that Nabhaji was a Balmiki would be wrong.⁷⁷

In the book '*Shri Valmiki Sarbhag Jaati Bhed*', one of the names of God is said to be Valmiki. It is also said that Valmiki and Ganga used to wash away the sins of people. Hence, they are always referred as Repository of Salvation. Therefore, they are brother-sister. As per another story, one of the three sons of Varun was raised by a Balmiki woman. So, Balmiki people accepted his on their '*guru*' teacher. It also states about the origination of Valmiki society In Joseph Yaliyath, it has been identified as the truth.⁷⁸

So, from the above mentioned facts the conclusions which are drawn clearly states that Balmiki and Valmiki are equivalent to each other. In many states of India, temples of Valmiki are constructed. There are several temples Amritsar, Jalandhar, Bithoor, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Chandigarh, Fatehbad (Haryana), Hissar, Kurukshetra, Sannor (Patiyala), Rooskee, Panchkuiya (New Delhi), Bolni(Meerut), Bahina, Chitrakut Dhaam, Kankhal (Haridwar), Sitamadi, Bagpat(Meerut) Darjeeling (West Bengal) and others. The pilgrimage of Amritsar is the most old and popular.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Shri Priyadas Prabhit- Bhaktmaal Tika, Pp. 43.

⁷⁸ Joseph Thaliyat- Notes on Scavenger Caste of North Madhya Pradesh, Anthropos, 56, 1981, Pp. 790

4.3: Methods of Worshipping and Religious Beliefs

Balmiki (Valmiki), Churha, Lalbegi, Halalkhor and others were Hindus as well as Muslims. Muslim Bhangis were known as Sheikhs and Halalkhors. Based on religious beliefs, the Churha Bhangis of Punjab were neither Hindus nor Muslims. They mainly worshipped Lalbegi. The method of worshipping Lalbegi is known as *Kursinama*. Some people call God Lalbeg as Balshah Noori Lalbeg, whereas some called him Balmiki. They used to plait to Balmiki.

Churhas don't construct temples; instead they make small hidings of two and a half bricks where they light the lamp. In some places they have created high rising platforms like those of Gol Gumbaaz and Buddhist Stupas. However, they never called it a temple. It was their ritual to sacrifice hen. Then, all the blood of hen was collected in a utensil after sacrificing it, with the help of a mess, blood was sprinkled all over the houses. They believed that sprinkling blood would drive away evil forces and ill health. Once in a year, a cock was sacrificed too. In the colonies of Churhas "*Baabe ka thaan*" was made by joining two and a half bricks.⁷⁹

Lalbegi and Churhas worshipped Maayi, Masani, Naklinayin, Paun and Mayi Madaran. They also worshipped Googapir. Such worshippings were prevalent in Western Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The main Gods of Paun culture are Sambal Singh, Nathmal, Kesalmal, Jeetmal, Harisingh. All these Gods were of the same genealogy. They even had a sister whose name was Sedo and other two cousin sisters were Naathiya and Shyam Kaur. Among all of them, Kalwa Paun had a significant position.

It was customary to offer pigs and goats and alcohol to the Paun Gods. A place of worshipping was made within the room where two and a half brick fireplace and made a

⁷⁹ Bhagwandas- *Valmiki Jayanti aur Bhangi Jaati*, Pp. 20.

thaan. It was in this *thaan* that the lamp was lighted and the Gods were worshipped. Five or Seven Poun Gods were worshipped and the same number of lamps highlighted. Flames were brought up by Patang by applying ghee in the holocaust. The head of the family invoked the Poun Gods to come into their homes. If the Flames became liked it and write it meant that the Gods had entered their home. Chapatis were offered to the God. These offerings are made as per the number of the Paun gods present in the *thaan*, either five or seven. The cooked meat of pork and mutton were placed on the chapatis. Seekh kebabs were also offered. All these were placed on the chapati. One or two bottles of alcohol were also offered. Once the flame lighted all these were placed in front of it. The offerings of chapatis with meat and alcohols were paid to the flame. After the process, the sacrament was distributed among the family members. The chapatis and the cooked meats were given as a sacrament first to the ladies of the family, then to the other members. Alcohol was offered to the elder members of the family as a sacrament. The rest of the sacrament was distributed among neighbours.

Ramprakash Gautam of Kanpur said that in his house Nagarsen Bulaki, Kali, Durga, Nathiya and Miya Badshah were worshipped. Ram Singh of Chandigarh said that in his family Shyamkor Astabali was worshipped. Although in different families Bawri, Karsier, Indrabhat and Masani of Jewar were also worshipped.

In Gurgaon there is a temple of a goddess whom the Valmiki society calls as Masani Mayi Gurgaon, in this Temple, piglets are offered as sacraments. It is said that in this temples Jaats and Brahmins also come and offer the piglets as sacraments.

There are some Bhagat who were blessed by the Pawn Gods and whenever they appear, they pray for Ma Hidimba. The temple of Hidimba is located in Himachal. Hidimba is the wife of Bhīma from Mahabharata and the mother of Ghatothkach. As per a Bhagat Ghatothkach is actually the Madani Paun God. The female God who were worshipped are actually yoginis

and were named according to the places they resided in. Like - Nyavwali Mayi, Mayi Masani from Gurgaon, Mayi Madaran, etc

However in Paun Gods Kalwa Paun has a special place. It is said that there are 52 Kalwa pauns. They are also named according to the places they reside in. Like Kalwa Khardauni from Khatauli belonged to somewhere near Meerut. Wherever it was proved by the Bhagat, their name was given accordingly.

In the popular book Juthan there is a mention about such traditions. It states that in Valmiki communities whenever someone used to fall ill instead of taking them to the hospital they used to follow all kinds of superstitions. Whenever the disease took a serious note, the Bhagats were called and suggestions were taken from them. During this time two or three singers and Dholak players used to come with the Bhagat and used to play songs in a different tone. It was believed that by the songs of God was invocated and appeared within the Bhagats. Such an atmosphere was created by this song that anyone would start dancing to it. Special words were used in this song so that the God can be invocated immediately.

As soon as the Bhagat started dancing, all the music was stopped. And as the Bhagat started moving it was believed that the God had appeared within him. The God used to tell his name and greeted everyone. The elder member of the family used to come in front of him and told the god about the sufferings of the diseased. Then the god used to touch the patient and use to give several ways by which they believe the patient would be cured.⁸⁰

There are a number of Gods who were worshipped in the Valmiki society. Along with Sambal Singh, Mohammed Sayyed was also worshipped. Mohammed Syed was offered white cock as a sacrament. The same offering was made to Totapeer.

⁸⁰ Omprakash Valmiki- Juthan, Pp. 52-53.

These Gods were worshipped on a daily basis. Lamps were lighted in the *thaan* and Hookah was offered. For some time the Hookah was kept on the *thaan*. However, after sometime the elder member of the family took some puffs from this hookah.

The Goddesses were also worshipped along with the Gods. However these Goddesses were worshipped independently, different from those of the Paun Gods. These Goddesses were known by the names of different places. They were call maayi. Some of the famous of them were Niyavale wali maayi(Muradabad), Bhojpur wali. It is believed that they are the different forms of Mahakali. Maayi Madaran is worshipped in the Saharanpur district of Muzaffarnagar. Then there is Mayi Dhootni. Maayi Basanti belongs to Raiwala of Dehradun. It is believed that she is very peaceful in nature. Male piglets are offered to her. Sacred meals are offered as sacraments of Mayi Dhootni. The sacrament consists of sweet dishes, kheer and puri. The whole family took part in it. The whole family goes to the journey for Mayi Basanti.

In several families, kheer was offered as a sacrament to Gangaram. Mansaram Saktaram Manand Dhobi kusumiya also worshipped Gods and Goddesses.

The Bagars are closely related to Churhas. Every year they set out on a pilgrimage and on their return, feasts are thrown. Several families worship Bawariya Gods. It is believed that he was a disciple of Gorakhnath. Churhas consider Gorakhnath, Manchandarnath, Jalandharnath and Balkatanath as their ancestors, which proves the fact that they were related to the Nath ancestry. “Nanga Puja” was very popular in this society. Wheat and sweets were mixed to make tikka or *nanga bhog*. It is said that Nanga Pujas were conducted prior to Gods.

Sambal Singh, Hari Singh, Jeetmal, Kesarmal and Nathmal were five brothers known as the Bawariye. It is believed that they acquired the power of 56 Kalwas from Gogapeer, and the power of 64 Joginis from Kalidevi of Ganganagar, Rajasthan. And in Medi they acquired the

place of Goga Jaharpeer. These are the five residing places of Bawariyas. Gorakh tila is also located here.

According to some worshipping method it is also believed that this society is related to the Buddhism. These methods passed from the Nath and Sidha but for to the advancement of time and the oppression by Hindu society, it got lost. They couldn't keep their social and religious traditions bound together and hence lost their existence. Hindu society oppressed it and it got extinct. To gain respect these people keep wandering from one religion to another. Sometimes they follow Sikhism and sometimes Islam. And when they don't get shelter within any religion, they build up the temples of their own gods and starts worshipping them. But till date it has not been able to raise its voice against the prohibitions made by the Hindu society. Most of the priests of Valmiki religion when asked about the relationship between their religion and Hinduism, prefer to remain silent. They have nothing to say of it. They are only concerned about the sacraments that are made to gods.

Once upon a time the Lalbegis existed in many numbers. They were mostly found in the Hindi speaking provinces of North India such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Punjab, and Rajasthan. Some Bhangis belong to the Lalbegi's religion and Valmiki caste. Girvan had elaborated about the religion of bhangis in his book 'Night Broom'. The famous writer of Urdu Maulana Altaf had also mentioned about the bhangis of this province in his book which is the North Eastern Province. It has now transformed to Punjab, Haryana and Delhi.

According to folk stories it can be concluded that the Lalbegis originally belonged to Ambala and Rawalpindi. Varish Shah, the writer of Heer had also talked of Churha caste and Lalbegi religion in his compositions.

Varish Shah belonged to the Jhang province. Mussalis and Kutana caste used to do the work of Bhangis in this region. They had an influence of Muslim culture. They used to do Roza and Namaz.

The kind of language used in *Kursinama* of Lalbeg wasn't that of Jhang but of Ambala and Doab.⁸¹ According to Bhagwan das, there is an influence of Punjabi in the sections. However, the next section has the Ambala influence. The language is similar to that of Jalandhar. There is a connection in their culture as well as language. One section has the influence of Karnal and Ambala.⁸²

Baalshah was the son of Santosh Rishi, Santosh Rishi of Sharapadat Rishi. Sharapadat Rishi was the son of Ainak Trik. Trikhik was the son of vikhik. Vikhik of Mahadev. And Mahadev means Shiv Aut. Aout Khanda was of alakh purush. Alakh purush was the son of Shakti and Shakti is the son of Agam purush.⁸³

Valmiki was worshiped as god and his birthday is also celebrated all over India as *Valmiki Jayanti*. Bhavadhas (the religious society of God Valmiki) was set up in Punjab by Rishi Nath Ratnakar in 24th May, 1964. Devsingh Asur, Viresh Motilal Bilal, Dasratn Ravan have a major role to play in this. But prior to this, a religious society was established in Ludhiana in 1960 by V S Dayal.

Later on, Bhavadhas was changed to *Aadi Dharm Samaj*, and Dasratn Ravan had an important role in this. Bhavadhas attempted to bring together the Valmiki society. But they were successful only in the religious sphere. They could not give it a form of protest. Many of the rituals performed were similar to the Brahmin culture. They started naming the demons. They do not worship Rama from Ramayana but the text of Ramayana is holy and

⁸¹ Chand, Achutank, May 1927, Pp. 137.

⁸² Chand, Achutank, May 1927, Pp. 137.

⁸³ Ibid. Pp. 138.

pious religious text to them. The role of these institutions couldn't be neglected on the social level. Under the leadership of V. S. Dayal several institutions were formed that stopped that torture on the people of this community. These institutions provided loans to the needy people of the society. The interest paid was almost negligible.

Same institution has been working in Jalandhar. It is playing an important role in the field of education. The name of the institution is Kamleshwar Valmiki Educational Trust, Jalandhar. This institution has not only been providing education in the towns and cities but also in the rural areas. Their programmes are continuously spreading education. On 23rd November 2009 Rajkumar Bhatthi had carried on the same program to spread education and tramped on the road from Amritsar to Delhi. He spread the information about the importance of education in every village. This institution also played an important role in opening tuitions for B.Ed and PCS. In such Institutions the rural students were given much importance.

4.4: The Balmiki Harijan Sangh

One distinct feature of the day to day life of the Balmikis in Darjeeling is that the social life of the community works out in close connection to some of the traditional and organizational wings established long time back. The socio-cultural practices and ways of living are moreover designed by these wings. The community members adhere to the norms and practices of these wings and hence have become the administrative and legal pillars of Balmiki society and behaviour.

The Balmiki Harijan Sangh is the most important organizational society among the Balmiki community in Darjeeling. This community association was established in 1948, under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Letter: To the Secretary, Balmiki Harijan Sangh. From The Registrar, Registrar of Societies, West Bengal, (Memorandum No. S/1120. Dated: July 3, 1982).

The formation of this Sangh was primarily for the betterment and upliftment of the community against the unequal and unjust society based on the caste factor prevalent then in Darjeeling Hills. It came out as an association based on the ideas that it was necessary to be in close contact of the entire community in the alien territory which was however never accepted by the other hill societies. At the outset the Sangh started its functioning office in the Municipality Quarters which has been allotted to them at Harijan Barrick (Room No.9 and 10). Later on the Sangh got its own land at 13, Khan Bahadur, Dr. Abdul Aziz Road.⁸⁵ In the 1982, the Darjeeling Municipality permitted the Sangh to construct two storied building for Adult Education, Rest House, Library and Club for the Harijans, under section 317 of the Bengal Municipal Act XV of 1932.⁸⁶

The Balmiki Harijan Sangh worked on the pure democratic processes since its inception. Regular elections were held for the formation of the Governing Body, and also formation of every governing body was informed to the district and state authority.⁸⁷ The portfolios were distributed on the basis of individual's qualification and ability to work consciously and responsibly for the community. The governing was composed of President, Vice President, Secretary and Co-secretary, two Treasures along with Executive members whose responsibility was to actively and enthusiastically work for the community without fulfilling their personal desires through Sangh. These elected members were highly respected by the community members. Their activities were accountable to the community as a whole.

General meetings of the Balmiki Harijan Sangh were called on periodical basis. These meetings were attended by the entire community member. It had been the responsibility of

⁸⁵ Letter :To Whom It May Concern, Registration Assesses to Balmiki Harijan Sangh. Plot holding No. 36. Dated: December 9, 1981.

⁸⁶ Letter: To the Secretary, Balmiki Harijan Sangh. From The Municipal Engineer, Darjeeling Municipality. Dated: December 3, 1982.

⁸⁷ Letter: To the District Magistrate, District Court, Darjeeling. Information of Newly Elected Governing Body of Balmiki Harijan Sangh. Darjeeling. Dated: September 01, 1990. Ref. No. 24/1 (9091) BHS.

the Sangh to inform about the agendas before hand to the members so that better discussions could be held in the meeting. Apart from general it had been the responsibility of the Sangh, to call upon the yearly meeting, where only the yearly reports and yearly audit was to be presented before the members.⁸⁸

4.5: Chaudhury Sanstha

The Balmiki community had restrained its social practices as carried out by their forefathers, similar to their original homeland in the north western parts of India. The community has sticks to the strict standards of the rank ridden society and has held the *Chaudhuary system*⁸⁹ of caste position and association even in contemporary era. ‘Chaudhary Sanstha’ is an important administrative wing of the community since pre-independence. It has been one of core pillar which holds and binds the community together. It is an organizational wing within the community where in five members are chosen to represent and address the entire matters and things that persists within the community. These *Chaudhuries* are administrators and are elected areas wise, and is also hereditary in nature. After the death of the *Chaudhury* the eldest son inherits the position of his father. As such the other members from the community could not get the opportunity to become the *Chaudhury* of the community.

Being at the apex of the community the *Chaudhuries* assert themselves to represent the collective determination of the community. The Chaudhury Sanstha takes cares of all the issues with the community. The ideas and concepts of the Sanstha of incredibly good quality when it was started, it kept the mutual understanding and to establish justice within the community. The fundamental nature of Sanstha and the stringency towards the cultural and

⁸⁸ Notice for Yearly meeting, Balmiki Harijan Sangh, Darjeeling. Dated: July 16, 1993.

⁸⁹ Chaudhury are elected areas wise, in Darjeeling they follow nine biras(meaning areas) at present there are five nine chaudhury in 32 wards of Darjeeling Municipality area. See, Balmiki, Lekhranj, *Balmiki Community in Darjeeling Hills: A Socio-Economic Profile*, in Journal of Political Studies, Vol. 7, March 2013, The Registrar: University of North Bengal. Also See, Lekhranj Balmiki. (2011). “*The Balmiki Community In Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness.*” in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). *A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal*. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications.

conventional ritualistic practices towards the community members. By which the Sanstha could maintain the unity and reliability within the society itself. It was meant to tackle or handle almost all the community issues and situations as well as resolving the social life of an individual or the community as a whole. It had doomed for the betterment of the community but in owing to the course of time it had proved to have unenthusiastic impacts.

The *Chaudhuries* have controlled the Balmiki society and have been carrying out customary practices of pre-independence days. Child marriages (especially in case of female), confinements on dowagers remarrying and masterminded marriage (arranged) rehearses are still taken after broadly. These unconstructive impacts in one logic have occurred in parallels to the self-interests of the 'Paanch'⁹⁰ members. The interests of these Paanchs later became the practice of the Chaudhury Sanstha, which later created negative impacts or influence up the community members leading to disregard to this particular organizational wing.

The conception of *Izzat*⁹¹ has been deeply narrow down by the *Chaudhuries*. From the very early age the children are discouraged for inter-caste marriage. The Chaudhuries Sanstha, looks down upon those who attempt inter-caste marriage. According to the ideology of the Sanstha one who is born in the community, whether male or female, it is the duty and responsibility to get married within the community itself. Here, for them 'Jaat Ki Roti Jaat Ko, Aur Jaat Ki Beti Jaat Ko.'⁹² In this connection the community head does not provide any scope for welcoming of new member (outcaste) in the community, which means they have segregated themselves from other communities in the hills,

⁹⁰ The Chaudhuries are also called Panchs, meaning total number of administrators in Chaudhury Sanstha in Hindi which means *paach* (Five in number).

⁹¹ The honour or good reputation of a person, family, or group of people. <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/izzat> Accessed on 28.12.2012 17:30 hrs.

⁹² English translation: the food of the community should be for the community members, and the daughter of the community should be marriage within the community.

Contrary, if such cases arise the performer (offender) will be socially excluded from the community. The community *Chaudhuries* declares ‘*hukka pani bandh*⁹³’ for such a member with entire family. As such the member with entire family is socially boycotted by the entire community. Again, for inclusion the member has to pay the penalty known as *Daand*⁹⁴ to the *Chaudhury Sanstha* including the whole of the community members both in cash and kind, along with the onetime meal and drinks to the members. There have been certain cases when the member from community going for inter-caste marriage has been socially boycotted and was made to pay *Daand* for his inclusion in the community.

In 2006 the *Chaudhury Sanstha* made an announcement saying that, those who have married other caste are supposed to pay a *Daand*, by the 31st of December, 2006.⁹⁵ And as a concession the amount of cash paid as *Daand* was kept Rs. 1100 and from 01st of January, 2007 it would be converted into Rs. 11000. As a result of the announcement the members those who had went for inter-caste marriages, started to pay the *Daand* as soon as possible within the due date.⁹⁶ This was the time when maximum assortment was done by the *Chaudhury Sanstha* for their personal desires and the members of the community were exploited within the community itself. Hence, the headmen (*Chaudhuries*) of the community

⁹³ In case if the inter-caste marriage takes place the member is not allowed to enter the other community members house. Moreover, he/she with the entire family is not invited or not allowed to participate in any ceremony of the community. As such the member/family is isolated or excluded within the community. The community members are not allowed to have any kind of relations with that family.

⁹⁴ *Daand* is a penalty paid by the member to *Chaudhury Sanstha* including whole community both in cash and kind, and proper meal with drinks has to be offered and also has to apologies in front of the community members. The *Chaudhuries* has to be informed regarding the payment of the *Daand*, and accordingly they finalize the date and day for the payment. Within the given date the person has to invite the entire community member for *Daand*. The person has to pay a certain amount of cash to the *Chaudhury Sanstha* (till 2006, the cash was 1100 rupees) along with proper meal, such pork, roti and rice, and drinks are also offered to the *Chaudhuries* and community members.

⁹⁵ Shri Anil Balmiki. (Safai Karamchari. Darjeeling Municipality. Ghoom). Personal Interview. Darjeeling. December 23, 2012.

⁹⁶ Shri Kailash Ram Harijan. (Safai Karamchari. Chandmari). Darjeeling. Personal Interview. Darjeeling. December 31, 2012. Shri Kailesh Ram Balmiki, who paid the *Daand* because he had married an outcaste; during the given year (2006) the *Chaudhuries* has given concession, supposed to pay Rs 1100 with proper food and drinks were offered to the whole Community.

misused their powers and positions, for the sake of the guiding and restricting the community from losing its identity and *Izzat* in an alien territory.⁹⁷

Lack of information among the members of this community is the biggest drawback for their upliftment. When the Chaudhury Sanstha was exploiting the community members based on the inter-caste marriages, the Government of West Bengal came out with the proposals regarding functioning of Adult Education Centre and Inter- Caste Marriage under P.C.R. Act⁹⁸, which was sanctioned by the Government of India, who release central share of fund on the account thereof.⁹⁹

Irony with this community is that when government was introducing and appreciating the inter-caste marriages, they were segregating themselves from the main stream. Although, the Balmiki Harijan Sangh send the name for the grants, for those members who went for inter caste marriages. This initiative was taken under the leadership of Mr. Nirmal Sarwan, General Secretary of the Sangh, who immediately responded to the government.¹⁰⁰

Thus, the *Chaudhury Sanstha* has auxiliary subjugated the entire Balmiki population with its reciprocal reimbursement caucus and policy. The complexities of the framework have constituted a genuine hindrance to the Balmikis common advance in Darjeeling.

⁹⁷ Lekhraj Balmiki. (2013). '*Darjeeling Municipality And The Case Of The Balmikis*', paper presented at ICSSR sponsored National Conference: Scavenger Communities: Problem, Dynamics And Way Forward. Organised by Centre For Study Of Social Exclusion And Inclusive Policies, Tata Institute Of Social Sciences, Mumbai. 16th – 17th September, 2013.

⁹⁸ The Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955.

⁹⁹ Letter: To the Secretary, Balmiki Harijan Sangh, Darjeeling. From, Special Officer, Scheduled Caste and Tribe Welfare, Darjeeling Government of West Bengal. Inviting Proposal regarding Functioning of Adult Education Centre, During 1990-91. Dated: December 06, 1990. Memo No. 1301 (10) TW.

¹⁰⁰ Letter: To The Special Officer, Scheduled Caste and Tribe Welfare, Darjeeling Government of West Bengal. From the Secretary, Balmiki Harijan Sangh, Darjeeling. (Reply to the Inviting Proposal regarding Functioning of Adult Education Centre, During 1990-91. Dated: December 06, 1990.) Dated: December 14, 1990. Ref. No. 45(90-91) BHS.

4.6: Four Gharanas and their Ideologies

Believing in different Gurus or spiritual teachers had added a distinct feature in the Balmikian culture, which has given rise to different wings or agencies in the community. There are four Gharanas, with which Balmikis are associated as their sources of beliefs. These four Gharanas are Balmiki, Nanak, Nath and Kabir, which reflect the importance of their culture in Darjeeling.

The gurus of these Gharanas are followed as their spiritual teachers or preachers.

Valmiki has been followed by the majority of the Balmikian, besides that they also follow the preaching's of Saint Kabir, Nath and Nanak. The Balmikis those who are following Guru Nanak as their Gharana, are mainly from Punjab. They believe in the teachings of Guru Nanak, which result in forming their ideological belief. Similarly, the other three are also followed by the Gharanas and preach their religious ideologies.

This performance of following different ideological belief has proved the diverse culture within the Balmiki community. They celebrate the birthdays of their respective Gurus, though they belonged from different cultural background. While celebrating the *Jayantis* (birthdays) of their Gurus, the other Gharanas do participate in the performances.

Even though these forms of practices had been imperative for the Balmikian cultural aspect in binding these ideological Gharanas with each other, with the changing of time and with the beginning of education and modernity these aspects do not seize consistent to people in the existing period. Though slow in but the steady frequency and intensity towards the participation has been decreasing.

4.7: Wedding

This principle of caste system is also applicable for weddings. Manu is against inter-caste marriage, marriage is allowed but not in reverse order. Marriage is allowed only in the equality of social status. A Brahmin can have inter-caste marriage but the lower caste, can never marry a Vaishya, Ksharitya or Brahmin. Kshatriya can marry a Vaishya and Shudra woman but not Brahmin women. Manu says that for twice born people his first marriage needs to be with that of his own cast but if a situation arises where he has to marry for second time, he can marry women below his caste.¹⁰¹ Manu also says that a Shudra women can always be a wife of Kshatriya, Brahmin and Vaishya. A Vaishya woman can always be a wife of Kshatriya, Vaishya and Brahmin, Kshatriya women can always be a wife of Brahmin, Kshatriya but a Brahmin woman should be a wife of Brahmin.¹⁰²

4.8: Position of Women in the Community

Balmiki women are considered equal in family matter, participate in social and religious matters on an equal footing and contribute to the family income.¹⁰³ But in social sphere womenfolk has no high respect in the Balmiki Community. The family is patriarchal in its character and women could not enjoy enough liberty. Male child is more desirable. There has been no such instance when girls could mix freely with young men, its treated as shameless or a sin. Married women cannot take equal part in the religious performance. Moreover, the married women are kept in 'ghunghat/ghoonghat'¹⁰⁴. Ghoonghat is compulsion for the

¹⁰¹ Manusmriti- 3.12.

¹⁰² Manusmriti- 3.13.

¹⁰³ Singh, K.S. (2010). *The Scheduled Castes*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 235-243.

