

SCHEDULED CASTE AND THE POLITICS OF MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract: The present article analyses the relation between Scheduled Caste and politics of Maharashtra. It also discusses the Maratha dominance during the post-Independence period. After the implementation of Mandal Commission, various political parties have clarified their views. They have shown the connection between the Hindu dalit castes and Ambedkarite Movement. They have also mentioned that how the politics of NavBaudhas takes place in Vidhan Sabha and other elections of Maharashtra.

Keywords: Bahujan., Caste, Movement, Reservation, Tribes, Women.

Relation between Caste and Politics –

According to Dr. Suhas Palshikar, in the politics of Maharashtra the reference of Kunbi – Maratha caste is always made. In the group, Maraths always claim the highness of the caste but the group is commonly observed as intermixed the Kunbi caste everywhere. During the historical development some castes believed themselves to be Maratha or Kunbi because of the attraction of Kshatriyatva or the likeness in occupations. These groups were identified as Marathas or Kunbis by other caste – groups too. Because of this complexity, a large group of population is referred as Maratha – Kunabi. Many claims are done about the population of this group too. The leaders of this group as well as the other caste also believe that population of Maharashtra may be comprise of the Maratha – Kunbi caste up to 40% or more than that ¹.

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The 1931 census mentioned the peasant - castes separately. Therefore, other peasant castes were also include in it. So it can be said that Maratha – Kunabi caste may have the population up to 31%. If we exclude other peasant castes, The proportion comes down to 28 – 29 % as per guess².

The Development of Maratha Dominance During the Post IndependencePeriod :-

A large group become aware about the caste during the non-Brahmnical movement. This Sense of being a Kshatriya or the claimers of the ruling power. Because of the insistance of Kshatriyatva, Maratha caste become conscious of its higher place in the hierarchy of hindu social system and also became aware of its centralness as a peasant in a village – economy. This gave impetus to this group to lead and make the political union. The consciousness about the place in traditions as well as ambition to lead is seen in Maratha Caste consciousness³.

Another thing which came out of the Non – Brahmanical movement is the peculiar structure of Maratha Caste. The broader aspect of ‘ Farming Castes ’ transformed in to Maratha – Kunbi caste group. The traditional distinction between subcastes remained constant, the compitionsamongthemeselves for superiority also continued but the Maratha – Kunbi social fact dominated it. This caste group is in fact a political caste group, means Maratha – Kunbi is a political happening^{3A}.Because of the formation of this caste group. A major chunk of Marathi population was included in Maratha Kunbi section. Approximately one third of total population is included in this only section and hence we are the common people this feeling was developed among the Maratha – Kunbis. Along with this the process of inclusion provedbenificial regarding the democratic politics. Major reason being a major section of population, who is considered as Maratha – Kunbi, can legally claim the political power. In this way, the formation of inclusive Maratha – Kunbi group and its politics of population contributed to the dominance of Maratha – Kunbi group in Maharashtra Politics⁴.

The third element along with the caste consciousness and the population is the concept of “ Bahujan ”. It became possible to establish their own caste – interests for Maratha – Leaders on the thoughts of multi – castes are all other non – Brahmin castes because the issue of welfare of all other castes too.The Maratha relationship took the responsibility to protect the interest of all other non – Brahmin castes. MaharshiVitthal Ramji Shinde put the Bahujana thought which

expand itself beyond 'Caste'. Keshavrao Jedhe attempted the politics of broader perspective who had the relationship of majority of castes⁵. This legacy was continued by Yashwantrao Chavan. He brought the phrase 'Bahujana Community' in to vogue. The Bahujana Community, which included the Maratha – Kunbi Caste, has the same interest, those of Maratha – Kunbi castes was the view of Yashwantrao Chavan⁶.

Economic Basis of Hegemony :-

Economic control is the basis of hegemony. Without this a social group cannot control the political power. Maratha – Kunbi caste is fundamentally a rural and farming group. The place of this group in rural society is an important topic. Maratha – Kunbi caste holds the major section of Maharashtra's farming land. Agriculture is the most important factor in rural economy. During the British rule, because of Peshwa – rule and the money – lenders, Brahmins and trader castes had large sector of farming lands. Though Marathas didn't have full control over them, they had partnership in them⁷. Land reform regulations changed this situation. Agricultural land came into control of peasant castes. And hence Marathas controlled the rural economy.

After formation of Maharashtra state the Maratha leadership made policies to strengthen this control over rural economy. To control agricultural economy the control over water is also necessary, To implement the policy, the irrigational dam constructions were started after 1960. Useful decisions for 'Green Revolution' were taken. In this way, The control over land was supported by economical dominance. Eventually the state power came into control of Marathas, which resulted into taking the useful decisions in interest of rich agricultural class after 1960.

The expansion of economical dominance became possible. A co – operative movement started with the establishment of sugar factories. The Government encouraged the co – operative movement. The network of credit societies, District co – operatives banks, Small scale co – operative institutes was established in rural area. The government supported it by sanctioning grants and loans for it. This process instigated the Maratha Youth to engage in the co – operative movement. In this way, they participated in the rural political process. It also resulted into building of local political support. Politics did not remain only for elections; it became the factor for constant support. Co- operative movement created a control of local leadership over the

economical sources. Co –operative institutions created control over economy of area. Co –operative leaders strengthened the control over rural economy. Because of announced objectives of co – operative movement, this control got the form of collective betterment and hence the Maratha dominance was not opposed for a long time⁸.

