

DEVELOPMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES IN INDIAN STATES

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ABSTRACT

Caste is the basic system of Indian society. It is based on highly unequal division of economic and social rights. The country's growth also gets affected by the mechanism of caste system. In spite of increasing protective measures since independence, the percentage of schedule castes development continuous lower than the overall development. The policies of reservation were implemented over 60 years ago. The issue is not on reservation but how reservation would be applicable to get the best result in prevailing social situation. In this article, it is argued that the lack of inclusive implementation of policies some sections of people was affected from the mainstream of society. Introductory section of this article made an attempt to explain the evolution of Scheduled Castes in India. It defines how the division of society segregates some section of people from the social inclusion. The next segment gives a hawk's eye view on the governmental interventions for their development. The affirmative actions are one of the key instruments of social development. Due to lack of inclusive governance the Schedule Castes are led behind the mainstream. The graphical presentation clears educational development of Schedule Castes in comparison to Other Social groups. Finally conclusion appears with the proper implementations of plan and policies may leads to inclusive growth of the Scheduled Castes in Indian states.

Key Words: Inequality, Reservation, Inclusive development, Affirmative action.

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Abbreviation

DPEP – District Primary Education System

EAS – Employment Assurance Scheme

IAY - Indira Awas Yojona

ICDS – Integrated Child Development Service

IRDP – Integrated Rural Development Programme

JGSY – Jawahar Grama Samrudhi Yojona

MSDP – Multi - Sectoral Development Programme

N FBS - National Family Benefit Scheme

NFE – Non-formal Education

NMBS - National Maternity Benefit Scheme

NOAPS - National Old Age Pension Scheme

NREGP - National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme

NSFDC – National Scheduled Castes Development Corporation

SC – Scheduled Caste

SCA – Special Central Assistance Plan

SCDC – Scheduled Castes Development Corporation

SCP – Special Component Plan

SCSP - Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan

SGSY - Swarna Jayanti Swarozogar Yojona

SSA – Sarva Siskhya Aviyan

TSP - Tribal Sub-Plan

Introduction

Social inequality has been a vital structure of all human societies. It reflects in different forms and divides the society. It is only because of the natural differences in ability, power, wealth and status among the individuals or groups¹. Untouchability and ritual pollution is one of the primary causes of the social inequality². Untouchability is not the fundamental institution of the Hindus only. It is also prevalent among the Muslims, the Christians, the Jains and the Buddhists³. The system of untouchability is even found in countries outside India like Burma, Japan, Ceylon and USA. But in India, it is a vast social system of relation, which has no parallels anywhere in the world⁴. Untouchables are generally defined as the people belonging to lower castes. Untouchables are called as Dalits, means oppressed castes⁵. The term Castes comes from the Spanish word “casta” meaning race. The Portuguese seafarers’ arrived on the west coast of India with trading purpose in the 15th century. They were the first one to use in Indian context⁶. Historically India has followed a strict castes system. In Manusmriti the sacred text of Hindus defined, ‘caste is an ancient institution’. It is based on the ideas of Varna, karma and dharma⁷.

The society was sub-divided into four categories based on their occupation and functions in the society. The function of each caste is determined by the power and status they would enjoy in the society⁸. Our history says, this system was introduced with the Aryan invaders in third century BC. It is a feature of ancient Indian society. The origin of the caste system was made by some sacred reason. For the harmonious maintains of the society, the people were divided into

¹ Chandra, Ramesh, Identity and Genesis of Caste System in India, New Delhi, Ghyana Books, 2005

² Jhodaka, S. Surinder, Caste, Oxford University Press, 2012

³ Ibid, pg3-12

⁴ Ghurye, G.S, Caste and Race in India, Mumbai; Popular publication, 1996

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Perez, Rosa Maria Kings and Untouchables: Study of Caste System in India, Orient Longman, 2000

⁸ Mohanty, Manoranjan, Class, Caste and Gender, Sage Publication, 2004

⁹ Sharma, K.L, Caste, Class and Social Inequality in India, Rawat Publication, 2001

¹⁰ Ibid.

four categories. The Brahmins formed the upper caste and were involved in all religious activities. On this class hierarchy the Sudras were constituted the lower caste people. They were constituted workers and slaves for the society. They were called untouchables. But Mahatma Gandhi defined the untouchables as “Harijan” meaning children of God.