¹⁰⁴ The Sari developed long with one end used to cover the chest, the head and the face. This enabled ladies to work in the fields close to men or even ride a stallion like men. Customarily, in a few sections of India, ladies

women section and has been defensible aphorism that it shows respect to the elder's male section. The dumpy appraisal of females in Balmiki community can be followed to various interrelated monetary, lawful, social, political, and institutional elements. Ladies' destitution is exacerbated by standing and ethnicity-based separation, as the position framework characterizes access to assets and openings, leaving ladies more burdened than men at each level. Ladies have unequal access to nourishment, instruction and human services, constrained chances to win salaries, limited access to and control over beneficial assets, and couple of compelling lawful rights. They are additionally hindered by an absence of attention to their lawful rights and openings.

Constant such kind of concerning praxis against the women within the Balmiki community has led to the exclusion by other section of people in hills, where the women benefit from maximum civil liberties and emancipation, and to a great extent verbal in political spheres.¹⁰⁵ They are kept private in the domestic works of the households. Male section has prohibited women from taking education in order to continue male domination in the community. In this context Hindu religious text has given a number of concessions to men but has imposed severe restrictions on women. Sub-castes endogamy and lineage exogamy are the marriage rules. Adult marriage and monogamy are prevalent and most marriages are negotiated. Vermilion, finger-rings, toe-rings and noise pins are the marriage symbols for the women. Divorce is not allowed. Families are most often nuclear in nature. Property passes from father to sons and the eldest son inherits the office and titles that were held by his father. Women have specific roles in economic, social and ritual spheres and in mundane, marriage and death. Birth pollution is observed. The marriage rituals are performed at the bride's place and

are expected to have a Ghoonghat before the family senior citizens and men, with the exception of spouses and close family individuals.

¹⁰⁵ Lekhraj Balmiki. (2012). *'The Second Wave of Gorkhaland Movement and the Marginalized: A case study of Balmiki Community in their Diaspora'*, paper presented at UGC sponsored National Seminar: Regional Movements: Identity Question And National Integration: Contextualizing India's Growing Regional Assertions. SAP (DRS Phase-II) University of North Bengal 15th -16th March, 2012.

her parents host the marriage feast. The marriage is consummated at the groom's residence. They cremate their dead and dispose of the mortal remains in holy waters. Death pollution is observed.¹⁰⁶ As such women have been left behind with the limited role to play both in social and economic spheres.

A noteworthy issue among the Balmikis is debt. A typical saying of the Bhangis is that 'they are conceived paying off debtors, live in the red and will pass on in the red'. Community impost has been restrained and is given more significance within the community. They cannot be exception as a large amount of money is needed to perform many customs such as *Sindara*,¹⁰⁷ *Pilachawal*,¹⁰⁸ *Sagai*¹⁰⁹ *Dowry*¹¹⁰, *Bhaat*¹¹¹, *Chuchak*,¹¹² *Chaati Ki Raat*,¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ Singh, K.S. (2010). *The Scheduled Castes*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 105-112.

¹⁰⁷ *Sindara* is a ceremony performed by father-mother for their daughters both in cash and kinds, by offering the daughters with new cloths, ornaments, fruits-sweets and also in cash.

¹⁰⁸ The date of marriage is settled in the wake of counseling the minister. The insinuation of the proposed date of marriage is sent to the groom's dad through a letter which is sprinkled with turmeric glue asking for him to accompany marriage party on the delegated day.
http://revenueharyana.gov.in/html/gazeteers/kurukshetra_2009/Chapter_III.pdf accessed on 12.12.2012 at 2:30 am.

¹⁰⁹ *Sagai* is the most critical preparatory service required with marriage. Previously, it was settled through the organization of family. *Naai* (Barber) yet now it is settled either through relatives or dear companions. At the point when the father of a young lady wishes to pledge her, he makes enquiry for an eligible male of rumored family. By and large, horoscopes of the male and the young lady are coordinated to guarantee similarity. Prior, the male and the young lady never got the opportunity to meet each other before marriage. Choice of proper match was the sole duty of the guardians. Be that as it may, now the act of the male endorsing the young lady himself, especially in urban zones, is picking up ground. When everything is settled, the *sagai* function is performed at male's home with religious and social festivities. On the delegated day, the father of the young lady went with his relatives goes to the male's home with desserts and different endowments. In a basic service, he applies *tilak* on the temple of the male and offers a few cash to him and his close relatives. By and large, desserts, organic products, money and different endowments are displayed by the young lady's father to the male on this event relying on his monetary and societal position. Moreover, cosmetics pack comprising of *bindi*, *sindoor* and *glass bangles* and so forth along with a few desserts is sent for the young lady as a token of *sagai* from the male's side which is offered to the young lady by the elderly women of her family. This gives a flag to the relatives and the villagers with respect to the engagement of the young lady. This service is called *Maangbharai*. On return, they are offered endowments comprising of garments and money as a token of *shagun*.
http://revenueharyana.gov.in/html/gazeteers/kurukshetra_2009/Chapter_III.pdf. accessed on 12.12.2012 02:30 am

¹¹⁰ Dowry is the most important feature which has really handicapped the community. They try and give as much as possible to the in-laws in both cash and kind. There is a competition within the community members and show-off which does not allow them to overcome them out of their loans.

¹¹¹ *Bhaat* is a ritual performed by the Mamas (uncles) of both the bride and groom one night before the marriage, in which the uncle has to pay both in cash and kind to their individual side of the bride and groom. Individual family members and relatives are given clothes with cash to honour them. In the end the uncles are offered with meal in return.

¹¹² *Chuchak* takes place when the new baby is born. In the event of a male tyke, she hangs some branches of mango leaves at the highest point of the external entryway of the house. At that point *chuchak dhuwai* (washing the mother's areolas) is for the most part performed by the sister-in-law of the ladies. She washes her areolas

Jadulla (Mundan),¹¹⁴ *Moncha*,¹¹⁵ etc. Moncha is a ritual which is performed after the death of the family head (father/grandfather). The Mocha has to be decided by the *Chaudhuries of the Community, declaring it as Naw-beda-aar-paar*,¹¹⁶ where all the members of the community participate for *Pagdi*¹¹⁷ from all over Darjeeling district. This has resulted in being good customers and easy victims/prey for the moneylenders¹¹⁸ and the economically stronger communitys who charge them with high rate of interest.

There has been little push to counteract such velvety social traditions, avoidance and to reintegrate the individuals who have progressed toward becoming avoided through joblessness. Likewise, prompt consideration should be given to learn these kinds of practices, and to maximize awareness orientation programmes so that they can sustain in monetary and societal spheres.¹¹⁹

with warm water and got money related endowments or some brilliant trimmings. After this function, bosom bolstering begins.

¹¹³ Chaati-ki-Raat takes place with new born baby (specially in case of male-baby). On the 6th day, *Chhatti* function is performed when every one of the individuals from the family keep wakeful all through night. It is for the most part trusted that the Goddess of destiny composes the destiny of the new conceived child on this night. On the tenth day, *havan* is performed for filtration of the house. *Ganga Jal* (hallowed water of the waterway Ganga) is sprinkled in the house. The tyke is frequently named on this day. The Brahman proposes the name. The name of the tyke as proposed by Brahman was relatively last previously however it isn't really restricting nowadays. Be that as it may, a few guardians still want to adhere to the underlying word proposed by the family cleric.

http://revenueharyana.gov.in/html/gazeteers/kurukshetra_2009/Chapter_III.pdf. accessed on 12.12.2012 02:30 am

¹¹⁴ The parents decide when the new baby is suppose to have a first hair cut, normally they keep it with odd number e.g. one, three or five years. *Jadulla* is related with parents *Kul Davata*, where they offer a pair of pigs to their holy Goddesses. After the worship is over the baby has his/her first hair cut by the priest.

¹¹⁵ When the male head of the family expires they go for *Moncha* decided by the *Chaudhuries*, and the headship is shifted to the eldest son of the family concerned.

¹¹⁶ This phrase is used to call upon all the members of the community along with entire family and relatives, its some kind of open invitation.

¹¹⁷ *Pagdi* is a turbon which has to be put on by the *Chaudharies* and relatives to the next head in the family specially in case of elder son who takes the charge of the family.

¹¹⁸ In most cases these moneylenders belong to the Upper Caste. However, money lending business cuts across the caste association in the sub-continent wherein the moneyed class continues to control the business of lending and earning interest on the principle amount. The *Afgnahis* for instance have been traditionally a ready source of liquid cash for the cash trapped individuals.

¹¹⁹ Lekhraj Balmiki. (2013). '*Darjeeling Municipality And The Case Of The Balmikis*', paper presented at ICSSR sponsored National Conference: Scavenger Communities: Problem, Dynamics And Way Forward. Organised by Centre For Study Of Social Exclusion And Inclusive Policies, Tata Institute Of Social Sciences, Mumbai. 16th – 17th September, 2013.

The condition of Balmiki community is pathetic. Since the vast majority of the general population, from the community are uneducated. Social shades are malice in the community. Destitution conceives an offspring to various things including liquor abuse, spouse beating, betting. The vast majority of the kids can't go to class. The young lady kids turn out to be a piece of the calling for traditional work.¹²⁰ Dropout cases from schools can be notice. At a very early stage the children start helping their parents in profession.

In case of education they hardly get best schools and colleges, because of economic problems. Moreover, the mental setup of carrying out the occupation of parents has made them least interested in higher education. This has brought about virtual segregation of community from whatever is left of the general public and in ceaseless grasp of superstition and backwardness. The youngsters keep on suffering as guardians discovered brief period to go through with them and their rank and geological disengagement let to facilitate underestimation in the schools. The truth is not withstanding when freely untouchability has been dispensed with yet standing framework is in particular pervasive and no one would deny it. The other certainty is that everyone thinks about *Dom*, *Mehtar*, *Bhangis* and *Helas* and such terms, criticizing them may search for an edified society however proceed by and by. Youngsters, acquire, these terms from their folks and thusly these communities confront racial biases from each one. It is thusly, not amusing that names of their territories seal their destiny as zones are constantly specified with the community names thus names like *Harijan Bustee*. They remind us how rough our framework was versus the untouchables. The very establishment of the separation in India is station framework, which malign Dalits and hurt

¹²⁰ [Swachchakar Dignity](http://swachchakar.blogspot.in/2007/02/manual-scavenging-in-uttar-pradesh.html): Manual Scavenging in Uttar-Pradesh Status of manual scavengers in Gorakhpur, Uttar-Pradesh By Vidya Bhushan Rawat, Social Development Foundation, Delhi, Ram Bhuvan, Jan Kalyan Sansthan, Chauri Chaura, Kirti Singh, Social Development Foundation, Delhi Thursday, February 22, 2007.
<http://swachchakar.blogspot.in/2007/02/manual-scavenging-in-uttar-pradesh.html>. Accessed: 25.02.2013 20:29 hrs

the very respect and pride of a person, which are fundamentals for his development and advancement.

Literacy rates among the Balmikis have been low down for the reason that they cannot meet the expenses of it, though they have scrutiny edification favorably. Balmikis favour formal education for their boys and girls who study up to graduate and postgraduate levels depending upon the individual aptitude and circumstantial constraints. In maximum cases it can be seen that female child education is given less importance as they are treated *Paraya Dhan*.¹²¹ Arrangements for the study of the girls are conspicuous by its absence. However, in late years, particularly in urban regions of Darjeeling town, girls are being educated at primary level.

They are further disadvantaged by a lack of awareness of their legal rights and opportunities. Constant such kind of practices against the women within the Balmiki community has led to the exclusion by other section of people in hills, where the women benefit from maximum civil liberties and emancipation, and to a great extent verbal in political spheres.¹²² The complexities of the framework have constituted a genuine deterrent to Balmikis common advance in Darjeeling. The pattern today is toward the disintegration of the manufactured boundaries between the positions. The seriousness of the rank structure of the Hindus was broken, all things considered, amid the age of British lead in India.¹²³ But the commitment of the child to take after the calling of his father is as yet authoritative; men being from low standing have not ascended to high positions and places of power; and banning, in any case,

¹²¹ As per Indian Tradition, a girl is wedded out to a boy who is her Pati (husband). The parents brought up the girl child to her adulthood to wed out to her in laws in a different home. Though she was given birth by a couple, she will be living her valued period of rest of the life with her husband not with her parents. It seems that she has been given birth and brought up to handed over to another party. So, a girl is called Paraya Dhan.(The girls are considered Laxmi, the Goddess of Money).

¹²² Lekhraj Balmiki. (2012). '*The Second Wave of Gorkhaland Movement and the Marginalized: A case study of Balmiki Community in their Diaspora*', paper presented at UGC sponsored National Seminar: Regional Movements: Identity Question And National Integration: Contextualizing India's Growing Regional Assertions. SAP (DRS Phase-II) University of North Bengal 15th -16th March, 2012.

¹²³ Mathew Atmore Sherring, *Hindu Tribes And Castes as Represented in Benaras, 3vols.* Calcutta: 1872-1881. *The Tribes and Castes of the Madras Presidency.* London:1909.

loss of rank, is another major issue as it may some time ago have been. Likewise, the standing framework was now and again erupted from inside by clerical factions, most quite the ascent of Buddhism, itself a response from, and challenge against, the excruciating subjugation of the standing framework.¹²⁴ The administration has not by any stretch of the imagination got itself free of the station framework however it might claim to have decimated the untouchability at any rate on the papers. Along these lines, it is basic for the administration to make its arrangement in a thorough way and not react to a circumstance on absolutely specialized way.¹²⁵

4.9: Gotra (Clan)

The meaning of Clan is to belong to the same tribe. It also means the Bahir vivahi clan, meaning that they should marry outside the similar clan. The Hindi word for clan is 'gotra'.¹²⁶ As per Rahu Sanskritayan, *gotra* means the solution for protection of cows. It may be place or protecting communities. Cows were once the wealth of Hindu Aryans. This is the reason why the similar descendant's community or clan belongs to same *gotra*. The period, in which the Europeans started rearing of animals, rearing of cows was already prevalent in India. Though we have very less information about this period. Vishwamitra Bharadwaj and all other clans belonged either to the *gotra* era or 'Pitrasatta' era. All there Clans resided near Rishi Ganga before 1500 BC. And were also there during the Dastra or Samantwadi era. It is possible Kuwa (Kabul) and Suwastu (swat) valleys had people living in the areas, during *Gotra* and Pitrastta era when it was buffered off commonly.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Jaideva, Paramanshi. (2002). *Dalits In Early Buddhism*. Delhi: Kalpaz Publications. Also see, Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. "Buddhism and Communism", *National Seminar on Marx, Ambedkar and Polarization of Oppressed and Exploited Classes in India*. New Delhi: Sanjivayya Institute of Socio-Economic Studies, 1991. Also see, Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. (1957). *The Buddha And His Dhamma*. Bombay: Siddharth College Publications.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Damodar Dharmanand Kosambi, *Ancient Indian Culture and Heritage*, Pp. 114.

¹²⁷ Rahul Sankrityayan- *Human society*, 1986, Pp. 20.

According to famous scholar DN Jha, Aryans came to India in the form of semi-nomads. Animal rearing and farming was their basis to earn economic living. Animal rearing was the most important part of their economic life. There were battles between different clans for the cows. 'Gavisthi' word was famous for these wars, which meant searching of cows. The impact of animal rearing on Aryan society can be determined by the fact that the people who lived with cows in the same 'Gosht' belonged to the same clan. Later on, they were considered blood related, similarly this word was praised by the Clans. Daughters were called 'duhitti' because she did the job of taking out milk. For food both cows and buffaloes were killed. Guests were served delicious meat of cows and buffaloes. This is the reason why in Vedic Era the word '*godahan*' (killing of cows) was also very famous.¹²⁸

The information of killing of cows is gathered by the works of Damodar Dharmanand Kosambi. He believes that a lot of information is gathered from the holy books. Such rituals were done to serve as offering to gods. All such traditions were done near the fire which was considered Holy. The tradition of these holy rituals became more serious and prevalent as time passed on. Since, the number increased, the number of killing animals also increased. And thus nowadays it is hard to trust. The most essential animal which could be sacrificed were humans, buffaloes and horse but almost all kind of animals were sacrificed.¹²⁹

This section mostly discusses of the Clans, especially Valmiki, Bhangis, Churha and others sub caste. These clans are different from that of Brahmin. Some Clans even match to that of the Kshatriya Rajput. According to Doctor Ambedkar, Shudras are Aryans, or mixture of two or more cultures. These questions were prevalent in those days. Back in the ancient Era they belonged in the 4th rank or the last rank yet they were discarded by the three upper caste. Even if it is believed that they were not Aryans, but due to business purposes they met with

¹²⁸ DN Jha- *Ancient India: An outline*, Pp. 21.

¹²⁹ Damodar Dharmanand Kosambi- *Ancient Indian Culture and Heritage*, Pp. 115.

Aryan, got married to them and used to socialize with the other three upper communities. In some matters they earned a lot of profits and came near to those of Brahmins and Kshatriya. In short, they mixed well along with the people of upper caste just like England's Celtic tribes got transferred into Anglo-Saxons. The proof of their other identity was completely removed.¹³⁰

Dr Ambedkar in his book says that Shudras didn't have a different caste, they belong to the Indian Aryan communities Kshatriya rank.¹³¹

The list is given in the book Patit Puraskar and tries to prove that the clans of Balmiki society were Kshatriyas. The list contained - Bais, Khairvaar, veer, Gujjar, Sowa, Dado, Yaduvanshi, Kachwah, Kinwaar, Thakur, Bhojpuri, Taank, Rawat and many more.¹³²

For marriage some regions gave preferences to matching of '*chitki bundaki*' while in Punjab Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, Clans were matched.

The clan of the bride must be different from that of the groom's, father's, mother's and grandparent's. For example if the mother belongs to Kesla father belonged to Khaiswaal, and grandmother belong to Panta, the girl should not belong to any of these. If the clan of the girl matches to any of these three Clans, marriage would not take place. This was a very strict rule that could not be opposed.

Clans can be resident specific. There are some Clans which belonged to the same place but due to continuous migrating, literacy and other factors the same Clan was called by different names for example, Piwaal, Pihal and Paahiwab. Some Clans can be found like sauda-saudai-sudha-sood, etc. and Chandalia - Chinaliye, Chancha, Chandra, Chandril, etc. There are some

¹³⁰ Baba Saheb Dr Ambedkar- Sampurna Vadmay, Section-1, Introduction, Pp. XXI.

¹³¹ Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar- *Who were the Shudras?* 1946

¹³² Ithaven- *Tribes and Castes*, 1872

Clans who knowingly adopt differences so that they can move away from the feeling of hatred and inferiority. For example Birlan became Birla, Chauthel and Chautala became Chutela.

The community has been summed up into Valmiki society from different communities such as Churcha, Valmiki, Hela, Bansod. This is reason why their Clans also became associated to Bhangi. Some others also joined themselves into new community.

4.10: Economic Life of the Balmikis

Throughout the years Balmikis have turned into an urban community in Darjeeling and speak to a significant number of the vagrant non-local Nepali talking communities. With the presentation of septic toilets, the act of conveying buckets of feces on their heads is gone yet despite everything they work to clear blockages in sewers where they are half submerged in rotteness. The shame remains, they are yet related to the work and are still considered as untouchables and stereotyped as ‘Jamadar’.¹³³ As such the community is stereotyped to have a place and speak to the classification of sweepers, safai karamacharis, etc. given that encounter they have dependably been minimized and regarded as out caste economically, socially, politically.

Table: 4

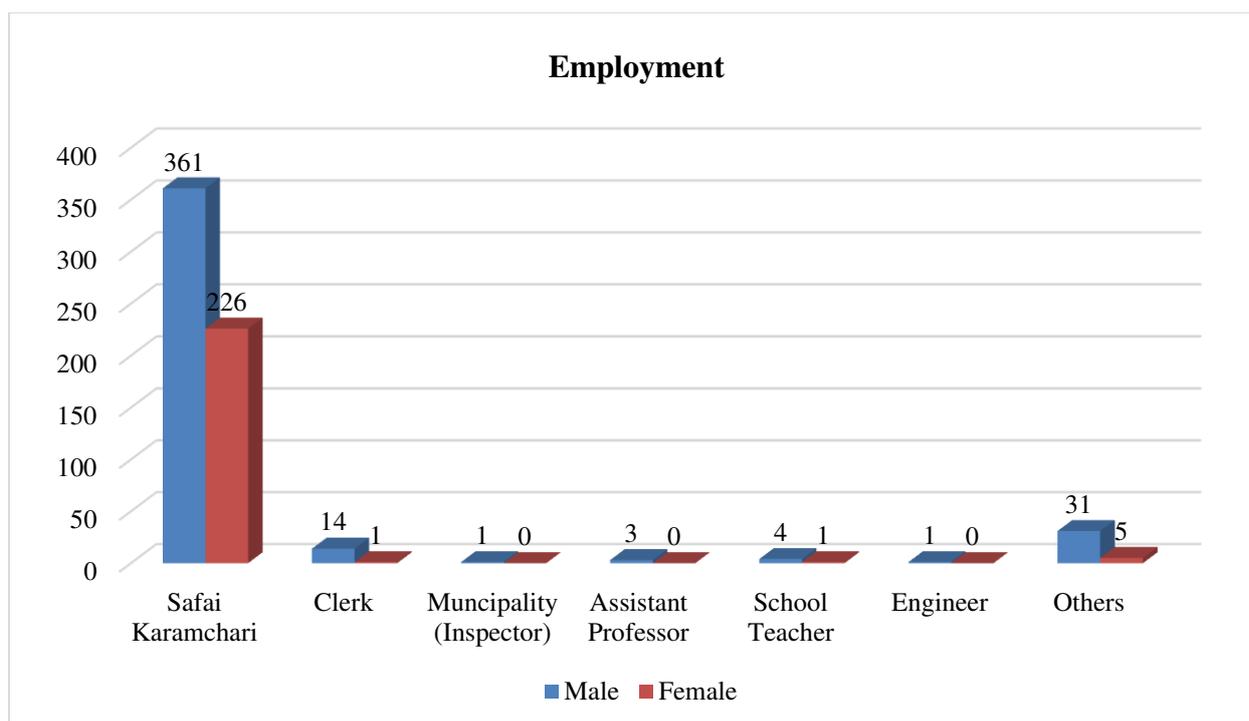
Balmiki Employments in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong

	Male	Female	

¹³³ According to Oxford Dictionaries Jamadar is a person who sweeps homes or offices as job. <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/jamadar> Accessed on 12.12.2012 at 1: 10 am. See, Sharma, Balchandra. (1962). *Nepali Shabda Kosh*. Royal Nepal Acedamy. Pp. 366. Also see Ralph Lilley Turner, (1931). *A Comparative And Etymological, Dictionary Of The Nepali Language*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trybner & Co., Ltd..Pp 209, ‘where Jamadar has been defined as the lowest Commissioned Gurkha or Indian rank in the Indian Army’. Also see Rai, R.B. “*Jiten Mitra: Sab Bhandra Youge Purano Commissioner*”, in Gurung, Madan Kr., & Bhutia, Passang. (Ed.). (2000). *Souvenir. Darjeeling Municipality 1850-2000*. Darjeeling: Darjeeling Municipality. Pp.41. also see Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). “*The Balmiki Community In Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness.*” in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). *A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal*. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications

	Permanent	Casual	Permanent	Casual	Total
Safai Karamchari	293	68	145	81	587
Clerk	14	-	-	01	15
Municipality (Inspector)	01	-	-	-	01
Assistant Professor	03	-	-	-	03
School Teacher	03	01	-	01	05
Engineer	01	-	-	-	01
Others	07	24	01	04	36

Figure: 3 Employments



As the table (above) shows, the post of ‘safai karamchari’ inducts a major share of total employment in Darjeeling. Other professions like Clerk, Assistant Professor, Engineer are negligible in comparison in this respect. However, a closer look at this figures with respect to gender reveals a skewed pattern against women in this area. Firstly, there are much fewer

women compared to males in all the posts mentioned. Secondly, the share of casual workers among females are much higher than that of males, which also means males are more likely to get a permanent job than any of these posts that females. It can also be noted that women are not getting jobs in more socially respected jobs like engineers and teachers.

With the development of Darjeeling Township, they were employed by the municipality to work as the sweepers/safai karmacharis in the Conservancy Department. But with the creation of septic lavatories, the act of conveying pails of fertilizer on their heads is gone yet they still work to clear blockages in sewers where they are half submerged in foulness.

They have a relatively high, steady salary¹³⁴, retirement benefits, and so forth.¹³⁵ But still for this stable remuneration (permanent job) they have to pay inducement¹³⁶ to the Officer In Charge in the municipality of Conservancy Department. Thus, the tendency of corruption and exploitation of the Balmikis is very high in the Darjeeling Municipality. Besides, this they have been regular victims by the section supervisor, who are paid *Bhanja*¹³⁷ both in cash and kind. Still, this kind of practices has never been reported by the victims neither to the authority in the municipality nor to the police. But even though their relative well-being is a source of envy, and their job is almost hereditary.

Now a good number of them serve as sweepers in public and private sector establishments. They have shifted from serving some households on contract basis to being in regular service. Moreover, they have also been found in some unorganized sectors such as sweeping the

¹³⁴Regular monthly Basic pay ranges from Rs 9000-Rs 12000, only if the employ is permanent in Darjeeling Municipality. Source: Staff Statistic Report Of Darjeeling Municipality As On 01.04.2012.

¹³⁵Deliege,Robert. (2001). *The Untouchables of India*. New York: oxford International Publishers Ltd. (Translated from French by Nora Scott).

¹³⁶In 1998, the people those who were given permanent (made permanent) posts according to the Municipality Order, were asked to pay Rs. 2000 individually, this part has been interviewed on the field survey with the Balmiki Harijan Sangh member. One of the employ named Lila Dev was withheld as she refused to pay the bribe for her permanent post. Similarly, in the year 2006, the amount was increased to Rs. 10000- 30000 depending on the capacity of the employ for being permanent.

¹³⁷Bhanja is bribe paid to the supervisor of a particular section by the Safai Karamchhari.

upper caste houses and cleaning toilets which they term as *tekhas*,¹³⁸ and in spite of positive action programmes, their participation in the public sphere is low. More than 80% of the Balmiki population¹³⁹ is dependent on the municipality for their livelihood. Though they have a regular source of income but their living standards has not been uplifted because of their social and cultural practices where huge amount of money is squander. In some cases they even have to sustain their families in their native homeland thus, their economic condition at stake.

