INTRODUCTION

In India there is diversity in many things people from various castes tribes and religion live together. In democracy, the participation of people from every class is important, there for the caste is so important factor. The census of every has done separately in India in 1911 british government had also done census of Dhangar community sepreately. At present the population of Dhangar community is about one lakh. (Manohar.2012)

So far as the Dhanger caste is concerned it is one among the oldest castes in the Indian society. The Dhangar caste is primarily located in the Indian state of Maharastra. We find Dhangar community is all over India and it’s known in all the states in different name. There are different views and opinion about the origin of Dhangar community. The literal translation of the name danger is who is wealthy. The word danger is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Dhenu” i.e. cow. These are quiet and innocent group of people who wander with flocks and herds. They are called by different synonyms like Danger, Dangad and Dhapal. Dhang also means a hill or a mountain. During the times of hardship some kshariyas went to the mountains and hills with their sheep and cows and stayed in the forests. These people are called Dhangars. But according to Hindu religion, the son of Bharama Deva mariachi and Marichies son is kahsyap, kashyap has created whole mankind, kashyap has 36 wives. Among 36 queens, one queen form Dhangar community Sandra was the name of the queen. She belongs to Hatkar community tribe which is one of the sub castes of Dhangar community.

Pastoralists can be defined as “member of caste or ethnic group with a strong traditional association with livestock-keeping, where a substantial proportion of the group derive over 50% of household consumption from livestock products or their sale and where over 90% of animal consumption is from natural pasture or browse and where households are responsible for the full cycle of livestock breeding”. Other researcher defined Pastoralists are people who derive more than 50 per cent of their incomes from livestock and livestock products, while agro-pastoralists are people who derive less than 50 per cent of their incomes from livestock and livestock products, and most of the remaining income from cultivation, who live mostly in dry remote areas. Golla, Karuma, Monpa, Rabari, Bharwad, Charan, Aahir, Kuruba, Dhangar, Toda, Raïka,
Gujjar and Sandhi are the major pastoralists groups found in various states of India. According to a semi-popular magazine, more than 200 tribes, comprising six percent of the country’s population, are engaged in pastoralism (Khurana1999). Pastoralists mainly depend on three resources livestock, pasture and water and for this purpose they migrate and this is the only way for they can survive and sustain the ecological balance of nature. It is strongly believed that without the participation of the pastoral people, the Millennium Development goals of the United Nations cannot be achieved properly in the regions where pastoral people live. Meena H. R., 2012 (Socio Economic Profile of Sheep Reared Dhangar Pastoralists of Maharashtra, India)

Initially there were twelve tribes of Dhangar and they had a division of labour amongst brothers of one family. This latter formed there sub divisions and one half division. These three being hatkar, ahir and khutekar. The half division is called khatik. All sub caste fall in one of these divisions. All sub divisions emerge from one stock and all sub divisions claim to be a single group of Dhangars. Studies have revealed that they are genetically the closest. The number three and a half is not a random selection but has a religious and cosmological and significance.


The Dhangars ignore the sub castes and project themselves only as Dhangars. Captain Fitzgerald had observed that ‘the general idea is that originally there were twelve tribes of bargi Dhangars, who came from Hindustan, and the country about hingoli was called bara hatti. The term bara hatti could thus mean a country of the Dhangars of twelve hattis. The term hatkar is derived from hatti. According to the Dravidian etymological dictionary, hatti has the following meaning, hamlet, cowstall, Sheepfold. A hatti would therefore mean a sheep pen or a camp or a settlement of sheep keepers. In the old kanaaada lesicon hattikara occurs as a synonym of govali, or cowherds. These etymological linkages indicate a connection between the sheep and cattle keepers. The term means a camp of sheep cattle keepers. Bara hatti means a village consisting of twelve vadis. The vadi constitutes 20 to 23 Dhangar families.
The word ‘hat’ means obstinate in Marathi and kar means doer meaning obstinate. Captain fitz Gerald, once an assistant commissioner in berar, made the following observation. The hatkars declare that they came prior to the nizam becoming subhedar of Deccan on behalf of the king of delhi. the hatkars are all bargi Dhangars, or the deccan on behalf of the king of Delhi.

The hatkars are all bargi Dhangars, or the shepherds with the spears. The hatkars say that they formerly, when going on any expedition, took only a blanket seven hands long and a bear spear, and that on this account they were called bargirl, or barga Dhangars. The temper of hatkars is said to be oriya and Bengali people to make their babies sleep at night is quoted below.

