

DISCUSSION ON POPULATION BASED RESERVATIONS OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT: CONVERSATIONS OF CONTEMPORARY KARNATAKA'S SITUATION

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ABSTRACT

In the Indian context when we think of social transition the first thing that comes to the mind is caste configuration structure. The concept of caste on one point of time was used on the basis of superior- inferior and high-low. The tradition, history and culture of every community is embedded in caste. Caste is not an imprint of community. It is the political, social, economic property of an individual. Based on this, discussion on what share one is having on the basis of population of his caste for equal rights, power and status in different fields is still going on. Every caste in India has created its own historical background in the name of tradition to attain superiority. At one point of time caste was used for the sake of pure- impure but this being used to have economic strength, royalty and participation in desired circle. Hence, today caste is now being sought as a right and authorization. Be it power, educational facility, to be used equally, it is being seen on the basis of caste in the present situation. Today caste has become the centre of power. Rather than making an effort to bringing the backward castes on par, it is being used for vote banking politics, political upsurge in the larger extent. Before independence for the upliftment of the untouchable castes many parametres were followed and the victimized castes were clubbed in the schedule. In independent India these scheduled castes were officially declared. Later for the sake of vote banking and political emulations. The task of stabilizing all those castes went on which is true to its context. But, to what extent all those castes became stable is still a question answered. The tag that scheduled castes are untouchable castes changed slowly during the course of time. The reason is vote banking politics. This has created hatred amongst the scheduled castes as well as sub castes in the states. The same situation in Karnataka has paved way for several debates and discussions.

Key words:

scheduled castes, political involvement, reservations, internal reservation inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

During the census of 1911, the colonial period when colonialism in India was securing its roots the scheduled castes were named as exterior castes and recognized likewise. The main reason for such recognition was practice of untouchability. In 1921 these untouchables were called inferior castes. In the 1928 Simon report for the first time untouchables were called inferior caste. In 1931 the Census of India Commission under the leadership of Hutton recognized scheduled castes keeping untouchability, social discrimination issues as the parameters.

The untouchable caste people were grounded with a tag of caste system and were denied of social status. The upper caste people who restricted the entry of untouchables to the world of literacy held their monopoly in all the fields. Hence during the pre-independence period the untouchables were in a completely merciful state socially, economically, academically and politically. During this period Dr. B.R. Ambedkar did a valuable campaign from 1918 to 1951 seeking separate political importance for untouchables in politics.

During 1930-31 and 1932 round table conference as a representative of the scheduled caste people he became successful in convincing the British for giving political importance. The then prime minister of Britain Sir Thomas Mac Donald declared separate voting system for the untouchables during the 1932 round table conference.

There were differences between Ambedkar and Gandhiji regarding this issue and Gandhiji held a fasting for 21 days in Yerawada jail for a period of 21 days. Later there was a Poona agreement wherein in place of separate constituency joint election system was brought into force as per the population of the untouchables political representation for Loksabha and Vidhanasabhas was included in the constitution.

As per the Article 330 and Article 332 of the constitution separate provisions have been given to scheduled castes in lower house of the parliament and lower houses of all the state assemblies. Currently 120 representatives from the scheduled caste from various parts of India have been elected for the Loksabha. In the same manner 750 legislators are representing in different states. In Karnataka 36 assembly constituencies have been reserved for scheduled caste.

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Discussion on population based reservation for scheduled castes and political interference: Dialogue of contemporary Karnataka context.

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Today caste has become the centre of power. Rather than making an effort to bringing the backward castes on par, it is being used for vote banking politics, political upsurge in the larger extent. Before independence for the upliftment of the untouchable castes many parametres were followed and the victimized castes were clubbed in the schedule. In independent India these scheduled castes were officially declared. Later for the sake of vote banking and political emulations. The task of stabilizing all those castes went on which is true to its context. But, to what extent all those castes became stable is still a question answered.