The predisposition against them is all things considered that regardless of whether a portion of the general population having a place with Balmiki people group who need to leave the work discover it about difficult to get an option job. It likewise mirrors that there is for all intents and purposes no passage of this group in the administration segment and also other work. It obviously implies that while in the sanitation work of the districts there is a one hundred percent booking for them, there is for all intents and purposes no push to delink them from this tradition and restore them somewhere else. Furthermore, by just broadcasting that legislature has prohibited toilets won't bring out of the bedlam that the social framework has perpetrated upon them. One is that there is as yet searching and other grave certainty is that non-attendant Safai Karmcharis is developing. That implies on account of moderately better pay rates and contract framework, those with associations in the higher ups land the position while the issue of cleaning and going down the seepage and sewage line. Despite the way this is most abused and cruel work that any human could do, the ladies keep on doing it due to budgetary emergency. We as a whole realize this does not by any stretch of the imagination bring them any cash. The catastrophe is that even the plans for poor don't contact them. The

¹³⁸ Tekhas are unorganized sectors where the community men/women members work as sweepers and earn his/her family livelihood. They are paid very low wages and sometimes both in cash wage and kinds during festivals.

¹³⁹ See, Staff Statistic Report Of Darjeeling Municipality As On 01.04.2012.

individuals who are knowledgeable, and their number is exceptionally constrained, don't land position as per their training. The plan of the legislature has additionally underestimated them on the grounds that the issue is tended to from a financial perspective and not a socio-social issue without sufficiently giving thought to their restoration. In this calling, a dominant part of specialists are ladies. They leave to work in early hours of the morning without having the tea and return late toward the evening. Amid that essential period, no one is at home to deal with their kids. They need to bring themselves bringing about their failure to go school.¹⁴⁰

There are two prevalent traditions in Indian society- donation and forced labour. Forced labour is applied on Dalits whereas donation is applicable for Brahmins and temple associations. Without doing any physical labour, the Brahmins are endowed with so much of donation; it seems as if there is no need to do any work. It is believed that India is land of farming and agriculture but if any Brahmins tries to do the job of farmer, it is considered an ignominious act and the Brahmin would be considered inferior. In the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, the sections are decided on the same basis. Maybe for this reason, the people who consider physical labour to be an important aspect of life are considered to be inferior. Not paying wages, after making them work is the forced labour. This is prevalent since thousands of years and is the main reason of illiteracy and misery of Balmikis. Because of this tradition of forced labour, they are bound to live such a life. All their self-confidence, ambitions, bravery and chivalry got lost in the pages of history. They couldn't even save their memories. All the holy texts and religious texts have played a major role in increasing their misery. You would get several books about donation where the importance of it has been mentioned but you won't get any text about forced labour on any language. Although, the

¹⁴⁰ [Swachchakar Dignity](http://swachchakar.blogspot.in/2007/02/manual-scavenging-in-uttar-pradesh.html): Manual Scavenging in Uttar-Pradesh Status of manual scavengers in Gorakhpur, Uttar-Pradesh By Vidya Bhushan Rawat, Social Development Foundation, Delhi, Ram Bhuvan, Jan Kalyan Sansthan, Chauri Chaura, Kirti Singh, Social Development Foundation, Delhi Thursday, February 22, 2007
<http://swachchakar.blogspot.in/2007/02/manual-scavenging-in-uttar-pradesh.html>. Accessed: 25.02.2013 20:29 hrs

book 'Begar-Kuli-Pratha' by Shekhar Pathak is available in Hindi language. Where Balmikis were made to become slaves of forced labour and were exploited every time.

Forced labour began with the stereo-typical mentality of the rural people, which ended with the protests of Dr Ambedkar. However, the spurn tradition is still prevalent even today in some urban and rural areas. It has been criticized by Premchand in his book "Saddgati" and portrayed it as inhuman. In the story, the exploitation of Balmikis has been shown in a dreadful manner.

Balmiki society has been going through ruins and been struggling through a painful life which isn't visible to the upper class people. It is due to the overlook of people that they consider themselves inferior. Every step of the way, they are forced into believing this that they were born to a Bhangi family due to their poor deeds. This has been repeated so many times, it appears to be a truth, but it is all an intrigue.

Balmikis are placed in the lowest strata of the caste system. They have forgotten that instead of doing all the dirty works they do, they should protest against it, which they haven't. This is all a planned intrigue which is found even today. It is unpleasant situation which if taken lightly will lead to dark future of Bhangis. It will be difficult to get out of it. The inferior mentality of the people had made them weak. They have not only destroyed the self-confidence of Balmikis but have also destroyed their power of analyzing. The dreadful scene of this condition was seen in Peshwa rule. When a Bhangi entered the village, sounds were made to make the upper caste aware that a Bhangi is entering the village. The food that they were given for their job was tied at the end of bamboo and given, so that the shadow of the Bhangi doesn't touch the person and make him impure.

The exploitation culture is continuous in this society. These people were treated in the most inhuman way in Darjeeling in relation with their occupation. There are many such incidents

against which no objections are made. Similarly, in they put double labour for simple payment. It is a matter of argument considering the harsh and tough situations there. In many municipal and governmental associations, the labourers were delayed in paying.

But the health association, during the season of travelling appoints a dozen of scavengers far away. They aren't even paid properly. Half of the actual amount is paid that too after years of their job. This is prevalent since ages. In this way, the associations take the advantage of their helplessness and make them forced labourers.

As per the facts of the report published in Navbharat Times 1994 that when the scavengers ask for an increase in that payments then they were asks either to work like that, or leave without taking the remaining payment.

This society has been pushed into the hell of the society and this is proved by the historic and religious facts. First of all the holy books and the memoirs deprived them of education. Divock repeated from speaking and learning Sanskrit. As per Manusmriti a Brahmin can consider the property of a Shudra as his own because according to them Shudras have nothing of their own, all the properties can be ceased by the owner anytime.¹⁴¹ In reality Shudras should never collect properties no matter what, even if it's for their benefits because if a Shudra collects his property and becomes rich then it is a pain to a Brahmin.¹⁴²

The same kind of practice has been observed in the Bhangi society. Some control then by the political motives whereas some control them by their religious motives.

The normal income of a sweeper in any private Institution of municipalities or any government institution is from rupees 3000 rupees 5000. This is the reason why a bit of change is observed in the economic condition of the sweepers. There are many such families

¹⁴¹ Manusmriti, Chapter 8, Verse 417.

¹⁴² Manusmriti Chapter 10, Verse 119.

who have come out of the past and saw bright futures. They send the kids to school and colleges and through this some have even grown by studying hard. Some became clerk some became teaches and some engineers. But the work of contractors is just increasing and hence it seems that this dream will always remain a dream.

On the Possibility of *Balmiki* Consciousness: Unaddressed Aspirations of the Marginalised

5.1: Introduction

The fundamental question which comes to the study of Dalit Liberation Movement is to understand who are the Dalits? The term '*Dalit*' a derivative of Sanskrit word 'Dal' which means to be crushed and destroyed, refers to the poor and downtrodden. According to Ghan Shyam Shah, "*Dalit includes those termed in administrative parlance as Schedule Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward classes*" (Shah, 8). Traditionally, in the Hindu social order, they are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy, considered '*Ati-Shudras*' or '*Avarna*' and are treated as untouchables. Dalits are a mixed population of numerous castes and in Hindu society, Dalit state has been historically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure such as leather work, butchering or removal of rubbish, animal carcasses and human waste. In pre-independence India Dalits stayed outside the village and worked as manual labourers and sweepers. They were segregated and banned from full participation in Hindu social life. Unfortunately, even after independence, discrimination against Dalits still exists in rural areas in routine matters such as access to eating places, schools, temples and water sources, though it has largely disappeared in urban areas and public spheres. Basically, "*caste is a lived social experience in India more than a prescribed mode of social stratification*" (Davy XV). Despite the massive changes brought about urbanization, industrialization and globalization, the grim reality of caste convention still looms large over the Indian social order and has not shown any substantial signs of reduction.

In 1901, Risely, then Census Commissioner of India, attempted to classify the Hindu castes. The term '*Scheduled Castes*' appeared for the first time in the Government of India Act 1935. The Simon Commission coined this term in 1928, later on, the British Government issued the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order 1936, specifying certain castes and tribes. Among whom the Balmikis/Bhangis were the first to be added. As compared to the term 'Harijan' given to the untouchables by Mahatma Gandhi, the term 'Dalit' found a ready acceptance among the untouchable communities all over India. It expresses Dalits' awareness about themselves as oppressed people and signifies their resolve to demand liberation through a revolutionary transformation of the system that denies them the opportunities to ameliorate their lot. Bishop A.C. Lal considers "*the word 'Dalit' as a beautiful word because it transcends narrow national and sectarian frontiers*" (Lal,xiii). Arjun Dangle, a Dalit writer does not consider Dalit as a caste but rather 'a realization' which "is related to the experiences, joys, sorrows and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of society"(Dangle,264).

The term *Dalit* is alluded to broken, oppressed individuals who become subject to deliberate act of exploitation by those above them in a hierarchical social system. The *Dalit* Panthers, once a militant organization had used the term in its Manifesto. It says, "*Members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, nee-Buddhists, the working people, the landless poor peasants, women and those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion are called Dalits.*¹ It further elucidates, "*We do not want a little place in Brahman Alley. We want the rule of the whole land. We are not looking at persons by a system. Change of heart, liberal education, etc. will not end our state of exploitation. When*

¹ *Manifesto of the Dalit Panthers*, 1972.

*we gather a revolutionary mass, rouse the people, out of the struggle of this giant mass will come the tidal wave of revolution"*²

Thus, the Untouchables of country had themselves chosen an alternative character, 'a revised self-portrait' that of *Dalit* to indicate their lack of belief in being polluted, their sense that their condition was the result of the lack of the caste system, and their inclusion in the Ambedkar movement of all those grounded by their religions, social and economic status.³ Through this '*new identity*', *Dalit* Movement directed itself in the direction of status - improvement vis-a-vis social mobility among *Dalits* and shaping their agitation sensitivity and assertion for reaching their rights of equality and equal opportunity, self- respect and a respectful identity.⁴

The community has chosen the word '*Dalit*' itself and has used proudly as a sign of self consciousness. The word has been used in English Press, without its translation. Founder and editor of 'Asmitadarsh' (Translation 'Mirror of Identity'), Professor Gangadhar Pantawane, has defines the word in the following manner, he says, "to me Dalit is not a caste. He is a man exploited by the social and economic traditions of this country. He does not believe in God, Rebirth, Soul and Holy Books teaching separatism, Fate and Heaven because they have made him a slave. He does believe in Humanism. Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution."⁵ These are the changing perceptions about the community, which was subjected to 'institutionalized deprivation' for centuries and its struggle for Liberation. It started with very reformative kind of attitudes and passed through several radical and revolutionary phases. There were dynamic changes occurred at definitional level of the movement and today in socio-political system the word 'Dalit' is widely acceptable and used. But, not much

² Ibid.

³ Zelliott, Eleanor. , *Ibid*.Pp.V

⁴ Ram, Nandu. (1995). *Beyond Ambedkar* .Delhi: Har-Anand Publications. Pp. 87.

⁵ Quoted in Eleanor Zelliott, *Ibid*. Pp. 268.

of elucidation is available about the introduction of the term 'Scheduled Castes' either in the Constitution or in any laws or rules. It was in 1901 that the then Census Commissioner of India, Risley tried for the first time to classify the Hindu castes. Then in 1911 an interrogation was made to identify which of the castes and tribes were discriminated and oppressed against on religious and social grounds. In 1921, these castes and tribe were called the 'Depressed Classes' and J.H. Hutton, the then Census Commissioner, systematically categorized the Depressed Classes. The expression of the term 'Scheduled Castes' first was coined by the Simon Commission and was placed in the Government of India Act, 1935. Prior to this Act, they were known as Untouchables, Depressed Classes or exterior castes. In April 1936, the Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order issued by British Government specified certain castes, races, and tribes as Scheduled Castes in different Provinces of India and the list was continuation of the earlier list of Depressed Classes. Further, the list drawn in the Constitution of India (1950) was a revised version of the above-mentioned Order of 1936. The test applied was the social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of the historical customs of Untouchability. Certain specific measures were taken to fulfil the assurance of 'justice, social, economic and political' that was carried out by the Preamble of the Constitution. There is no definition of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the Constitution itself. But the President is empowered to draw up a list in consultation with the Governor of each States, subject to revision by Parliament (Articles 341-342).

5.2: Balmiki Liberation

We find a long history of struggle for *Dalit* Liberation where they have gone for conscious attempt to redefine their self-image and many dynamic and landmark changes have occurred at the definitional level during the course of the movement. Today the word *Dalit* is widely acceptable and used all over the country; many social scientists have started referring to the *Dalits* and ex-Untouchables or the Scheduled Castes inter changeably. Balmikis are referred

as the *Dalit*, in this work, for the ex-Untouchables or the Scheduled Castes who by articulating their self-realization and their struggle against the caste oppression and by their "will to act against exploitation, a rise from oppression, from death to life, from darkness to light" are continuing their Movement.⁶

An understanding of the development of term '*Dalit*' itself reflects changing nature of the community and provides meaningful insights to analyse the nature and scope of *Dalit* consciousness. In fact, *Dalit* consciousness is political consciousness that is expressed politically during the course of the *Dalit* movement. Political consciousness is a complex concept as discussed in the previous chapter and it is a very comprehensive concept playing a 'catalyst role' in the articulation of Balmiki community. It is participative having significant impact on the political system and its actors both subjectively and objectively. It connotes self-image vis-a-vis other individuals and communities, their relationship with socio-political locations and their linkages/connectivity with socio-eco-political and cultural structures of society. Political consciousness characterizes an individual's of community's cognitive comprehensibility of its objective conditions as well as its subjective awareness that, in turn, forms through social experiences, political struggles and cultural traits.

To understand *Balmiki* consciousness as a *Dalit* is a complex process as it incorporates several complexities like political consciousness. It includes the understanding of the Dalits politics, processes of political socialization and political culture among *Dalits*, its impact on the construction of political consciousness and its different ways of expressions including literature. An effort has been made to understand *Dalit* movement in India in the following section along with the understanding of *Dalit* aesthetics.

⁶ Omvedt, Gail. (1994). *Dalits and Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India* Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 11

It was Dr. Ambedkar in the twentieth century, who took up cudgels against the injustice and exploitation meted out to Dalits due to caste discrimination. Balmiki consciousness is guided by the Ambedkarite ideology, programs, leadership and organization and incorporates both institutionalised and non-institutionalised individual and collective actions initiated and adopted by the community to achieve desired goals. Leadership provided by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had powerful impact on the community and subsequent course of *Dalit* movement draws inspiration and strength from his vision. We would discuss his impact on the *Dalit* movement in the next section.

Dr Ambedkar held Hindu religion and its teachings responsible for the fate of the untouchables. He had declared “you must burn away the Vedas and the Shastras, which deny any part to reason” (quoted in Valmiki, XIX). On 25 December 1927, Ambedkar had burnt a copy of *Manusmriti* in a bonfire as Manu, the ancient sage, is believed to have formulated the laws of pollution and untouchability. Moreover, as opposed to Gandhi’s efforts to remove untouchability through penance and acts of social service by caste Hindus, Ambedkar used the language of rights and legal provisions. He stressed upon a positive co-relation between untouchability and economic deprivation and disparity, constantly emphasizing the exploitation of Dalits as to how they were denied the right to education, ownership of land and jobs above the level of scavenging or any other menial occupation and they were also forced to do the labour without any wages. Valmiki refers to a situation when his village men were beaten up for refusing to work without wages. He poses a question, ‘why it is a crime to ask for the price of one’s labour?’ (Valmiki, 39) Ambedkar endeavoured to inculcate awareness about such acts of injustice and exploitation and make the Dalits conscious that they have their own identity as human beings, equally equipped with physical and mental capacity as other human beings and equally entitled to enjoy all the human rights without any abridgement or limitation.

According to Valmiki, Dalit consciousness is elemental in opposing the cultural inheritance of the upper castes, the notion that culture is a hereditary right for them and one that is denied to Dalits. Defining Dalit consciousness further, Valmiki says “Dalit consciousness is deeply concerned with the question, “Who am I? What is my identity?” (Valmiki, 28). It is this consciousness that gives Dalit literature its unique power and separates it from traditional Hindi literature describing Dalit characters. According to Valmiki, “Dalit consciousness does not just make an account of or give a report on the anguish, misery, pain and exploitation of Dalits, or draw a tear-streaked and sensitive portrait of Dalit agony; rather it is that which is absent from “original” consciousness, the simple and straight forward perspective that breaks the spell of the shadow of the cultural, historical and social roles for Dalits. That is Dalit consciousness. Dalit means deprived of human rights, those who have been denied them on a social level. Their consciousness is Dalit consciousness”. (Valmiki, 29). It is a staunch feeling of protest against the imposed lower caste status and evil of untouchability and a sense of self-respect and pride for a new social order based on the values of liberty, equality, justice and fraternity.

Political consciousness is informed through the multiple factors: level of political education, articulated political opinion, amount and quantum of suppression, marginalization of a particular community, urge for radical changes and many more. It is to be noted that the greater amount of political consciousness would increase and enlarge the level of political participation. It would be observed, in the course of this study, that the greater amount of articulated political consciousness among the *Dalit* community has increased and broadened the level and scope of political participation, particularly since Dr. Ambedkar throughout the country. In fact, there exists a proliferation of consciousness that is felt politically and expressed politically among the *Dalit* community.

One can identify a progressive pattern in the expression of political consciousness through processes of political socialization, political participation and political culture, thus, making it 'a functional catalyst' providing general participation orientations, community mobilization and identity building processes. It can be identified that the political consciousness performs through the following stages:-

1. Subjective understanding of the self;
2. Transmission of knowledge from one generation to another;
3. Objective cognition of the socio-eco-politico-cultural conditions;
4. Critical relationship with other communities and the structures of powers and economic controls; and
5. Transforming society consciously with a visionary movement.

It can be observed that a new self-image with overall general political participation is being cultivated by Dalits through assertion of their rights and continuation of their movement for social change and for the establishment of an egalitarian society.

5.3: Dalit Collective Action

Various concepts such as social movement, revolt, agitation, political action, collective action, reform and revolution, have major thrust to bring about change in socio-political system. It has been a serious challenge for the scholars to construct the term movement with special reference to dalits. The term 'movement' has been used interchangeably with organization or union. Social activists, political leaders and also scholars have used the very term differently.

It was during early nineteenth century that the term 'social movement' gained currency in Europe. This was the period of social upheaval and change where political leaders and

authors were concerned with emancipation of the exploited classes. But there was not a consistent definition of the term 'movement', and it was during second quarter of the last century that attempts were made to define the concept of social movement. One of the most important terms synonymous to movement is Collective action that may be of two kinds

1. Institutionalised collective action
2. Non-institutionalised collective action

Shah⁷ classifies movements as revolt, rebellion, reform and revolution to bring about changes in the political system. Reform does not challenge political system per se. It attempts to bring about changes in the relations between the parts of the system in order to make it more efficient, responsive and workable. A revolt is a challenge to political authority, aimed at overthrowing the government. A rebellion is an attack on existing authority without any intention of seizing power. In a revolution, a section of society launch an organized struggle to overthrow not only the established government and regime but also the socio economic structure which sustains it and replace the structure by an alternative social order. He further argues that there is another line of argument that asserts that mass movements or protests are redundant in the Indian culture and civilization due to its 'multilinear character' and all 'pervasive hierarchy'. Because of the Brahminical ideology and hierarchical social structure the oppressed classes have become docile, obedient and fatalist. But scholars who point to a number of struggles by the oppressed classes in pre and post Independence India refute such assertions. Some explain these protests as a result of the conflict between 'tradition' and 'modernity'. According to them parliamentary democracy has been transplanted in India, where there is no tradition of voluntary effort. People have developed an ambivalent attitude

⁷ Shah, Ghanshyam. (1990). *Social Movements in India*. Delhi: Sage Publications. Pp. 13-27.

towards authority, they take advantages offered by the political authority but at the same time do not legitimise it.

Defining what, exactly, social movement is, can be difficult. It is not a political party, nor it is an interest group, which are stable political entities that have regular access to political power and political elites; nor it is a mass fad or trend, which are unorganised and without goals. Instead they are somewhere in between (*Freeman and Johnson, 1999*). So characteristics of social movements are that they are “*involved in a conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; and they share a distinct collective identity*” (*De La Porta and Diani, 2006*). Social movement thus, can be understood as an organised yet informal social entity engaged in extra-constitutional conflict and is oriented toward certain goals or objective, which may be specific or narrow or more broadly aimed at complete change.

Social movements arise when social conditions create dissatisfaction within the existing arrangement. People join movements for infinite variety of reasons - Idealism, compassion, political consideration, neurotic frustration and so on. There are mainly three contending theories which explain the origin of social movements- Relative Deprivation theory, the Strain theory, and theory of Revitalisation (*Rao, 1978*).

“*Relative Deprivation*” is a concept developed by Stauffer (1949) “*It holds that one ‘feels’ deprived according to the gap between expectations and realisations. The person who wants little and has little, feels less deprived than the one who has much but expects still more*”. A point that is coincident by relative deprivation theorist is that a position of relative deprivation alone will not generate a movement. The structural conditions of relative deprivation provide necessary conditions. Sufficient conditions are provided by the perception of a situation and by the estimate of capabilities by the leaders that they can do something to remedy the situation (*Rao, 1978*). ‘*The Strain Theory*’ of social movement has

been propounded by Neil Smelser (1962). This theory considers structural strains as the underlying factor contributing to collective behaviour. Structural strain may occur at different level such as norms, values, mobility etc. Smelser's analysis of the genesis of social movement is very much within the structural functional framework. He considers strain as something that endangers the relationship among the parts of a system leading to its malfunctioning (*Smelser, 1962*). It places stress on the feeling of deprivation also. The Relative Deprivation and the Strain Theory- give us an impression that social movement necessarily arise out of negative conditions such as 'deprivation' and 'strain'. Wallace who championed the theory of Cultural Revitalisation assert "*that social movement develop out of a deliberate, organised and conscious effort on the part of the members of the society to construct a more satisfying culture for themselves*". This theory suggests that adaptive processes are employed to established equilibrium situation. These movements tend to be double edged sword. On the one side, they express dissatisfaction, dissent and protest against existing conditions, and, on the other, they offer a positive programme of action to remedy the situation (*Rao, 1978*).

The *identity* movements a derivation of social movement that came to fore very recently, are of different nature, these movements are mainly collective actions or efforts for demands- the defence of interests and the promotion of rights of certain groups of individuals who feel discriminated against, the search for symbolic recognition by a significant others. This paper will focus on what should be understood by *identity*, define the characteristics of *identity* movements, and discusses the impacts of *identity* movements on Indian states.

Morris-Jones argues, "Even after Independence government is relied upon and at the same time spat upon and abused. The same man who is looking to government one moment may in the next take part in demonstrations involving violence and on a scale that threatens to make

any government impossible." This is the outcome of the constant conflict between traditional values and modern institutions.⁸

According to Rajni Kothari, democracy in India has become a playground for growing corruption, criminalization, repression and intimidation of large masses of the people. The role of the State in 'social transformation' has been undermined. People have started asserting their rights through various struggles: "There is discontent and despair in the air still highly diffuse, fragmented and unorganised. But there is growing awareness of rights, felt politically and expressed politically, and by and large still aimed at the State. Whenever a mechanism of mobilization has become available, this consciousness has found expression often against very odds, against a constellation of interests that are too powerful and complacent to shed (even share) the privileges. At bottom it is consciousness against a paradigm of society that rests on deliberate indifference to the plight of impoverished and destitute who are being driven to the threshold of starvation by the logic of paradigm itself"⁹

Thus, after analysing the above typologies, it is evident that to define a social movement is a difficult and complex task. However, a working definition of the social movement is necessary to examine the Dalit movement. Paul Wilkinson gives the following working concept of 'social movement': "A social movement is a deliberative collective endeavour to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence illegality, revolution or withdrawal into utopian community. Social movements are thus clearly different from historical movements, tendencies or trends. It is important to note, however, that such tendencies and trends, and the influence of the unconscious and irrational factors in human behaviour, may be of crucial importance in illuminating the problems of interpreting of explaining social movements. A social movement must evince a minimal degree and

⁸ Jones, Morris.W. H. (1964). *The Government and Politics of India* .London: Hutchinson University Library, quoted in Ghanshyam Shah, *ibid*.

⁹ Kothari, R. '*The Non-Party Political Process*'. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 (5), February 4, 1984. P p. 218 quoted in Ghanshyam Shah, *Ibid*. p. 25

organization though this may range from a loose, informal or partial level of organization to the highly institutionalised and bureaucratised movements and the corporate group." ¹⁰

There is some consensus among the scholars regarding element of volition and normative commitment. For instance, "Heberle conceives of these belief systems, as an expression of the collective will of the people among whom they are accepted. He is emphatic that it is the element of volition that makes the beliefs socially effective, it is the conscious volition of individuals acting collectively that brings about the embodiment of ideologies in social movements."¹¹

Thus major ingredients of social movement consist of objectives, ideology, programs, leadership and organization, which are co-ordinated and inter-dependent. We will examine the Dalit movement with the above working concept of the social movement where efforts are to seriously examine the important components and their effect on the Dalit movement in its search for 'new self-image' and new identity-building process.

5.4: Social Mobility among the Darjeeling Balmikis

In the 1970, the Bhangi Conference was held at Naval Ashram in Mokha Bhangi Bustee, Jodhpur Rajasthan, which was also attended by the Balmikis from Darjeeling. The conference was of great importance and significance for the Balmikis as it emphasised on the socio-political mobility of the sweeper community of the country. The Conference provided the platform for the delegates coming from entire North Indian states such as, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Delhi etc., where they can discuss the upliftment of the Safai Karamcharis. This yearly conference is the chance where the leading members of the Balmiki Caste of the country meet and make discussions on the contemporary issues for the betterment of the

¹⁰ Wilkinson, Paul. *Social Movements* (London: Pall Mall, 1971), p. 27 quoted in Ghanshyam Shah, *Ibid.* p. 16-17

¹¹ Shah, Ghanshyam. *Ibid.* p. 17

community. As such it is considered to be a very important to confer together the various problems like settling disputes and passing resolutions for the improvement of their caste which has remained at the lowest ladder of the society for centuries.¹²

In Indian context, any attempt by a particular caste to raise its status has been closely associated with the process of Sanskritization. Through Sanskritization movement, a section of Untouchables who could enhance their economic condition, either by dissenting or continuing their traditional occupations, fought struggle for higher status in the caste hierarchy. The founder of this concept, M.N. Srinivas, defines the concept of Sanskritization as follows: "The caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially so in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A low caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism or teetotalism, and by Sanskritising its rituals and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites, and beliefs of the Brahmins and the adoption of the Brahmanic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. This process has been called Sanskritization."¹³

In this way the lower castes followed Sanskritic practices and cultures. They tried to clarify their claims to higher castes in the social order by inventing suitable mythologies. The Sharars or Nadars of Tamil Nadu out-pasted the limit of Untouchability. The Iravas or Ezhavas of Kerala have also blurred, if not completely spoiled, the line of Untouchability. The Nadar organised movements in the late nineteenth century against the civic disabilities they suffered. They entered the political system by first supporting the Justice Party in the

¹² Lal, Shyam. (1999). *The Changing Bhangis of India: A study of Caste Association*. Jaipur: Sublime Publications. Pp. 127.