Chhele ghumalo para juralo bargi bulbulite dhan kheyenhhe khanjnadebo kise?
"Hushed the child sleeps and quiet is the neighborhood now; for the bargis have descended on our land, the bulbulis have eaten away our crops, how shall we pay our land tax?

The ain I akbari describes them as being a proud, refractory and domineering race of rajputs, living in the basim sircar and, with numerous armed forces, occupying the forts and controlling the surrounding districts.

They are even now noted for their martial qualities and readily become soldiers. The armies of shivaji were composed of recruits mainly drawn from this case who were most trusted by shivaji. The bravest Maratha leaders, among whom the holkars are the most distinguished are of this tribe. When tending and driving sheep and goats dhangars ejaculate har har, which is a name of mahadeo used by devotees in worshipping him. The dhangars is a name of mahadeo used by devotees in worshipping him. The dhangars furnished, har har mahadeo, was used by the dhangars. The shepherds of Maratha country are called marathe (barhattahatkar). At the time of his coronation, chhatrapti shivaji maharaj showed that he belonged to the gahlot clan shahu maharaj coined the word Maratha for the peasant section i.e kunbi.

Historically Maratha was a common term used for people of Maharashtra historically region that speak Marathi. Today, however, the term Maratha refers only to those Marathi speaking people who also belong to certain specific hindu castes for one available linsting, refer to Maratha clan system. Thus the term Maratha people and Maratha Dhangar are not interchangeable and should
not be confused for each other. All Dhangars of western maharashtra and,like holkars,can be termed Marathas,but all Marathas are not Dhangars.for one available listing of dhangars,refers to list of Dhangar clans in India.

The Dhangars of the northern or southern India are reasonably considered to belong to the same race. The danger community is one of the oldest existing communities of India, tracing its history back to Mahabharata times. They have originated several ruling dynasties, most recently the holkars of indore.Prominent Dhangars have been hakkaraya and bukkaraya,founders of the vijaynagara empire.Dhangars have founded the hoysalas,hokar,rashtrakutas,maurya,pallav dynasties.In addition the poets kalidasa and kanakadasa were also Dhangars.the famous vithoba temple at pandharpur was built by vishnubardhana,a Dhangar from the hoysala dynasty.The famous meenakshi temple was built by pall lavas who were Dhangars.lord Krishna,prophet Muhammad and Jesus Christ were all shepherds.metaphorically,the term shepherd is used for god.

Traditionally veing warriors, shepherds, blanket and wool weavers and farmers, Dhangars were late to take up modern day education. Though it has a notable population not only in Maharashtra but also in India, had a rich history, today it is still politically highly unorganized community and is socially, educationally economically and politically backward. They lived a socially isolated life due to their occupataion, wandering mainly in forests, hills and mountains. (Sudhir stars Yancha: article 2010) (Courtesy - Daily 2010)

**Political status of Dhangar community**

India is a democratic country. Majority should rule india.Our parliament is the main Power in India and assemblies are centre in state. Dhangar is one of the big communities of India. Dhangar community may be one of the single largest communities of india.Polulation of Dhangar (shepherd) community is around 11%.Although scattered, Dhangar are found in large numbers in uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan,Gujrat,Andra Pradesh and Karnataka from Maharastra.Though culturally ,shepherds of India are known by different names across the country as Dhangar in maharastra,kuruba in Karnataka,rabari maladhari and bharwad in Rajasthan and gujrat,bakkarwal in himachal Pradesh,meshshavak in Bengal,gowala in Tripura
and pal in haryana, thus dhangars have fragmented social identity due to different names in different parts of India.

In addition to fragmented social identity, Dhangars throughout India have broken political identity due to different political nomenclature. Dhangars in majority part of India are in OBC schedule. Dhangars of extreme north India in some part of India are in ST schedule. Dhangars of central north India are in SC schedule. As a result, Dhangars are kept away from socio-economic power as well as from political power. Political participation of this community which has got a legacy of rulers and is mainly a pastoral community is grossly and dangerously negligible.

Looking at population percentage, Dhangars should have at least 54 members of parliament but there were only 3 Member of Parliament from Dhangar community in the last parliament of 543 and 2 throughout in India.

In lokksabha election 2009 population of 11 crore Dhangars got only 36 candidatures from all over India. 124 years old Indian national congress had given only 2 seats to Dhangars, the largest Hindu community of 11 crore population. Likewise Bhartya janta party and bahujan samaj party had given 2 each seat to Dhangar community. But Rastraya samaj party of 5 years had given total 12 seats to Dhangars. Established political parties so far have not groomed a single leader at national level from the population of 11 crore Dhangars or have not allowed growing any leader in India. State level leaders are also few and cornered by so called dominant leaders and parties.

