



Evaluation of Government Policies and Programmes for the Welfare of Dalits: A Review

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Abstract

This paper aspires a vision for the welfare of Dalits through the government policies and programs of India. After independence, the Indian government had launched many government policies and programs for the empowerment of Dalit. The major aim of these government schemes was to the upliftment of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes communities for their welfare in social, economic, political, and educational to come in the mainstream of the society. But on reviewing all these government policies and programs, it is found that this scheme has been unable to benefit the entire Dalit community equally. Through this paper, Evaluation of policies and programs and find out behind reason for the failure of these. All the data of the study have been taken from the secondary data and government sites. In conclusion, There is a need to change the implementation methods of policies and programs for the upliftment of Dalits, And at the same time drawing attention to the new issues (creamy layer concept among Dalits) emerging in Dalits in the contemporary era.

Keywords: *Dalits Empowerment, Evaluation, Government Policies and Programmes.*

Introduction

Dalits have been subjected to several deprivations in India seeing as immemorial and have been marginalized in different spheres of life. They have been socially degraded, economically exploited, politically inferior` and educationally deprived by the dominant castes and classes. The Scheduled Castes or the Dalits are the people who have been victimized in a number of ways for centuries since the later Vedic Age for being in the lowest rung of the Indian caste

hierarchy and often being termed as the untouchables (Zelliot, 1996). The oppression, suppression and victimization of this large section of Indians went on unabated for so long that it seemed by many to be their natural plight and thus the tradition, in spite of legal bindings against it, carries on in various ways in the Indian society even today (Omvedt, 2011). Indian Government has taken many steps to abate such malpractices and atrocities on the Dalits and even came up with different educational schemes, financial helps and reservation policies in government educational institutes and jobs to ensure that the Dalits are represented in every sphere of Indian life and also ensured political representation in the electoral processes by reserving seats for the Dalits. In spite of all these governmental efforts, still the Dalits are living in a state of intense poverty and social stigma barring a few who through their efforts have been able to come out of the social stigma, intense poverty and attained respectable position in the society. The paper “*Evaluation of Government Policies and Programmes for the Welfare of Dalits: A Review*” is an attempt to critically evaluate the ways in which various governmental schemes have been rolled out to ensure that the Dalits are empowered socially, economically as well as educationally; and yet it is being perceived that these schemes have not become fully effective in the development and progress of the Dalit community, and also focus on Needy contemporary issues (Creamy layer, Reservation within Reservation) for Dalits.

Government Schemes for the Dalits:

The Government of India has since its independence, under the proficient leadership of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and others ensured through constitutional guarantees and remedies are in place so that the Scheduled Castes and other people who are socially deprived for ages are not discriminated against anymore and steps were taken to ameliorate their educational, social, cultural and educational state by starting some schemes and reservations for them (Ambedkar, M. 2005). Reservation in governmental educational institutions as well as in government jobs has led to a much brighter situation for some of the people belonging to the Scheduled Caste community, but still a greater number of people are living in their intense poverty and hardship facing the social stigma of being the people who are not fit enough to come up from their lowly status and take charge of the world as the higher caste people have been doing.

Article 46 of the Constitution of India declares. “The state shall promote with special care the programmes for educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation” (Wankhede, 1999: 28). Constitutional guarantee is only

the first step as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar stated as until the time the essence of equity and justice is not enthralled in the minds and hearts of the Indians, social equity is impossibility (Guru, 1993).

Indian Government with its humanitarian face has always been helpful to make significant developments for the Scheduled Caste people and have come up with various schemes and projects which can help the Scheduled Caste people find some ways to fight the injustices that they were suffering for ages. The Schemes can be broadly being divided into two categories – (a) Educational Empowerment schemes (b) Economic Empowerment schemes. The last category of Schemes is meant to uplift the respect and value of the people belonging to the Scheduled Caste community and thus make these people gain their self-respect. What this paper deals with is the first two schemes – the Educational and the Economic ones which are essential schemes which if properly implemented can lead naturally to gain some confidence of the SC people in their respective communities and lead to their social empowerment.