¹³ Srinivas, M.N. (1952). *Religion and Society among Coorgs of South India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 32.

early 1930s and later the Congress party. They have moved from the lower rungs of the ritual hierarchy to a position of status and power. Similarly, the Ezhavas formed their caste organization in 1903, known as SNDA Yogam (Association for the Maintenance of Dharma founded by Sri Narayana). The Association initiated activities for Sanskritizing norms and customs of the Jravas. They initiated a Satyagraha for temple entry in 1920s, as well as bargained with the government for economic opportunities and political positions, thus, improving their status.

It is clear by now that the Dalit movement in pre-Independence period had achieved a respectable status. Though reformative in nature, the Bhakti movement, the Neo-Vadantic and Sanskritization movements have contributed very meaningfully for the proliferation of political consciousness among Dalits and it can be said that these movements laid down firm foundations for the Dalit Liberation movement whose agenda include recognition of human existence, social mobility, political participation, social change and establishment of an egalitarian society.

The Balmikis regarded the Brahmans and non-Brahmans as superior to them in terms of social status, economic and political power. However, the ritual difference does seem to be very great. For there are restrictions on commensally relations and the upper and lower classes (from Nepali community) do not mingle freely with the Balmiki community in the Darjeeling.

5.4.1: Limited Scope of Sanskritization

Caste Hindus tended to treat the Balmikis with an amount of con-dissension because they are treated lowest of the low. Here, again the differences between the two groups were expressed in terms of style of life. In brief, I want to address that Sanskritization as defined above has very limited scope for the Balmikis as an avenue of social mobility. Imitation implies the existence of social elite what can be initiated though the non caste groups are considered to

be socially higher, economically better off and politically more powerful. Their higher position in these spheres is not accepted as legitimate by the Balmikis. Sanskritization in the sense of copying customs of other castes has very limited scope for the Balmikis as an avenue of social mobility. Shyamlal in his essay “The Bhangis and religious reform movement in Jodhpur in 19th Century: Naval Dharma” has pointed out that sectarian movements have often acted as important agents of Sanskritization. He treated these cases as of the same kind where ‘low’ caste takes over the style of life of a higher caste.

It was found that the Naval Sect had a strong influence on the thinking of some of the leaders and that some of them at least thought that the teaching of Naval sect should be adopted and advocated for the caste improvement. However, here in one sense the case was important in respect of very different form the process through which one group initiated the style of life of another. The influence of Naval sect was very important and included teaching such as:-

1. The Bhangis should give up the bad habits of eating meat, drinking alcohol etc. It is proper to meditate about the naval Prakash and Bhajans and to acquire knowledge.
2. Every Bhangi member should know the Naval’s ideas of religious teachings Maharshi Naval expounded these in his Naval Prakash.¹⁴

The Head Mahant of Naval sect urged the leaders and the caste fellows to follow the teaching of Naval Swami and the leaders also urged to follow up the suggestion very seriously. Though within the caste the majority of the people felt respectful towards those who followed the teachings, yet the majority of the people did not seem anxious to emulate them. Whatever the degree of influence of the Naval sect, it is not difficult here to accept the argument that the sect was regarded as a caste by the outsiders. Sanskritization according to Srinivas, implies that the imitating and the imitated group are different. Here one can find that the

¹⁴ Ibid.

leaders who were arguing for taking over the teachings were themselves members of the Naval sect. Thus, it was not that one group was taking over another groups' customs, but that the some members of the caste who were the other caste member to follow their own model.¹⁵

5.4.2. Mobility through Education

Education is regarded as an important avenue of mobility. Besides being an important avenue of economic mobility, education by itself was considered to be status conferring device. The prestige attached to education was not only because of economic opportunities. However, differences between the style of life of educated and uneducated are very apparent. The educated Balmiki, though small in numbers, generally speak a refined Hindi, Nepali and English even Bengali which is very different from that of the migrated Marwari and Nepalese. Those employed in urban sectors dress in western clothes which are looked upon with considerable respect in comparison with the Balmikis residing in their native places at Rajasthan, Haryana etc. It has been find out that educated Balmikis are more hygiene conscious and culturally refined than the rest of the members of the caste. As such education is a symbol of higher status, but the attitude of the illiterate towards the educated is not one of complete admiration. They feel a certain amount of alienation from educated and this has led to significant rift within the caste.

The Balmikis of Darjeeling doesn't have much scope in the local economy and are forced to seek opportunities outside in wider economic system especially in unorganised sectors. Hence, practically every leader, educated or illiterate said that the only way to improve economically was to effectively employ education as an avenue of mobility and to enter the salaried and professional classes in large numbers. The trend, however seems recent though

¹⁵ Ibid.

there have been some educated, occupationally mobile individuals among the Balmikis, whereas, the bulk of them are illiterate and are still carrying on the traditional occupations. It is not worthy to mention neither the State government nor the Central Government shown any interest in collecting data of the Balmikis. Even the educational institutions and the universities did not bother to take initiative for the collection of data of a marginalised small community which is becoming marginalised more and more. This hunted an individual researcher who himself belongs to this community. Thus, he carried out research all by himself, roaming about here and there for nearly four years though out the hill areas of Darjeeling. The data furnished by the researcher is not a concocted story; it's an outcome of the tireless journey of a hungry research worker.

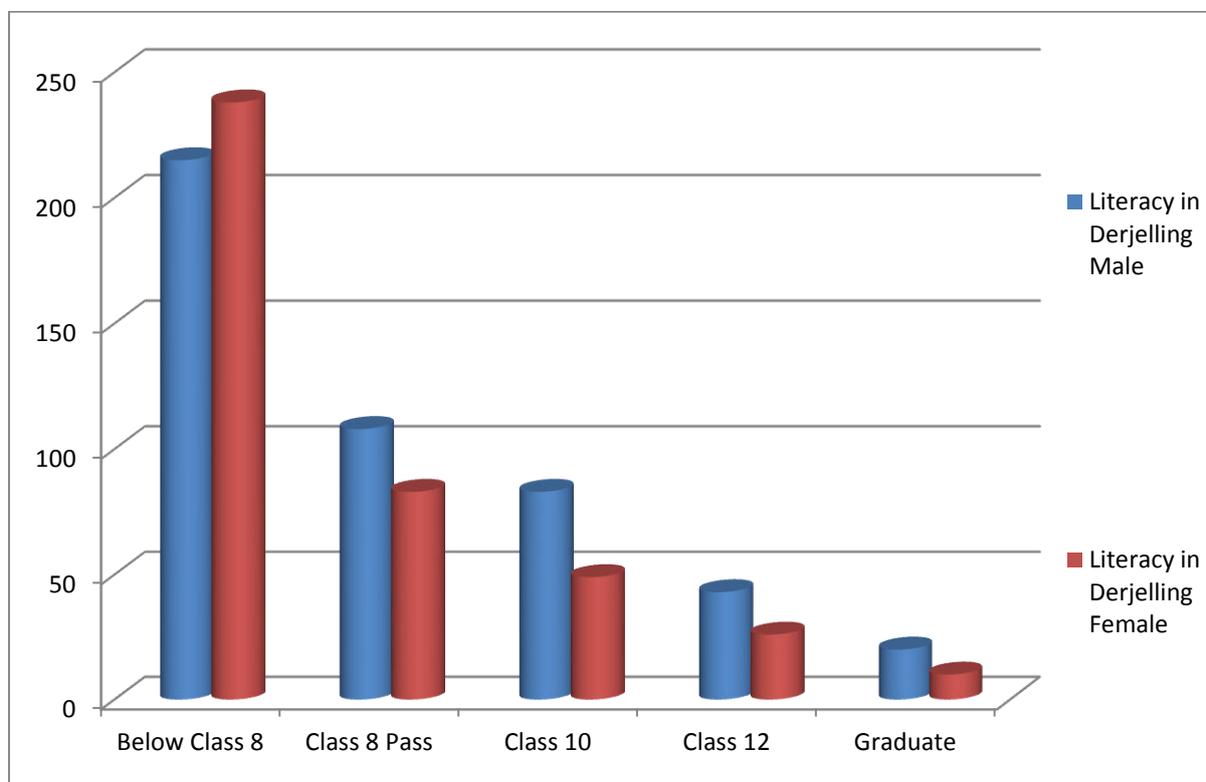
Table: 5

Balmiki Literacy in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong

Education Standards	Male	Female
Below Class 8	315	338
Class 8 Pass	208	103
Class 10	103	69
Class 12	73	62
Graduate	40	20
Masters	10	08
Ph.D	02 pursuing	Nil

Source: Field Data

Figure: 4 Literacy



The literacy rate among the Balmikis is much alarming. Total population in the three hills sub-divisions of Darjeeling is 4,914 of which 3,563 people never attended any school. In the truest sense of the term the huge majority of the Balmikis were illiterate¹⁶. Percentage wise 72.5% of the Balmiki population in hills is illiterate. Approximately 13.49% could not cross the bench mark of Class 8. Only 3.5% people passed the Madhyamik examination. 2.74% could not enter the college education. Only 1.2% of the population graduated themselves but could attend the Post-graduation classes. Only 0.36% could earn their masters from universities.

This has been the main reason why the leaders of this community have become so conscious of the opportunities of the wider economic system is that those of them who moved out into

¹⁶ Here by illiterate we mean those who cannot sign their names.

urban middle class occupations have realised that scavenging is the main reason of their low position. Hence, it is important and essential to be conscious to improve the socio-economic position by developing the ability to take up new jobs as technicians, engineers, professors, lawyers and administrators. This is the need of the time in this competitive world. Moreover, this is because more scholarships and seats are reserved for the Harijans in schools, colleges, and government jobs. If this community fail to improve their position, time is coming when such facilities and opportunities will cease to exist.

Education is considered to be the key to mobility in this field. It is pointed out in this context that Balmiki should get their children educated in larger numbers. Most of the respondents expressed that they are the poorest lot and most backward in economic and educational field and therefore lower in social hierarchy than the other scheduled castes, in getting jobs in the professions and the services they have to face competition from the other scheduled castes rather than caste Hindus. So the sentiment of antagonism was expressed against the advanced scheduled caste communities.

The Balmikis tend to identify the Nepali Scheduled Caste, such as Kami, Damai advanced caste in the hills. The Balmiki as Safai Karamcharis, speak of themselves along with other caste as the poorest among the poor, and most backward people in Hills population.

5.4.3: Move towards Political Power

The political representatives or the leaders from Balmiki community are very anxious to use the political power as an avenue of mobility. The community has its affiliations with Congress party in the early 1980s during the Indira Gandhi regime. During my field visit one of the respondents¹⁷ showed me photographs of his father with Indira Gandhi sharing the

¹⁷ Name not revealed on the request of respondent.

same days in a public meeting in Darjeeling. Though, less in numbers the Balmikis were interested in state and national politics.

Contemporary political structure can serve an important avenue of mobility. Though among the Balmikis we can find awareness of this, they argue that they are a numerical minority caste in the Darjeeling region. It is rare to find a whole caste group identifying itself with one particular party consistently. Yet, majority of the Balmikis show their allegiance to the main stream political parties in Darjeeling. By the term main stream political party we off course to like to refer both national levels, state level, as well as regional or local level political party. Which have their support base throughout the hill areas of Darjeeling? As a community Balmikis usually do not like go against the current. Thus, with the change over in the political scenario of Darjeeling, they also used to change their political affiliations. The Balmikis believed in short term gains, they never thought about far reaching future profits. As a caste community they are the worst suffers. Hence, fear psychosis often chased the Balmikis to take a political refuge, thus they often choose to go under the safest umbrella at hand. Taking into considerations about their hopes and aspirations, dreams and desires, they remained with the majority Nepali community in political spheres. Knowing fully well about the exploitation both in the socio-economic and political sphere they could hardly find any alternative but to stay at Darjeeling, because leaving Darjeeling for them could be a suicidal as a communities Nepalese were very brave expansionist and allegiant to the Indian State. But rivalry between the right and the left, the national and the regional, made some Nepalese hostile towards the 'others'. The Balmikis no doubt belongs to the 'others'. In spite of their best wishes and support towards the causes of the Nepalese they started losing their ground in Darjeeling Hills.

5.5: Gorkhaland Movement and the Balmikis

Right from the early 20th century encouraged the emergence of a distinct identity among the people of the hills. Nepali language and culture dictated the overarching features of the population which originally came from Nepal, but was composed of many different groups. However, the demand for a separate entity, distinct from Bengali speaking counterpart was raised mainly in 1917, when Hillmen's Association submitted a memorandum to the Secretary of Bengal, demanding a separate administrative unit. In subsequent years, the Association continued its demand and presented memoranda to the British Government in 1930 and 1941. A petition was placed by them to Sir John Anderson, the than Governor of Bengal, in 1934, for special safeguard for hill people and preferential treatment. The alternative was total segregation of the district, and creation of an autonomous administrative unit.

The course of segregation took a new turn with the formation of All India Gorkha League on May 1943. For the first time a political organisation, exclusively for the hills populace under the banner of 'Gorkha' was formed. The demand for a separate administrative unit grew stronger after independence in 1947. Autonomy was demanded in a public meeting in Darjeeling in August, 1947. The District Committee of the Communist Party of India (CPI) in memoranda to the States Constituent Assembly requested the constitution of 'Gorkhastan' comprising Nepali speaking areas. In 1952, Gorkha League in a memorandum to the then Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru offered two alternative proposals: Inclusion of Darjeeling and Doars in Assam, or creation of a separate province comprising Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri and the States of Sikkim and Coochbehar. 1950s and 1960s was characterized by the demand of the recognition of Nepali language as an official language under Eight Schedule of the Indian Constitution as well as for the autonomy status of Darjeeling. In 1961, West Bengal Government passed an Act, accepting Nepali as an official language in the three

hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling, that is, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong. Conversely, Nepali language did not get recognition under the Eight Schedule of the constitution. Such attitude of the Indian government towards Nepali language was followed by the formation of All India Nepali Bhasa Samiti in 1972. The same year is followed by the demand of an ‘Autonomous State’ after the creation of new states of Assam.

The Gorkhaland movement received impetus when the Pranta Parishad raised the demand for a separate state. In September 1980, in a memorandum to the Prime Minister, the Pranta Parishad first demanded a separate state and claimed the recognition of Nepali language under the Eight Schedule of the constitution. However, the demand was more systematically articulated by the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), under the leadership of Subash Ghisingh after 1985. The struggle reached its peak in 1986-88. The mass movement finally yielded the constitution of ‘Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council’ (DGHC) in 1988, which intended to ensure genuine territorial autonomy by giving the community of three hills sub-division of Darjeeling the chance to control its social, economic, cultural and educational development. However, it was alleged that DGHC under the leadership of GNLF, became more and more inefficient and corrupt. As a result it is taken as the failure of DGHC to bring about what the people of Darjeeling hills wanted. The movement yet, continued under GNLF demanding a separate state of ‘Gorkhaland’. Meanwhile, the demand of separate statehood was dropped by the GNLF leadership and submitted a proposal for recognition of Darjeeling region as Sixth Schedule area. Such attitude of the GNLF leadership was met with large scale protest by the people of Darjeeling. As a result the fraction within the party leadership occurred, which led the seeds for future majority party Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM) in 2007 under the leadership of Bimal Gurung.

Bimal Gurung rejected the proposal of Sixth Schedule forwarded by the GNLF leadership. The movement since then have been able to draw the support of not only the Nepali speaking

people of Darjeeling district but is been able to ally with non Nepali speaking population of the region as well as the Adivasi of eastern part of the district and the people of Dooars. The movement for separate state of Gorkhaland is still a hot topic in the state of West Bengal though it has lost its momentum with the signing of Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA) between GJMM leadership on the one side and Centre and State Government on the other and after the GTA election in Darjeeling hills area, the successive demands of the Gorkhaland movement focused chiefly on the following issues:

- 1. Racial and cultural differences between Bengalis and Gorkhali as Justification for Separate Administrative Unit or State*
- 2. The fear of losing linguistic and cultural identity of Gorkhas as a result of domination of advanced Bengalis.*
- 3. Historical differences between Bengal and Darjeeling.*
- 4. Economic Development of the region*
- 5. Exploitation and marginalization of Gorkhas by the majority Bengalis.*

After looking into the history of the demands of the people of Darjeeling hills and the States reaction to the movement, so far as initial phase of the movement is concerned, it can be said that the voices of the people of Darjeeling hills were completely submerged, neither the demand of the recognition of Nepali language nor the claim of autonomy was considered by the government. The issue of Darjeeling hills was simply over passed during state reorganization. The Gorkhaland movement under GNLF, what we call a second phase of the movement, here to some extent the voices were being heard in the form of DGHC. For some Gorkhaland movement observed it is considered as a victory of the movement or a step towards a goal of separate statehood. On the one hand, it can be seen on the part of the State Government as an experiment before forming a separate state to observe whether the people of Darjeeling hills are really in a position to run the State or not. On the contrary, it can also

be seen as strategy of the governments to destabilise the mass movement by giving the people alternative to their demand of separate state, and to note the government was successful in implementing their policies into action.

Considering the third phase of the movement what the GJMM leadership calls ‘Antim Ladai’ (Nepali word meaning ‘final battle’), the party leadership has been able to draw the attention of the government as a result of the mass support of Darjeeling hills as well as from the adjoining areas of Terai and Doars. Withstanding the rising strains and tensions arising out of the movement launched by GJMM the Centre and the State Government reacted and responded with an idea of formation of the constitution of Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA), in 2011. Moreover, the original voice for the demand of separate state is yet to get heard and achieved.

In the mid 80s of the previous century, the Gorkhaland movement came into existence, which brought about a total chaos in the peace loving people of Darjeeling irrespective of caste, creed, religion and sex etc. Though the Nepalese had the strangle hold in the movement yet, the marginalized smaller communities including the Balmikis came forward with a strong support to the Gorkhaland movement which worked as a two way traffic. Although the Balmikis extended their support to the movement at the outset but they started losing their ground because of the fact that the police force tried to disassociate the Balmikis from the movement. The police often tapped their backs used to bring them as informers, a kind of mutual hatred developed between the agitating Nepalese and the others like Gorkhey Marwaris, Gorkhey Balmikis etc. Once who were the ‘Dajus’ (loving elder brothers) at once became ‘Bhaiya’ (elder brother from alien state or community). The so called tapping and support of the police to the Balmikis created hatred in the mind set of the agitators in the one hand and police atrocities on the Balmikis overtly or covertly injected fear psychosis on them. Thus, they slowly became the men of nowhere. They were isolated both from the

Nepalese and the police. Neither they could leave Darjeeling nor could they live in Darjeeling. Their overall conditions became standstill in Hill politics.

During this whole period of First Wave of Gorkhaland movement the role of the Balmikis slowly but steadily became insignificant. This is because of the fact some of the Balmikis in order to survive from being sandwiched by the police and the Nepalese, thought better to re-migrate to their native places. Some were killed in the encounters, some lost their jobs, many drops out took place from the schools and colleges; some lost their properties due to arson, robbery and theft. Thus, the Balmikis, a marginalised community became even more marginalised in terms of population and property in the District of Darjeeling.

A mentioned must be made here that the Balmikis started to suffer from identity crises. As they were treated in Darjeeling as outsiders, although, they were the permanent residents in Darjeeling for more than four generations. On the contrary those who re-migrated to their native places also faced the same challenges. As they were treated as the outsiders or guests who came for a while would enjoy some time and would return back to Darjeeling after peace being re-established there. The masses of Darjeeling now started to think that the people from outside have no affinity towards the mother soil and people of Darjeeling. They have only come here to earn money and send to their native places. They have no contribution to Darjeeling as they hardly invest money there, other than to purchase their livelihoods. Neither the native communities of the Balmikis nor the Nepalese majority in Darjeeling could have sympathy and time to understand the position of Balmikis, that, they were not business magnets neither they were placed in lucrative high or dignify governments jobs. The Balmikis however, were living in peace in Darjeeling because nobody treated them as untouchables in Darjeeling. As soon as they tried to re-settle themselves in their native places they had to face the crude caste hatred with which they were not accustomed to.

It is interesting to note that the identity crisis was not an issue only for the Balmikis, even the majority of the Darjeeling people have been suffering from identity crisis from a purely different point of vision. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that, the agitating Nepalese in order to establish their own identity to a new birth. First, they tried to segregate themselves from the Nepalese of Nepal in the one hand and treated as first class citizens in India rather than as foreigners. They tried to show that their language, tradition, culture, dress, food habit etc. are different from the Nepalese of Nepal. Moreover, from the geopolitical perspective also they should be treated separately. They are very much Indian, they speak in the same tone as the most of Indian people speak. They speak in the same voice as Indians as a nation should speak. They are patriots in every respect that they despite being deprive of facilities as an Indian citizen must enjoy. Yet, they never opt for any secessionist movement; neither had they tried to create a separate state fully free from the Indian Federation. Rather, they are interested to stay within the political framework of Indian Federation. They are ready to abide by the law of the land in toto led down in the Constitution of India. Their only aim was to receive the status of Indian citizen as enjoy the same respect the other main land Indians do enjoy. Of course, sometimes this movement crossed the limit of constitutionalism or legal basis but that too, to a very limited extent. The reason why the Balmikis came up with the strong support to this movement at the initial stage. The Indian Nepalese refrained from calling themselves as Nepali. Rather, they used to call themselves as Gorkhali. They tried to preach that Gorkhali Language, Gorkhali Tradition, Gorkhali culture, are totally not similar from the Nepalese of Nepali. Thus, they tried to earn a new identity of their own to show they are not enemy, aliened or foreigner, or friendly neighbourhood. But the domicile of a part of India is deprived of natural facilities of the region. Moreover, this Gorkhali people are overburdened by the influx of refugees coming from Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Bangladesh and many states of India as well. Identity crisis of the two communities of the Gorkhali and the

Balmikis somehow locked them together but later developed a hot and cold relationship between them.

Political parties, to be more precise the ruling parties did not miss much to utilise these crisis to meet their long cherished desires to win the election which takes place periodically in a democracy. But democracy should be delimited within election, party, majoritarianism etc. To have flavour of democracy one must aim at to an all round development of each and every community at the grassroots. As the Britishers used, Tibet, Nepal, as buffers, the New Delhi Government, showed hardly any difference in this attitude as well. The State Government of West Bengal that is, the Left Front Government on the other hand often alleged about the state motherly attitude of the Centre in regard to West Bengal. But they forget about the every nook and corner of West Bengal, far from Kolkata, the Gangetic Plain especially the Jungle Mahal of Chhota Nagpur Plateau or for that matter the bordering area of Sundarban or the Hilly area of Darjeeling, about the steps they themselves take.

The First Wave of Gorkhaland movement was concluded with an aspiration of fulfilling the demands of having a separate identity of Darjeeling with the State of West Bengal in India. Other communities who supported this movement also had the same vision that in near future the short term gains will be fulfilled. The formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) under the leadership of Mr. Subhash Ghising, the uncrowned king of Darjeeling Hills created a new zeal in the mind frame of the masses of the hills. From the Government point of view it was an ointment to the wound to suppress. The establishment of DGHC couldn't be a permanent solution of the Gorkhaland movement. It was just a temporary arrangement for both the State Government and the Gorkhas. Within a short span of time rebellion broke out in Darjeeling for further demands. They were not satisfied with the semi-autonomous status of the Darjeeling Hill Council. The inability of Mr. Subhash Ghising, in controlling the rebel forces with the GNLF, the mistrust and the misconduct on the part of

second grade leaders of the GNLF, the mutual misbehave amongst different communities residing in Darjeeling, the antagonism between the centre and the state in relation to Darjeeling the indulgence from some national parties in the one hand and the violent opposition from the ruling parties within the state added fuel to the fire. Thus, for darjeeing people as a whole this was the salt to injuries, when Mr. Bimal Gurung, once the right hand of their unchallenged leader Mr. Subhash Ghishing, to accomplish his personal gains, bluntly blamed Mr. Ghishing of misusing the power along with monetary corruption, paved the way for the second phase of movement.

In 2006, March just seven months before the birth of GJMM, an incident took place, in Darjeeling Municipality, which naked the true face of GNLF. There was a long standing demand of the Casual workers mostly scavengers working in the Darjeeling Municipality, to make them permanent. The State Government issued an order in this respect, for making them permanent. But due to the lack of education and not been organised three high dignitaries of the GNLF including Mr. Pranay Rai (MLA), Mr. Madan Munshi (Badababu/Supervisor) and Aamir Munshi (Badababu/Supervisor), took bribes of huge amount from the aspirants who names have been already been published in the government notification for making them permanent.¹⁸ One journalist Deep Bantawa, has published a full paper on this issue which has been cited here.

Table: 6

Bribe paid by Safai Karamcharis

Sl.No.	Name of Representative	Bribes Paid (Amount)
1.	Shri Ashok Bhadur Tamang	Rs. 10,000.00

¹⁸ Bantawa. Deep. Bharastachar Ko Samaj: Darjeeling Municipality. (Translated). In *Gorkha Patrika*. Editor: Shri L.M. Pradhan. Publisher: Shri N.C. Khaling. Year 43, Vol. 1. March 2007. Pp. 10-11.

2.	Shri Arun Pardhan	Rs. 15,000.00
3.	Smt. Sashi Harijan	Rs. 10,000.00
4.	Smt. Sushila Harijan	Rs. 10,000.00
5.	Smt. Ramawati	Rs. 10,000.00
6.	Shri Puran Balmiki	Rs. 15,000.00
7.	Shri Janak Lama	Rs. 10,000.00
8.	Smt. Udmit Lepcha	Rs. 15,000.00
9.	Shri Suresh Harijan	Rs. 15,000.00
10.	Shri shyam Tamang	Rs. 10,000.00
11.	Smt. Radhika Chettri	Rs. 30,000.00
12.	Shri Bimal Basnet	Rs. 15,000.00
13.	Shri Ajay Tamang	Rs. 15,000.00
14.	Smt. Khamoshi	Rs. 10,000.00
15.	Shri RajKumar Thakur	Rs. 10,000.00
16.	Shri Anil Chettri	Rs. 20,000.00
17.	Smt. Sumitra Balmiki	Rs. 10,000.00
18.	Smt. Narayani	Rs. 10,000.00
19.	Shri Milan Sharki	Rs. 20,000.00
20.	Smt. Chameli Harijan	Rs. 10,000.00
21.	Shri Passang Tamang	Rs. 15,000.00

Source: Gorkha Patrika.