After the formation of Maharashtra state, in a very short period, three tier system of local government was generated. It was democratic decentralization of power on local and rural level for encourage the participation of people in local decision making process. ZillaParishads, Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayat were formed in Maharashtra to hand over the tricks of development to the localites. Through this institutions, Maratha caste got connected with district level power centers like co – operative institutions, local self government which also proved to be instruments of maintaining the Maratha hegemony. Thus Maratha got control over local level development machinery. District level leaders participated in ZillaParishads. Control over ZillaParishad is directentry to interfere in the district economy. These local institutes connected the political and economical hegemony. The local level Maratha hegemonical network got connected with state level Maratha hegemony through it.

During Sanyukta Maharashtra Movement, the pride of Maharashtra got the expression YashwantraoChavan succeeded in combining the pride of Marathi and the interest of Marathas during this time. He emphasised that the Marathi state should be a common mans state and a state of Bahujanas, To fulfill the interests of non – Brahmins without opposing Brahmins was his strategy. YashwantraoChavan had once told that “Maharashtra would not belong to any one particular caste”. Like the politically inclusive ‘ Bahujan Community ’, he attempted to saw the culturally inclusive “Marathi Culture” Concept by the spread of education, encouragement to the Marathi language, literature awards, the project of Marathi encyclopedia, etc. Through this attempts, he tried to avoid the opposition of Brahmins to the Marathi Leadership. Thus after 1960, Maratha hegemony did not remain anti-Brahmanical. On the other hand it stood for the interest of Brahmins.

Internal conflict in Maratha Kunbi community and internal opposition was a problematic factor in development of Maratha hegemony. Ancestral legacy, history, were the factors on which some

of the Marathas were relied. They were far away from Kunbis peasant Marathas. The economic interests of both groups in Maratha Community were different. Their cultural ambitions were different. Yashwantrao Chavan knew that it was difficult to maintain only the interests of elite Marathas. So he tried to develop new cultural and economical expectations of Maratha peasants and the community⁹.

The socio-economic conditions of Maharashtra contributed to the development of Maratha hegemony. On one hand, we can observe the limitation raised to the Maratha hegemony in relation to economy and the ambition of capitalist. Among them, how the Maratha leaders compromised with Brahmins, we saw it above. While making compromise with capitalists we should note that the sector of Maratha dominance was none other than rural sector. Mumbai has been an industrial hub since long time. Even in 1960 it was so. The capitalists were interested in extending their business in Maharashtra, so it was quite evident that the Maratha hegemony would get limited there. The development of Maratha dominance was also possible by preferring the development of Mumbai and the urban Maharashtra.

Maratha dominance was developed step by step during the next two decades after 1950. During this period, Yashwantrao Chavan was leading the Maratha – Kunbi community. He tried to maintain this hegemony. He tried to co – ordinate between the ambitions of the regional and the district level leaders. One can say that he gave a particular form to Maratha hegemony and partly provided a legitimacy to it. During Chavan’s leadership the conflicts and competition among the Maratha leaders was decreased and communal integrity among them was achieved. However, this internal competitions and protests never ceased thoroughly even in its peak period of glory. This is why the Maharashtra politics always remained live because of the internal competitions among great Maratha leaders like Rajarambapu Patil, Vasantdada Patil, Anandrao Chavan and Balasaheb Desai.

Table No 1

Reservation according to the Population Proportion decided by Mandal Commission

Category	Population (%)	Reservation (%)
General	25.58	50.50
OBC	51.56	27.00

SC	15.05	15.00
ST	07.51	07.50
Total	100.00	100.00

[Ref. :- KaradeJagannath –Aarakshan : DhoranAaniVastav, 2005, Page 65]¹⁰

In India castes are classified in to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes. In Maharashtra 299 castes are included in Other Backward Classes by Mandal Commission Maharashtra government made categories more precisely. The Maharashtra government had already classified Other Backward Castes, VimuktJati, Nomadic Tribes, etc. They are classified by the following way :-

- 1) VimuktaJati
- 2) BhatakyaJamati (Nomadic Tribes) (Banjara)
- 3) BhatakyaJati (Dhagars and a like)
- 4) BhatkyaJati (Vanjari and a like)
- 5) Special Backward Class (Gowari, Mana, Koshti, Sali, few sub castes in Koli castes)
- 6) Other Backward Class (Kunabi, Mali).

This classification is done for administrative and political purpose and it does not reflect the true social structure of Maharashtra society¹¹.

Mandal Commission and Political Parties :-

In year 1977, Janata Party government came into power on 20th December 1978, Second Backward Class Commission was established and also promised that if the party forms the government, They will certainly apply the Mandal Commission¹².