Review of Literature :

The Government Policies and Programmes For the Welfare of Dalits are reviewed by some Important Thinkers as follows:

Singh and Kaur (2018), conducted a study entitled “A Study on Skill Development of Paint and Coating Industry”, The finding of the study indicated that lack of formal training and inadequate provisions for the training of painters are the main reasons behind the shortage of skills in paint industry. **Ansari and Khan (2018)**, conducted a study on “Role of Education and Skill Development to Promote Employment in India for Rural Development”, The objectives of the study were to analyze and highlight the status of contemporary education with respect to skill development and to provide some suggestions based on the observations and analysis of the study. In India, around 12 million youth enter the workforce every year, with poor education and negligible work skills, if they are unemployed due to lack of skills, massive social unrest could arise. **Shrivastav and Jatav (2017)**, conducted a study entitled “An Analysis of Benefits and Challenges of Skilling India for Dalits Community”, the main aim of this paper was to study the prospects and challenges for skilling in India. **Hazarika (2016)**, conducted a study on “Skill Development for Rural Entrepreneurship”, A study on State Institute of Rural

Development (SIRD), Assam” The objectives of the study were to examine different skill development facilities provided by State Institute of Rural Development for rural entrepreneurship. **Jogdand (2000)**, in his volume “New Economic Policy and Dalits”, contained the papers on economic reforms and Dalit’s, economic reforms and their impact on employments and their status. **Bhaimali and Biwa’s (2004)** in their paper on Development and Empowerment of Disadvantaged People of India concluded that scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are far behind compared to the rest of the population in respect of literacy and educational development. **Guru (2000)**, in this article “Dalits from margin to margin” to deal primarily following issue, First, what are the different process of marginalization that seem to be operating among the Dalits?, Second, why does this phenomenon continue to exist? **Singh (2001)** in his study on surplus land distribution and its influence on socio-economic status of scheduled castes of U.P. highlighted the issues of backwardness, poverty, indebtedness and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes for scheduled castes in U.P. **Pathak (2002)**, in his study on Special Component Plan in U.P. envisaged the existing socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes in respect of their economic activities, occupational patterns and source of livelihood. According to **K.S.Chalam (2007)**, in his book “Caste Based Reservation and Human Development in India” included the determination of policies such as reservation implemented for providing special opportunities for SCs and STs on the basis of caste in Indian Constitutional System. For centuries on account of social evils and traditions. They are not getting actual opportunities of participating for individual and social developments. **Nandu Ram (1988)**, “the mobile scheduled caste: the rise of new middle class” in his study, after independence, for two or three decades with the help of government policies and programmes like reservation for the implement of SCs and STs to emerge middle class within dalits (sc/st). **Shrinivas (2016)**, “Dalit middle Class” also described the emergence of class among Dalits. **Throat, Aryama, and Negi (2007)**.”Reservation and Private Sector”, After globalisation, in Indian government institutions rapidly increase privatization on account of this, in front of lower class (SCs and STs) new disadvantages are originated for their daily life. Because, here, in the country lacking of quality education and economic resources. SCs and STs are unable to take the benefits of Globalisation in contemporary times. Therefore reservation is compulsory in private institutions or sectors for uplifting of them.

Objectives of the study

1. Implementation of government policies and programmes for Dalits community.
2. Evaluation of government policies and programmes for Dalits Community.

Research Methodology

The basic nature of this study is Descriptive. For this study purposes the secondary sources of data are used from bulletins of Government of India, data base of SC/ST budget allocations under different schemes, and latest economic survey of India and a relevance research article, books.

Implementation Government Programmes and Policies.

The Significant Educational and Economic Schemes for the Development of the Dalits are

Educational Empowerment:

In pre- British Indian society, The Education was the privilege of the upper strata of society, but the British rule in India established Western system of education based on the theory of equality and universalistic criteria of admittance, opening the doors of education to all irrespective of caste, class, sex or religion. The spread of education among the weaker sections has become a major part of the government programmes since the early 1950s (Micheal 2007). It mostly includes financial support in the form of scholarship stipends at the school and college levels, construction of hostels, reservations for students of this community in engineering and medical colleges and other facilities.

Some of the special programmes:

- Pre-Matric Scholarships
- Post Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Caste Students (PMS-SC)
- Scholarships for obtaining Higher Education and Coaching Scheme
- RGNF Fellowship of UGC for PhD scholars for higher education to SC/ST Community.
- Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojna
- Ambedkar Overseas Vidya Nidhi Scholarship 2020 for SC / ST.
- Dr. Ambedkar fellowship for Dalits students to study in foreign countries.

Which had a significant impact on improving the educational status of the Dalits; include elementary education, pre and post-matric scholarship, book banks, hostel facilities for Boys and Girls, ashram schools in tribal areas, national overseas scholarships, coaching classes and allied schemes.