Solapur, sangli, hingoli parbhani, madha and baramatti lokksabha constituencies have dhangar community in majority, but dhangar community which can influence the result of at least 60 member of legislative assembly and 9 member of parliament constituencies had virtually no political participation in lokksabha election held in 2009.

Not a single ticket had been awarded to Dhangar community either by congress, bhartya janta party, shiv sena or by national communist party to the Dhangars, whoever boasts of their lineage from famous holkar dynasty and the great ruler like maharani ahilyabai holkar of indore. During last 60 years of Indian democratic history, only one member of parliament from Dhangar of Maharashtra has been able to reach to parliament in delhi. Anna dhang of national
communist party and prakash shendge of bhartya janta party were willing to contest from sangli constituency, popatarao gawade of national communist party from shirur, haribhau shelke of congress form parbahni were willing to contest from their respective party, but none of them got ticket from their respective party or from part of alliances.

Jan suraj party of vinay kore contested priti shinde, daughter of ex-igp madhukar shinde from nanded. Bahujan samaj party contested journalist dilip sdatkar from yevotmal, BRP-BMS contested madhavrao naik from hingoli and sanjay kokare from north east mumbai, rashtriya samaj paksha contested total 12 dhangars, maharashtra 10 karnataka 1 and gujrat 1 former minister anandrao deokate who opted to vacate his MLA seat for the then chief minister shshil kumar sindhe was allowed to contest instead of deokate from solapur. Ujwaltai shinde was defeated due to the vote shared by RSP candidate. Due to delimitations Sholapur is converted as reserve seat and only option for anandrao devkate is permanently closed. In maharashtra established political parties have not groomed or allowed growing single leader at national level from Dhangar community of 15 million populations. On state level there are very few leaders who are deprived of even MLA ship by the established political parties. Anna dange, the senior Dhangar leader formed lokrajya party, but he had to tender his resignation from the party by himself and had to join national communist party. By way and by that way, dhangar larger by population and rulers by legacy, have been gradually eliminated from politics in maharashtra assembly also dhangars are not adequately represented. Shri ganpat rao desmukh of peasants and workers party (9 times MLA senior most in assembly) and haridas bhade of bharatiya republican party, bhaujan mahasangh were only 2 MLAs from Dhangar community in last assembly. Ramesh shendge (NCP) and prakash shendge (BJP) were only 2 MLAS from community. (Dhangar / Shepherds – Politically Deprived Community (S Akkisagar - June 2010))

In Dhule District in concern of Dhangar Community two Time Represent in Maharashtra Assembly/Vidhan Sabha In 1995 first time Anil Gote was Elected as a Independent candidate from Dhuliya City constituency and now he also second time represent to dhule city constituency at present. Anil Gote come from Dhangar community. If Anil Gote Come from Dhangar but hi not elected as a Dhangar.

In Dhule Municipal Corporation first Deputy President Santosh Mahanor is Dhangar in Bake 1999 Smt. Hematai Gote first lady Dhangar. Directly elected from public as a Municipality
President if all those candidate are Dhangar But they could not leading Dhangar Community. They elected own credite.

CURRENT SITUATION OF DHANGAR COMMUNITY

Traditionally being shepherds, cowherds, buffalo keepers, blanket and wool weavers. Butchers and farmers, the Dhangars were late to take up modern day education. Thought it has a notable population, not only in Maharashtra but also in India at large, had a rich history, today it is still a politically highly disorganized community and is socially, educationally and politically backward. They lived a socially isolated life due to their occupation, wandering mainly in forests, hills and mountains. (Kaka kalelkar commission report, B.D Desmukh report, 2012)

Now these days they are developing their social political, educational and economical conditions. We can see some changes in their condition, but the changes are not sufficient and permanent, we need the permanent solution of their sociological and political condition and it can be possible only after educational awareness of the entire Dhangar community, the people of this tribe do not take any participation in political activities, but they should have to do participate in politics if they want to improve their sociological, educational and political background but still they are not ready take any active participate in any field and so that they are need for that.

Dhangar community is considered as nomadic tribe at state level reservation and and other backword class at central level reservation, so in this way they have some benefits of reservation of the both the level but because they have to wonder from one place to another and due to their illiteracy there is a lack of political awareness in this community and they are far from participation in politics, we find that there are no any research study in this field, so that there is nessisety of the research study in this field.