This paper has opened the curtain that how the poorest of the poor including the Balmikis became the victims of corruption. The government officials of such higher position could exploit people like anything.

A new phase of the Gorkha movement ushered in since 2007. Some decadents of GNLF came up with a new organisation of the Gorkhas in the form of GJMM, under the leadership of Bimal Gurung. The main purpose behind this movement was to establish a separate state within the Indian Federal structure. They were not at all satisfied with functioning of the Darjeeling Hill Council. With the changes in the political scenario in West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee assumed power defeating the CPI (M) Left Front Government after three and a half decades of Communist Rule. Showing more liberal approach towards the Gorkha problem in Darjeeling Mamata's endeavour was to mitigate the displeasure and discomfort of the Hill communities. This resulted in the formation of GTA (Gorkhaland Territorial Administration). GTA was endowed with more political and economic power in compared to DGHC. The identity crises, however, of different communities in Darjeeling took a new turn. Unlike the GNLF, Bimal Gurung and men initiated the movement keeping all communities and sub-communities of Darjeeling in view to grab the power from the Bengalis.

Thus, the immediate enemy for Bimal Gurung and his company is seen to be the Government of West Bengal. But Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of West Bengal had a long history of struggle behind her to uproot the Left Government came in between them, with newer solutions. The formation of GTA is one such step. Moreover, she formed Development Boards of different Hill communities one after another, in order to weaken the strength of the GJMM. At the advent of such Boards, the identity crises of different communities came under sharp challenge. Balmikis as a community is not free from such crises. With the Clarian call of Mr. Gurung all out struggle against the Bengal Government every community leaving in Darjeeling hills got together and talked in same tone. The Balmikis were an exception in this perspective. But as soon as different hill communities got some sort of identity of their own the Balmikis remained in the dark. As none talked about them, there was hardly any leadership of their own to convince Mamata for creating such a Development

Board for them. Both Gurung and Mamata had their agenda in Darjeeling most of which was hidden behind the bamboo curtain. Gurung's aim was to dislodge the GNLFF and grab the predominance over Darjeeling. On the other hand Mamata to disperse the unity and integrity of the Hill people under the aegis of the hegemonic rule of the GTA and its leader Bimal Gurung. A special mention must be made here that the identity crisis of the Balmikis fail further deep in to gorge behind because of the fact that they became 'Gorkhey Balmikis' to the Gurung and company in one hand and insignificant group of people to Mamata and her men on the other. CPI (M) was losing its strength throughout Bengal and in Darjeeling too, it at once became a meagre force. Similarly, at the beginning of the movement the whole gamut of the Gorkhalis supported Bimal Gurung and his men which resulted in the rapid decaying of the strength of the GNLFF. Mamata's Trinmool Congress took this opportunity of political doldrums went from strength to strength. On the contrary the GJMM backing the wrong horse by supporting BJP could make them isolated from the Communists and the other liberal forces. BJP as the most viable political actor entered into the scene having picked up one Lok Sabha seat for two successive terms but without any real damage to the ruling party of Bengal. Bimal Gurung likewise, could gain hardly anything but to give away one parliamentary seat to the BJP. Under such circumstances, the fate of the Balmikis suffered a lot as their identity has lost the sight of all political actors including the BJP, Trinmool Congress and GJMM.

During the second phase of the Gorkha movement a series of upheavals took place under the umbrella of GJMM. The first of this kind was the '*Bhash Bhusha Andolan*' (Dress code Movement), the main objective behind this movement was to keep the traditional dresses of each and every community intact. Thus, through this cultural movement a multicultural atmosphere was created in the Hills, which could combine different communities of Darjeeling together with separate cultural identities.

'Bhash Bhusha Andolan' had its own limitations as the demand for the traditional clothes of each community raised so high that the supply was not adequate, sometimes it got down even to zero and the price hike took a heave all round. Balmikis in particular faced much more trouble in importing such dresses from Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Moreover, smaller sects of different communities felt shy to come out with the uncomfortable dresses which they did not wear for long. Thus, this movement lost its credibility within a short period of time.

Another fairly important movement during this phase was a hunger strike/Bhook Hartal. People from all works of life took active part in this movement at the beginning. The Balmikis extended their heartfelt support to it with the staunch belief for upholding their causes and consequences. But this sort of movement could not last long for its own limitations. Many stakeholders of this movement immediately failed ill. They had to rush to the hospitals, without proper medication they has to return back home. As the movement being initiated at random in a sporadic basis, it failed to provide any impetus to the higher cause of the establishment of the separate statehood.

The GJMM gave a call for a unique movement entitled *'Ghar Bhitrai Andolan'* or *'stay within house'*. Due to this movement people at large have to confine themselves with the boundaries of four walls. Offices were not attended by the employees, schools and colleges remained empty, teagardens were closed, factories were shut down, the shopkeepers could not open their shutters, streets and markets remained manless, drains and streets were covered by garbage, bad smell rented the air of Darjeeling as a whole, travellers and tourists found no cause to visit. In a word, the normal life of the people of Hills, had been shattered, the overall environment for human residence was going from worse to worse. The entire situation of the Balmikis under these circumstances went further deteriorated. The salaries of the casual workers and scavengers were cut-off; they had no money to earn their livelihoods. Very few

of the Balmikis were engaged in the government jobs and attended the day to day office were however, paid off but due to the closing of banks and ATM counters even ample money was not available.

Besides these movements apart the rallies and processions, picketing, setting of fire etc. became a daily routine for the agitators. The peace wanting people of Darjeeling now became ready to give up these movements forever, as they failed to receive any satisfactory outcome from these struggles.

Changing of political parties in power, transformation of leadership gave birth to the suspicion to the people of Darjeeling. They at once started to show back towards these movements. They found no fruit to pluck from these movements. The marginalised Balmikis as a consequence, became more and more marginalised in due course.

However, the long pending problems of the Gorkhas or Gorkhaland unresolved till date. As a result of which the future of the Balmikis are also at stake. Although the pace of the Balmiki consciousness is slow but here, it can be observed that there has been a silent revolution,¹⁹ in the Darjeeling hills by this dalit community which has been continuously trying to uplift themselves in one or the other ways.

¹⁹ Letter to the Prime Minister of India. *Subject: Appeal for Justice for the Poor Harijans of Darjeeling*. Ref. No. 23 (86-87) B.H.S. Dated: 07.02.1987.

Summary and Concluding Observations

The present study entitled “BALMIKI COMMUNITY IN DARJEELING HILLS: A STUDY OF POLITICS OF MIGRATION, DEPRIVATIONS AND EMPOWERMENT” has discussed the process and problems of migration of one of the marginalized communities in the hills of Darjeeling. The study also has attempted to evaluate a large account of deprivations of the community in India in general, and in the hills of Darjeeling in particular. The study further tried to evaluate the contradictions between the constitutional provisions safeguarding the deprived communities, on the one hand, and the ground reality of their marginalization and deprivations, on the other. The study has designed some research questions to guide us along our present study.

The present work has been designed in six chapters. The summary consists of three sections. The first section is an overview of the different chapters of the present work. The second section highlights on the major findings of the present study. And the third section of the summary tries to point out the requirements of and space for future research in the area.

Section I

. The **First chapter** entitled ‘Introduction’ contains the statement of the problem of study, a brief review of literature, objectives of study spelt out by the research questions, developed the framework for our study, explained our research methodology, along with the significance of the study. This section also points out the limitations of the present study, and at the end, it tries to highlight on the organization of the entire thesis.

The **Second chapter** reviews the historical traces of the *Balmikis* Migration to Darjeeling Hills. This chapter has been designed in a manner to provide a picture of the life of the

Balmikis in the Darjeeling Hills, both as it was in the past and is in present. This chapter also tries to conceptualize Migration by way of analyzing different theoretical underpinnings, and attempts to interrogate the process and problems of migration in the context of India and West Bengal in general, and the hills of Darjeeling in particular.

The **Third chapter** makes a brief survey of the constitutional provisions geared towards affirmative action and locates the position of the *Balmiki* within the same and attempts to unearth them within the broad canvass of Indian politics. There are enumerable constitutional provisions regarding the socio-economic and political upliftment of the SCs and STs and OBCs, to cope up with the main stream populace. The upper castes of Indian society in general are not prepared to accept the so called lower castes people to move up horizontally. On the other hand, due to lack of proper education and financial distress most people belonging to lower castes scare to mix up with the so called upper caste people. Moreover, the upper caste people occupy the fundamental position in the government jobs especially IPS, IAS, and IFS, and legislators who have the lion share in the law making process. Due to the red tape naught any constitutional provisions pertaining to SCs and STs is not being activated in proper time. Dilly-dally with the constitutional provisions has become a part and partial for the administration, legislature and judiciary.

Chapter Four begins by throwing some light into the socio-economic and political processes and *Balmikis* marginalization in Darjeeling. The community aspirations and experiences of marginalization of the *Balmikis* in Darjeeling hills. The dreams and desires, the hopes and aspirations of the *Balmikis* residing in the hills of Darjeeling have not been addressed properly. They have been dealt with ham-handedly as they were not the local people; they were migrated from the north-west provinces of India during the British regime.

Chapter Five have attempted to into the possibility of charting a *Balmiki* consciousness. The study have explored the complex process of identity formation for the Balmikis, sometimes as a caste based groups, sometimes as an occupation-based group mainly through ethnographic study of the community, through oral history as well as through primary sources (historical) and contemporary sources (literature on Gorkhaland movement).

Section II

The present study started with exploring the concept and context of migration and deprivation of one of the most marginalized communities in India, as well as in the hills of Darjeeling in West Bengal. In the process the study raised certain issues with regard to the nature, pattern and process of Migrations of the *Balmiki* community to Darjeeling and surrounding areas, and the responses of the community to migration. The objective of the present study was also to perceive the community's social, economic and political position vis a vis, the dominant Nepali or Gorkha community of the area under study. The present study reveals the following major findings accordingly:

It has been observed that history has remained utterly silent about the contributions made by the Balmikis even during India's struggle for freedom. For instance during the sepoy mutiny Mangal Panday was penalized and hanged to death for his revolt against the Britishers, his contribution has been eulogized in history. But a person from the Balmiki community named '*Matadin Balmiki*' who shared the same fate as Mangal Panday, however, does not have any account of his contribution in the history.¹ Moreover, even the contributions of Dr.B.R.

¹ Statue of Matadin Balmiki at Barrackpore and the title stone nameplate states that “ *Matadin Balmiki showed the Indian Soldiers that the factory where the tallow of the animals was being brought in that enraged the already aggrieved soldiers, and led Mangal Pande to fire the first shot and kill the British army officer. Subsequently both Mangal Pande, and Matadin Balmiki were tried in the court martial and sentenced to be hanged to death. It was Matadin Balmiki who was hanged first, and after him Mangal Pande was hanged.*”

Ambedkar in the process of nation-building, and more importantly his contribution for giving us the Constitution of India, has always remained underemphasized.

The fundamental maxim of this study was to bring the '*dissenting voices*' in the context of Darjeeling. The Balmikis as an immigrant community that have been experiencing the caste based inequality with the '*unequal*' Nepalis Indian population.² Under such circumstances, the Balmikis have been treated differently at different stages of hill life. There is no doubt that the Balmiki migration to the hills is parallel to the Nepalis and other communities, during the British regime, as a forced labour. However, the Balmiki migration from the Northern and Central Indian states was not smooth. It reflects the nature and scope of their migration in terms of '*push*' and '*pull*' elements in an alien territory. In the process of their migration, due to the changing political scenario the host communities developed the feeling of hatred towards this dalit community. Even being the permanent settlers in the hills, they have been treated as 'outsiders' by the so called cosmic local communities. In the process the Balmikis lost the sense of belongingness in an alien land and thus the practice of 'back home' migration eventually developed. Rather the problem of this dalit community, did not end here, they were again treated as '*others*' or '*Pradeshi*' at their native places.

The Balmikis traditions, societal organizations, socio-economic proceedings have been different from the local majority community. Their functioning could not match with the footsteps of the Nepali community, because of which they have been outlined from the decision making procedures. However, the Balmiki Harijan Sangh has been able to consolidate the hopes and aspirations of the community in the hills of Darjeeling. Being the apex functioning body of the community it has been trying its level best to fulfill socio-economic desires, up to a certain limit. Political demands still need to be address by the hill

² Here '*unequal*' means Nepalese Indian population who have been treated as 'outsiders', as they have migrated to Indian states during the British encounters. They have been treated as Second Class Citizens by the mainstream Indian populace.

politics. The irony is that, they have remained inferior and considered backward community in the hills, because of which their confidence level have been further gone down in the due course. People either consider them subordinate because of their occupation or they are apathetic towards them. In the true sense of the term the community has been socially, economically and politically deprived. All these facts remained intact in their life the reason why they consider themselves as the prey to the suppressing society. The harassment and disregard by the higher authorities and local Nepali communities has filled the Balmiki with such coldness that the highly educated members of the community kept themselves behind the curtain. Most inferior of the inferiors Nepali communities, this Balmiki community is stuck in the bog of financial crises. Government has introduced so many schemes for improvement of the lower castes, but no one has ever acknowledged the necessity for schemes for the upliftment of people who keeps the society clean.

From the underpinning of the present study, it is fairly incontestable that Darjeeling is one of the most stratified societies in present day context on the bases of 'caste' and 'others.' The Balmikis has become a sandwich between the notion of caste and others, which have pushed them to the peripheries in the day to day politics of the hills. The Caste has been an incalculably important and mainly permanent marker of community stratification and it becomes more obvious from the magnitude of the caste-factor in the political landscape of Darjeeling. They were denied from providing substantive post in the Darjeeling municipality, even after working for 10-12 years of tenure, the vacant posts of Safai Karamcharis were allocated to the middle class, upper caste Nepali population due to job competition who further suppress the Balmikis on the basis of caste but not on the occupation. A part of these

the Balmikis were also denied from the benefits which they were supposed to get after their super annuation of services.³

The deprivations had come in different ways at different phases of Darjeeling politics. The single party domination and lack of strong opposition, on the issues of marginalised or dalit, in hill politics have sub-lined the upliftment of caste groups especially in case the Balmikis, because of which the segregated territory could not benefit much from this deprived section of society. The promises made by the centre and the state in the autonomous council (DGHC) could not accommodate this community. There has been reservation of seats for the representation of SCs and STs in all the elected bodies viz., Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha, Nagarpalikas, Panchayats etc. but unfortunately not a single seat had been reserved for the SCs in neither the erstwhile administrative arrangement, the Darjeeling Gorkha Autonomous Hill Council, nor the present Gorkhaland Territorial Administration, by election. As per the norms prescribed for the Government of India in the Constitution 3 (Three) seats for the Scheduled Castes and 4 (four) seats for the Scheduled Tribes was supposed to be reserved in the DGHC. The entire SCs and STs are dismayed by the denial of the Constitutional rights by the Government of West Bengal, who were responsible for making the provision in the DGHC Act by an Act of Legislative Assembly or ordinance.⁴ The relation between caste distinctiveness and politics has been dynamically exploited by the political parties and the local hill populace, leading to the Balmikis deprivations, not only politically but also socially, and economically.

Further, more the study has been focusing mainly on the *Gorkhey Balmikis* to see social mobility mainly through access to education and a shift away from 'traditional' occupation.

³ Letter to, The Chairman, Darjeeling Municipality, from Balmiki Harijan Sangh. Ref. No. 3 (98-99) B.H.S. Dated: 18.04.1998.

⁴ Letter to the President, Balmiki Harijan Samaj, from, Darjeeling Dooars Scheduled Castes and Tribes Welfare Association, Central Committee, Darjeeling - 734101, West Bengal. Ref. No. DDCTWA/DJ/3. Dated: 23.03.2003.

The practice of reservation for this Scheduled Caste group, is a colonial legacy, has been officially integrated as an element of our national program after independence. The positive discrimination or affirmative actions have been the major way in which the State had tried to deal with the question of welfare of this socially and economically marginalised community. Over the years, the legitimacy of this policy have increasingly been questioned by the Darjeeling populace on the ground that ‘others’ are being benefited as they are the outsiders, they should avail these empowerment provisions at their native place. The middle classes of the hills overwhelmingly predominated, have most prominently adopted this anti-reservation position on the grounds that the policy is in-egalitarian and anti-meritorious and therefore unfair. On the other hand, reservation policies in empowering this Balmiki community through education and service safeguards (reservation) have played an important role in giving this deprived community some access to scarce resources which have for long been cornered by the hills people.

Although the endeavor is not to reduce this doubtful outlook about various reserved group candidates, assured gear need to be borne in mind before we believe such skepticism. In understanding that social and cultural resources are immensely suspiciously accumulated with the advantaged upper castes in India, Darjeeling cannot be an exception. This has accumulated an essential purpose of caste among other factors. Coupled, with this encouragement of ‘merit’ which once more seems to somehow ‘inhere’ in upper caste Nepalis. Hence, not only are reserved Balmikis category seen as ‘inherently lacking in merit’ but those who do not fall inside this understanding are treated as exceptions which in turn reinforces the caste/dominant common sense we just referred to.

Auxiliary, hierarchies of caste, the so called ‘Sano Jat and Thulo Jat’ in Darjeeling and its practices are main obstacles to social, economic and political empowerment of these Balmiki population in hills, even for meritorious candidates from this community have affected the

wellbeing within the context of Darjeeling. Empowerment provisions, institutional supports to this community have been rare as data, interviews and reports indicated. Perhaps, there is a necessity to take a fresh look at what constitutes for instance 'equality of opportunity', 'social justice' 'economic upliftment' as well as accesses to resources. Perceptive of 'access', its nature, its problems, its possibilities have become productive forces or way through which the contested notions of empowerment for Balmikis in hills is yet to be achieved in true sense of the term.

Section III

Caste is a social division deeply rooted in Hindu society, which is based on occupation, and is also hereditary in nature. As such the Indian society has been fragmented on caste system, where the lower caste has been discriminated in all spheres of life. Some are even turn untouchables. But the factors like increase access to education, rapid growth and government policies to aid the most disadvantage groups, are helping to bring cut-out social barriers. In the education system seats are reserved for the students of lower caste and these quotas also extend in entering government jobs. A must to introduce reservation in private sector spot debate about such policies are fare. Some experts would say that the needed for the lower caste for make up the decades of miss-opportunities.⁵

Reservation policies have had not hitherto reached the largest section of the peoples. They have just touched the deep aspiration of the people. One needy of education or government jobs or to ask reservation in private sector, hoping that this will happen, will not eradicate discrimination.

Under such circumstance, it becomes immensely important how do we look into these Balmiki dalits? What are the motions around this dalit community? To answer these

⁵ Dalit Future by Anand Teltumbde.

questions, here the changing things are supposed to be taken into account, to imagine what kind of future could be for these Balmiki dalits. There are many things but we like avoid to bell upon that, as it may sound irrelevant, whatever have been gone into the history for the construction of dalits as such. But Ambedkar is one who imagined the future of dalits. In his ‘Annihilation of Caste’ he gave a definition on imaginary ‘*Ideal Society*,’ where his conception of society was based on *liberty, equality and fraternity*. Subsequently, we can draw clues from that; the minimalist kind of future is visioned for Balmiki dalits which is something like eradication of Caste. ‘A caste should go, and even the dalits should go’, as such kind of identity is not just. Many scholars many disagree and will contest that how caste could be disappearing or in other words how caste could be annihilated. Not only from the other people but the dalits themselves actually do not believe that caste could be annihilated. As a result this becomes a paradoxical situation. Secondly, the further arguments is creating a utopia, some sort of communist, communism that of Marx, that Ambedkar, interpreted liberty, equality and fraternity in the lowest at the term and acquiring these terms not from the French Revolution, but he said ‘I have taken it from Buddhism’. Now here the arguments put forward becomes more complicated, as that in Buddhism one will not find these terms 2500 years ago. As a result this kind of argument is doubtful, when and where we are present, we cannot jump on a supplement future just like that, we need to see the present. In terms of present, how does the dalits situation can been seen, for this we should go back and see how the changes that has come in the caste system, rather not going into the ancient or medieval period, but much valid from colonial times, there is distinct the caste has come out and took caste system.⁶

Major changes have taken place after the transfer of power. Our daily people have been more vicious, than actually is the colonialist aware of being. There have been lots of screening

⁶ Ibid.

rights from the making of Constitution itself, which had been in many issues. They have synonymously outlined *Untouchability* but reserved the caste, on the basis of the social justice to be done to the lower caste.

Now the question arises that, did the social justice exist during colonial time? The reservations for Scheduled Caste, the exceptional people were instituted, during the colonial time itself from 1937 onwards. There was policy that the Britishers had agreed and which was actually made onto quota system, and Ambedkar was member of Viceroy Council of 1943. So in recognisable term this kind of reservation or quota had come into being during colonial regime, at least 4 years before the transfer of power had taken place. But none of the framers had showed it as if they have doing a new and they created a parallel schedule for the scheduled drive, from which there were no concrete criteria, such as, and all rights were physically isolated.⁷

But that could be accommodated within the same scheduled and the scheduled could have been named anywhere in the Constitution. The game was at least the stigma associated with the scheduled on the Scheduled Caste could have been diluted, but ironically they did not want that to happen. They again made it open ended saying that the state would identify the classes which was to be read as caste, which are backward both educationally and socially.

The reservation by this end by creaming was forced into something like a weapon to divide people in as many ways as could it be possible. So, this was actually the conspiracy. Similar things could have been happened in the supporting evidences in terms of religion. The Indian Constitution has projected a secular, where as it is not secular. Nehru commented upon those people who are entering up secular; do not know what secularism means. Secularism is like a firework between religions and the State politics. As a result the proper setting of secularism

⁷ Ibid.

is absent in Indian context. These kinds of things, religion and caste were the biggest weapons in the hands of the ruling classes which were kept reserved with great expertise. Even Hindutva can be traced with this kind of practices. Though it may be seemed irrelevant here but still it can't be ignored as it provides some sort of basis for further arguments.

The instrument which we have adopted for our political system is that it is singularly unsuitable type of system. But just if we analyse, the colony by default like West system model, not all the colonies were adopted in toto in many ways. India got the opportunity to come out with the most suitable class system, which we term it as democracy, but theoretically 49% of the people will be excluded in the process. Unfortunately, all that ideas which were incorporated went wrong, during the formative days of the nation new nation building process.⁸

As a result, this has an implication to present caste or contemporary caste system having ritualistic aspect of caste, would have collapsed because of the capitalist relations. Today's caste is actually a constitutionally caste, which tends from Constitution, because what happens in means terms that it precipitated or manifested in terms of caste atrocities. Power asymmetries have happened in the villages, this asymmetry has lot of things to do with the political economic change that had been brought in after the formation of newly independent Indian states.

This kind of trendy circumstances had made immensely difficult to stitch the dalits future. The minimalist term of atrocity in annihilating of caste will have to think of instead of eliminating outlined caste itself. It might sound funny just to really outline caste. Now it may be argued that can such kind of system can be really be eliminated. For instance untouchability outward, which is theoretically impossible, because untouchability is one

⁸ Ibid.

aspect of the caste and caste undermines Untouchability, cannot go hand in hand. So, the notion of untouchability did not change anywhere. But we have to look in terms of the future of the dalits in general and Balmikis in particular. It has many assumptions behind, that there would be in the liberal kind of things etc. it is something like doable if we can build up proper awareness amongst the people, if people can put forward their demands in proper place at a proper time, such kind of things probably can be done. Now the interrogation crops up how can the derailments of caste happen? To grapple with this problem the ratification of the constitution along with the elimination of malpractices that taking place in the Indian society has to be eliminated. And thus, the outline caste identities do not remain any more.

Absolute masses of dalits around 90% who have been left out in the rural areas without any hope and aspirations, actually has to bear the stigma. In this context it is not wise to demolish reservations system as a whole rather it could be freeze for those who have been taking the benefits of reservations time and again. On the other hand once beneficiaries being refrained from receiving benefits any more, may assembled together to take the system to the fight. Here it is to be noted that these reservations should be freeze not based on caste rather on the bases of economic conditions of the dalit castes. In this way the sub-caste politics could have been controlled and more opportunities could have been created for the dalits upliftment. Reservation as Ambedkar's idea had not been defined properly, or let say it could have been used as an instrument to eliminate caste. But it has been used as a perpetual kind of thing and the same kind of dictum the dalits are inferior people where being pulled by the reservations.⁹

Ambedkar realized the abolition of political reservation, rather scientific reservation that he was mistaken and he was not able to unknot aforementioned full mistake during drafting the Constitution. So it was somewhere arbitrary limited to 10 years and automatically this gets

⁹ Ibid.

renewed, without any dalits asking for it. Thus, consequently, this practice became the integral part which only perpetuated by the ruling classes.

Dalits do not exist in long term that is the future; it might be a mere prediction. But the current economic, political scenario reflects this as a positive aspect, keeping in view the alternative, without any further destruction of the dalits. Still, this can be annihilated future and not dalits, which is a shared desire, although it cannot be a shared realistic possibility, because the over whelming majority of the upper castes, upper classes and elites had given up the project of reinventing communities in horizontal humanistic way. Unless dalits recognise this that society as a whole has to remagine the future, which is caste annihilated in partnership with the Hindus primarily but Muslims as well as they have caste system. It has to be read universal partnership of the exploiter and the exploited. The other side is none of the liberative striving the knowledge system of marginalised majority and related and incorporating to main stream pedagogy system.

Lastly, another way round it can be changed only through revolution. However, it is to be pointed out, that this revolution at what cost. This 21st century the political system, the fundamental things are not taken care and have been diverting the real issues, instead of addressing them, which will reinforce caste only. So as to summon the arguments it can be taken into account that ‘the future of the Balmikis dalits is at blink.’¹⁰

The present study thus opens the possibility of formulating a broad conceptual framework to understand the history of migration, the process of deprivation and moves towards empowerment of a community which has remained invisible in the social-political life of the Hills. There is no written history of the community in the Hills, and therefore, recourse to

¹⁰ Prof. Anand Teltumbde (IIT, Kharagpur), Speech at National Workshop cum orientation programme for SC and ST and other Marginalized Groups, Organised by ICSSR-ERC and Dept. of Sociology, St. Xavier’s College, Kolkata. 26th -27th September, 2015.

oral history became important and unavoidable. Moreover, the literature on Dalit is vast, ever increasing and emerging in large quantities. The present work would try to provide future scope for the formulation of “identity approach” that would (re) investigate into the division of labour; wherein lies the point of departure from most other previous Dalit Balmiki research. Moreover, significant contribution to literature is hoped to be made by looking into location-specific studies.