With the passage of time our country is developing in all aspects. The social fabric of the country underwent a little change only. The caste system remained intact. The period of British rule from the late 18th centuries brought a little change. They try to take attempt of ensuring all public facilities to all sections of the society. They use the caste system as a means of social control. The British Indian government began to take an interest in the condition of “untouchables’ group”. The members of the lower castes are often described these days as Scheduled Castes. This term introduced by the Britishers, that means they are on the scheduled of the castes and eligible for government aid⁹.

At that time among our politicians two main approach were emerged. One is by political leaders and another is by religious leader. Their action and ideas made a remarkable impact on untouchable advancement. Mahatma Gandhi, whose chief aim was liberation from colonial rule with the philosophy of non-violence. His goal was to removing degrading stigma and manifestation of the untouchability. His term Harijan gave them a special status in the society¹⁰. The other approach came from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a brilliant untouchable lawyer. He believed that after destroying the caste system, the untouchability could be destroyed. He becomes a chief spokesman of depressed class people. He demanded a separate recognition of the lower caste people.

The Simon Commission in 1935 first coined the term Scheduled Castes (SCs) through the government of India Act of 1935. In the mean time government of India published a list of Scheduled Caste, order 1936. This idea carried out by the government after independence period also. Accordingly under article 341(1), the President of India, after consultation with the Governor, may specify “the castes, races, tribes or parts of group within the caste or race, which

shall be deemed to be scheduled castes¹¹”. However under article 341(2), the parliament of India by law can include or exclude the mentioned groups from the list of Scheduled Castes.

In contemporary period, the Scheduled Castes are defined under article 366(244), of the constitution of India. This¹². The Scheduled Castes constitute a significant demographic strength in India. In the year of 1935, the Scheduled Castes were estimated at about 5 cores in the year 1981, estimated as 10.475 cores in the year 1991. The population was estimated 13.822cores, which constitute 16.48% of the total population. The decadal growth of Scheduled Castes in India over 1991 was 30%, which is more than decadal growth of general population 81% of the scheduled Castes population living in rural areas. Nearly 84% of the Scheduled Castes lives in ten states. In the state of Himachal Pradesh it is 25.34%, West Bengal 23.62%, and in Utter Pradesh 21.04% of its total population. In Maharashtra 11.10% of its population are SCs and 28% of the total population of Punjab belong to Scheduled Castes. Other states like Bihar 14%, of its total population, Haryana 19.75%, Karnataka 16.38%, Andhra Pradesh 15.93%, Tamil Nadu 19.18% and Odisha 16.20% of its total population is Scheduled Castes. It shows a significant strength of Scheduled Castes population.

¹³According to the 2001 census, the Scheduled Castes population in India is 166,635,700 persons, consisting 16.02% of the country's total population. Being fourth – fifth (79.8%) of them lives in rural areas and rest one – fourth (20.2%) lives in urban areas. The sex ratio of 933 females per thousand male is slightly higher than national average of 933 sex ratio. The highest percentage of Scheduled Castes population of the countries lives in Utter Pradesh, West-Bengal, Bihar, Andhra-Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Himachala Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka etc. The smallest concentration of the Scheduled Castes population is in the North-Eastern areas.

The process of the states as enumeration, categorisation and classification of the population for administrative purposes played a vital role in shaping our understanding of caste. The process also influences the communities to construct their identities. It was during British colonial rule period that the untouchable began to attract state attraction for welfare and development. British ruler clubbed them together and made them into administrative category.