In the year 1991, the Janata Dal Government came into Power. V. P. Singh, who was the strong supporter of recommendation made by the Mandal Commission, became the Prime Minister. He formed a ‘ Cabinet Committee ’ for the implementation of Mandal Commission. For the first few days, The Prime Minister himself chaired the committee. Then it was headed by Deputy PM Devlal. But after a very short time, he resigned from the chairmanship of the Mandal Commission implementation committee because he himself supported reservation on the basis of economical backward classes instead of caste. BJP published a booklet on the Mandal Commission in the year 1983 and it supported the Commission in the party’s election manifests.

Along with this, it also proposed 15% reservation on economical backwardness basis. It also proclaimed that the congress party has been in government since the independence but it has always neglected the welfare of Dalits, Adivasis and Bahujans¹³.

If we have looks towards the Marxist party, we find that they have always tried to prove Mahatma Phule's Non – Brahmins movement as the dividing force in the society. Dr. Ambedkar is remembered to say in his speech given at Lahore in 1936 that economical development should be given prominence instead of any other development.

Scheduled Castes :-

The state of Maharashtra has included 59 castes into Scheduled Castes category. According to the census of 1931, the proportion of Scheduled Caste's population in Maharashtra is 16.5 % and the same counts 11.09 % according to 1991 census. The population of Mahar, Charmakar, Matang is more than the rest S.C.s The Mahars are almost everywhere in Maharashtra and is integral part of the Balter(Balutedar) system of rural Maharashtra. Hence it is considered crucial in the politics of Maharashtra. Charmakars and Matangs are scattered all over Maharashtra and doing their traditional occupations. Matang community resides in Vidarbha's Buldhana, Amravati, Yavatmal, Chandrapur and in Marathwada Nanded ,Parbhani, Beed, Osmanabad and in western Maharashtra Solapur District. The Charmakar community resides in Nashik, Osmanabad, Solapur, Sangli, Kolhapur districts of Maharashtra. The Scheduled Castes people have been migrating to urban sectors of Maharashtra on large scale because of modern education and job opportunities as well as the equal opportunities in social structure¹⁴. In rural areas, They still dwell on labour in fields and in urban areas too labour has not left them away.

Table No 2

Maharashtra – List of Scheduled Castes.

1) Ager	14) Byagara
2) Anmuk	15) Chalwadi, Channayya
3) Aremala	16) ChennaDasar, HolyaDasar,
4) Arawa Mala	HoleyaDasari
5) Bahna, Bahana	17) Dakkal, Dokkalwar

6) Bakad	18) Dhar, Kokaiyya, Dohar
7) Balahi	19) Dom, Dumar
8) Basur, Burud, Bansar, Bansodi	20) Yallamwar, Yellammalawandu
9) Beda Jangam, BudgaJangam	21) Ganda, Gandi
10) Bedar	22) Garuda, Garo
11) Bhambi, Bhambi, Asdaru, Chamadia, Chamar, Chamari, Chamgar, Harlya, Harali, Khalpa, Machigar, Mochigar, Madar, Madig, Mochi, TelguMochi, KumatiMochi, Ranigar, Rohidas, Nona, Ramnami, Rohit, Samgar, Samgara, Satnami, Surjanami.	23) Dhasi, Dhasiya
12) Bhangi, Mehtar, Olgana, Rukhi, Malkana, Halalkhar, Lalbegi, Balmik, Kasar, Zadmali.	24) Haller
13) Bindala	25) Halsar
	26) Holar, Valhar
	27) Holaya, Holer, Holey, Holiya
	28) Kaikadi
	29) Katiy, Patharia
	30) Kangar, Kanera, Mirdha
	31) Khatik, Chikwa, Chikwi
	32) Kolupulwandalu
	33) Kori
34) Lingder	47) MangGarodi, MangGarudi
35) Madgi	48) Manne
36) Madiga	49) Mashti
37) Mahar, Mehra, Taral, DheguMegu	50) Meghwal, Menghwar
38) Mahyavanshi	51) MithaAyyalwar
39) Mala	52) Mukri
40) Mala Dasari	53) Nadiya, Hadi
41) Mala Hannai	54) Pasi
42) Mala Jangam	55) Sansi
43) Mala Masti	56) Shenwa, Chenwa, Sedma, Rawat
44) Malasale, Netkani	57) Sindholu, Chindolu
45) Mala Sanyasi	58) Tigar, Tirbanda

46) Mang, Matrang, Mini Madig, DakhaniMang, Mang, MahashiMadari, Garudi, RadheMang.	Turi
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Scheduled Tribes :-

Thane, Nashik, Dhule and Chandrapur, Gadchiroli and Nanded are the two hilly areas in Maharashtra where tribal communities reside on large scale. MahadevKoli, Warli, Konkani, Bhil, Gond are main scheduled tribes in Maharashtra. There are 9.27% of scheduled tribe's people in total population. According to the census of 1931, it was 5.08%. Because of not having any support of traditional occupations, scheduled tribes diverted to other occupations¹⁵. Many scheduled tribes turned towards agriculture during the last century. But because of money – lending, they are facing poverty and exploitation. Many communities are trying to achieve the status of scheduled tribes. The Gowari community in Vidarbha is also trying for it. Through the Gowari leaders are claiming the status, many scheduled tribes are opposing their demand¹⁶.