Economic Empowerment

1- Financial Scheme

- **National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC):** The Scheme NSFDC is especially meant to finance certain income generating activities for the Scheduled Caste people who are living below double the poverty line limits which is set to be presently at Rs 98,000/- per annum for rural areas, whereas Rs 1,20,000/- per annum for urban areas. This scheme is meant to generate programmes which ensures that the Dalits and gainfully employed.
- **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC):** The NSKFDC is envisaged to provide credit facilities to beneficiaries amongst Safai Karamcharis, manual scavengers and their dependants so that they can avail the benefits and do the needful in terms of their social and economic advancement.
- **Special Central Assistance (SCA) to Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP):** The objective of this scheme is to support scheduled caste families in increasing their productivity and income.

- **Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes:** Many Dalits have entrepreneurial ideas and yet they cannot start their business ventures because the lack of funds. Such people can avail the benefits of this scheme. In other words, this scheme is to promote entrepreneurship amongst the Scheduled Castes.
- **Credit Enhancement Guarantee Scheme for Scheduled Castes:** This Scheme is to provide credit guarantee facility to Young and start-up entrepreneurs, belonging to Scheduled Castes so that they can make necessary start in their ventures with the help of government aid.

2- Poverty Alleviation Programme:

2:1. Self Employment Programmes:

Prior to 1960s, there were no self-employment oriented programs. For the first time, the government gave a different approach to development strategy ie. “Growth with Social Justice” in 1969. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP-1978), was started in rural areas of the country to increase the source of income of small farmers and landless labours. The beneficiaries were given subsidized credit, training and infrastructure so that they could find credit new sources of earning themselves. In this scheme, agricultural labours and small farmers received new skills to involve in vocations other than cultivating the land. They included fishery, animal husbandry and forestry. IRDP suffered from certain shortfalls in managing enterprises. Many unviable projects were undertaken and subcritical investments were made leading to the collapse of these microenterprises, later on, merged with Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana in 1999. Its goal was to provide self-employment for educated unemployed people. In this programmes, 50 percent of the benefit was for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 40 percent for Women and 3 percent for disabled person.

2:2. Wage Employment Programmes

The wage oriented programmes started during the 6th and 7th Plan in the name of National Rural Employment Program (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Program (RLEGP). These two programmes were merged in 1989, in to Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY-1989). The JRY was revised and launched in April 1999 and was named as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JRSY). Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) is the restructured, streamlined and comprehensive version of the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). It was started on 1 April 1999. The main aim of this programme was the development of rural areas. Infrastructure like roads to connect the village to different areas, which made the village more accessible and also other social, educational (schools) and infrastructure like hospitals. Its secondary objective was to give out sustained wage employment. This was only given to BELOW POVERTY LINE families and fund was to be spent for individual beneficiary schemes for SCs and STs and 3% for the establishment of barrier-free infrastructure for the disabled people. The village panchayats were one of the main governing body of this programme. ₹1848.80 crore was used and they had a target of 8.57 lakh works. 5.07 lakh works were completed during 1999–2000. One of the landmarks of the above programme was launched as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005. It is one of the largest publicized a flagship program of the government to provide 100 days guarantee wage employment every year to the household whose adult member interested to do unskilled manual work. If the employment is not given within 15 days of application, they are entitled to daily unemployment allowance.

- **Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY):** The Centrally Sponsored Pilot Scheme ‘Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana’ (PMAGY) is envisioned and is being implemented with the objective of an integrated development of Scheduled Castes (SC) majority rural areas which have a Dalit Population concentration higher than fifty percent. Initially PMAGY was launched in about a thousand villages in five States of Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. This Scheme was further revised on 22nd January 2015 and was extended to one thousand five hundred Scheduled Caste majority villages in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, West Bengal as well as Odisha.

2:3.Food Security Programmes

There are the various food security programs which are run by the central government with the help of state government, Integrated Child Development Services (ISDS), Antodaya Anna Yojana (2000), Targeted Public Distribution System (1994), National Rural Health Mission (2009), National Food Security Mission (2009) and National Food Security Act (2013).