¹¹ Kamble, N.D., *The Scheduled Castes*, Ashis Publishing, New Delhi, 1982

¹² *Planning Commission (Govt. Of India)*, New Delhi, pg 405

¹³ *10th Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, Govt. Of India, New Delhi, 2001, pg 201*

Initially calling them as Depressed Classes and later defining them as Scheduled Castes in the Government of India Act 1935. The post independence Indian states continued with the category of SCs but expanded the list of communities and scope of the state action. Over the years the Government of India has evolved a large number of policies and programmes for the welfare and empowerment of SCs.

Generally the Government could identify three sets of policy measures that Indian state evolved to deal with marginalised situations of the SCs.

- (a) The protective measures in the form of legal sanctions against practice of untouchabilities and violation of civil rights.
- (b) Enabling or empowering measures in the form of special programmes for their development including quotas in educational institution and employment in the Government system.
- (c) Representational measures in the form of special quotas in legislative bodies at all levels in proportion to their population.

Protective measures through the five year plans

¹⁴The Scheduled Castes people constitute a major portion of the country. Their development becomes a prior duty of the nation. So our government has made number of constitutional provisions for the protection and promotion of the weaker sections. The Directive Principle of State Policy and social justice have been taken as a medium of development of weaker sections. The Indian constitution guarantees safeguard to weaker sections under part (xvi) and also provides for the protection and promotion of their social, economical, educational, cultural and political interests. It is only for the bridge the disparities with other sections of the society. Fundamental Rights and fifth, sixth, seventh scheduled of the constitution try to guarantees certain safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, article 330 guarantees reservations for the SCs and STs. After that the developmental planning attempted through the Five Year Plans.

¹⁴ Dutta, N.K., *An X-Ray on Reservation Provision in India*, Anmol Prakashan, New Delhi, 1991, p-247

A specific sector of backward classes was included from the first plan to provide special needs of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. According to article 17 of part (iii) of the constitution said, "Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden". Untouchability being an age old practice. Its eradication is incomplete without mental recognition. So Article 14 of the constitution guarantees equality before law. It also states to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes or for the Scheduled Castes (Article 15(4)). It also empowers the state to make provisions for reservation in appointments or in favour of any backward class citizen under article 16(4). Under Article 46, it also provides special care to the weaker sections of the society; particularly protect them from social injustice and all forms of the exploitations. Reservation of seats on Govt services is another measure of positive discrimination under article 335. Article 340 and 341 empowers the state to appoint a commission to investigate the condition of backward class people. There are number of constitutional provisions to provide protection and promotion of the interest of the socially disadvantaged groups. Further improvement steps taken through the Annual Plan, Five Year Plan etc. The plan included various policies and programmes for the upliftment of Scheduled Caste people.

¹⁵The developmental planning launched in 1951 through the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) visualise that the programme under various sectors of development would benefit all sections of the population including SCs, STs and OBCs. But unfortunately, it never happened so. Therefore, special programmes under the Backward Classes sector were formulated, keeping in mind the special requirements of Scheduled Castes.

¹⁶The Second Plan (1956-61), assured that benefits of economic development will bring a new horizon to the backward sections. In order to reduce inequalities, it will help a lot.

¹⁷The Third Plan (1961-66), advocated greater equality of opportunities and reduction of disparities in income and wealth. The economic equality became a chief aim of the Third Plan. Economic stability earns the social equality at somehow.

¹⁵ The First Five Year Plan, Planning Commission (GOI), Chapter-37, 1951.

¹⁶ The Second Five Year Plan, Planning Commission (GOI), Chapter 28, 1956.

¹⁷ The Third Five Year Plan, Planning Commission (GOI), Chapter 21, 1961.

¹⁸The Fourth Plan and Fifth Plan (1969-78), visualize the basic goal as rapid increase in the standard of living of the people. Through various measures it tried to promote equality and social justice.

¹⁹One of the subsequent Annual Plan (1979-80), was launching the special mechanism of Special Component Plan (SCP) for Scheduled Castes development.