Hindu Dalits Castes :-

There are many internal differences among this 59 backward classes (i.e. scheduled castes). A kind of competition and jealousy among all this castes. Despite of social backwardness, the integration is not seen. On the other hand, the scheduled castes got disintegrated on class levels within themselves. On this background, Shivsena and BJP tried to organize other Hindu Dalits by opposing NavBoudhas after 1980. Shivsena implemented the policy of opposing three “M”s. One of those “M” is “Mahar”. “All reserved places are occupied by Mahar” was their mouthpiece to attract non – Mahar Hindu Dalits. The other scheduled castes automatically got divided into different political parties¹⁷. After 1995, BJP used the concept of Hindu Dalit. By doing this they opposed the politics of NavBuddhas. Because of this propaganda, BJP – Shivsena got the support of Hindu Dalits¹⁸. Not a single Nav Buddha candidate was elected in 1995 Vidhan Sabha election of Maharashtra. All were non Nav Buddha candidates who got elected. 18 seats are reserved for scheduled castes in Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha. In 1990 elections, RPI (Khobragade) and BahujanMahasangh got one seat each. But in 1995 elections, not a single seat was elected. In 1995 elections, Shivsena's Dalit candidates got elected from Dharavi, Kalamb, Devlali, Solapur (North). Non – Navboudh candidates were supported by Shivsena in this constituencies. In 1999 elections, Mukhed's seat was also won by

Shivsena. B.J.P.'s dalit candidate got elected from Chalisgaon, Nagpur, Kej, Parvati, Washim, Tiroda, Her, Karjat. All of them were non – Navbouddha. In 1999, B.J.P. could continue from washim, Her, Karjat, Chalisgaon, Parvati, Tiroda while congress got elected from Nagpur, Jat and Wadgaon¹⁹.

In 1995 Vidhan Sabha elections, B.J.P.'s S.C. candidates were elected more than any other party. 38% candidate belonged to B.J.P., 22% of elected candidates belonged to Shivsena, 17% candidates belonged to congress and 6% belonged to other parties.

The congress party splited in 1999 and the Nationalist Congress Party was formed. Hence LaxmanraoDhoble formed 'BahujanRayatParishad '. The Parishad has been taking efforts to integrate Matang community. Dr. VimalMundada, LaxmanraoDhoble, TukaramTupe are non NavBoudh MLAs from NCP. The party could established itself in Kej, Mangalvedha, Man only by excluding NavBouddha candidates. Along with this, congress could get non Navbouddh candidates in Nagpur, Jat, Wadgaon constituencies .

Politics of Castes :-

Opposition to caste system, eagerness to improve the social status were the basic points in Dalit Politics. After 1890 efforts were made to organize Dalits. This efforts were useful for creating the political awareness. Gopal Baba Walangkar and ShivramJanbaKamble initiated to attempt for the improvement of their community. Prior to them, Mahatma Phule had already made efforts for the social improvement and the problem of untouchability.

ChhatrapatiShahuMaharaj and Vitthal Ramji Shinde contributed to the improvement of untouchables through their thoughts and on field works. 'Humanity and Equality' were the motivating factors behind the works of Phule – Shahu – Shinde was more of criticism of Hindu religious philosophy and the actual eradication of it from the hindu society. This lacks in the thoughts of S. M. Mate V. D. Savarkar.

AmbedkariteMovement :-

The leadership and writing of Dr. Ambedkar accelerated extented the speed and directions of dalits politics in Maharashtra as well as India. He emphasized on organization of

dalits for equal rights. He attempted to organize Dalits on this issue. An organization called 'BahishkrutHitkarani Sabha', a news – paper called 'Muknayak' (1920) and discussion with the British Government for separate representation of Dalits in the Round Table conference spurred the Ambedkarite Movement. The 'Chavdar Tale (Chavdar Lake) Satyagraha' at Mahad accelerated the expansion and speed of the movement. The Movement of entry to Dalits in famous KalaramMandir at Nasik developed the Ambedkarite Movement.

' Bahishkrit Bharat ' and the participation in Round Table conferences sharpened and well organized the movement. The study of institutions of caste and the philosophy of Hinduism was done by Dr. Ambedkar. That helped him to develop a thought process for his movement. He tried to study and understand all aspects of caste system and raised his voice for its iradication. And to support the principles equality and fraternity he accepted the Buddhism. He instigated his followers to accept the Buddhism in order to renounce the religion which rejected equal rights to dalits.

On political level, Dr. Ambedkar formed ' IndependentLabour Party '. Its aim was to organize a political party for Dalits, agricultural labourers, and workers. It was followed by ' Scheduled Caste Federation '. But after the independence the direction of politics had changed and it also made Dr. Ambedkar to change this. The political party should belong to common public and it should support public welfare and democracy. Such was his attitude towards his party. Hence, he prepared the format of the Republican Party.

Republican Party :-

Due to the movements of Dr. Ambedkar, the dalits were awoken and had got importance in the politics of Maharashtra. Ambedkarite Movement was against congress and was not positive about communists. Such situation made the Ambedkarite Movement to participate in politics with new context and to take new stand.

