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ROLE OF RESERVATION POLICIES IN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

Reservation policies in education have generated a lot of discussion around the world, especially in nations that are struggling with past injustices and marginalised populations. This abstract explores the many facets of reservation in the educational system, examining its goals, history, debates, and effects through a socioeconomic perspective. Reservation in education was first implemented to remedy historical injustices and systemic inequality. Its primary goal was to give underrepresented groups—especially marginalised castes, tribes, and economically disadvantaged segments of society—opportunities. Its proponents contend that by levelling the playing field and empowering historically marginalised communities, it promotes inclusivity, diversity, and social justice. But there has been doubt and criticism about the effectiveness and fairness of reservation schemes. Opponents contend that these actions could exacerbate discrimination, threaten meritocracy, and result in ineffective educational outcomes. Concerns are also expressed over the weakening of educational standards and the possible stigmatisation of recipients. Reservation policies undoubtedly brought about important socio-economic shifts, despite the criticisms. Through expanding educational opportunities for historically underprivileged populations, they have promoted social mobility, strengthened community bonds, and broadened the range of viewpoints found in educational settings. Furthermore, data indicates that reservation laws have boosted marginalised groups' involvement and representation across a range of industries, supporting inclusive development and progress. In the future, the difficulty will be finding a careful balance between advancing diversity and upholding high standards in education. Reservation laws must be regularly reviewed and improved by policymakers in order to stay applicable, efficient, and in line with the changing socioeconomic environment. Furthermore, supplementary actions are necessary to create a more meritocratic and equitable education system. These actions include raising the standard of elementary education, strengthening skill development programmes, and tackling structural disparities.

KEYWORDS: Education, Reservation Policy, Diversity, Tribes,

INTRODUCTION:

'Education is the whole of events that shape the child's attitude and young and decide the character, assert Brown and Rau. Ignorance, injustice, and illiteracy can all be eliminated via education. According to a person's country, age, and situation, education can also alter their ability to think, feel, and recommend things. Without education, it is impossible for a person to develop fully on all fronts—not just in terms of their personality but also in terms of their culture, civilization, and the advancement of their country as a whole. Education is the means by which a man discovers his qualities and acquires the means to express

them appropriately. The Indian educational system is currently one of the fastest-developing in the world. Still, the presence of Christian missionaries and British authorities contributed to the development and advancement of education in India, from primary to higher education. The 'Saints' of antiquity are credited with initiating the Indian educational system. Many people consider the Vedas, or ancient books, to be the solid foundation of Indian culture. Back then, students were taught by the methods of Shruti (hearing) and Smriti (memorization). There were no schools, therefore pupils lived in celibacy in the forest at their teacher's house until they had an education. During the Middle Ages, elementary education was given in Maktab schools, while language instruction took place in Madrasahs, or secondary schools. The Portuguese missionaries who came to India are credited with founding modern education. Primary schools, orphanages that imparted vocational skills, colleges, and universities made up the foundation of the Portuguese educational system.

THE GENESIS OF RESERVATION POLICY AND EDUCATION:

India's historical record demonstrates that the country has had reservation laws in effect for thousands of years. Our sacred texts served as the main sources of legislation for the English dominion thousands of years ago. Reservations were first established as a result of the Varna system, the Caste System, and the Untouchability practice. Originally, the caste system was a type of reservation in which members of the upper caste, such as Brahmins and Kshatriyas, were expected to carry out 'elite' duties and to be entitled to specific employment, educational, and other benefits.

The introduction of the reservation policy was prompted by the underprivileged Vaishyas and Sudras, who were forced to undertake "menial" and subservient labour and did not receive any benefits, particularly in the area of education. The Hindu texts Geeta, Vedas, and Puranas made it quite evident in the past that only Brahmins were allowed to receive an education. A current form of reservation system was created to protect and safeguard the interests of the lower castes as a result of historical atrocities and exploitation of these groups. Equal opportunity, social standing, and caste advancement are anticipated outcomes of the initiative. Tamil Nadu was the birthplace of modern India's reservation policy system. The Dravidian Movement's power movement was started in Tamil Nadu in 1831 by various underprivileged groups and communities. This resulted in the Madras Presidency and the princely state south of the Vidhya having reservations in public service and education. This reservation was instituted by the British in response to multiple petitions from different parties. The principal objective of the British administration and the princely states was to implement reservation policies and representation for underprivileged communities. Following this, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule called for universal free and compulsory education as well as proportionate reservation in government employment. Following that, in 1848, she was the first to recognise the importance of education and opened Poona's (Pune's) first untouchable school. The princely state of Mysore gave voice to the underprivileged segment of the population in 1874, and it was the first to recognise the need of presenting to underprivileged people. The Governor of Mysore reserved 20% of middle and lower level police department employment for Brahmins and 80% for Indian Christians, Muslims, and Hindus between 1874 and 1885. The Princely state appointed the so-called Hunter panel in 1882 because a backward panel was required to investigate the situation. The commission was appointed to solve the education and economic problems, like providing free and compulsory education to backward classes.