²⁰The Sixth Plan (1980-85), provides a developmental approach to the Scheduled Castes. The implementation of Special Component Plan (SCP) brings an eye catching improvement in the social life of the Scheduled Castes. The SCP was one of the interventions strategy for the all round development of SCs or STs. This plan meant to ensure benefits to these special groups by guarenting them fund. The Governor also creates a separate budget for making funds. The SCP contains overall development of the Scheduled Castes. It monitors various developmental programmes for the benefit of the Scheduled Castes.

In the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90), the Special Component Plan for Scheduled Castes was strengthened. The scheme for the welfare and development of Scheduled Castes continued. There was supportive increase in flow of funds for the development of SCs. Under the Special Component Plan (SCP), the State Plans, Central Plans, Special Central Assistance Plan (SCA) AND Institutional Financing Resulting the expansion of infrastructural Facilities and enlargement of their coverage. The educational development was given the main goal and primary motto of the Seventh Plan. The Scheduled Castes Development Corporation (SCDC) was one of the instruments of economic development of Scheduled Castes families. Total elimination of scavenging is one of the objectives Seventh Plan. Another important achievement of this plan was the setting of a National Scheduled Castes Development Corporation (NSFDC) in 1989. The aim of this NSFDC was to provide financial assistance, loans to Scheduled Castes families.

¹⁸ The Fourth Five Year Plan, Planning Commission (GOI), Chapter- 21, 1969

¹⁹ The Annual Plan, Planning Committee (GOI), Chapter 28, 1980

²⁰ The Sixth Five Year Plan, Planning Commission (GOI), Chapter 28, 1980

²¹The major objective of the Eight Plans (1992-97) was to bridge the gap between the development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Minorities. So that this disadvantaged sections of the population could be brought on par with the rest of the society. The problem of the Scheduled Castes was tackled by proper mechanism of planning and implementation of programmes. The Special Component Plan, Central Plan and schemes specially targeted for the welfare and development of Scheduled Castes were the mechanism under Eight Plan. Alleviation of poverty through National Poverty Alleviation Programme was one of the measures taken out by the Government. Skill development programme was also ensuring poverty reduction. Rehabilitation of scavenger was an important programme in the Eight Plan. For the educational development of Scheduled Castes, Government provides pre-metric and post-metric scholarship. Providing hostel facilities, boarding grants, free supply of books, stationary and uniform was also worked out in the Eight Plan. The Integrated Rural Development Plan (IRDP) played a vital role in the community development also. In 1989, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Preventions of Atrocities Act were implemented to prevent the offence and atrocities against the backward class people. During Eight Plan, the protection Civil Rights Act of 1995 and 1989 was brought a little change in its functional attitude. For the economic development of SCs, OBCs and Minorities three national level apex body were set up. They act as agents in developing schemes for employment generation and financing pilot projects such as; The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (1992), The National Minorities Development Corporation (1994-95) and National Safai Karmachari Finance Development Corporation (1996-97) etc.

²²The Ninth Plan (1997- 2002) was committed to empower the socially disadvantaged groups. The Government tried to use as a weapon for the socio-economic change in society. The prior aim of this plan was creating a proper environment for the SCs, OBCs and Minorities where they were able to live the life with confidence and dignity. They can freely exercises their rights and enjoy their privileges. People's participation was the chief aim of this plan. The approach adopted towards empowering the weaker sections was holistic in nature. The social empowerment, economic empowerment and social justice with intra-sectoral focus were created an attention for the development of Scheduled Castes. Literacy status is one of the key indicators