The main discovery of the research in one way is that, it provides more than enough scope for the research to conceptualize empowerment of dalit community in Darjeeling hills, all the way through the corridor of deprivations, far away from the main land India. Furthermore, the research will surely enhance the dalit contemporary literature. Here, it is worth to be mentioned that beside the over worked ‘*Gorkhaland Movement*’, by the researchers, the study will prove to be a new platform for the future scholars to study tiny communities within the hills.

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APPENDIX I

In different regions, V/Balmiki castes and sub-castes are known by various names

States	Castes/ Sub-Castes
Andhra Pradesh	Mehtar, Maal
Assam	Mehtar, Bhangi, Lalbegi
Bihar	Hari, Mehtar, Bhangi, Lalbegi
Gujarat	Bhangi, Mehtar, Olagna, Rukhi, Malkana, Halalkhor, Lalbegi, Valmiki, Korar, Meghwal, Jadmali
Haryana	Valmiki, Churha, Bhangi, Majhabi
Himachal Pradesh	Valmiki, Churha, Churhe, Majhabi
Jammu And Kashmir	Chooria
Kerala	Chandal
Madhya Pradesh	Bhangi, Mehtar, Valmiki, Lalbegi, Dharkar, Dom, Dumar, Rukhi
Maharashtra	Bhangi, Mehtar, Olagna, Rukhi, Malkana, Hallakhor, Lalbegi, Valmiki, Korar, Jadmali
Meghalaya	Mehtar, Bhangi, Lalbegi
Manipur	Mehtar, Bhangi
Orissa	Mehtar, Bhangi, Valmiki, Valakiki, Haadi
Punjab	V/Balmiki, Churha, Bhangi, Majhabi, Lalbegi, Musalli, Dom, Valmiki, Baalnik

Rajasthan	Bhangi, Churha, Mehtar, Olagna, Rukhi, Malkana, Halalkhor, Lalbegi, Valmiki, Korar, Jadmalli, Meghwal
Tamil Nadu	Paraiyaan, Chandal
Tripura	Mehtar, Bhangi
Uttar Pradesh	Balhar, Valmik, Valmiki, Hela, Majhabi, Dhanuk, Dom, Bansod, Hadi, Bhangi, Halalkhor, Daarpuri Rawat, Gojipuri Rawat, Dumar
Bengal	Mehtar, Mehtare, Hari, Bhangi, Bhuimali, Dom, Hela, Valmiki
Uttaranchal	Dom, V/Balmiki, Shilpkaar

Appendix II

Scheduled Castes in West Bengal

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Bagdi, Duley | 21. Halalkhor |
| 2. Bahelia | 22. Hari, Mehtar, Mehtor, Bhangi, |
| 3. Baiti | Balmiki ¹ |
| 4. Bantar | 23. Jalia Kaibartta |
| 5. Bauri | 24. Jhalo Malo, Malo |
| 6. Beldar | 25. Kadar |
| 7. Bhogta | 26. Kami (Nepali) |
| 8. Bhuimali | 27. Kandra |
| 9. Bhuiya | 28. Kanjar |
| 10. Bind | 29. Kaora |
| 11. Chamar, Charmakr, Mochi, Muchi,
Rabidas, Ruidas, Rishi | 30. Karenga, Koranga |
| 12. Chaupal | 31. Kaur |
| 13. Dabgar | 32. Keot, Keyot |
| 14. Damai (Nepali) | 33. Khaira |
| 15. Dhoba, Dhobi | 34. Khatik |
| 16. Doai | 35. Koch |
| 17. Dom, Dhangad | 36. Konai |
| 18. Dosadh, Dusadh, Dhari, Dharhi | 37. Konwar |
| 19. Ghasi | 38. Kotal |
| 20. Gonrhi | 39. Kurariar |

¹ Subs. by Act, 25 of 2002, s.2.

40. Lalbegi
41. Lohar
42. Mahar
43. Mal
44. Mallah
45. Musahar
46. Namasudra
47. Nat
48. Nuniya
49. Paliya
50. Pan, Sawasi
51. Pasi
52. Patni
53. Pod, Poundra
54. Rajbanshi
55. Rajwar
56. Sarki (Nepali)
57. Sunri (Excluding Saha)
58. Tiyar
59. Turi
60. Chain²

² Subs. by Act, 24 of 2016, s.2

Appendix III

Balmiki Gotras

1. Aadival
2. Adaliya
3. Athvaal
4. Aanoriya
5. Aajad
6. Aadivaan
7. Aarajya
8. Iklo Siya
9. Iktare (Bandta, Bairakthana, Bharkua, Nagpur)
10. Ujjain wal Goyar
11. Umravaal
12. Otwaal, Uttwaal
13. Kankra
14. Kangra (Haryana, Himachal)
15. Kalyani (Punjab)
16. KAndara, Kander
17. Kasotiya
18. Karotiya
19. Karoshiya (Delhi)
20. Kela
21. Kesa
22. Kesla, Keswal (Saharanpur, Dehradun)
23. Kathet (Muradabad)
24. Kachwah (Jabalpur)
25. Kundela (Delhi)
26. Kundi
27. Karwaliya (Kanpur)
28. Kalosiya, Kalla (Ajmer, Rajasthan)
29. Kaamwaal.
30. Kanaujia (Uttar Pradesh)
31. Kathumara
32. Keer
33. Kathala
34. Kathwaal
35. Khatrata
36. Kharra
37. Khareliya, Kheraliya, Kherriya (Jaipur, Bulandshahar)
38. Kharadiya
39. Khariya
40. Khairwal (Muzzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh)
41. Khair Waar
42. Khoda, Khode (Indore, Ujjain)
43. Khokhar
44. Kode
45. Kuntiya
46. Gangahedi, Gangaheri (Delhi)

47. Gangotri
48. Goyar
49. Gechchan, Golecha
50. Gangeriya, Gugeriya
51. Gogriya, Gogliye,
52. Gohra, Guhera (Madhya Pradesh)
53. Gathera
54. Gathariya
55. Gahlot (Rajasthan)
56. Gund
57. Girj
58. Gokhale
59. Godiwal, Godiyal, Godeeyal (Dehradun),
Raipur Berisaal (Bijnaur, Uttar Pradesh)
60. Gujrati
61. Ghoghle (Indore)
62. Gharu
63. Ghaamli (Maharashtra)
64. Ghavri (Haridwar, Uttar Pradesh)
65. Ghor
66. Ghanghet, Ghaghat (Dehradun, Uttar
Pradesh)
67. Ghusar
68. Ghoghliya
69. Chatval (Punjab)
70. Chudiyana
71. Chirya Wadia (Chaar Wadya)
72. Changra, Changriya (Nagore, rajasthan)
73. Chedwaal
74. CHauman
75. Chandaliye, Chandeliya, Chandel (Delhi,
Rajasthan, Guwahati, Indore)
76. Chinaliye, Chandril, Chandra, Chanchal
(Uttar Pradesh)
77. Choraman
78. Chavriya (Bikaner)
79. Chawla, Chaaran (Dehradun)
80. Chauhan (Pattharphor, Haadpher) (Uttar
Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi)
81. Chutela, Chautala
82. Chohtel (Jabalpur)
83. Chomar
84. Chajlaan
85. Chapri Band
86. Jediya (Jodhpur, rajasthan)
87. Java (Bikaner)
88. Jaadipat
89. Jajotar
90. Jaanewal, Jeevwal, Jainwaal
91. Jagya Sangat
92. Jadaun
93. Jhijhariya
94. Jhumliya
95. Jhnujh
96. Jhanjhote (Vardha, Maharashtra)
97. Jhanghala, Janghala, Jangghara
98. Jaavle (Jalgaon, Amravati, Maharashtra)
99. Tank, Taig (Rajasthan, Delhi, Meerut)
100. Topiya (Topya)
101. Tundlayat

- 102.Tepan
- 103.Dhor
- 104.Dagle
- 105.Daagar
- 106.Dendhuta
- 107.Dendawal
- 108.Danodiya
- 109.Dangoriya, Dindoriya (Jaipur)
- 110.Dulgach, Duglach
- 111.Dageriya (Indore)
- 112.Dekina
- 113.Dhikiya, Dikya
- 114.Dingiya (Uttar Pradesh, Bijnaur, Dehradun)
- 115.Dhakoliya
- 116.Dhalet, Dilodh (Haryana)
- 117.Danjha
- 118.Dumde (Uttar Pradesh)
- 119.Tark
- 120.Tusambar
- 121.Timboli
- 122.Teji, Tejaswi
- 123.Tanvar
- 124.Tishavar, teshvar
- 125.Thanwaal
- 126.Thapar
- 127.Thavriya
- 128.Dhariwaal
- 129.Dhaav
- 130.Dhalod
- 131.Dhigaan
- 132.Dhaul
- 133.Dishavar
- 134.Devya
- 135.Nirmal
- 136.Navliya
- 137.Narvaar
- 138.Narvale (Indore)
- 139.Nahar (Punjab, Dehradun)
- 140.Nahat (Punjab)
- 141.Nayak (Orissa)
- 142.Pacherwaal
- 143.Parihar, Padiyaar
- 144.Parmar
- 145.Premi
- 146.Panwar (Agra)
- 147.Patuna
- 148.Pathrol
- 149.Parvaan
- 150.Parcha, Paroche (Haryana, delhi, Dehradun)
- 151.Pivaal, Pahival (Shamli, Muzaffarnagar), Pihal (Rajasthan, Hyderabad, Delhi)
- 152.Pandat, Pandit
- 153.Payoriya
- 154.Pachula
- 155.Bainvadiya
- 156.Baali
- 157.Badgurjar (Uttar Pradesh, Gaziabad, Dehradun)

158. Bal gohar, Balgoyar
159. Bar Gohar, Bar Goyar
160. Birlaan (Uttar Pradesh, Gaziabad, Dehradun)
161. Baar Vasya, BArasa
162. Bainsdwaal, Beniwaal
163. Boyat, Bohat (Bidisha), Bahaut
164. VAid, Vaidhya
165. Baavra (Jhansi)
166. Burat
167. Baagor, Baggan, Baigi, Baagre (Malkapoor)
168. Biwaal
169. Bisnaar (Kota), Vishnariya (Malkapoor, Bharatpur, Rajasthan)
170. Baagri (Jabalpur)
171. Basaud
172. Barwaal
173. Bairathi
174. Bairagi (Allahabad)
175. Barburiya
176. Bahanwaal, Bhainwal, Beniwal (Delhi, Bulandshahar)
177. Bharti
178. Bhuranda
179. Bhunbak (Saharanpur)
180. Bhuradiya
181. Bhagwana
182. Maalya
183. Motha, Meetha (Jaipur)
184. Mathodiya (Bulandshahar)
185. Maaroth (Indore)
186. Mattu
187. Mehar
188. Mahroliya (Delhi)
189. Munim
190. Mochika
191. Mevati (Haryana, Rajasthan)
192. Maurya
193. Morotiya
194. Mailayanda
195. Maindwaal
196. Manotiya
197. Makwana
198. Maachal, Machal (Kota)
199. Malhotra (Punjab, Himachal)
200. Rahatwaal
201. Reel
202. Raanvaa, Ranawat
203. Lot, Lohat
204. Lohra, Lohariya, Luhadiya
205. Lodha
206. Lakkhan, Lakhan (Rajasthan, Gujarat)
207. Lidiya
208. Lodiya
209. Ladar
210. Vidhyarthi
211. Lidlaan
212. Lathoriya
213. Rauth (Samastipur)

- 214.Rathod
- 215.Ratnakar (Bareilly)
- 216.Rediyān
- 217.Rajauri, Rajauriya (MUrabad, Uttar Pradesh, Dehradun)
- 218.Sonwaal
- 219.Sarvaan (Ambarnath, Thane, Delhi)
- 220.Saagnaān
- 221.Saude, Sauda, Saudayi, Sood, Soodha, Saudya (UP)
- 222.Sunaliya (UP)
- 223.Silelaan
- 224.Sikhaniya (Kanpur)
- 225.Sangan
- 226.Sangoliya
- 227.Sangle (Amravati)
- 228.Sarsiya
- 229.Sagar
- 230.Satyarthi
- 231.Sarkariya
- 232.Saarsar, Saarswat
- 233.Saulanki (Bundi)
- 234.Singor (Kota)
- 235.Sallappa (Karnatakka)
- 236.Sambariya
- 237.Siotra, Sihote (Jabalpur), Suhotra- Nahan (Punjab, UP)
- 238.Sinsinwaal
- 239.Seriya Ujinwaal
- 240.Sodiya
- 241.Snehi
- 242.Hans (Punjab)
- 243.Hans Taudiya
- 244.Hatwal
- 245.Hathgen (Hamirpur, CHattarpur, Banda, UP)
- 246.Hitkar
- 247.Hadaute (Nagpur)
- 248.Harala
- 249.Rerawa
- 250.Bais
- 251.Bir Gujar
- 252.Bhadauria
- 253.Bisen
- 254.Sowa
- 255.Bundelia
- 256.Noda
- 257.Yaduvanshi
- 258.Kinwar Thakur
- 259.Bhojpuri Routh
- 260.Gazipuri Routh

APPENDIX IV

Detailed Population of Balmiki Community in Darjeeling

Ward No.	Nos. Of Families	Population	Male	Female	Children below 6 Yrs.
1	11	58	28	30	4
2	10	41	21	20	2
3	12	62	30	32	1
4	06	38	20	18	3
5	17	68	30	38	8
6	15	69	34	35	5
7	05	34	16	18	01
8	11	58	26	32	04
9	20	129	71	58	08
10	08	46	20	26	02
11	11	58	28	30	02
12	16	84	48	36	12
13	42	282	151	131	16
14	03	11	06	05	NIL
15	03	19	08	11	NIL
16	02	15	10	05	02
17	10	66	34	32	05
18	43	243	117	126	35

19	08	78	35	43	18
20	01	12	5	7	2
21	06	52	18	34	10
22	06	44	22	22	5
23	04	17	10	07	03
24	05	30	14	16	08
25	06	46	26	20	08
26	18	134	62	72	17
27	09	61	28	33	9
28	06	35	17	18	3
29	09	59	26	33	7
30	02	17	09	08	1
31	23	113	66	47	14
32	19	116	55	61	09
Total	367	2195	1091	1104	224

Detailed Population of Balmiki Community in Kalimpong

Ward No.	Nos. Of Families	Population	Male	Female	Children below 6 Yrs.
1	04	14	06	08	2
2	06	20	12	08	3
3	04	15	08	07	1
4	06	18	08	10	2
5	03	13	07	06	2
6	02	07	04	03	1
7	05	23	10	13	2
8	06	14	09	05	2
9	04	13	09	04	NIL
10	04	20	11	09	2
11	03	12	08	06	1
12	03	10	06	04	NIL
13	05	20	11	09	1
14	03	10	06	04	NIL
15	04	20	12	08	1
16	03	15	07	08	2
17	08	49	25	24	5
18	09	74	38	36	4
19	07	52	24	28	2
20	03	04	06	08	1

21	06	52	18	34	4
22	06	46	26	20	4
23	04	17	10	07	3
Total	108	538	281	257	46

Detailed Population of Balmiki Community in Kurseong

Ward No.	Nos. Of Families	Population	Male	Female	Children below 6 Yrs.
1	11	61	25	36	3
2	12	65	37	28	3
3	06	47	26	21	1
4	27	166	88	78	6
5	09	53	28	25	4
6	07	52	19	33	5
7	11	61	29	32	4
8	09	73	39	34	4
9	06	35	17	18	4
10	19	123	65	58	6
11	22	134	58	76	10
12	10	56	27	29	4
13	05	32	13	19	2
14	14	94	52	42	6
15	16	91	48	43	5
16	05	32	13	19	2
17	11	78	40	38	5

18	10	54	24	30	5
19	15	86	46	40	3
20	05	27	15	12	2
Total	230	1420	709	711	84

APPENDIX V

Employment in Darjeeling, Kalimpong And Kurseong

Departments	Male		Female		Total
	Permanent	Casual	Permanent	Casual	
Municipality (Safai Karamchari)	109	22	59	24	214
Municipality (Clerk)	06	-	-	-	06
Municipality (Peon)	03	-	-	01	04
Municipality (Inspector)	01	-	-	-	01
School (Safai Karamchari)	20	10	10	07	47
College (Safai Karamchari)	-	02	01	-	03
Cantonment (Safai Karamchari)	48	06	32	05	91
District Court/District Magistrates' Office (Safai Karamchari)	20	06	-	08	34
Hospital (Safai Karamchari)	25	05	28	26	84
DGHC/GTA (Safai Karamchari)	18	-	09	-	27
Bank (Safai Karamchari)	05	02	04	01	12
Bank (Clerk)	02	-	-	-	02
Bank (Cashier)	01	-	-	-	01
Police Station (Safai Karamchari)	06	01	01	-	08

Fire Station (Safai Karamchari)	02	-	-	-	02
Post Office (Safai Karamchari)	03	-	-	-	03
Forest Department (Safai Karamchari)	04	-	-	01	05
Army (Safai Karamchari)	05	-	-	-	05
Railways (Safai Karamchari)	09	-	-	-	09
PWD (Safai Karamchari)	05	-	-	-	05
Electric Board (Safai Karamchari)	02	01	-	-	03
BSNL (Safai Karamchari)	05	01	-	01	07
Planters' Club (Safai Karamchari)	-	-	01	-	01
Govt. Press (Safai Karamchari)	01	-	-	-	01
Backward Classes Welfare Office ((Safai Karamchari)	01	01	-	-	02
Welfare Department (Safai Karamchari)	02	-	-	-	02
PHE (Safai Karamchari)	01	-	-	-	01
HMI (Safai Karamchari)	-	01	-	-	01
Employment Exchange (Safai Karamchari)	01	-	-	01	02
LIC Office (Safai Karamchari)	01	-	-	01	02

Animal Research Development (Safai Karamchari)	01	-	-	-	01
Hotels (Safai Karamchari)	-	10	-	05	15
Shop (Salesman)	-	04	-	01	05
Carpenter	01	-	-	-	01
Labour	-	06	-	02	08
PF Office (Safai Karamchari)	-	01	-	-	01
PF Office (UDC)	02	-	-	-	02
Assistant Professor	03	-	-	-	03
School Teacher	03	01	-	01	05
Engineer	01	-	-	-	01
Army	06	-	-	-	06
Nurse	-	-	01	-	01
Driver	01	04	-	-	05
Others	-	09	-	01	10

APPENDIX VI

Article Published in Gorkha Patrika



APPENDIX VII

Estd. 1948

वार्त्नमक हरिजन संघ, दार्जीलिंग
रजि० न० एस/३८७१३

व्यापित १९४८

BALMIKI HARIJAN SANGH
Registration No. S/38713
DARJEELING

Room No. 9 and 10 Harijan Barrack
Dr. K. B. Abdul Aziz Road
Darjeeling - 734101

मकान न० ९ और १० हरिजन बरिक्
डा० के० बी० अब्दुल अजिज रोड
दार्जीलिंग - ७३४१०१

Ref. No. 94(91-92) B. H. S. Dat 5.10.91

To,
The Officer -In-Charge,
Sadar Police Station ,
Darjeeling .

Subject : Information of Annual General Meeting of this Organisation
on 6.10.91 at 2.P.M. in Turnbull High School, Darjeeling .

Sir ,
I would like to bring to your kind notice that an
annual General Meeting of Balmiki Harijan Sangh ,D rjeeling
will be held on 6.10.91 at 2.p.m. in the Turnbull High
School ,Darjeeling . This is for your kind information and
necessary action please .

Thanking you , Yours Faithfully ,

Enclosed : A copy of the
letter of this meeting .

(NIRMAL SARWAN)
Balmiki Harijan Sangh
Darjeeling - 734101
Regd. No. S/38713

27/10/91

APPENDIX VIII

Estd. 1948
बाल्मिकि हरिजन संघ, दार्जीलिंग
रजि. नं० एच/२८७१३
स्थापित १९४८

BALMIKI HARIJAN BANGH
Registration No. 5/38713
DARJEELING

Room No. 9 and 10 Harijan Barrack
Dr. K. B. Abdul Azis Road
Darjeeling - 734101

मकान नं० ९ और १० हरिजन बारिक
डा० के० बी० अब्दुल अजिज रोड
दार्जीलिंग - ७३४१०१

Ref. No. 74/2/(90-91) B. H. S.

Date. 12.6.1991.....

To ,
The District Magistrate ,
Darjeeling.

Sir ,

With reference to this organisation letter No. 58(90-91) at. 6.4.91 addressed to the Administrator , Darjeeling Municipality , Darjeeling and a copy of which was also sent to your honour for information and needful action . But with great regret I would like to mention that no action or reply has yet been known .No reply has yet been received from the Administrator, Darjeeling Municipality or from your honours end .

I therefore , request your honour to be kind enough to look into the matter and also to do the needful for quick and positive action .

With Warm Regards ,
Thanking you ,

Yours Faithfully ,
(Signature)
12.6.91
(NIRMAL SARWAN)

General Secretary
BALMIKI HARIJAN BANGH
Darjeeling - 734101
Regd. No. 5/38713

APPENDIX IX

Estd. 1948
बाल्मिकि हरिजन संघ, दार्जिलिंग
स्थापित १९४८

BALMIKI HARIJAN SANGH
DARJEELING

Room No. 9 and 10 Harijan Barrack
Dr. K. B. Abdul Aziz Road
Darjeeling - 734101

मकान नं० ९ और १० हरिजन बार्क
डा० के० बी० अब्दुल अजिज रोड
दार्जिलिंग - ७३४१०१

Ref. No. B. H. S. Date.....

64(90-91) 8th, April '91

To,
The Special Officer,
Scheduled Castes/Tribes welfare,
Malden,
The Mall (Road),
Darjeeling.

Subject:- Demand for the introduction and implementation of welfare schemes for the betterment and upliftment of peer Balmiki Harijans of Darjeeling.

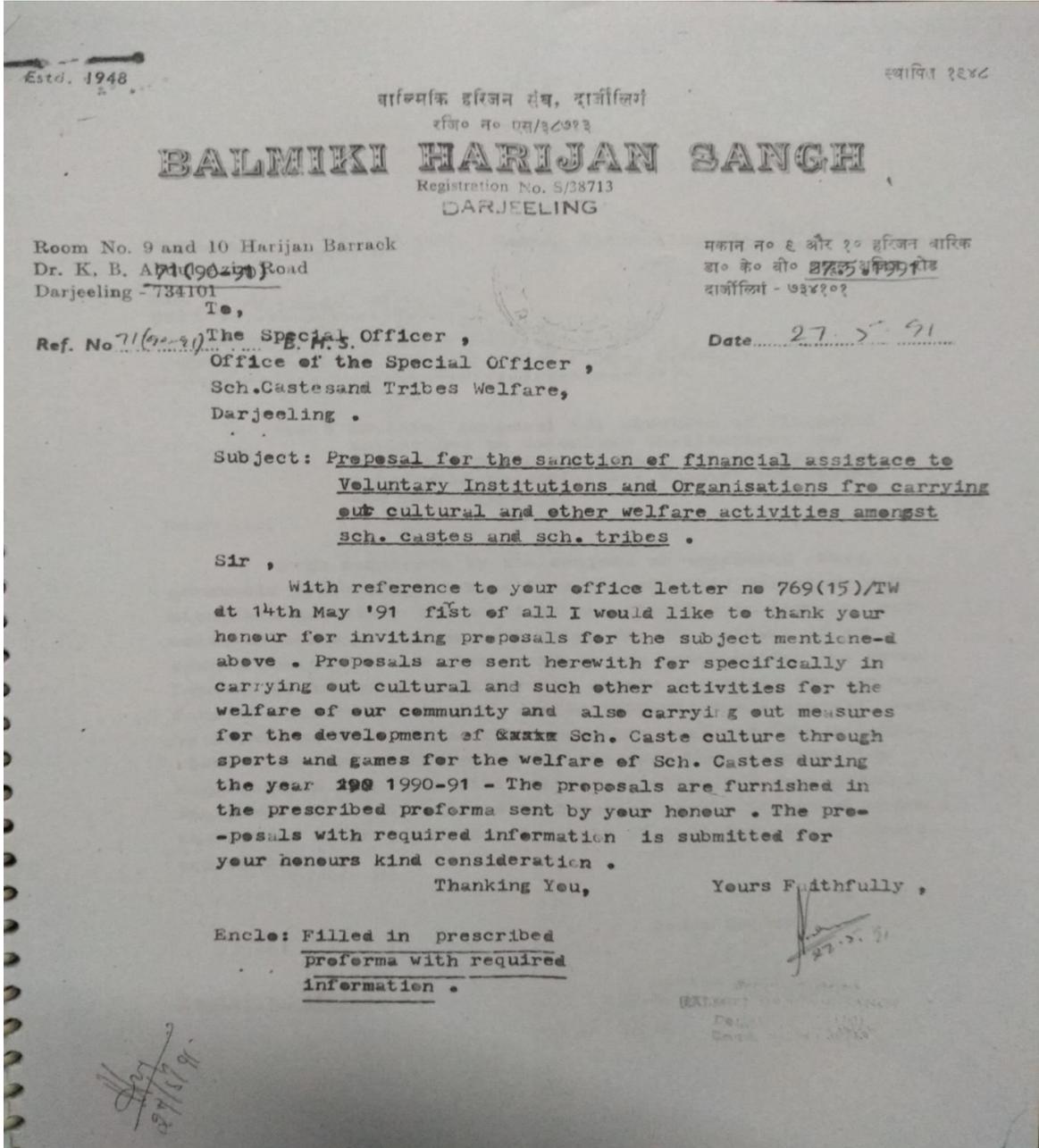
Respected Sir,

I for and on behalf of the peer Balmiki Harijans of Darjeeling, would like to bring to your kind notice the following few facts for your kind consideration :-

1. That the Peer Balmiki Harijans are residing in and around Darjeeling since more than 100 years. But nothing has been done so far for their upliftment and betterment.
2. That the Schemes for the betterment and upliftment of Balmiki Harijans are formulated and implemented in other Districts and Towns of West Bengal, Other States and at the National Level. But these schemes has not yet been introduced in this town why?
3. That some housing Schemes are run by the HUDCO which are formulated and introduced by HUDCO for the weaker sections of the society. This Organisation demands that these Schemes are to be introduced and implemented in this town of Darjeeling for the Balmiki Harijans of Darjeeling.
4. That a COLONY for the Balmiki Harijans is a must in this town. As they do not have their own huts/shelters or houses. Though, they are residing here since more than a century. But due to their poor economic and social condition they could not manage their own huts/shelters or houses.
5. That a colony is to be built and provided to the Balmiki Harijans of Darjeeling on ownership or tenancy basis.

continued on page no.2.....