Reservations were implemented for underprivileged classes in various locations with identical goals. In 1901, Shahu Maharaj instituted reservation for non-Brahmin and backward classes in Maharashtra, which was then a princely state called Kolhapur. In order to provide universal access to education, he established multiple hostels in Kolhapur and offered free education to all. A reservation was created in 1908 in support of numerous castes and communities that were involved in British governance. The wonderful idea by Vishweshvarayya, the Assistant Commissioner of Mysore, the Dewan of Mysore, the institution of scholarship for the backward class of students, was given a nomination procedure by the governor of Mysore in 1914. One lakh rupees was given in 1917 as scholarships for BCs and lower classes. The Maharaja of Mysore established a committee in 1918, headed by Chief Justice C. Miller, to look into the matter, report on its findings, and recommend ways to give the downtrodden classes proper representation. The committee concluded that there was an excessive number of Brahmins in the Services. The committee also suggests enhancing scholarship to backward classes, relaxing requirements for qualifying educational texts, and exempting them from them. For the first time, preferential recruitment for members of underprivileged groups was formally implemented in 1921 for both state and collegiate service. That marked the official beginning of India's reservation policy. In 1921, Madras implemented quota-based community representation in its educational system and government services.

Mysore's prince Krishna Raje Wodeyar (1921) instituted the "non-Brahmin" reservation of government posts in Mysore (now Karnataka). As a result, there was a strong anti-Brahmin campaign in Tamil Nadu, and Dravida Kazhagam began calling for large special quotas. The Madras Presidency gave them reservations for government employment and educational opportunities in response to their demands. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, a member of the impoverished class, called for legal reservation in the second decade of the 1900s. It led to the first mention of representation for the untouchables in the Montague Chelmsford report on August 20, 1917. It was written that the mass populace was suppressed by the intelligent class. The information was given in 1930 by the Royal Commission of the Government of India. This report's ratio should be followed when providing representation for all castes in government services. The conference around the round table took place on November 12, 1930. Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar was invited by Vic Roy to present at this conference and discussed the 1928 Simon Commission demand from the poor class during the conference.

For instance, the allocation of seats in Parliament and Assemblies, the cooperation in administration, the reservation of services and education, etc. In the conference, Dr. Ambedkar made revisions to the same and presented new demands for the memorandum's growth of the depressed class. With the communal award of 1932, reservations—which had hitherto only existed at the provincial and local levels—formally entered the national arena. The Poona Pact gave the downtrodden castes more reserved seats and sufficient representation in the national and local legislatures. However, employment, including in educational institutions, for SCs and not STs started in 1943 in pre-independence India.

RESERVATION POLICY ON EDUCATION SYSTEM AFTER INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION AND RESERVATION (GOVERNMENT POLICY)

Humans require a vast array of goods on this planet. One of the primary demands following India's independence was to treat everyone equally. Enforcing and enforcing reservations is one of the objective requirements for treating Indians fairly. The previous reservation policy scheme was altered and updated by the Indian drafters of the Constitution after our independence. The reservation was created to provide these groups with a home and to remedy the historical discrimination, injustice, and persecution they had to endure. The goal of this is to fulfil the Constitution's guarantee of equality. The Indian government established reservations for the weaker segments of society in the fundamental rights of the people in order to end various forms of discrimination and depressed classes and treat everyone equally. Article 15(4) set a specific reservation provision aimed at raising the educational bar for the exploited/depressed class. Article 46 stipulates that SCs and STs must get special boarding, scholarships, and other benefits. "All citizens shall

have equal opportunities to receive education," states Article 15(4). It further specifies that "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the weaker sections of society (in particular SCs and STs), and shall protect them from social "injustice" and all forms of exploitation." Article 29(2) stipulates that students in the weaker group must be evaluated based on their merits. The award will also be available to students from SCs and STs who are transferring to the Bodh Dharma. According to Article 340, this provision of the reservation is mainly based on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). They are socially and educationally backward classes of citizens within the territory of India.