²¹ The Eight Plan, Planning Commission (GOI), Chapter- 29, 1992

²² The Ninth Plan, Planning Commission (GOI), Vol-2, 1997

of socio-economic development which is largely depending on the level of education. It is being the powerful instrument for social empowerment. It includes with all necessary infrastructural facilities, providing basic amenities to all schools, opening of new schools/ hostels, up gradation of schools, special coaching, educational concessions, increasing the coverage under provision of incentives to girl students etc. So the Ninth Plan committed to achieve the universalization of primary education by 2005 with a special focus on low literacy package of SCs, STs and OBCs. The District Primary Education System (DPEP), Lok Jumbish , Shiksha Karmi, Non-Formal Education (NFE), and National Programme for Nutritional Support to primary education (Mid-day-meal) are the popular programmes for the educational developmental of the disadvantaged groups. Sarva Shiksha Aviyan (SSA) is a historic path towards achieving the goal of universalisation of elementary education. It is a time bounded integrated approach in partnership with the states. It aims education to all children in the age 6-14 by 2010. It is a mission mode approach. To facilitate the recruitment of the SC/STs candidates the Government launched a scheme "Special Coaching Scheme". There has been a significant increase in levels of literacy rate among SCs went up mere 10.27 per cent in 1961 to nearly 55 per cent in 2001. Bringing them much closer to the general population that was the case in 1961. Literacy grew at much faster rate among them in general population. School attendance also improved making them close to the other categories of population. In 2001, 72 per cent of SC boys and 63 per cent SC girls were attending schools which are very near to the general student's percentage.

Table.1 Literacy Rate of All Social Groups & SC Population (1961-2011)

Year	All Social Groups			SC		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1961	40.4	15.35	28.3	16.96	3.29	10.27
1971	45.96	21.97	34.45	22.36	6.44	14.46
1981	56.38	29.76	43.57	31.12	10.93	21.38
1991	64.13	39.29	52.21	49.91	23.76	37.41
2001	75.26	53.67	64.84	66.64	41.9	54.69
2011	80.89	64.64	72.99	75.17	56.46	66.07

Source: Register General of India

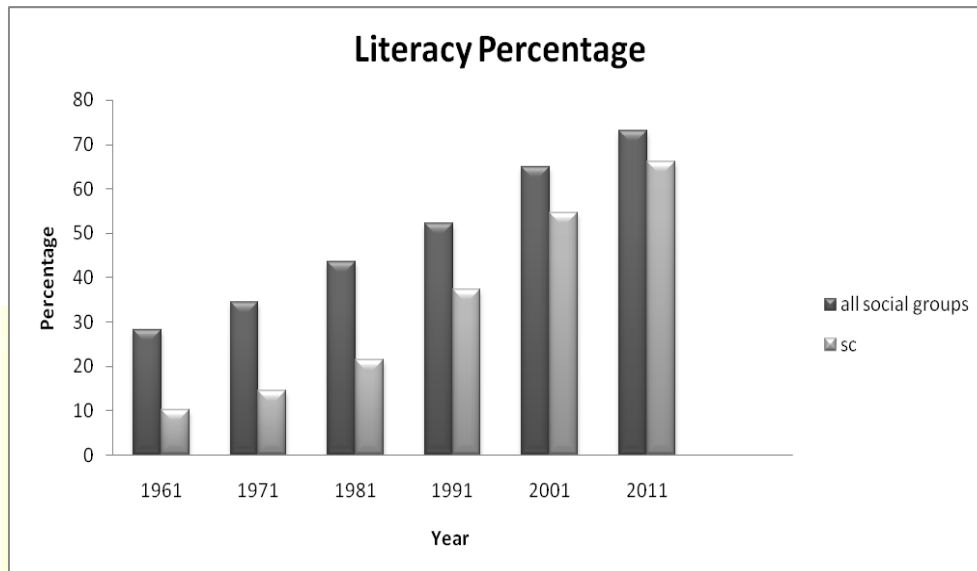


Fig.1 Literacy percentage of all social groups and SCs

For the development of the women and children belonging to the Disadvantaged Groups the programme of Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), works in every state of the nation. Under the Jawahar Grama Samridhi Yojana (JGSY), 22.5% SC/STs people were engaged for their livelihood. Under the Employment Assurance Scheme (ESA) which is open to all rural poor who are in need of wage – employment preference is given to SC/STs people. Swarna Jayanti Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) was covered at least 50% of the Scheduled Tribes population. Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) has the objective of providing rural household facilities belonging primarily to the SCs categories. Under the Central Rural Sanitation Programme (NSAP), The National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), the National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and the National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) all the programmes were only for the meant of weaker sections development under the Ninth Plan.