This question of social justice is found throughout the country. There has been measures to solve this problem legislatively and in some states amiably. On this basis even in Karnataka, there is a call against the inappropriate distribution of power for scheduled castes. When we discuss about such movements with respect to Karnataka we deem it to be special, because the dalit movement of 1970-80 has gained a very special place among the other movements held in India. In India the movement stood up for equality on the basis of socialism.

In this manner the movements, struggle, campaign and fight helped immensely for the strengthening of identity of scheduled castes. But this identity is becoming fragile due to too many confusions, problems, oppositions and so on. The main reasons being, question of power based on the population of sub castes within the scheduled castes, question of existence of the main aboriginal castes having more strength in terms of population, stewardship of migrant castes who are lesser in strength and their indifferent tendency towards untouchable castes.

The census starting from 1911 to the period of Justice A.J. Sadashiva commission reports and the unreleased recent census report on social, economic and population census, of the government indicate that the population of scheduled castes is more in number. At present there are 101 castes under the list of scheduled castes and the total population is more than 1 crore. But in 1972 the L.G. Havanoor Commission Report had made provisions for the inclusion of non-untouchable castes under non-untouchable castes in the scheduled caste list which created a new wave of opposition. For all these efforts 101 castes were added to other castes list which are as follows;

Madiga and Madiga related castes

Adi Andhra, AdiDravida, Adi Karnataka, Madiga, Madar, Matanga, Mochi, KamateMochi, Machigar, Madari, Mang, Thoti, Chammar, Chammaragar, Samagara, Edagai Dora, Kakkeya, Jambuvulu, Arundatiyar, Haralayya, Dakkaliga, Chandal.Chakkaliyan, bambi, Bambai, Asandaru, Asodari, Chamadiya, kalta,

Valanchi, Ranigar, Rohidas, Dokkalvar, Kankeyya, Jaggali, Kadiyar, Machara, Mini Madig, Mang, Garudi, Garodi, Manne, Panchama, Raniyor, Samban, Sambaan, Sindolu and Bendollu.

Holeya and Holeya related castes

Adi Andhra, AdiDravida, Adi Karnataka, Holeya, HoreyaDasara, Maladasam, Holeyat, Balagai, Chalavadi, Channaiah, Champar, Mahar, Mala, ThotiChannadasa, Paraya, Pariyas, Paravan, Mala Jangam, Mala Masti, Bhangipanchama, Panniyadi, Tharal, Malahain, Malasel, Netkani, MalasaSanyasi, Baira, Badak, Aryaaborigin, Bakad and Panchama.

Lambani related castes

Lambani, Lambadi, Sukali and Sagali.

BhoviVaddar related castes

Odd, Odde, Oddar, vaddar and Vadder.

Korma related castes

Koram, Korava and Korma.

Untouchable migrant castes

Kose, Koracha, KotagaMetri, Lingadar, Movitin, Mundala, Sillekyathan, SudugaduSidda, HandiJogi, Tirubanda and Mukri.

When we take into consideration these 101 castes, the percentage of population with respect to Madiga is 33.4%, Holeya castes are 30% and untouchable migrant castes is 10.94% and the population of non-untouchable castes such as Bovi, Lambani and Korma is 23.64%.

With regard to the political representation during the assembly elections the representatives of untouchable castes such as Holeya and Madiga held equal reservations in the assembly for contesting before the 1972 Havanoor Commission report's inclusion of non-untouchable groups.

The non-untouchable groups that were included in the untouchable communities list in 1972, came forward to swallow the additional reservations given for minor populations during the 1983 and the later elections. It can be examined in the table given below. The 2008 and 2013 assembly elections have been considered here.