THE RESERVATION POLICY AND THE COMMISSIONS

The Indian government established Commissions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes to offer quota in jobs and educational institutions. In 1953, after Independence, the Kaka Saheb Kalelkar Commission was established for the first time in India. The Government of India appointed the commission with 11 members to look into India's socially and Educationally Backward Classes citizens, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This commission constituted for the provision of reservation to backward classes problems. Initially, in 1954, the Ministry of Education suggested that 20% of places be reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in educational institutions as per the proportion of the state's population. At present, for example, states like Kerala, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra went up to 90%. The backward classes were classified into four categories. The four categories are as follows:

1. Low social position in the traditional caste hierarchy of Hindu society,
2. Lack of general educational advancement among the majority of a caste or community.
3. Inadequate or lack of representation in government services.
4. Inadequate representation in trade, commerce, and industry.

According to the Kalelkar Commission report, they identified around 2399 caste or groups as Backward Classes with the recommendation, but the Government of India did not accept their proposal. The most recent was the Mandal Commission, which was established in 1979 with the goal of identifying India's socially and educationally backward classes. The commission estimated that, excluding Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 52% of India's population belonged to Other Backward Classes in 1980. Therefore, it was suggested in the Mandal Commission report that people from Other Backward Classes should be eligible for reservations for 27% of positions in the public and central government sectors. It was stipulated in 1982 that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes would receive separate reservations for 15% and 7.5% of positions in the public sector and government-aided educational institutions, respectively. In 1981–1982, the school was initially opened at the District Head Quarters exclusively for Untouchables. However, the general caste teachers' refusal to work at these institutions resulted in their closure fairly quickly. Following this, the government made government service available to everyone under the Carter Act. However, the administration did not want to infuriate the majority of Hindu caste members, therefore the outcome was null. Consequently, doors to government buildings and schools were remained closed for untouchables until the end of the nineteenth century.

Launching specific interventions and incentives to improve accessibility for the Tribals who live in remote, far-flung areas and remain isolated has been made possible by the National Policy on Education, 1986 (revised in 1992) special committee on STs' educational status. As a result, attempts to make basic education accessible to all people persisted, notably via the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme. A distinctive aspect of this programme is the involvement of parents/guardians of ST students in school activities. This guarantees programme ownership for Nutritional Support to Primary Education or Mid-Day Meals, which serve as support services to boost retention rates. Special measures have also been introduced in the area of higher and technical education, including the Department of Secondary and Higher Education's scholarships, seat reservations, remedial tutoring, and a relaxation of the minimum qualifying cut-off percentages. Students from Scheduled Tribes were also given special consideration for developing their abilities in the more modern, up-and-coming trades, which have higher employability. The 93rd Amendment to the Constitution and its implementation are significant events in Indian history because they provide opportunities for marginalised groups. In 2006 saw the implementation of the change under Article 15 (clause 5). The weak among socially and educationally underprivileged strata, particularly those in Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, were permitted by the governments to receive special allowances. This amendment also includes a special clause on admittance to educational institutions, including private educational institutions. The 93rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 2006 established a 27 percent condition for other backward classes in order to implement admissions reservation. In addition to enhancing the working conditions of ST employees, the Ministry of Labour specifically organises training programmes for skill enhancement. Their particular needs are met by the "Coaching – cum– Guidance Centre for educated STs Job seekers" programmes, which are dispersed throughout the nation. Of these, 13 centers provide facilities for training in shorthand and typewriting. These Centers offer occupational information and individual guidance and conduct confidence-building programs to benefit the STs Job seekers.