APPENDIX X



APPENDIX XI

Estd. 1948 स्थापित १९४८

बाल्मिकि हरिजन संघ, दार्जिलिंग

BALMIKI HARIJAN SANGH
DARJEELING

Room No. 9 and 10 Harijan Barrack मकान नं० ९ और १० हरिजन बारिक
Dr. K. B. Abdul Aziz Road डा० के० बी० अब्दुल अजिज रोड
Darjeeling - 734101 दार्जिलिंग - ७३४१०१

Registration No. S/38713

Ref. No. 57(90-91) B. H. S. Date 5th April '91

To,

Shri R. B. Rai ,
Member of Parliament ,
Darjeeling.

Subject :- Grievances of the Harijan , Balmiki Community .

Sir ,

I for and on behalf of the Balmiki Harijan's would like to bring to your kind notice the following few facts for your kind information and sympathetic consideration :-

1. That some cases of unnecessary delay and harrasment are reported to this organisation , @ 10 cases are presently reported .
2. That a letter in this regard was submitted to the Special Officer , Scheduled Caste/Tribes , Welfare , Darjeeling but there is adverse affect of this letter No. 32(90-91)B.H.S at 16.11. 1990 .
3. That the Certificates (Caste) which are ready are not given or issued to the applicants and they are still lying with the Office Concerned .
4. That they demands migration certificate or Caste Certificate from the applicants native place . Which is not at ^{all} possible as because some of the applicants are residing here since more than 100 Years and ^{are} @ three generations reside of Darjeeling . Even they do not know where is ~~their~~ ^{their} native place .
5. That the Authority concerned of their native place regards them as the natives of Darjeeling and refused to issue them the Caste Certificates .
6. That some of our members could not get jobs due to the failure to produce the Caste C_rtificates in time due to unnecessary delay and harasment to them by ~~their~~ not issuing the Certificates

Continued on page2.....

Handwritten note: Adv. a copy in reply 5-4-91

APPENDIX XII

Estd. 1948

स्थापित १९४८

बाल्मिकि हरिजन संघ, दार्जीलिंग

रजि० न० एस/३८७१३

BALMIKI HARIJAN SANGH

Registration No. S/38713

DARJEELING

Room No. 9 and 10 Harijan Barrack
Dr. K. B. Abdul Aziz Road
Darjeeling - 734101

मकान न० ९ और १० हरिजन बरिक्क
डा० के० बी० अब्दुल अजिज रोड
दार्जीलिंग - ७३४१०१

Ref. No. 32(90-91) B. H. S.

Date 16.11.1990

To,
The Special Officer ,
Scheduled Caste/ Tribes, welfare,
Maldon ,
The Mall (Road),
Darjeeling.

Subject:- Unnecessary delay and harrasment to issue Caste Certificates
To the Balmiki Harijans of Darjeeling.

Respected Sir ,

I would like to request you to kindly arrange to issue Caste Certificate to the Balmiki Harijans in the due course of time . Some cases of delay and unnecessary harrasment are reported to this organisation . The petitioner reports that even after the submission of all the necessary documents required , unnecessary delay and harrasment to the Balmiki Harijans is being reported by the members of Balmiki Harijan Communities . Who are the residents of Darjeeling and are the members of this Organisation .

I for and on behalf of the members of entire Balmiki Harijan community , request your honour to kindly look into the matter and save the poor Balmiki Harijans from unnecessary harrasment and long delay. This Organisation prays for your kind Co- Operation.

Thanking You ,

Yours Faithfully ,

(NIRMAL SARWAN)
General Secretary ,
Balmiki Harijan Sangh .
Darjeeling.

Copy forwarded for necessary action to :-
1, S. D. O. , Sadar, Darjeeling .

APPENDIX XIII

Estd. 1948

स्थापित १९४८

बाल्मिकि हरिजन संघ, दार्जिलिंग

BALMIKI HARIJAN SANGH
DARJEELING

Room No. 9 and 10 Harijan Barrack
Dr. K. B. Abdul Aziz Road
Darjeeling - 734101

मकान नं० ९ और १० हरिजन बारिक
डा० के० बी० अब्दुल अजिज रोड
दार्जिलिंग - ७३४१०१

Ref. No.26(90-91)..... B. H. S.

Date.....4th..September..196

To

The Prime Minister ,
Government of India ,
New Delhi -110001

Subject;: Congratulations and a lot of Thanks for the Introduction
of 27 % Reservation for SC/ST in Central Services.

Honourable Sir ,

I would like to express my heartiest sincere
thanks on behalf of the Balmiki Harijan Community which is still
neglected and @ downtrodden one , for the introduction of 27%
reservation in Central Services for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled
Tribes .

Indeed it is brave step towards true democracy and to uplift
the downtrodden peers.

I hope that peer Balmiki Harijan's will be benefitted by
this new bold step.

Thanking You ,

Yours faithfully,

(NIRMAL SARWAN)

General Secretary ,
Balmiki Harijan Sangh ,
13, Dr.K.B.Abdul AzizRoad,
Darjeeling .



SCAVENGING AS DEPRIVATION AND FRAMEWORKS OF REGULATION AND CONTROL

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Received: 27/01/2018

Edited: 06/02/2018

Accepted: 14/02/2018

Abstract: To terminate the inhuman practise which employed humans to "Clear, Carry and Dispose of human excreta" the act of "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation" was brought into effect. According to this law, the act of cleaning of sewers by men is a practise of scavenging. Even after so many campaigns that bring this issue in the forefront as a matter of difference in caste and states that this requires the immediate approach of State officials so that it can be eradicated, this issue of inadequate sanitation facility is continued. This paper aims to analyse the problem of manual scavenging critically and the role it plays in deprivation of Human Rights, in the current situation and the prohibited mechanism of this inhuman practise.

Key words: Acts, Balmiki, Dalit/s, Deprivation, Human Rights, Scavenging¹.

Background:

Among the Dalit communities, manual scavengers² are the most exploited ones. They can be found in most parts of the country, where they clean the roads and are engaged to the job of carrying night-soil. Not only do they have to undergo the social discrimination but also the amount which is paid is very low. Apart from all these, they also have to suffer from various health problems if they are continuously engaged to the job of cleaning due to the viral and bacterial effects. This community is known by various names in different parts of India such as Balmiki³, Bhangi/s⁴, Mehatar⁵, Lalbegi⁶, Chuhara⁷, Hari⁸, Olganas⁹, etc. Since they belong to the minor group, their population density is counted differently and included under the "Scheduled Castes"¹⁰.

Manual Scavenging as Deprivation

One of the most important areas of the Indian fabric has been caste system which is existent since many centuries. It is inhuman and not at all forms the basis of equality and labour is divided on the basis of caste. All the social, economic and political conditions of people are based on their caste status. These manual scavengers are also scheduled caste who belongs to the lowest strata of the caste system-'Untouchables among Untouchables'.¹¹ The

hierarchy of the society is practised in such a way that, it is based on the habitation of the village, towns or cities. Usually the upper class of the society resides in good places but manual scavengers are always found to be residing near dumping grounds. The contact with the disposed excreta makes them a victim to various diseases and infection.¹² The children of from these communities are not usually treated right by the fellow classmates and teachers. Such an abominable behaviour towards children makes the children lose their dignity and this is the reason why there are many dropout rates. Dalits are made to perform this in human practice of manual scavenging.¹³ This may be called a forced labour because dalits cannot even ask for or take up any other occupation since they are discriminated on the basis of their caste and occupation. They aren't paid right. There is even over compared to that on the minimum wage and hence they have to borrow money for the upper caste neighbours to survive. This makes them a victim to the relationship of bondage.

In one study by Ashif Sheikh,¹⁴ *Untouchability in rural India*, Dalit Muslims¹⁵ are also subjected to manual scavenging due to which they also become a victim of discrimination within their own community. A bigger part or large section of Muslim

community believes that Islam doesn't fit caste as soon as there should not be operation on the basis of caste within Islam. However it is different in case of Indian Islam.

Manual Scavenging as Human Rights Issues

Since 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been promoting and codifying a common standard of achieving for all peoples and nations. Over the years human rights has broadened with the input of socialist states and states of the third world, to incorporate a wide range of economic, social and cultural, development and the right of the indigenous people.¹⁶

The exploitation that these manual scavengers go through is a mockery on the modern Indian Labour Law and international conventions that are usually measured by the right of the workers. No individual voluntarily accepts to handle the human excreta but this is imposed tradition that only exploits the basic rights of the people and shows the inhuman caste system.

There are a number of reasons why manual scavenging is considered to be a forced labour or slavery.¹⁷

1. **It acts as a compulsion:** It is believed in most places of the world that the occupation of the citizen must not be on the basis of caste but Indian society still accept the fact that manual scavenging should be done only by a certain community of people. It is a forced compulsion for a certain class of people to pick up this manual scavenging as a job. The members of this community are prisoners of this manual scavenging job and when they try to revolt against said they are made a victim to extreme violence.
2. **It is hereditary:** Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar had said, "Our society is like a multi store pyramid and there are no doors for entering into the storeys. One has to die in the storey in which one is born" this means that a particular community of people would follow the occupation their ancestors leads to follow which is very far away from the idea of decent employment.

3. **It is an indefensible custom:** Manual scavenging is a caste based job as per the belief and arises due to the unequal society. These customs survive the social change and on the moral basis they become insupportable. Even in modern India the practice of manual scavenging is in destroyed and the people are subjected to oppression and injustice. Manual scavenging is a hindrance to social justice.
4. **It is based on caste based division of labour:** As the Brahmins belonging to the higher class in the society and have assigned the cleaning work to the lower classes of the society, is insult to the principles and ideal adopted by the modern society and economies. Due to the watertight nature of this division of labour on the basis of caste many communities are deprived of the right and also will have to live in a miserable state.¹⁸

Frameworks of Regulation and Control

Government of India has made several laws and legislations and programs which promotes the rights of the backward and the oppressed class of the society.¹⁹

Legislation: Sanitation is subject to the State, and Delhi became the first state to band manual scavenging in February 2013. Within 3 years of service the municipalities Railways and containments have been given sufficient sanitary latrine spaces available.²⁰ According to article 253 of the constitution Parliament can empower two or more States to register adoption legislation, for this several laws has been enacted by the government.²¹

The employment of manual scavengers and construction of dry latrines prohibition act 1993: the employment of manual scavengers and construction of dry latrines Provision Act 1993 was drafted by the Ministry of under the Urban Development after 6 States agreed on passing the resolution to frame a law that will insurance ointment to the manual scavengers. It was drafted under Narasimha Rao Government²² and was passed in 1993. By this time 23 states and all the union territories has adopted the act. While they were some

other states which had enacted their own form of law but within the similar act.²³

As per this ask anyone who is employing a scavenger or constructing a trilateral will have to face imprisonment for one year or will be fined rupees 2000.²⁴ The practice has been spread on a white level but there has been no convention on the law for 20 years.²⁵

National Commission for Safaikaramcharis (NCSK): NCSK is a statutory body formed in August 1994, but this commission was active till February 2004. The commission work towards the upliftment of the Safaikaramcharis ensure that correct measures are taking for the Welfare of them and also makes it suitable recommendations to the central government and investigate matters that are related to implementation of laws and schemes and maybe a matter of grievance related to the purpose.²⁶

The prohibition of employment as manual scavengers and the rehabilitation Act 2013 or MS act 2013: As per the 1993 law under the state list the question was if the Parliament has the jurisdiction to enact the prohibition of employment as manual scavengers and Rehabilitation Bill 2012. Arguments were put forward regarding the objective of the bill some believe that it aims at protecting the weaker sections of the society such as the scheduled caste and Scheduled tribe from the employing them as manual scavengers. It is also stated that it is the duty of the central and state government to make proper house with adequate sanitation and road infrastructure and quality schools for the children of SC and ST communities for all the ex-manual scavengers. The three full realisations were made in the rehabilitation plan of 2011 draft:

1. Restore the dignity of life of entire community of sanitation workers

2. To secure through educational opportunity of the future generation so that they cannot be recruited as a manual scavengers and get better employment opportunities.
3. Spells of the task must be cleared out by every ministry PSU and private sector organisations so that the order is made enforceable.²⁷

The prohibition of employment and Manual scavengers and the rehabilitation Act 2013 acts as a roadmap to a proper strategy so that the sanitation can be improved and the human practice of manual scavenging can be prohibited and there are alternative options for the employment of persons who are related to the job of manual scavenging.²⁸

Final Observations

The Parliament has tried to bring out the new law and is ready to make amends well so that the legislation and the Human Rights schemes are not made a victim to the weak implementation and the ignorant nature of the government. Today India is used as stage where it is necessary to abolish this National shame and its people must come together to see and transform the dream into reality and abolish the practice.

Do a number of people have been freed from the act of manual scavenging but still they lack the source of income and the biggest concern is the rehabilitation which the prohibition of employment as manual scavengers and the rehabilitation bill 2012 seeks address. The employment of manual scavengers and construction of dry latrines prohibition act 1993 betrayed the hope of the people but still people are really hopeful about the new law and think that it would bring out the change in the condition of Living. It is now a time to answer the questions that they have been fighting for since a long time their right must be given to them and they must not be oppressed.

Notes and References

1. The evidence of the origin of Manual Scavenging is found in the Mughal periods. It started with the introduction of dry latrines in the courts. Jahangir, the Mughal ruler of India built a public toilet at Alwar which is located 120 km away from Delhi. However, there is no much evidence about its maintenance. The Municipal Records of 1870 has shown that the municipalities organized by British in India were required to

- build roads, parks and toilets. These British administrations were the organizers of the system that required removal of night soil. For this purpose, they employed Bhangis.
2. Sweeping and scavenging is often considered to be the inferior job and anyone who was associated with this job had to live under the pressure of social discrimination. In India, the social discrimination is done on the basis of caste which has made these people do certain jobs, which is termed as their "traditional" jobs. These sweepers and scavengers are regarded to be the most polluted community and are highly discriminated because of their religious, social and economic life conditions. <http://safaikarmachariandolan.org/whatismanual.html> Accessed on 10.10.2012 15:31 hrs.
 3. The Balmiki are one of the largest socially stigmatized Dalit groups in Uttar Pradesh alone and Rajasthan, Haryana, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh. Also see Balmiki, Lekhraj (2011). "The Balmiki Community In Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness." in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal. Darjeeling: KalpaGriha Publications.
 4. As defined by Shyamlal (1992). In *The Bhangi A Sweeper Caste: Its Socio-Economic Portraits*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., According to the social hierarchy among both higher and lower castes in India the Bhangis occupy the lowest of the low position as they are night soil removers. They are found in Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, etc. Also see Ibid.
 5. As per Hindu tradition Mehatar or Mihtar are the sweeper or scavenger caste. They were believed to be very unclean and despicable tribe.
 6. Lalbegi have been sweepers and scavenger, both activities considered as polluting. Many members of the community work as sweepers for the municipal authorities and hospitals in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The Muslim branch of the Lal Begi are known as Hasnati and the Hindu branch are known as Balmiki.
 7. In Punjab, sweepers are known as Chuhara, and this name has been derived from their business of collecting and sweeping up scraps (Chura-Jhurna). Also see, Srivastava, B. N. (1997). *Manual Scavenging in India: A Disgrace to the Country*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
 8. Sweepers in Bengal are known as Hari, the name is supposed to come from haddi, a bone; the Haris are the bone-gatherer, and was familiar to early settlers of Calcutta under the quaint designation, of the 'harry-wench'. Also see, Srivastava, B. N. (1997). *Manual Scavenging in India: A Disgrace to the Country*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
 9. Similarly, in Bombay Scavengers are known as Olganas or scrap-eaters.
 10. The term 'Schedule Castes' actually came into use during the British Raj, (The Government of India Act, 1935).
 11. Analysis and Recommendations in the context of The Prohibition of Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Bill, 2012, Submitted to Honorable Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha), by RashtriyaGarimaAbhiyan. http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/New_files/Key_Issues/Manual_scavenging/2013/Analysis_of_manual_scavenging_bill.pdf Accessed on: 19.01.2014 12:44hrs.
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 13. Violence against Manual Scavengers: Dalit Women In India. Submitted to: UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, During her visit to India between 22 April- 1 May 2013, Submitted by RashtriyaGarimaAbhiyan. <http://www.dalits.nl/pdf/violenceagainstmanualscavengers.pdf> Accessed: 18th January 2014 16:02 hrs
 14. Convener of RashtriyaGarimaAbhiyan since his university years, is fighting for the empowerment of Dalit specially Dalit-Muslims through various campaigns of Jan Sahas. Ashif was born in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh,

- and face several kinds of discrimination from very early in his life, because of his Dalit Muslim identity. According to Ashif Sheikh, in the year 2000 he joined the movement to eradicate manual scavenging, after conducting a study called Untouchability in Rural India.
15. In Muslims, Haila and Halalkhor communities are involved and often forced in manual scavenging, which faces more difficulties than other Dalits in abandoning manual scavenging.
 16. Thorat, Sukhdeo. (2004). Hindu Social System & Human Rights of Dalits. Critical Quest: New Delhi.
 17. This section has been developed on the basis of the writings of Swabhiman, Eradication of inhuman practice of manual scavenging and comprehensive Rehabilitation of manual scavenging. February 24, 2013 at 6:26 PM [www.Eradicationofinhumanpracticeof manual scavenging and comprehensiveRehabilitation of manual scavenging _ World Pulse.htm](http://www.EradicationofinhumanpracticeofmanualscavengingandcomprehensiveRehabilitationofmanualscavenging_WorldPulse.htm) Accessed on: 21.01.2014 13:32hrs
 18. Ibid and Contradictory to this practice of inhumanity the "Right to Health" is included as the fundamental rights of Indian citizen. Some of them even become a victim to psychological disorder.
 19. This challenge requires urgent need so that efficiency inclusiveness and accountability can be improved such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee programme (MGNREGP) and Aajeevika National Rural livelihoods mission (NRLM). Back in 2011 NRLM was launched with the aim to reduce poverty of 70 million BPL households so that they could access self-employment and gets skilled wages out of the employment opportunities. UNDP has also become a partner of NRLM so that they can easily get a technical support for all the implementation of the programs. Aajeevika National rural livelihood mission NRLM focuses towards the upliftment of the poor and needy families. The NRLM puts special effort so that they could help out the vulnerable group of people who are victim to social exclusion and discrimination.
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 26. "Extension in the tenure of the National Commission for SafaiKaramcharis (NCSK) up to 31st March 2016" (Press release). Press Information Bureau Government of India. 21 February 2013. <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=92367> Accessed on 18.05.2014 13:21hrs.
 27. Bhasin, Agrima (3 October 2012). "Washing off this stain will need more". The Hindu (Chennai, India).
 28. Manual scavenging was considered as the writ petition number 583 of 2003 on the hearing of 27th March 2014 by the Supreme Court. Orders have also been disposed by the Supreme Court with various directions of the government. <https://www.devex.com/projects/tenders/identification-profiling-and-livelihood-mapping-of-manual-scavengers-among-high-prevalence-states-in-india/140510> Accessed on: 21.01.2014 12:31hrs.

ISSN 2278-4039

JOURNAL OF POLITICAL STUDIES

Volume 7

March 2013

JOURNAL OF POLITICAL STUDIES

An annual Journal of the Department of Political Science
University of North Bengal

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Balmiki Community in Darjeeling Hills: A Socio-Economic Profile

Lekhraj Balmiki

Abstract

The present attempt tries to explore the socio-economic profile of the Balmiki community which has been engaged with their traditionally assigned occupation as scavengers and sweepers / Safai Karmcharis¹ in the Darjeeling hills. Being a subaltern community, the Balmikis represent a strange case of community yet to come out of the traditional fold.

Key Words: Balmiki, Scheduled Caste, Subaltern Community, Socio-Economic, Municipality

1. Introduction

“Balmiki²” and not “Valmiki” is the often preferred way of spelling by people from the Darjeeling. The *Balmiki* Community (also known as “*Bhangi*”³) in Darjeeling Hills, migrated from Rajasthan, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh etc.⁴ The characteristics of *Balmiki* community include rigid, hereditary membership in the caste into which one is born; the practice of marrying only members of the same caste (endogamy); restrictions on the choice of occupation and on personal contact with members of other castes; and the acceptance by each individual of a fixed place in society.⁵ The *Balmikis*’ has been perpetuated by the Hindu ideas of *Samsara* (reincarnation) and *Karma* (quality of action). According to their religious beliefs, all people are reincarnated on earth, at which time they have a chance to be born into another, higher caste, but only if they have been obedient to the rules of their caste in their previous life on earth. In this way *karma* has discouraged the *Balmiki* people from attempting to rise to a higher caste or to cross caste lines for social relations of any kind.⁶

1.1 Brief History of Balmikis in Darjeeling

The ‘*Balmiki*’, a Dalit community numbering 6,300⁷ is one of the socially stigmatized groups in three sub-divisions of Darjeeling district and totaling 529,000⁸ in the state of West Bengal. The history of the *Balmiki* in Darjeeling is as old as the establishment of the Hill station. During the colonial period they were brought from Alwar⁹ (Rajasthan) to remove human excrement and clean the town of Darjeeling. Thus the migration of the *Balmiki* from their native villages to the hill station of Darjeeling overlaps with the growth of the Municipal body post 1850s.¹⁰

With the establishment of Darjeeling Hills, the Balmikis were brought by the Britishers

from western India to work as manual scavengers. During the post independence period, Balmikis as, scavengers carried night soil on their heads for their livelihood. Thus the migration of the *Balmiki* from their native villages to the hill station of Darjeeling overlaps with the growth of the Municipal body post 1850s.¹¹ They were employed as sweepers in the Darjeeling Municipality, as daily wage earners. A separate locality was created especially for the Balmikis near the dumping ground known as '*Harijan Barrick*' which is properly known as '*Jamadar Line*'. They were provided houses with single room and a kitchen with no toilet facility, by the Municipality. With larger families it has been very difficult to stay in such single houses. Moreover, the municipal authority hardly takes any initiative for repairing or maintenance of these municipal quarters. Due to this, workers are suffering from various illnesses, including respiratory diseases, urinary tract infections and a range of skin diseases, eye disorders, gastrointestinal ailments, and even lung cancer. Furthermore, these workers had no access to basic amenities such as adequate housing, drinking water or electricity.¹² Over the years they have become an urban community in Darjeeling and represent a substantial number of the migrant non-native Nepali speaking communities.

1.2 Social Structure of the Balmikis

The Balmikis are divided into various sub-castes and exogamous lineages. They recognize themselves as *Sudras*.¹³ The community has retained its social practices as carried out by their forefathers, similar to their original homeland in the north western parts of India. The community adheres to the strict norms of the caste ridden society and has retained the *Chaudhury system*¹⁴ of caste organization even in contemporary times. These *Chaudhuries* are administrators and are elected areas wise, and is also hereditary in nature. After the death of the *Chaudhury* the eldest son inherits the position of his father. As such the other members from the community could not get the opportunity to become the *Chaudhury* of the community. Being at the apex of the community the *Chaudhuries* assert themselves to represent the collective determination of the community. The *Chaudhuries* have controlled the community and have been carrying out customary practices of pre-independence days. Child marriages (especially in case of female), restrictions on widows remarrying and arranged marriage practices are still followed widely within the community.

The notion of *Izzat*¹⁵ has been greatly developed by the *Chaudhuries*. From the very early age the children are discouraged for inter-caste marriage. Accidentally, if such cases occur the performer (offender) will be socially excluded from the community. The community *Chaudhuries* declares *hukka pani bandh*¹⁶ for such a member with the entire family. As such the member with his/her's entire family is socially boycotted by the entire community. Again, for inclusion the member has to pay the penalty known as *Daand*¹⁷ to the *Chaudhury Sanstha* including the whole

of the community members both in cash and kind, along with the onetime meal and drinks to the members. There have been certain cases when the member from community going for inter-caste marriage has been socially boycotted and was made to pay *Daand* for his inclusion in the community.

In 2006 the *Chaudhury Sanstha* made an announcement saying that, those who have married other caste are supposed to pay a *Daand*, by the 31st of December, 2006.¹⁸ And as a concession the amount of cash paid as *Daand* was kept Rs. 1100 and from 01st of January, 2007 it would be converted into Rs. 11000. As a result of the announcement the members those who had went for inter-caste marriages, started to pay the *Daand* as soon as possible within the due date. This was the time when maximum assortment was done by the *Chaudhury Sanstha* for their personal desires and the members of the community were exploited within the community itself. Hence, the headmen (*Chaudhuries*) of the community misused their powers and positions, for the sake of the guiding and restricting the community from losing its identity and *Izzat* in an alien territory.¹⁹

Thus, the *Chaudhury Sanstha* has auxiliary subjugated the entire Balmiki population with its reciprocal reimbursement caucus and policy. The complexities of the system have constituted a serious obstacle to Balmikis civil progress in Darjeeling.

Balmiki women are considered equal in family matter, participate in social and religious matters on an equal footing and contribute to the family income.²⁰ But in social sphere womenfolk have no high respect in the Balmiki Community. The family is patriarchal in its character and women could not enjoy enough liberty. Male child is given more importance. There has been no such instance when girls could mix freely with young men, which is treated as shameless or a sin. Married women cannot take equal part in the religious performance. Moreover, the married women are kept '*ghunghat/ghoonghat*'²¹. *Ghoonghat* is compulsion for the women section and has been used defensible aphorism, which is a mark of respect to the elder's male section. The stumpy grade of women in Balmiki community can be traced to a number of interrelated economic, legal, cultural, political, and institutional factors. Women's poverty is exacerbated by caste and ethnicity-based discrimination, as the caste system defines access to resources and opportunities, leaving women more disadvantaged than men at every level. Women have unequal access to food, education and health care, limited opportunities to earn incomes, restricted access to and control over productive resources, and few effective legal rights. They are further disadvantaged by a lack of awareness of their legal rights and opportunities. Constant such kind of practices against the women within the Balmiki community has led to the exclusion by other section of people in hills, where the women benefit from maximum civil liberties and emancipation, and to a great extent verbal in political spheres.²² They are kept private in the domestic works of the households.