2008 karnataka general assembly elected sc mla's						
	Total	HOLEYA	MADIGA	LAMBANI	BHOVI	OTHERS
Congress	7	4	2	0	1	0
JDS	2	1	0	0	0	1
BJP	24	4	5	8	5	2
Others	3	1	0	0	2	0

Total	36	10	7	8	8	3
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2013 karnataka general assembly elected sc mla's						
	Total	HOLEYA	MADIGA	LAMBANI	BHOVI	OTHERS
Congress	17	8	3	3	1	0
JDS	10	3	2	5	2	0
BJP	7	1	2	1	2	1
BSR	1	0	0	1	0	0
Others	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	36	12	7	10	5	2

The figures of both the elections contain 68% of the untouchable communities wherein they have 50% reservation. After the 1972 Havanoor Commission inclusion of 11 communities in the scheduled caste list 23.64% of Bovi, Lambani and Koram communities have gulped 50% of the reservation and have taken the stewardship in political power. Therefore, the untouchable communities are trying to take their share and regain power based on population based reservation.

In this manner the 101 castes of scheduled castes have been campaigning, fighting and seeking reservation based on population since 25 years. This is important from many aspects. The major issues being , ownership of identity, untouchable and non-untouchables discussions, rightist and leftist discussions, dialogues regarding social justice, social amiability and so on.

Discussions regarding ownership of identity of Scheduled Castes

At present the issue of ownership of identity of scheduled castes is the current issue in Karnataka. The dalit chief minister's issue in the 2013 assembly elections justifies this fact. The word Dalit has been used in a broader sense and while it comes to ownership of identity, the original untouchable communities come forward to exhibit their unity which is a fact. But there is lack of unity among the aboriginal untouchable communities which has cultural and traditional reasons too. Though Holeya related rightist community and Madiga related leftist communities have come together on the basis of distinct cultural patterns and marriage customs the notion with which they are seen as castes in the other castes has not changed. On this basis it seems that when dalit politics is becoming stronger right- left attitude, untouchable and non-untouchable issues are more relevant. Owing to the fact and fear that dalit politics may become stronger, the dominant castes are using such sensitive issues to show wrong direction, which has been proved in many political narratives. Due to this fact scheduled caste communities are exhibiting their strength through organizations and caste conventions. In the same manner some political parties are keeping aside untouchables from political participation to attain their theoretical goals. Hence in the untouchable communities seeking political participation through population based representation, there is lot of dualism, bias and opposition. Supplementing to this during the BJP led government in 2008, out of 7 ministers there

was only one minister from the untouchable community and the remaining 5 ministers belonged to other castes.

If the prejudice and oppositions are kept aside and if the untouchables come forward to exhibit their unity like they had before the formation of the 1972 Havanoor Committee the issues like dalit chief minister, equal political representations are not something impossible. Factors such as political participation, ownership of identity, reasoning of population based reservation are inter-related inherent issues.

Discussions about non-untouchables and untouchables

There are two distinct groups; Madiga related group and Holeyya related group in the 101 sub castes of scheduled castes. They have been labeled as untouchable castes traditionally. Likewise the migrant untouchable castes are leading a low level life. On this basis we can consider these castes of Karnataka in two time periods.

First phase:

Starting from the independence period to 1980s. During this period in 1972 the Havanoor Commission have a report for the inclusion of various castes to the scheduled castes list. This report gave a caste wise population report. Since the untouchable communities were in a substantial proportion the reservation proportion was fixed based on the same. But still non-untouchable castes were included to the scheduled castes. The campaign against the hazards of inclusion was foiled by conspiracy.

During these oppositions through the 1977 constitutional amendments some of the castes belonging to scheduled castes and backward classed were included in the scheduled castes list. In this manner a conspiracy was formed to destroy the power of untouchable castes. When the untouchables were longing to get the benefits of reservations for physical and educational qualifications the Banjara, Lambani, Bhovi, Koracha and Korama castes were included with the untouchables and an order was done to include them in the scheduled castes list on 27-03- 1980 ((SWC: 285 SAD 78). This was the development of the first phase.

Second phase:

After 1980 the period may be called as the second phase of non-untouchable and untouchable discussions. Due to the inclusion of the non-untouchable castes that were there in the backward classes list to scheduled castes list there was lot of adverse effects in the distribution of reservations, people with lesser number of population had major benefits, more power and extended their predominance in power in a notable manner.

