



A STUDY ON CASTE, RELIGION AND CASTE BASED RESERVATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

Sree Ram Vithal Poduri

Planning Engineer

JNTUK

1. Introduction:

The caste system in India is possibly the world's oldest social structure. Caste is a defining element of Hinduism, and it refers to a complex system of social groupings based on ceremonial purity. A person is regarded a member of the caste into which he or she is born and stays a member of that caste until death, albeit the status of that caste may change through time and across locations. The religious idea of karma, which holds that one's station in life is determined by one's conduct in previous lives, has long been used to justify differences in rank.

Reservation is an Indian system that offers scholarships, fee concessions, 49.5 percent seats in educational institutions, jobs, and qualification exam and age relaxation to specific castes. Reservation was motivated by the desire for representation in school, employment, and politics. It empowers the Union Government, as well as the States and Territories of India, to designate reserved quotas or seats, which lower the criteria required in exams, job vacancies, and other situations for "socially and educationally backward persons," based on provisions in the Indian Constitution.

The four major varnas, or main caste categories, have been used to characterise this more than 2,000-year-old structure in traditional scholarship. The Brahmins (priests and instructors), the Kshatriyas (rulers and soldiers), the Vaisyas (merchants and traders), and the Shudras constitute the order of precedence (laborers and artisans). The "untouchables" or Dalits, a fifth category outside the varna system, are typically assigned tasks that are too ritually filthy to deserve participation inside the traditional varna system. Almost identical structures are also visible in Nepal.

In 1950, the authorities set quotas in government positions and educational institutions for scheduled castes and tribes, the lowest in the caste structure, in an attempt to remedy historical injustices and provide a fair playing field to the previously disadvantaged.

In 1989, the allocation was expanded to include a group known as the OBCs (Other Backward Classes) that fell between the upper and lower divisions. In recent decades, as a result of increasing secular education and the development of urban development, the influence of classification has diminished somewhat, especially in cities where the various classes live together. and intermarriage are increasingly common. In some southern states and Bihar, in the northern provinces, more and more people are starting to use the right word after a social reform movement. Despite the changes, class ownership remains strong and almost always reflects the class.

Recently, reservation in our country is one of the burning issues. Behind the reservation game, the clauses of reservation in our constitution put by the politicians for SC, ST, OBC depending on conditions of those days when people were discriminated based on the caste. In the current scenario, the youth is facing discrimination due to the reservation system as the general caste candidates are getting less vacancies as compared to SC, ST, OBC in the higher education as well as public sector jobs. There was a decade when SC, ST, OBC faced inequality, discrimination in the Indian society due to false beliefs, rituals, orthodox mindset of the people but today India has achieved a position where the citizens are more educated and have modernized and changed the mindset and as a result the people under SC, ST, OBC have achieved equal position in the society and most of them are not facing any discrimination. Whereas the Reservation system in India seems unjust to the general castes, resulting into less importance to the talented and hardworking candidates. As a result, most of the students are opting for higher studies in foreign countries, as well as for the better opportunity of jobs abroad.

Our constitution makers laid down provisions for reservation for a limited period which was the need of hour at the time as India got freedom after a long period and was at a developing stage. Then society stood on altogether on a different footing. So, to bring all members of it on the same level from various discriminations, the architects of our constitution sought this policy of reservation based on caste; that has now become a burning issue in country's present social political and economic life. It now really needs 'Review'.

The constitution of India states in article 15(4) that, "all citizens shall have equal opportunities of receiving education. Nothing herein contained shall prevent the state from providing special facilities for educationally backward sections." It also states, "The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of society, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." The article further states that "nothing in article 15(4) will prevent the nation from helping the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes for their betterment." In 1982, the constitution specified 15% and 7.5% of vacancies in public sector and government aided educational institutes as a quota reserved for the SC and ST candidates respectively for a period of five years, after which it was to be reviewed. This period has been routinely extended by the all succeeding governments. The Supreme Court of India ruled that reservations cannot exceed 50% and put a cap on reservations. But in spite of this ruling, there are state laws that exceed this 50% limit and are under litigation in the Supreme Court. For instance, caste-based reservation stands at 69% and the same is applicable to about 87% of the population

in the state of Tamil Nadu. And the Indian parliament has taken no review and revisions for fear of losing its mass base. That limited period of positive discrimination has become an avoidable feature of our socio-political life.