Evaluation of the Government Policies and Programmes;

The Schemes mentioned above are the ones which are essential for uplifting the state of the Scheduled Caste people as if they get the necessary education as well as economic push then it can lead to some kind of amelioration of their status and social standing. It needs to be understood here that education is the prime means to deal with poverty and social stigma that the Dalits are suffering from. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's idea of "*Be Educated, Be Organised and Be Agitated*" (Ambedkar, 1936) is significant in this context as he felt that it is primarily through education that the Dalits can come out of their prejudiced and lowly life and can truly shine as did Ambedkar himself. Reservation policy was a means through which education of the Dalits were ensured to some extent by the Indian government and the constitution. But constitutional guarantees does not get implemented by itself for the poor if the poor and marginalized sections of the society are not given the necessary material benefit and circumstances by which they can take undertake the benefits of the reservation policies. So the government came up with schemes of different kinds of scholarships as well as students' hostels so that the young minds of the Scheduled Caste community can get the necessary monetary help as well as material needs so as to complete their education.

Even though education for Scheduled Caste people is highly subsidized yet it is being noticed that they do not have the required means to carry on educating their younger ones if scholarships are not ensured for them. So Government is highly justified and right in making provisions for the scholarships for the students of Scheduled Caste community pursuing education.

Education: A government works well when the people are informed and educated about the choices they can avail. When education and information sharing and dissemination is lacking it becomes difficult for both the government as well as the people in a democratic set up to tackle the challenges they face as well as to develop in the true sense of the term (National Human Development Report, 2002). The policies of the government have led to improvements in the access of these sections to educational services. Literacy rates of these sections, as shown in the report of the ministry of human development (Education for all- The state scene, 1993), indicates an increase in the literacy rate among SCs from 21.4 per cent in 1981 to 37.4 per cent in 1991 and amongst STs from 16.4 per cent in 1981 to 29 percent in 1991. The literacy rate among SC males increased from 31.1 percent in 1981 to 40.6 percent in 1991 among ST males from 21.5 percent in 1981 to 40.6 per cent in 1981. The literacy rate among SC females increased from 10.9 per cent to 23.8 percent in 1991 and among ST females from 8 per cent in 1981 to 18.2 percent in 1991 (Bakshi 2010, Desai 2006, Michael 2007). As evident from this report, the main problems of these communities on the educational front of this, to exist the high level of illiteracy, a massive dropout rate at the middle and high school level and limited access to higher education. This has happened despite progressive educational programmes for these sections in our country. So till the time elementary and basic education is not provided to the people belonging to the Scheduled Caste community, it will always be a problem in the proper implementation of the governmental schemes as it is not always possible for the government to go to the doors of each Scheduled Caste household and it is not expected of each Scheduled Caste individual to come to the tables of the government offices to avail the schemes. Thus, lack of education seems to be the foremost barrier in ascertaining the implementation of the schemes as there is not much information that the people of Scheduled Caste community have about these schemes to avail the benefits.

The drop-out rate of the SCs is higher than that of the other category students at primary level. There is a sharp decline in the drop-out rate of the SC students from 2006-07 to 2007-08. This may be because of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan working at that time period and was to allocate around 3800 crore rupees especially for the education of the SC students (CBGA report) but SSA did not formulate guidelines of this allocation and neither did it publish data on the SC beneficiaries. Mid-day Meal Scheme and other such initiatives are taken by the government so

as to meet the challenges of universalization of elementary education amongst all communities (Mahajan and Goyal, 2005). But often it is being seen that the kids belonging to the Scheduled Castes and other oppressed communities find it difficult to come and enroll themselves in the schools. Even if they enroll, the dropout rates among the SC community are much higher (Sujatha, 2002). Admittedly, these schemes have contributed significantly to raising the educational status of Dalit students. However, the desired results have not been achieved to the extent expected because of numerous factors. In such circumstances what are required are also certain kinds of schemes for the new enrolled students to elementary education so that their dropout can be minimized as far as possible and more Dalit kids can be attracted to the educational institutions.

Lack of Awareness: Lack of Information and Awareness – The individuals belonging to these communities either possess low levels of education or no education at all. Mainly, there is lack of information and awareness amongst them. Due to these reasons, they feel vulnerable in communicating with the individuals belonging to upper or middle classes. Awareness and knowledge arouses confidence amongst the individuals to move out of their homes and go into the outside world and interact with people (karade, 2008). The lack of information and awareness is considered to be the major impediments that enable these communities to remain in seclusion. Therefore, to alleviate this problem, it is vital to generate awareness amongst these individuals regarding the significance of education and development of literacy skills. Besides, the development of education and literacy skills, it is vital for all individuals to develop effective communication skills. In rural areas, there have been establishment of schools and training centres, where parents, who have not acquired education can send their children to schools (Kapur, 2018).