The non-untouchables are to some extent rich politically, educationally, occupationally and culturally when compared to untouchables. They are well versed in utilizing the benefits with their skills as they did not have the social stigma or tag which untouchables had. This helped them in moving forward with the opportunities they had. In this manner even after 1980 the non-untouchables castes though less in

number utilized all the opportunists they got and moved forward in their political career thousand miles ahead of the untouchable castes. The untouchable castes who were more in number stayed too backward because of neglect. This paved way for the aboriginal castes to fight for their power and rights.

Left hand and right hand discussion

Among the 101 sub castes of the scheduled caste the Madiga related castes are called left hand communities and the Holeya related castes are called right hand communities. Among the 101 sub castes of scheduled castes the total population of these two castes is 64%. There is contradiction in the distribution of seats among the two communities. In the same way due to cultural reasons these two communities though these communities are considered different when it comes to power and some other aspects such as philosophical and theoretical issues these two castes have clemency and unity.

Supplementing to this the dalit movement of 1970-80 was initiated by these two castes together which strengthens the issues of theoretical and philosophical unity. But since both are equal in number there is an inner fight for dominance of identity which is the invisible truth. If these communities continue to fight in this manner it is very true that the other non-untouchable communities will make the best use of the situation and these will be deprived of their opportunities for distribution of power. The Holeya related castes have moved forward in political related representation. The Madiga related communities are deprived of political representations which is proved from the facts and figures.

On the whole if these two communities come together on the basis of brotherhood they can play a deciding role in politics. Coming together leaving behind the differences and intolerance is the need of the hour. Otherwise there is no doubt that dalit politics will go haywire in Karnataka. Both the communities need to understand this matter and take it up seriously. Because the foundation of dalit politics is based on the acceptance and understanding between these two communities. If they fight for their reservation based on the population being one this will definitely solve all the inherent inequality issues and help in their development.

Discussion on Social justice

Equality of status and right for living is the main objective of our constitution. This is also the objective of social justice too. The main intention of social justice is to bring the neglected and deprived communities into the mainstream and work for the welfare of these communities. If the basic needs are not fulfilled it will lead to conflicted life.

On this basis there have been constant movements since 25 years forcing for redistribution of reservations based on social justice to correct the inequality and discrimination.

The A.J. Sadashiva Commission which was appointed in 2005 to ease unequal distribution and discrimination of scheduled castes submitted a report to the government on June 14, 2002. The commission in its seven long years conducted survey of 20 lakh 24 thousand families with 96 lakhs and 60 thousand population census and also survey of 58 thousand scheduled caste workers working in different departments through their 141 questionnaires. The committee has recommended to divide the 101 castes 4 divisions based on their population and the reservation be divided in 6: 5:3:1 ration. There has been a regular fight for the report to be implemented. If the report is implemented the deprived communities can come in the mainstream and participate in politics. This aspect can be noticed in the social justice view.

Discussion on Social Harmony

The main objective of providing reservations in the constitution is to bring equality. Since this has not been implemented effectively the deprived communities have indulged in a fight for their rights. Already many of the states are solving this problem in harmony. People having an indifferent attitude towards the deprived class are not tolerating the issues of reservation classification. Such people are spreading rumours that there are differences within the scheduled castes. Is it true? If we go in search of the answer it is not being found. This looks like changing the route of the real facts in social justice. Equality within the scheduled castes is a must to rejuvenate the cultural traditions of the deprived classes seeking equality of living and rights. The untouchables who are divided in the name of dalits in case of Holey- Madiga and some more castes in the names of dalit activists should become united on the basis of harmony which is most required in the present situation. This will encourage the mindsets of other downtrodden communities which will pave way for the social transformation movement.

Conclusion:

On the whole when political involvement and participation issues is included in the population based reservation issues many aspects such as cultural, social, theoretical, philosophical and administrative stories open up. In this context of contemporary Karnataka period talking about dalit politics is more important because of the burning issues such as inconsistency, opposition and differences between the scheduled castes. For the establishment of ownership of dalit identity on the basis of harmony, non-conflict attitude and philosophy such discussions and dialogues are more consistent and important.

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