2. Objective of the study:

- i. To study about facts behind religionism and casteism in India.
- ii. To study about advantages and disadvantages of reservation system in India.

3. Scope of the study:

- i. The research is only based on secondary data.
- ii. The study is primarily limited to beliefs followed by people in India.

4. Data Analysis and Findings:

Caste and Religion is root cause for reservation system in India. Earlier, British rule adopted Divide and Rule Policy to rule India by raising disputes between kingdoms. Now the greedy politicians for their personal benefits, they are ruling in the same way by dividing us into castes and religion.

➤ Hindu Mythology:

- i. According to Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter-4 Verse-13 people were never categorized into castes or religion depending on birth.

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम्॥१३॥

(chātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśhaḥ

tasya kartāram api mām viddhyakartāram avyayam)

Meaning: *The fourfold caste has been created by Me according to the differentiation of GUNA and KARMA; though I am the author thereof know Me as non-doer and immutable.*

The biggest falsehood all Indians are being told by their elders right from the moment they are borne is that your caste is decided by your birth. This is a big lie being told by saints with little knowledge of scriptures. According to The Bhagavad Gita, the nature of your thoughts decides the caste which you belong too. In the Gita, your thoughts are divided into three categories- sattvic, rajasic and tamasic. In the above verse, GUNA means the nature of your thoughts and KARMA means the work that you do. So, let us try to understand the nature of these thoughts.

Tamasic- A person with tamasic thought nature is dull-witted, sluggish, unwilling to work, does not apply his brain, and is content to be idle. This is the lowest level of existence, and anyone who thinks like this is classified as a shudra. The type of employment such a person conducts will almost certainly involve manual labour, as such a person dislikes education and refuses to enhance his or her standards.

Rajasic- Rajasic people have a lot of materialistic and worldly desires, such as money, power, celebrity, and status. As a result, all politicians and soldiers are considered kshatriyas, or warriors who enjoy fighting wars and battles. Vaishyas include all traders, farmers, and artisans who are continuously thinking about growing profits, making more money, and providing for their families.

Satvic- This is an individual's higher character of thought. A person with sattvic thoughts yearns to learn and contribute to society in a positive and honourable way. As a result, in today's work environment, all entrepreneurs, scientists, intellectuals, and philanthropists are classified as brahmins.

Now, Gita says that the very basic nature of man is tamasic. All men if given a choice would love to sit idle and enjoy life without doing anything. So, a tamasic individual can be raised to the category of rajasic by whipping up his desires. How do your parents motivate you to study? they tell you that if you study you will earn more money, buy big houses and fancy cars, marry a beautiful girl. So, you become rajasic in nature and fulfill your materialistic desires. After your desires are fulfilled, money no longer remains your motive and you move to a higher state. You want to do something good for your country i.e., you start entertaining sattvic thoughts and enter a state of brahman-hood. Thus, you can see, at different stages of one's life one person shifts from being a tamasic to rajasic to sattvic. So, nobody's caste is determined by his birth. Anyone in a lower category can raise himself to a higher state by gaining knowledge and education. Also, we have seen a lot of people who fall from a higher state to lower state because of inaction or worldly desires. So, no one is a brahmin by birth. Also, nobody is a shudra by birth. This is the biggest falsehood spread by ignorant people.

ii. According to Bhagavad-Gita, Chapter-4 Verse-11

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ 11॥

(ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāns tathaiva bhajāmyaham
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣhyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ)

Meaning: In whatever way people surrender unto Me, I reciprocate accordingly. Everyone follows my path, knowingly or unknowingly, O son of Pritha.