The government announced 10% reservation for the economically disadvantaged segment of the general category in government positions and educational institutions in 2019. This was the most recent reservation policy. Many students from reserved kinds have been admitted to the basic quota of reputable Indian institutions and colleges over the years, particularly those who are members of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. 52.56% of the 3,45,84,781 students who enrolled in Indian higher education institutions lately belonged to reserved categories (SCs, STs, and OBCs), with the remaining 47.44% being members of the general class, according to the AISHE report 2015–16. A reservation quota in the Indian higher education system designates a specific number of seats in all universities and colleges for students from all castes, including SCs and STs, as well as those who are socially and academically disadvantaged. 15% and 7.5% of seats in Indian universities were set aside for the SC and ST categories, respectively. In addition, 27% of seats are set aside for students belonging to the OBC category. This results in 49.5% of seats remaining accessible for candidates from the general category in Indian colleges and universities. This brings the total proportion of reservations to 49.5%. The total percentage of SC, ST, and OBC reservations in higher education and other fields shouldn't go above 50%.

THE PRACTICE OF EDUCATION IN RESERVATION POLICY:

The practice of the reservation system in Education in India was divided into five categories such as reservation based on Caste, Religion based on reservation, management quota system, gender-based quota, and reservation for NRIs in higher Education institutes.

a) Reservation based on caste: Article 14 of the Indian Constitution clearly defines equality before the law. It implies that no Indian citizen shall be treated differently by the State or the Central government on the basis of their gender, caste, creed, religion, etc. For this reason, seats in educational institutions have been distributed to SCs, STs, and OBCs in varying ratios by the national government of India and all state governments. For instance, the Central government has set aside 15% and 7.5% of places in higher education for SCs and STs, respectively, and 27% for OBCs. However, this isn't the case in every state because the

distribution of seats in government-run educational establishments ought to correspond with the percentage of the state's population. For example, in Assam, the rules for reservation in government-aided educational institutes are 27% for OBCs, SCs for seven, and STs for 12. On the other hand, in West Bengal, reservations in government-aided educational institutes are 22% for SCs and 6% for STs, and 7% for OBCs categories, in most of the tribals states in North East India like Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, etc. followed more than 50%, 70%, 80% and 90% in the state services and educational institutions.

b) Religion-based reservation: Particular attention is given to religious minorities in India under this clause. A portion of seats have also been allocated by the centre and state-run higher education institutions to Muslims and Christians, who are religious minorities. Additionally, Muslims and Christians occupy around half of the seats in religious minority educational institutions. For instance, the Tamil Nadu state government set aside 3.5% of its population for Muslims and Christians.

c) Management quota system: Even if there is a management quota in higher education institutions, it is said that only the wealthy, regardless of caste or religion, can buy these seats, so the wealthy or high earners in India enjoy the majority of the seats. 15% of all seats are reserved for management quotas at many of India's most esteemed universities.

d) Reservation based on Non-Resident India (NRI): An NRI is an Indian citizen with an Indian passport who has travelled abroad for work, education, or other reasons for a minimum of six months. The Indian government offers non-resident Indians (NRIs) the chance to pursue higher education overseas in higher education institutions. However, only a small number of Gulf Country institutions and universities that offer higher education have set aside 15% of their seats for NRIs. For instance, in Bangalore, places are set aside for students of Indian descent who have moved abroad to attend engineering, medical, and MBA schools.

e) Gender biases quota: It is common knowledge that reservations are made for certain professions; similarly, the Indian government provides seats for women and girls in higher education. Many Indian law schools have allocated 30% of their reserved seats to women and girls in order to address this issue. For instance, the state's Bihar Engineering Board allots 3% of all available seats in engineering, medicine, and pharmacy to female students.

PROVISION REGARDING ANGLO-INDIAN COMMUNITY

Under Article 337, a special education provision was made for the benefit of the Anglo-Indian community. However, after 30 years from 25.1.1920, this special concession to the Anglo-Indian community would end. Additionally, a restriction was placed, saying that no educational institution would be eligible to receive any grants unless at least 40% of the annual admissions were granted to members of communities other than the Anglo-Indian population. As a result, the State order that forbade the Anglo-Indian Schools from admitting students from other communities was unconstitutional because it precluded the schools from fulfilling their constitutional duty to acknowledge a minimum of 40% of students from other communities.

Reservations being made in the realm of education The Constitution's Articles 46 and 29(2) provide for reservations in the educational domain. The direction has been advised that the reservation cap should not exceed 50%, and that candidates from all marginalised social groups would be represented within this 50% threshold. It was an effort to find out what the informants knew about the reservation policies that were in place in the realm of education. The table displays the data.