²³In the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07), to continue the process of development of the Disadvantaged Groups (SCs/ STs/ OBCs), the country adopted 3 pronged strategy.

- (1) Social Empowerment
- (2) Economic Empowerment
- (3) Social Justice

²³ The Tenth Five Year Plan, Planning Commission (GOI), Vol- 2, 2002

Though the removal of all existing inequalities, disparities and other forecasting problem the social empowerment could be achieve.

Through the empowerment- cum – income generation activities the Government tried to make the weaker sections of the society economically independent and self – reliant.

The elimination of all types of discriminations against the society, disadvantaged groups, and the social justice can provide them. With the help of constitutional commitments, affirmative actions and legislative support the social justice can be achieved in the society. Formulation of need- based programmes as well as their implementation was also the aim of Tenth Five Year Plan.

The Tenth Five Year Plan also made special efforts to fulfilling the universalisation of elementary education. The ongoing programme of the department of Elementary Education were continuing for the educational developmental of weaker sections of the society. In fact, the direction of the Supreme Court to treat education as a fundamental right is became the ultimate aim of the Tenth Plan. Along with the general education, vocational education was also found an important place in this plan. For the economical development women make the self-help pattern of swarozogaries is a welcoming measure. The overall development of the scheduled Castes was the main priorities of the Tenth Plan. Human Development Index indicators like literacy, infant mortality rates also shows that slow progress of India. Literacy rate has gone up to 64.8% in 2001, but the number of illiterates still exceeds 304 million. Life expectancy during 2001-06 was 63.9 per year for male and 66.9 for females. Contribution of agricultural growth was 2.1% despite a target of 45%.

So due to lack of inclusive development the Eleventh Plan (2007-2012), continue all the developmental programmes in inclusive mode, providing better wages and enhance the number of working days in the programme of National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP). Education and skill development among the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and poor enhanced. Structural production through programme like National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP), Swarna Jayanti Sworozogar Yojona (SJRY) improved. This ambitious provides significant improvement in health outcomes, universal access for children to education, increased access to higher education and improved standards of education including

skill development programmes. Special attention was given to the needs of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Class people of the nation. Women and children constitute 70% of the population and deserve special attention in all sectors. Minorities and other excluded groups are also provided by special programmes to bring them into the mainstream. Multi-Sectoral Development Programme (MSDP) in 90 Minority concentration districts was launched over the 11th Plan period. Its effective implementation over the Twelfth Five Year Plan is essential for ensuring minorities' development. In this plan an important initiative was taken to close the gap between the SCs/STs. The implementation of the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP) and the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) is devised for the Twelfth Plan which can overcome the difficulties experienced in the past. The scholarship schemes for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Minorities have enabled many students from these communities to continue their education. Greater effort was given to improve the enrolment ratios and to reduce dropout rates especially for girl children among SCs, STs, OBCs and Minorities.

Concluding observation

It has been a common understanding with social scientists and 'thinking mind' in India that the goal of the Indian state is 'growth with justice'. This addresses a complex socio-economic issue which has been confirmed by the thrust put on 'inclusive growth' in the XIth Plan document of our country. When we talk of 'inclusive growth' and state action in that regard, it means that present growth is with exclusion of some section of people, some regions, some states and some communities. In other words, when there is deprivation of economic opportunities for majority in the State, the growth is definitely not an inclusive one. This has posed a challenge for socio-economic development in the country. Thus, reservation as a public policy is one of the measures with an ultimate intension of bringing social inclusion in the society. It is a constitutional arrangement of equalizing the un-equals of the society. So the issue before us is how long 'reservation' as a public policy will continue. It depends on how best we can meet the developmental challenges and how quickly we address the deficits. Judicious planning, optimum effort, harmonizing initiatives and relentless determination or to sum it up a perfectly proactive and sensitized inclusive governance, will lead the nation to an era of development where the ideal of development would not need a contradistinctive term as

inclusive development but growth itself would come to mean a natural, homogeneous and inclusiveness.

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