➤ **Muslim mythology:**

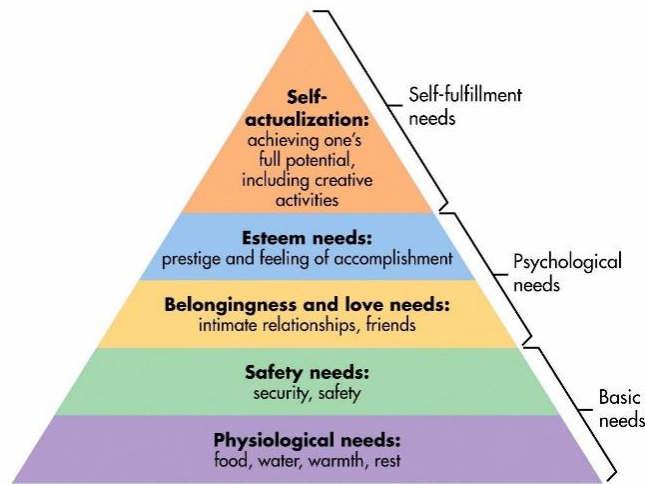
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

This Verse answers the question why are their different tribe, why all People are not of same colour and why is World not single Nation. Allah answers it by directly addressing the humans saying:” Human beings, we created you all from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Verily the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-fearing of you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” (- Verse 49:13 of Quran)

➤ **Christian Mythology:**

Galatians 3:28 is the twenty-eighth verse of the third chapter in the Epistle to the Galatians in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. It is a widely commented biblical passage, in which Paul states: "**There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**" It is sometimes cited in various Christian discussions about gender equality, and racism.

From the above findings and thorough knowledge, we can say that no religion states that person should be discriminated on the basis of birth. The fourfold caste system which mentioned in Bhagavad-Gita is also proposed by American psychologist named Mashlow and theory was familiarized as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.



Reservation is a form of affirmative action to uplift the status of socially and educationally backward communities in India.

➤ Articles in Indian Constitution which speaks about reservations in India:

"15. *Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.-*

(1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to- (a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.

(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children.

(4) Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially or educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

(16) *Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.*

Clause: (1) There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

(2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State.

(3) Nothing in this article shall prevent Parliament from making any law prescribing, in regard to a class or classes of employment or appointment to an office under the Government of, or any local or other authority within, a State or Union territory, any requirement as to residence within that State or Union territory prior to such employment or appointment.

(4) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.

Article 29 (2), prohibits denial of admission to any citizen 'into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them'" under 'Cultural and Educational Rights.'

Advantages of caste-based reservations:

- a. Increase in no. of people from backward sections in various decision making i.e., **Increase in representation** from different sections of society.
- b. It has helped some people from backward sections to achieve **higherposts** or **services** in the public sector as well as in some private institutions.
- c. It has encouraged the people to fight for the justice whenever there is violation of their **human rights**.
- d. **Meritocracy** is **meaningless** without equality. First of all people must be brought to the same level whether it elevates a section or decelerates another regardless of merit.
- e. Reservation has **slowed** down the process of forward becoming richer and backward becoming poorer.

Disadvantages of caste-based reservations:

- a. It is a form of **ethnic discrimination**. It's working as a barrier for inter-caste marriages.
- b. It's a biggest **enemy** of meritocracy. It's resulting into the **degradation** of **quality** of students and workers enrolled in different institutions.
- c. It's propagating notion of **caste-based society** instead of eliminating it.
- d. Poor people from forward castes don't have any social or economic advantage over rich people from backward caste. If this prevails, it may result into the formation of another backward caste of people belonging from poor people of forward caste.
- e. Beneficiaries of reservation are largely from dominant class in backward castes. Marginalised section still remains marginalised.

5. Conclusion:

People refer God as Sarvantaryami (the one who controls and operates everything), yet people question about others' religion or caste. People refer God as Akhilanda koti brahmandanayaka (The cosmic leader of the universe), yet people question about others' religion or caste. No person should be discriminated on the basis of caste, religion, race and gender as everyone are equal before God. People doesn't accept change easily, belief of one's religion/caste cannot be changed overnight as it is running in the blood of every single person. If a person believing that he/she belongs to certain religion/caste, he/she should see the other person in the same. The true meaning of secularism is not to question about other's religion. Religion and castes are the two things that are created by people upon their own perception.

Caste based reservations indirectly leads to corruption. Reservations should not be caste based but to be on basis of economic status of the family. Right to education should be provided for every person. Except education and medication nothing should be freely provided, which makes people lazy and shows less interest to work.