Reservation Policy and Women's Education It is impossible to exaggerate the role that education plays in the advancement of civilization for both men and women. Building a positive environment and fostering personality development are aided by proper education. The social and political elite in India is adamant that women should receive preferential treatment in order to level the playing field for all of its inhabitants.

Their kindness allowed women in India to receive reservations and special treatment in the workplace and in school. Regarding the reservation rules for women's education, however, there is a misperception. Women in India face discrimination when applying to schools, colleges, and universities because of this special treatment. Undoubtedly, teaching gives people a chance to work and helps them and society, etc., but it also weakens the position of women in this field. For instance, 64% of Indian women lack formal education, compared to 83% of educated women in Kerala. Furthermore, nearly 27 lakh women in Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh do not know how words are formed, according to the 1991 census report. Therefore, given these circumstances, women's educational status is currently quite depressing and pitiful.

POSITION OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes have the same status in educational institutions as other issues. Most institutions have appointed highly competent applicants for teaching positions; nevertheless, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes do not have access to highly qualified candidates. The application of the quota policy in university appointments to teaching positions was prohibited by the provisions of considerations and reserved posts for Scheduled Castes and Tribes. However, Karnataka's universities have adhered to the quota principle since 1976, filling 15% of available seats with members of Scheduled Castes. However, the case studies of four Karnataka universities about the appointments to teaching roles show an inadequate and noticeably smaller number of appointments for Scheduled Castes. Thus, the number of instructors from Scheduled Castes is only 2% at Bangalore University, 2.6 % in Mysore, 0.8 % in Karnataka, and 0.6 % at Agriculture University.

Conclusion

The educational quota issue is one of the many reservation issues in India, despite the fact that the reservation policy was created for the country's weakest segments of society. Developed nations with fewer problems than India, such as America, also embraced reservation policies called affirmative action. The primary cause is that the involved governments gave an excessively low percentage instead of adhering to the precise rate stipulated by the Constitution. The educational resources available to younger generations from all castes were inadequate throughout the 1980s. Following independence, the lower castes received more general education than the upper castes, but relatively little further education. In order to "identify the socially and educationally backward classes, to consider the question of seat reservations, quotas for people to redress caste discrimination, and to use eleven social, economic, and educational indicators to determine "backwardness," the Mandal Commission was established in 1979. However, the upper caste also heavily influenced these indicators. For instance, in 2006, when he implemented reservations for OBCs in educational institutions nationwide, Arjun Singh, the cabinet minister of the Ministry of Housing and Development of the United Progressive Alliance administration, faced accusations of engaging in caste politics. Hence, corruptions resulted in the acquisition of power and a way into politics, which was formerly exclusive to members of higher castes. Regarding the Women's reserve Bill, the majority of Indian women are unaware of its contents beyond the 33% reserve for women. In this case, the primary reason is lack of education. A small number of well-educated women and members of Parliament speak up in favour of increased participation through reservations in order to advance in their positions.

They claim that more women in Parliament will empower Indian women and that the bill's increased representation of them will change politics to become less corrupt, more compassionate, more sensitive to the needs of women, more progressive in terms of education, and more democratic in general. Nevertheless, the Lok Sabha members in the Indian Parliament disagree with this as well. The constitutional modifications have resulted in the insertion of Articles 16 (4A) and 16 (4B), which stem from Article 16 (4). However, this did not alter Article 16(4)'s structure either. Only SCs and STs are covered by these modifications. We stress that the structure of equality of opportunity in Article would collapse in the absence of the 50% ceiling

limit, the idea of the creamy layer, and the compelling reasons—namely, backwardness, inadequate representation, and overall administrative efficiency. The number of reservation percentages provided for OBCs, SCs, and STs based on the population proportion of the backward classes, the inadequacy of representation, and overall administrative efficiency are just a few examples of the compelling reasons why the concerned States must examine the provided reservation percentage in each case before making reservation provisions. It is impossible to argue that reservations do not help everyone, but for many states, the requirement of reservations becomes better than doing nothing at all. Last but not least, the public's voice matters by using the methods of protest, bandh, strikes, sit-in protest, public procession, etc. to prevent the lawmakers and government from manipulating the reservation.

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