In 1957 elections, Scheduled Caste Federation got success but the alliance between the anti congress parties couldn't last for long time and the 'Sanyukta Maharashtra Samiti' parted. After that the republican party organized the movement of landless Labourers under the leadership of

Dadasaheb Gaikwad. In the ZillaParishad elections of 1967, Dadasaheb Gaikwad decided to support congress and it resulted in to the differences into the party and then many of the dalitleaders joined the congress party²⁰.

Dalit Panthers :-

Differences on the issues like leadership, political programmes and the co – operation with other parties resulted into splits in the republican party and it failed to do politics of Dalits. The young Dalit got confused between one side of legacy of Ambedkarite movement and the failure in effective politics. It is necessary to change cultural frameworkto change the politics. The dalit youth recognized this and initiated to produce the literature and intruded into the culture. This created the tradition of dalit community at the beginning of 1970's. The irresponsible leadership may destroy the lives of followers and such experiences restlessness gave birth to aggressive organization of dalits – “Dalit Panthers” (1972). However it didn't last long and splitted. The main point for split the organization should be inclined towards Marxist's ideology or not? The discussion during the panthers raised the important issue of whether option for the parliamentary politics or accept the way of agitation for dalit rights.

After the death of Dr. Ambedkar, Dalit politics become stagnant in a very short period. This was the time when dalits started to migrate from rural areas to the cities. The restless, semi – educated, unemployed, agitated youth formed the aggressive movement of dalit panthers. The panthers and a view that the state and a upper class won't help them hence they have to take initiative for the dalit pride. Dalit panthers lead to act against the injustice made by upper strata of the society. Dalit community began to trust dalit panthers in the decade of 1970.

The progressive movement in Maharashtra had welcomed the establishment of Dalit Panthers. This organization brought the issue of untouchability and caste system at the center. The Panthers upheld the co-operation with untouchables and poor social elements. Dalit Panther opposed Shivsena in Mumbai. The organization took strong stand in the opposition of the congress leaders in other parts of Maharashtra. This things increased the possibilities of a stronger dalit politics. Dalit Panthers become radical in their attitudes towards upper class and caste of the society. They questioned the Indian political independence and its usefulness for the

dalits. The Panthers insisted the “Different Cultural World” for Dalits. Culture, Symbols, ideology, all such essential aspect of a dalit’s life should be different from those of a Hindu, the life of a dalit should be different from a Hindu were the insurances of Dalit Panthers. They were aggressive about the disconnection of Dalits from the hindu society.

However, Dalit Panthers failed to stand as a well organized institution . Due to differences over thinking line, different Panther groups were working. After 1978, groups in Marathwada and Vidarbha concentrated on the issue of renaming of the Marathwada University. All groups in the Panthers were facing the problem of power and continuous division. After 1981- 82, groups of Dalit Panthers failed to make any impression of Dalit politics in Maharashtra’s political horizon.

Dalit Women’s Politics :-

In 1992, reservation for women was fashioned in local self Governmental the leadership of scheduled caste women.

Table No3

Scheduled Caste women’s participation in local self government(1999-2003)

Sr. No.	Institute	Year	S.C. Women	Total
1	Municipal Corporation	2000-2003	79	693
2	Municipal Council	1999-2003	218	1750
3	ZillaParishad	2002-2003	83	660
4	Panchayat Samiti	1999-2003	194	1413
			574	4516

[Ref. :- ChavanVaishali]²¹

4516 women were elected in local self Government elections in Maharashtra in 1999 to 2003. Out of them 574 were from scheduled caste. In 2002 – 2003, 79 S.C. women were elected in Municipal Corporation 218 women of S.C. were elected in 1999 – 2003 in Municipal Council. 83 S.C. women were elected in ZillaParishad elections of 2002 – 2003. 194 S.C. women were elected in Panchayat Samiti in 1999 – 2003.

(Ref. :- Human Development Report, 2002, Mumbai, Planning Commission, Government of Maharashtra)

Politics of Navbuddha :-

NavBouddha(Formerly ‘Mahars’) had started politics with the thought of irradiation of caste system. They took inspiration from the ideologies of Phule, Shahu, Shinde and Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar. Therefore the politics of NavBouddha is different from reformation and it is the politics of change. Dr. BabasahebAmbedkar handed over the NavBouddha with the Republican Party. During the post independent period, NavBouddha may work as a balancing power in politics, such an issue was raised. Dadasaheb Gaikwad aligned with Congress, the Republican Party got divided, after the short span Dalit Panther also got splitted. And the politics of NavBouddha got engaged in the middle class issue like reservation and the renaming movement of Marathwada University.

After 1984, the politics of Hindutva got importance. In this period, the group under Prakash Amedkar raised the issue of landless labour act. This effort by him attempted to bring the politics out of the middle class issues However, on the issue of leadership Athawale, Gawai, Ambedkar, Khobragade group were continued. Efforts were made to integrate NavBouddha leaders. However, The politics of groupism continued.

In 1995 Vidhan Sabha elections, a third front was formed. With this third front, Dalit organizations, groups and parties failed to win the election. The Athawale group of Republican Party made alliance with Congress. This group won no seat. This Parties votes fell down to less than one percent voting. Therefore the failure of Khobragade, Kawade, Gade groups of Republican Party should be considered the failure of NavBouddha politics.