Poverty: India, the highest poverty persists among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in rural areas. But there is no any specific poverty alleviation policy and program for the SCs and STs which can eradicate chronic poverty. After 70 years of the independence, the condition of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are disgraceful and unjust. Most of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are poor because they do not have land for agriculture, even for housings, and some of them are rich because of land. There is a Millennium Development Program, the target of these developments and welfare programs

were to eradicate poverty and hunger, to reduce child mortality and to achieve universal primary education but this program could not achieve the targets. These are some of the models and programs: Trickle Down (1950), Green Revolution (1960), Growth with social justice (1969), Structural Adjustment Programs (1991), Millennium Development Goals (2000), Inclusive Growth (2007), and Minimum Government and Maximum Governance (2014). Yet at the same time it can be argued that The MGNREA, IAY, PDS, Food Security Act and others programs indicate that the programmes are poorly implemented and do not especially focus on the poor in terms of design and implementation. There is need to have a well-organized strategy of poverty alleviation policies and programs that can identify the poor people and give them social, economic, political and cultural justice (Karade, 2008).

Needy contemporary issues for dalits:

For several decades, with the successful operation of the development program for the Dalits, the emergence of New middle class among Dalit (Ram, 1988) & (Shrinivas,2016). After Independence, most of the benefits of development programs for Dalit have been available only to the 'Dalit middle class'. From time to time, efforts are being made by the government and constitutional institutions to make new provisions to benefit the development programs for the backward classes among the Dalit. In 2018, the Social-Justice Committee has been constituted by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, this committee mainly focuses on, identifying the backward castes (economically) in the Scheduled Castes to compose of special schemes and divide reservation into an equal part for them so that reservation, they can also get benefits. Caste or family is considered the standard for 'reservation within reservation'. This issue, while contradictory, raises a question mark on the relevance of social justice (Christophe, 2019). From time to time, the reservation has been explained by the Supreme Court, Jarnail Singh Vs. Lacchmi Narain Gupta on 26 Sep2018, there should be a provision of the creamy layer on the economic criterion regarding reservation in Scheduled Castes. Government of Bihar, in the leadership of Nitish Kumar, coined the term 'Mahadalit' which meant poorest among Dalits. The Mahadalit status entails benefits of over a dozen government welfare schemes including free land to the landless (Singh, 2015). In the Scheduled Castes, there is a feeling of rancor among castes to deprive advantage of reservation; the judicial demand for 'division of

reservation' is arising. 'Madiga Dandora Movement' was initiated in Andhra Pradesh by Madhiga community for sub-categorization to maintain the rationalization of Dalit reservations. In Punjab, the demand for sub-classification of caste was raised to rate the more depressed category in Dalits as category 'B' (Jodhka and Kumar, 2007).

Findings, Conclusion and Suggestions:

In conclusion, it can be stated that there are vivid and varied reasons because of which the governmental schemes meant for the Scheduled Caste community still could not be implemented properly. The reasons behind the obstacles arising in the access and implementation of these schemes are, firstly, the lack of awareness and education is the main contributor among the major factors that increase awareness. They are not able to develop understanding towards the schemes. And Second problem is related to the shortcomings in policy making. During policy making policy maker ignore the economic disparity among the Dalits, the disparity at the level of education and culture (nomadic castes), the disparity on the basis of region, considering all as the same, and make plan accordingly, by which raises a question mark on the policy making of the plans. After Independence, there has been a lot of improvement in Dalits through the reservation policy, but these improvements are not spread in the entire Dalit community, The state should also endeavor to identify most backward groups amongst the backwards and put them on priority within overall prescribed percentage of reservation to ensure their socio-economic development. It is also time to initiate a debate (M. Nagraj case 2006 & Janrail Singh vs. Lacchmi Narain Gupta 2018) whether a policy of creamy layer or some other strategy to benefit the lowest rung of the Scheduled Castes be not adopted so that the benefit of government policies are not cornered by the relatively advanced sections of SCs. Simultaneously, the officials, the public servants of the country, in whose hands the responsibility of implementing the policy of reservations rests, have to ensure that the benefit of reservation policy should percolate to the grass-root level, i.e., most backward, poor, subjugated, depressed and helpless people of these communities, then we can realize the needs of an equal society which was the dream of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Some state governments (Bihar, Mahadalit Commission 2007) have also taken meaningful steps regarding this issue. But in scenario of the increasing level of privatization in the contemporary phase, there is declining of public sector services and employment opportunities day by day. Due to this reason, there is

the judicial demand for reservation in private sector also. This demand is right in this contemporary phase and the Government of India should implement this demand soon for the salvation of Dalits so that they could also join the mainstream of development.

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