Male section has prohibited women from taking education in order to continue male domination in the community. In this context Hindu religious text has given a number of concessions to men but has imposed severe restrictions on women. Subcastes endogamy and lineage exogamy are the marriage rules. Adult marriage and monogamy are prevalent and most marriages are negotiated. Vermilion, fingerings, toe-rings and nose pins are the marriage symbols for the women. Divorce is not allowed. Families are most often nuclear in nature. Property passes from father to sons and the eldest son inherits the office and titles that were held by his father. Women have specific roles in economic, social and ritual spheres and in mundane, marriage and death. Birth pollution is observed. The marriage rituals are performed at the bride's place and her parents host the marriage feast. The marriage is consummated at the groom's residence. They cremate their dead and dispose of the mortal remains in holy waters. Death pollution is observed.²³ As such women have been left behind with the limited role to play both in social and economic spheres.

A major problem among the Balmiki is debt. A common saying of the Bhangi is that they are born in debt, live in debt and will die in debt. Social customs has been restrained and is given more significance within the community. Moncha is a ritual which is performed after the death of the family head (father/grandfather). The Mocha has to be decided by the *Chaudhuries of the Community, declaring it as Naw-beda-aar-paar*,²⁴ where all the members of the community participate for *Pagdi*²⁵ from all over Darjeeling district. This has resulted in being good customers and easy victims/preys for the moneylenders²⁶ and the economically stronger groups who charge them with high rate of interest.

There has been little effort to prevent such creamy social customs, exclusion and to reintegrate those who have become excluded through unemployment. In addition, immediate attention needs to be provided to ascertain these kinds of practices, and to maximize awareness orientation programmes so that they can sustain in monetary and societal spheres.²⁷

The condition of scavenging community is miserable. Since most of the people from the community are uneducated, social evils are prevalent in the community. Poverty gives birth to different things including alcoholism, wife beating, gambling. Most of the children cannot go to school. The girl children become part of the profession.²⁸ Dropout cases from schools can also be noticed. At a very early stage the children start helping their parents in profession.

In case of education they hardly get best schools and colleges, because of economic problems. Moreover, the mental setup of carrying out the occupation of parents has made them least interested in higher education. This has resulted in virtual isolation

of community from the rest of the society and in continuous grip of superstition and backwardness. The children continue to suffer as parents found little time to spend with them and their caste and geographical isolation led to further marginalization in the schools. The fact of the matter is even when publicly untouchability has been eliminated yet caste system is very much prevalent and nobody would deny it. The other fact is that everybody knows about Dom, Mehtar, Bhangis and Helas and such terms, denigrating they may look for a civilized society yet continue in practice. Children, inherit, these terms from their parents and in turn these communities face racial prejudices from every one. It is therefore, not ironical that names of their localities seal their fate as areas are always mentioned with the community names hence names like *Harijan Bustee*. They remind us how crude our system was vis-à-vis the untouchables. The very foundation of the discrimination in India is caste system, which denigrate Dalits and hurt the very dignity and pride of an individual, which are essentials for his growth and development.

A literacy rate among the Balmikis is low because they cannot afford it, though they view education favorably. Balmikis favour formal education for their boys and girls who study up to graduate and postgraduate levels depending upon the individual aptitude and circumstantial constraints. In maximum cases it can be seen that female child education is given less importance as they are treated *Paraya Dhan*.²⁹ Arrangements for the study of the girls are conspicuous by its absence. However, in recent years, especially in urban areas of Darjeeling town, girls are being educated at primary level.

They are further disadvantaged by a lack of awareness of their legal rights and opportunities. Constant such kind of practices against the women within the Balmiki community has led to the exclusion by other section of people in hills, where the women benefit from maximum civil liberties and emancipation, and to a great extent verbal in political spheres.³⁰ The complexities of the system have constituted a serious obstacle to Balmikis civil progress in Darjeeling. The trend today is toward the dissolution of the artificial barriers between the castes. The severity of the caste structure of the Hindus was broken to a great extent during the epoch of British rule in India.³¹ But the obligation of the son to follow the calling of his father is still binding; men being from low caste have not risen to high ranks and positions of power; and excommunication, however, loss of caste, is another serious problem as it might formerly have been. In addition, the caste system was from time to time burst from within by ecclesiastical schisms, most notably the rise of Buddhism, itself a reaction from, and protest against, the intolerable bondage of the caste system.³² The governance has not really got itself rid of the caste system though it may claim to have demolished the untouchability at least on the papers. Therefore, it is essential for the government to make its plan in a comprehensive way and not respond to a situation on purely technical way.³³

1.3 Economic Life of the Balmikis

Over the years Balmikis have become an urban community in Darjeeling and represent a substantial number of the migrant non-native Nepali speaking communities. With the introduction of septic latrines, the practice of carrying buckets of excrement on their heads is gone but they still work to clear blockages in sewers where they are half submerged in filth. The stigma remains. They are still identified with the work and considered untouchable and stereotyped as the “*Jamadar*”.³⁴ In other words the community is stereotyped to belong and represent the category of sweepers, *safai karamcharis*, *Jamadar* or sanitary workers. Given that experience they have always been marginalized and treated as outcasts socially, economically and culturally.

With the development of Darjeeling Township, they were employed by the municipality to work as the sweepers/safai karmachris in the Conservancy Department. But with the creation of septic latrines, the practice of carrying buckets of excrement on their heads is gone but they still work to clear blockages in sewers where they are half submerged in filth. They have a relatively high, steady salary³⁵, retirement benefits, and so forth.³⁶ But still for this stable remuneration (permanent job) they have to pay inducement³⁷ to the Officer In Charge in the municipality of Conservancy Department. Thus, the tendency of corruption and exploitation of the Balmikis is very high in the Darjeeling Municipality. Besides, this they have been regular victims by the section supervisor, who are paid *Bhanja*³⁸ both in cash and kind. Still, this kind of practices has never been reported by the victims neither to the authority in the municipality nor to the police. But even though their relative well-being is a source of envy, and their job is almost hereditary.

Now a good number of them serve as sweepers in public and private sector establishments. They have shifted from serving some households on contract basis to being in regular service. Moreover, they have also been found in some unorganized sectors such as sweeping the upper caste houses and cleaning toilets which they term as *tekhas*,³⁹ and in spite of positive action programmes, their participation in the public sphere is low. More than 80% of the Balmiki population⁴⁰ is dependent on the municipality for their livelihood. Though they have a regular source of income but their living standards has not been uplifted because of their social and cultural practices where huge amount of money is squander. In some cases they even have to sustain their families in their native homeland thus, their economic condition at stake.

The bias against them is as such that even if some of the people belonging to Balmiki community who want to leave the work find it nearly impossible to get an alternative job. It also reflects that there is virtually no entry of this community in the government sector as well as other labour work. It clearly means that while in

the sanitation work of the municipalities there is a one hundred percent reservation for them, there is virtually no effort to delink them from this tradition and rehabilitate them elsewhere. And by merely proclaiming that government has banned toilets will not bring out of the chaos that the social system has inflicted upon them. One is that there is still scavenging and other grave fact is that absentee Safai Karmcharis is growing. That means because of relatively better salaries and contract system, those with connections in the higher ups get the job while the issue of cleaning and going down the drainage and sewage line. In spite of the fact that this is most ill-treated and inhuman work that any human could do, the women continue to do it because of financial crisis. We all know that this does not really fetch them any money. The tragedy is that even the schemes for poor do not reach them.⁴¹

Those who are well educated, and their number is very limited, do not get job according to their education. The scheme of the government has further marginalized them because the issue is addressed from an economic viewpoint and not a socio-cultural problem without giving enough thought to their rehabilitation. In this profession, a majority of workers are women. They leave to work in early hours of the morning without even having the tea and return late in the afternoon. During that crucial period, nobody is at home to take care of their children. They have to fetch themselves resulting in their inability to go school.⁴²

1.4 The Political Position of the Community with Special Reference to Political Participation.

The *Balmiki* community under the auspices of *Balmiki Harijan Sangh*⁴³ is mobilizing the disposition of progress to protect their rights and raise their concerns. The Sangh has been taking the initiative for the upliftment of the community. Though migrated but they have projected themselves and who claim to be a gorkhey (gorkha), are now active in awareness and upliftment of the community though the pace is low. Looking back to the history of this gorkhey Balmikis, they are now the part of Darjeeling hills like other communities (gorkhey Marwari, Gorkhey Bhutias, and others). Almost three generation of Balmikis live in Darjeeling and they participate in every festival of the Darjeeling hills. The Balmikis have witnessed both the complex transitions comparing the First Wave (1980s under Subhash Ghising) and Second Wave (Post 2007 under Bimal Gurung) in the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling Hills. In the first wave of the Gorkhaland movement however, the Balmikis were either politically unaware or socially not in a position to identify themselves within the majority of the hill people. They didn't have any awareness of education or alternative employment, because of which they were ignored by the majority Gorkhey. But, in the Second Wave of Gorkhaland Movement (Post 2007) under Bimal Gurung, the Balmikis got an opportunity to show their majority and participate in the movement. Over the past 20 years, an emerging Balmikis identity and social consciousness has created a new political consciousness among them. Their consciousness is by no

means limited to the SCs. It has begun to symbolize a much broader sector of the oppressed and hitherto excluded social strata. It is based on an attempted, though by no means realized solidarity and discriminated Balmiki people. Their consciousness has made a political assertion though slow in nature. Thus, the oppressed Balmikis have begun to realize their power. This new spirit of independence among the Balmikis is not confined only to the socio-economic but also political phenomenon in Darjeeling hills. This together with the logic of fresh realignment of political party Gorkha Jan Mukti Morch (GJMM) has made the Balmikis the new pivotal players in Hills politics. The Balmikis and the other marginalized communities hold immense political potential, if only they can be brought together as a powerful force, this is the case when Mr. Bimal Gurung welcomed the marginalized community for a common cause of Gorkhaland. The impact of the Balmiki Participation in Gorkhaland Movement on the Community itself is twofold. First, material and political gains in the aftermath of the Gorkhaland movement. The hope of allocation of benefits to the community derived by way of the arrangements post movement; and that their political participation would enable them to be more politically conscious with potential leadership skills so as to be capable of forming, performing and marketing their own claims and conditions in future politics. Secondly, the negative impact is largely a perceived threat of being further marginalized in future by the dominant identities in control of power and allocation of resources.⁴⁴

Though they are traditionally Manual Scavengers and the only exception is the post of a sweeper. But by supporting the movement they have proved that being a son or a daughter of safai karmchari, they don't want that it should be restricted, that he/she should have equal opportunity to dream well and to be in high positions. Accepting better future for the coming generation of the Balmikis this dissenting voice might led for better governance.⁴⁵

1.5 Conclusion and Observation

In recent years considerable strides toward eradicating unjust social and economic aspects of the caste system as practiced in India have been made through educational and reform movements.⁴⁶ Despite several official attempts to improve the status of members of the lowest caste, the Dalits remain '*oppressed people*'.⁴⁷ The *Balmikis* as Dalits thus remain the '*lowest of the low*', in the hierarchical ordering of social positions in the Hindu Caste order. By taking up the jobs that nobody else will do, the *Balmiki* provide the most crucial service to the society and therefore help our civic system survive. Yet the society seldom takes notice of them. In fact, instead of giving them the dignity of labour that they deserve, the society treats them as filthy and polluting. And the only time that *Balmiki* are in news, is when the community is attacked/ostracized by the '*higher*' castes. Other times the community is practically invisible and unheard.⁴⁸

Balmikis, who are pushed towards margin systematically from the past in the name of religious/cultural practice, and social order, are still victimized in the society. Despite the legal provision of equality too, the society is not completely free from the influence of long run practice of caste based discrimination. Protecting the rights of marginalized and vulnerable people is probably the most overlooked and disregarded area of human rights in India.

Sanitizing scavengers' work environment does not always guarantee liberation from the stigma that has been attached to the community for so long. The government of India needs to review the schemes to ensure that they successfully benefit the target group in a sustainable manner. Moreover, it should not be ignored that it is crucial to mobilize scavengers so as to attain higher-education and employment opportunities other than sweeping.⁴⁹

Notes and References

- 1 Scavenger means and includes a Safai Karamchari wholly or partially employed for manual handling of human excreta and includes his dependents. Safai Karamchari means a person engaged in, or employed for any sanitation work and includes his dependents. http://www.stscodisha.gov.in/pdf/scheme_sc_st_NSKFDC.pdf Accessed on 12.12.2012 3:30 hrs.
- 2 The title of Balmiki (or valmiki) was affected by Balmikis (or Valmikis) to distance themselves from the manner in which they had been constructed, historically, as the lowest caste strata of the untouchables; as the sweepers, or scavengers (for an overview of the manner in which this initially occurred, see: Mahar, P.M. 1960, *Changing Religious Practices of an Untouchable Caste*, Economic Development And Cultural Change. Vol. 8, no.3, pp. 279-287).
- 3 "Bhangī", is another widely used Hindi term to denote the 'Balmiki' meaning 'one addicted to drinking bhang' (a drink made from marijuana leaves). See, Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). "The Balmiki Community in Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness." in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). *A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal*. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications. Also see. Sharma, Rama. (1995). *Bhangī, Scavenger in Indian Society: Marginality, Identity, and Politicization of the Community*. New Delhi: M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- 4 C.f. Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). *Ibid*. Also see. Sharma, Rama. (1995). *Ibid*.
- 5 Shyamlal. (1992). *The Bhangī: A Sweeper Caste, its Socio-Economic Portraits: With Special Reference to Jodhpur City*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan. C.f. Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). "The Balmiki Community in Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness." in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). *A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal*. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications. Also see. Sharma, Rama. (1995). *Bhangī, Scavenger in Indian Society: Marginality, Identity, and Politicization of the Community*. New Delhi: M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd.
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- 8 People-In-IndiaProfile. <http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopleprofile.php?peo3=16399&rog3=IN> Accessed: 31.08.2012 20:31hrs
- 9 Gurung, Madan Kr. "*Darjeeling Municipality: Then and Now*" in Gurung, Madan Kr., & Bhutia Passang. (Ed.). (2000). Souvenir: *Darjeeling Municipality 1850-2000*. Darjeeling: Darjeeling Municipality. Pp.29.
- 10 Lekhraj Balmiki. (2012). '*The Second Wave of Gorkhaland Movement and the Marginalized: A case study of Balmiki Community in their Diaspora*', paper presented at UGC sponsored National Seminar: Regional Movements: Identity Question And National Integration: Contextualizing India's Growing Regional Assertions. SAP (DRS Phase-II) University of North Bengal 15th -16th March, 2012.
- 11 Lekhraj Balmiki. (2012). '*The Second Wave of Gorkhaland Movement and the Marginalized: A case study of Balmiki Community in their Diaspora*', paper presented at UGC sponsored National Seminar: Regional Movements: Identity Question And National Integration: Contextualizing India's Growing Regional Assertions. SAP (DRS Phase-II) University of North Bengal 15th -16th March, 2012.
- 12 Asian Human Rights Corresponding School: Asian Human Rights Commission . Lesson 2: *An Examination of the situation faced by Dalit communities working as manual scavengers and manhole workers as well as the plight of Dalit women*. <http://www.hrschool.org/doc/mainfile.php/lesson65/231/> Accessed: 25.02.2013 21:35 hrs.
- 13 Shudra, also spelled Sudra, Sanskrit Ūdra, the fourth and lowest of the traditional *varnas*, or social classes, of India, traditionally artisans and labourers. The term does not appear in the earliest Vedic literature. Unlike the members of the three *dvija* ("twice-born") *varnas* —Brahmans (priests and teachers), Kshatriya (nobles and warriors), and Vaishya (merchants) —Shudras are not permitted to perform the *upanayana*, the initiatory rite into the study of the Vedas (earliest sacred literature of India). The Shudra *varna* includes a wide spectrum of endogamous status groups with dominant, landowning groups at one end of the scale and near-untouchables at the other. These variations derive from the belief that certain behaviour patterns and occupations are polluting, a concept that gave rise to a distinction between "clean" and "unclean" Shudra groups; for example, washers, tanners, shoemakers, sweepers, and scavengers were once relegated to the status of untouchable. As evidence of group mobility in the caste system, some observers have pointed out that many castes claiming Kshatriya and Vaishya status gradually emerged from the Shudra class. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/571589/Shudra> Accessed: 28.09.2013 12:23 hrs
- 14 Chaudhury are elected areas wise, in Darjeeling they follow nine biras (meaning areas) at present there are nine chaudhury in 32 wards of Darjeeing Municipality area. See Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). "*The Balmiki Community in Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness.*" in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). *A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal*. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications.
- 15 The honour or good reputation of a person, family, or group of people. <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/izzat> Accessed on 28.12.2012 17:30

hrs.

- 16 In case if the inter-caste marriage takes place the member is not allowed to enter the other community members house. Moreover, he/she with the entire family is not invited or not allowed to participate in any ceremony of the community. As such the member/family is isolated or excluded within the community. The community members are not allowed to have any kind of relations with that family.
- 17 Daand is a penalty paid by the member to *Chaudhury Sanstha* including whole community both in cash and kind, and proper meal with drinks has to be offered and also has to apologies in front of the community members. The Chaudhuries has to be informed regarding the payment of the Daand, and accordingly they finalize the date and day for the payment. Within the given date the person has to invite the entire community member for Daand. The person has to pay a certain amount of cash to the Chaudhury Sanstha (till 2006, the cash was 1100 rupees) along with proper meal, such pork, roti and rice, and drinks are also offered to the Chaudhuries and community members.
- 18 This part has been interview with Shri Kailesh Ram Balmiki, a person who was compelled to pay the *Daand* because he married a female from other caste. Personal interview with Shri Kailesh Ram Balmiki, who paid the Daand because he had married an outcaste; during the given year (2006) the Chaudhuries has given concession, supposed to pay Rs 1100 with proper food and drinks were offered to the whole Community.
- 19 Lekhraj Balmiki. (2013). '*Darjeeling Municipality and the Case of the Balmikis*', paper presented at ICSSR sponsored National Conference: Scavenger Communities: Problem, Dynamics and Way Forward. Organised by Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. 16th – 17th September, 2013.
- 20 Singh, K.S. (2010). *The Scheduled Castes*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 235-243.
- 21 The Sari grew in length with one end used to cover the bosom, the head and the face. This allowed women to work in the fields beside men or even ride a horse like men. Traditionally, in some parts of India, women are supposed to have a Ghoonghat in front of the family elders and men, except husbands and close family members.
- 22 Lekhraj Balmiki. (2012). '*The Second Wave of Gorkhaland Movement and the Marginalized: A case study of Balmiki Community in their Diaspora*', paper presented at UGC sponsored National Seminar: Regional Movements: Identity Question and National Integration: Contextualizing India's Growing Regional Assertions. SAP (DRS Phase-II) University of North Bengal 15th -16th March, 2012.
- 23 Singh, K.S. (2010). *The Scheduled Castes*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Pp. 105-112.
- 24 This phrase is used to call upon all the members of the community along with entire family and relatives, its some kind of open invitation
- 25 Pagdi is a turbon which has to be put on by the Chaudharies and relatives to the next head in the family specially in case of elder son who takes the charge of the family.

- 26 In most cases these moneylenders belong to the Upper Caste. However, money lending business cuts across the caste association in the sub-continent wherein the moneyed class continues to control the business of lending and earning interest on the principle amount. The Afghans for instance have been traditionally a ready source of liquid cash for the cash trapped individuals.
- 27 Lekhraj Balmiki. (2013). '*Darjeeling Municipality and the Case of the Balmikis*', paper presented at ICSSR sponsored National Conference: Scavenger Communities: Problem, Dynamics and Way Forward. Organised by Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. 16th – 17th September, 2013.
- 28 Swachchakar Dignity: Manual Scavenging in Uttar-Pradesh Status of manual scavengers in Gorakhpur, Uttar-Pradesh By Vidya Bhushan Rawat, Social Development Foundation, Delhi, Ram Bhuvan, Jan Kalyan Sansthan, Chauri Chaura, Kirti Singh, Social Development Foundation, Delhi Thursday, February 22, 2007 <http://swachchakar.blogspot.in/2007/02/manual-scavenging-in-uttar-pradesh.html> Accessed: 25.02.2013 20:29 hrs
- 29 As per Indian Tradition, a girl is wedded to a boy who is her Pati (husband). The parents brought up the girl child to her adulthood to wed out to her in laws in a different home. Though she was given birth by a couple, she will be living her valued period of rest of the life with her husband not with her parents. It seems that she has been given birth and brought up to handed over to another party. So, a girl is called Paraya Dhan. (The girls are considered Laxmi, the Goddess of Money).
- 30 Lekhraj Balmiki. (2012). '*The Second Wave of Gorkhaland Movement and the Marginalized: A case study of Balmiki Community in their Diaspora*', paper presented at UGC sponsored National Seminar: Regional Movements: Identity Question and National Integration: Contextualizing India's Growing Regional Assertions. SAP (DRS Phase-II) University of North Bengal 15th - 16th March, 2012.
- 31 Mathew Atmore Sherring, *Hindu Tribes and Castes as Represented in Benaras, 3 vols.* Calcutta: 1872-1881. *The Tribes and Castes of the Madras Presidency.* London: 1909.
- 32 Jaideva, Paramanshi. (2002). *Dalits in Early Buddhism.* Delhi: Kalpaz Publications. Also see, Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. "*Buddhism and Communism*", National Seminar on Marx, Ambedkar and Polarization of Oppressed and Exploited Classes in India. New Delhi: Sanjivayya Institute of Socio-Economic Studies, 1991. Also see, Ambedkar, Dr. B.R. (1957). *The Buddha and his Dhamma.* Bombay: Siddharth College Publications.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 According to Oxford Dictionaries Jamadar is a person who sweeps homes or offices as job. <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/jamadar> Accessed on 12.12.2012 at 1 : 10 am. See, Sharma, Balchandra. (1962). *Nepali Shabda Kosh. Royal Nepal Acedamy.* Pp. 366. Also see Ralph Lilley Turner, (1931). *A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language.* London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trybner & Co., Ltd. Pp 209, 'where Jamadar has been defined as the lowest Commissioned Gurkha or Indian rank in the Indian Army'. Also see Rai, R.B. "*Jiten Mitra: Sab Bhandra Youge Purano Commissioner*", in Gurung, Madan Kr., & Bhutia, Passang. (Ed.). (2000). *Souvenir.*

Darjeeling Municipality 1850-2000. Darjeeling: Darjeeling Municipality. Pp.41. also see Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). "The Balmiki Community in Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness." in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). *A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal*. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications.

- 35 Regular monthly Basic pay ranges from Rs 9000-Rs 12000, only if the employ is permanent in Darjeeling Municipality. Source: Staff Statistic Report of Darjeeling Municipality as on 01.04.2012
- 36 Deliege, Robert. (2001). *The Untouchables of India*. New York: oxford International Publishers Ltd. (Translated from French by Nora Scott).
- 37 In 1998, the people those who were given permanent (made permanent) posts according to the Municipality Order, were asked to may Rs. 2000 individually, this part has been interviewed on the field survey with the Balmiki Harijan Sangh member. One of the employ named Lila Dev was withheld as she refused to pay the bribe for her permanent post. Similarly, in the year 2006, the amount was increased to Rs. 10000- 30000 depending on the capacity of the employ for being permanent.
- 38 Bhanja is bribe paid to the supervisor of a particular section by the Safai Karamchari.
- 39 Tekhas are unorganized sectors where the community men/women members work as sweepers and earn his/her family livelihood. They are paid very low wages and sometimes both in cash wage and kinds during festivals.
- 40 See, Staff Statistic Report of Darjeeling Municipality as on 01.04.2012.
- 41 Swachchakar Dignity: Manual Scavenging in Uttar-Pradesh Status of manual scavengers in Gorakhpur, Uttar-Pradesh By Vidya Bhushan Rawat, Social Development Foundation, Delhi, Ram Bhuvan, Jan Kalyan Sansthan, Chauri Chaura, Kirti Singh, Social Development Foundation, Delhi Thursday, February 22, 2007 <http://swachchakar.blogspot.in/2007/02/manual-scavenging-in-uttar-pradesh.html>. Accessed: 25.02.2013 20:29 hrs
- 42 Swachchakar Dignity: A Cry for Change (Documentry) *Badlav Ki Chah*. Sunday, September 24, 2006. <http://swachchakar.blogspot.in/2006/09/cry-for-change.html>. Accessed 25.02.2013 20:40 hrs
- 43 Balmiki Harijan Sangh was established in 1948, Registration No.:- 3/38713.
- 44 Lekhraj Balmiki. (2013). "Dissenting Voices, Transformation and People's Assertions in East and North East India Unheard Voice: Balmiki Community in Darjeeling". in Pradip Kumar Sengupta and Manas Chakrabarty (Ed.). (2013). *Dissenting Voices, Collective Actions and Politics of Assertions: A Pan- Indian Perspective*. Kolkata: Levant Books.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Rajawat, Mamta. (2006). *Dalits: Role of Education*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. Also see, Wilfred, Felix. (2000). *Dalit Empowerment*. Bangalore: NBCLC.
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- 48 C.f. Lekhraj Balmiki. (2011). "The Balmiki Community in Darjeeling: Caste Consciousness." in Terence Mukhia (Ed.). *A Multi-Disciplinary Perusal*. Darjeeling: Kalpa Griha Publications. Also see. Sharma, Rama. (1995). *Bhangi, Scavenger in Indian Society: Marginality, Identity, and Politicization of the Community*. New Delhi: M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd. Also see, Gurung, Madan Kr., & Bhutia, Passang. (Ed.). (2000). *Souvenir: Darjeeling Municipality 1850-2000*. Darjeeling: Darjeeling Municipality. pp. 87-90. rivastava, Suresh Narain. (1980). *Harijans in Indian Society: A Cultural Study of the Status of Harijans and Other Backward Classes from Earliest Times to the Present Day*. Lucknow: Upper India Publishing House. Valmiki, Omprakesh. (2003). *Joothan: A Dalits Life*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- 49 Maya Suzuki. *Indian Government Strategy Against Caste Inequality: "Liberating" Untouchables in the Context of Welfare Schemes*, in Journal of Political Science and Sociology No.12. pp 65-83.

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