Only one NavBouddha was elected from Congress in 1991 Loksabha elections. Along with it a Matang of Congress and a Matang and a Charmakar from Shivsena, BJP were elected at that time. After 1990, a clear division between NavBouddhas and non NavBouddha can be seen. In the Loksabha election of 1998, all group of Bhartiya Republican Party was in alliance with Congress. This resulted into the wining of four seats by them. Two Bouddha candidates won in the 1999 Loksabha elections. In this election, Ambedkar group and Gawai group were with Congress. But four non Bouddha candidates also won the seats. In short, Bouddha and non

Bouddha differences continued it is discernible that Integration of all Dalit castes is not done by NavBouddha leaders.

The social power is the base of politics. Indian society is formed with caste – groups. Such environment instigates the awareness of politics and new political power continuous evolve through it. Different caste among SCs are becoming aware and caste – conscious these day and it is resulting in the political competition among them. The proportion of Matangs, Charmkars and Dhors is politically influential after NavBouddhas. During the pre – Independence period, the non NavBouddhadalit was confusion whether he should join the Ambedkarite Movement or join the politics against it. BabuDhondibaVaydande, SitaramBabajiLandge were the two Matang leaders who supported the AmbedkariteMovement and participated in the parvati satyagraha. But in 1925, R.S. Sakat opined that Matang shouldn't participated in the AmbadeviMandir Satyagraha. In July 1914, BahishkritHitakarni Sabhawas organized under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, the leaders of charmakar community, like Shivtarkar Master, Narayan Kajrolkar, GanpatBorgharkar, RaghobaVanmaliparticpatd. The Parvati Satyagraha was lead by P.N. Rajbhoj however the charmakar leaders got separated on the issues of parliamentary politics and the decisions of religions conversion. Congress party provided them with an organization called “ Bhartiya Dalit SevaSangh”. In short, the parliamentary politics brought out the split into the NavBouddha and non NavBouddha groups. The non NavBoouddha Dalit castes like Matang, Charmakar, Dhor did the politics from 1952 to 1970 by staying with Congress.

To unite Matang and Charmkar castes, Congress organized caste relies in 1970. The government established Charmodyogdevelopment Corporation and AnnabhauSathe Corporation for the upliftment of Charmakars and Matangs in 1974. The non - NavBouddha Dalit leaders like Bhingardive, BaburaoBhaisakar, LaxmanraoDhoble could unite Matang of Charmakar castes²².

Republican Party :-

The Republican Party has an important place in the politics of Maharashtra. Many parties are seen attaching the symbolic blue coloured flag of the Republican Party with theirs to attract scheduled caste voters. In Pune Pact, the demand for reserve seats for untouchables (Dalits) came forward. Through this process, the “Independent LabourParty ” founded by Dr. Ambedkar,

participated in the election of 1937 and thus participation of Dalits in parliamentary politics started.

Afterwards Dr. Ambedkar formed “Scheduled Caste Federation”, a political party of untouchables. In the general elections of 1946 and 1952, this party could not achieve success. Before his death, Dr. Ambedkar had wished to form a party called “Republican Party of India” and to unite all progressive social elements in it. According to it, the followers of Dr. Ambedkar established the Republican Party of India on 3rd October 1957. The progressive leaders like S.M. Joshi and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia didn’t show any enthusiasm of becoming one of the members of the party. This fact kept it only the renaming of old Scheduled caste federation to Republican Party.²³

P.N. Rajbhoj, RajabhauKhobragade, AwaleBapu, Dadasaheb Gaikwad, B.C. Kamble, DattaKattah, Armigam, IshwaribaiSundarRajan, Channan Ram were the leading members of newly formed Republican Party of India. The history of Republican Party is the history of division and groupism. After a very short period from establishment, the party got splitted in 1958. As per the general meeting, the constitution of the party was not written, members of the executive council were not elected through election; on such technical issues party got divided. But the rural cause was the ego of leaders which resulted into the division.

In the election of 1962, Only two groups of Dadasaheb Gaikwad and B.C. Kamble exited. But in 1964, R.D. Bhandare separated from the Dadasaheb group and eventually he joined the Congress. On the other hand, in 1965 the B.C. Kamble group was divided by D.M. Rupwate and Awale who later joined Dadasaheb Gaikwad. In 1967 and 1970, on the issues like, breaking the alliance with Congress and issueing the candidature of the legislative council to R.S. Gawai, the Dadasaheb group got divided for the second time. BaristerKhobragade formed his separate group. On 16th January 1974, B.C. Kamble, Gawai, Khobragade and BhaiyasahebAmbedkar got united.

Around 1970, the cases of injustice to Dalits and backward classes were increasing. Dalit youths started the movement of Dalit Panthers to oppose such injustice with dalits. It was criticized that

passive Republican leaders were responsible for increased injustice cases on the Dalit Panthers were struggling to change the title of Marathwada University to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar University. That was their central agenda during that period. “Namantar” Movement, Dalit Panthers spreaded all over Maharashtra along with this the leadership went through many shifts from Namdev Dhasal, Rajabhau Dhale to Ramdas Athawale. In the year 1983 – 84, Balasaheb Ambedkar formed Bhartiya Republican Party which made him the leader of one group of the republican movement.

In 1987, Maharashtra Government publish the fourth section of Dr. Ambedkar’s literature. The Hindutva – centered organizations objected the “Hindu Dharmatil Kutprashna” section in it. Shivsena, Maratha Mahasangh and other Hinduist organization took the objection and made agitation. In reaction to this agitation, the followers of Ambedkarite movement got integrated and in 1989 the Republican union happened.

In 1990 elections, the party got divided on the issue like alliance with Congress and Janta Dal. In the year 1990, the V.P. Singh government decided to implement Mandal Commission and the politics of backward classes initiated in the whole country. In the 1995 Vidhan Sabha elections of Maharashtra (when some groups of Republican parties were in alliance with Congress), The B.J.P. Shivsena alliance came into power and in result, again the Republican Party go united. 1996 Loksabha election were fought independently by R.P.I in 1997, again the party got divided. One group of Prakash Ambedkar, Raja Dhale, B.C. Kamble and the other by Gawai, Athwale and Namdev Dhasal restarted ‘Dalit Panthers’. Again three group come into existence in the party²⁴.

In 1999 loksabha elections, Athawale – Kawade – Gawai group got divided on the issue of alliance with Congress and N.C.P. In 2002 elections, main groups of Ramdas Athawale, Prakash Ambedkar, R.S. Gawai, Khobragade and B.C. Kamble existed in Republican Party. In means that many parties with the addition of the word “Republican” in their names raise continuously and then get divided. This is 50 years of history of Republican Party. A trend to elder in Congress party is also found.

Republican Party has got importance in the politics of Maharashtra through it is divided into groups because an emotional attachment and unity is found among followers because of the legacy of Ambedkarite movement. Due to this emotional relation with Republican Party, the parties which try to make politics on the support of social groups, feels the necessity of the word 'Republican' in their title. That is why, as R.P.I. is based on cultural and caste element, there is possibility of its integration even after division of mass support.

Table No. 4**Republican Party in Vidhan Sabha election of Maharashtra**

Year	Party	Casted Seats	Won Seats	Percentage
1962	RPI	66	03	5.38
1967	RPI	79	05	6.68
1972	RPI (Khobragade)	56	00	1.34
	RPI	118	02	3.77
1978	RPI (Khobragade)	23	02	1.41
	RPI	25	02	1.06
1980	RPI (Khobragade)	42	01	1.36
	RPI	36	00	0.76
1985	RPI (Khobragade)	16	00	0.52
	RPI	54	00	1.00
1990	B.R.P.	43	00	0.14
	RPI (Khobragade)	18	01	0.50
	RPI	21	00	0.70
	RPI (B)	01	00	0.00
	BSP	122	00	0.42
1995	RPI (Khobragade)	13	00	0.17
	RPI	61	00	0.15
	BRP – BBMS	129	00	3.03
	BSP	145	00	1.49
1999	RPI (Khobragade)	01	00	0.00

	RPI (Athawale)	10	01	0.69
	BRP – BMS	34	03	1.85
	BSP	83	00	0.39
2004	RPI (Gawai)	04	00	0.15
	RPI (B.C. Kamble)	02	00	0.00
	RPI (Athawale)	02	01	0.49
	RPI (Kawade)	55	00	1.18
	RPI (T.M. Kamble)	18	00	0.03
	BRP – BMM	83	01	1.23
	B.S.P.	272	00	4.00

The Progress of BahujanSamajParty :-

The share in the power, resources, authority, esteem are away from O.B.C.s, dalit castes, Muslim and Christian backward castes. And for these class, the term ‘Bahujan’ class is used. MaharshiShindeinitiated the ‘Bahujan’ politioics in Maharashtra. He used the term ‘Bahujan’ instead of ‘non Brahmins’. After Maharshi V.R. Shinde, ShetkariKamgar Party and Congress Party did the politics of Bahujan²⁵. In direct politics, YashwantraoChavan implemented the ‘Bahujan’ concept. However, he failed in the politics of labourers and subalterns among ‘Bahujan’. In the decade of 1990, new age of Bahujan politics started. Initially Bahujans united with farmers union after that BhujanMahasangh, BahujanSamajPakshand then caste organization were the three phases in the progression of Bahujan politics. This parties have mainly got influential votes in Vidarbha and Marathwada regions. In these regions, this parties are well organized and in result the multi – partied competition is seen there.

Rise of the BahujanIdeology:-

In the decade of 1990 Maharashtra saw the rise of the Bahujana ideology. Before it, the non Brahmanical movement and the Bahujan society concept of Congress did not practice the real politics Bahujan thought. The politics of the maintaining dominant Maratha caste’s interests and accepting the frame of chaturvarna by claiming Kshatriyatva was done. In the decade of 1970, Indira Gandhi implemented the policy of expelling the dominant leaders from all states. This policy indirectly spurred the possibility of division between Marathas and also the rise of OBC politics²⁶. A new fold of politics got formed as the new party ‘Janta Dal’ formed the

government. The Bahujan politics got the environment in the state of Maharashtra because of this. On the suggestion of Mandal Commission, OBCs got separated from the Marathas and as new politics of Other Backward Classes initiated. The organization like ShetkariSanghtana and Shivsenaspreaded all over Maharashtra in 1980s. The youth in OBC castes included themselves into this organization. Aggressive nature and stance against the established leadership of these organizations attracted these backward class youth who got a chance in the form of non Congress organization. The youth from the Mali and Vanjari Castes got the political stage from these alternative organization.

B.R.P. (Ambedkar Group) and BahujanMahasangh implemented the 'Akola Pattern'. Through it Dalit and OBCs could unite to form a political power. The political power could be fetched from the Maratha caste to the dalits and OBCs. This pattern was implemented in Kinwat and Akola ZillaParishad and Panchayat Samiti election as an experiment. It got success on Vidhansabha level at Kinwat and on ZillaParishadAnd Panchayat Samiti level at Akola.

BahujanMahasangh

OBCs, peasants, workers, women, dalits and Muslims were at center of BahujanMahasangh politics. In Akola, on 23rd September 1990, BahujanMahasangh was established at district level. MakhramPawar was the district- president. Afterwards the party was established at state level on 15th February 1993. MakhramPawar, Prakash Ambedkar, B.R. Shirsat, SuryabhanDhomne, Dr. DashrathBhande, etc were included in it. InitialyBahujanMahasangh was associated with Bhartiya Republican Party, but the leaders were different. But the point to be noted is that it was observed that 60% of the leaders should be from NavBouddha and 40% from the others non – NavBouddhacastes. In non – NavBouddha category, it become ordinary to offer leadership to a OBC person. The element of caste was at the center in the policy of propagationinBahujanMahasangh, which instigated the spread of the organization among Mali, Banjara, Dhangar, NavBouddha castes. Whenever these castes members were with large numbers, the organization propagated.²⁷

BahujanMahasangh defined Bahujan as the group of people deprived of by social, cultural, religious, educational, economical, political systems. The Bahujan are exploited under the roots

of Hindu unity and it opposes Islamic followers. Such a politics is rejected by BahujanMahasangh. The conflict in Indian society is the conflict between Bahujan (deprived) and Mahasangh propose the values of secularism and social equality. Right place and honour to Bahujanas, mandatory education and distribution of lands to landless such were the demands of BahujanMahasangh, which were economic in nature and beneficial for the deprived class. In 1995 Vidhan Sabha elections, BahujanMahasabha preferred former OBCs over peasants by recognizing caste – scheme. By it they offered 81% of candidature to the candidates from Mali, Dhangar, Vanjari, Teli, Banjara castes.

BahujanMahasangh gave prominence to former OBCs. On the other hand, number labourer peasantry candidates from OBCs was only 19%. In this election, BahujanMahasangh made the propaganda that Muslims were also Bahujanas. Along with this, they also offered poor Maratha candidates to divide them from rich Marathas. This means BahujanMahasangh was trying to divide the people into “Bahujans Versus Mahajans” through the election²⁸.

BahujanMahasangh organized the labourer / technician OBCs after 1999. It also created the milieu of Bahujan versus Mahajan, but except Vidarbha, they could not create the competition among them. The policy of Congress of including the leaders of OBCs started to dislodge the BahujanMahasangh on ideological and political basis. In short, the point raised by the Mahasangh began to dismantle within a short period of a decade i.e. nineties²⁹.

Table No. 5

Classification of BahujanMahasangh’s wise castecandidates³⁰ :-

Sr. No.	Caste Group	1995	1999
01	Upper Castes	01	00
02	Maratha	08	00
03	Farmer OBC	53	10
04	BalutedarOBC	03	02
05	Dalit	38	15
06	Adivasi	07	03
07	Non – Marathi	01	01

08	Muslim	13	03
09	Christian	01	03
	Total	125	34

BahujanSamajParty :-

Kanshiram established the BahujanSamaja Party in Maharashtra on 14th April 1984. He included all non – Brahmins under the term – Bahujan. So in B.S.P.’s Bahujan concept Marathas, OBCs, Dalits, and Muslims were included. The party already had some Nav – Bouddhaleaders and party – workers. In 1993, there were 16 members from non Nav – Bouddha caste out of 25 members of executive council. Therefore mahadevJankar (Dhangar) objected that OBCs donot get enough place in the party³¹.

After 2000, BSP started to offer place to OBCs and Muslims too along with dalits castes. After 2003, BSP applied the policy of uniting NavBouddhas and OBCs BSP could not enter the politics of Maharashtra only with caste equations. But it could capture the vote shares of BahujanMahasangh and Congress. After the election Vidhan Sabha of 1995, BSP organized OBCs. BSP offered the non – Bouddha and OBC candidates in 1999 and 2004 elections but it did not prove fruitful.³²

BSP could not get sufficient support from BAMCEF (Backward and Minority Community Employ’s Federation) to enter the oplitics of Maharashtra Since 1978. They are influential in few constituencies but not all over Maharashtra. B.S.P. made division among Bahujan votes and in result the Bahujan politics become narrower. The Bahujan politics could not result into a strong political form but it definitely started to acquire importance in all established parties. This can also be recognized as the main success of bahunjan politics³³.

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