



Dr.B.R. AMBEDKAR'S CONTRIBUTION FOR RESERVATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Abstract

Social justice and reservation policy and social justice are two important terms which we can't neglect in a modern society. The history of reservation in India is also the history of south India too because most of the movements regarding representation of backward classes in public services and in education became the order of the day in end of the 19th century and also the beginning of the 20th century and it continued further. Now a day's agitations by various communities continuing for backward status. Caste politics diluted the actual intension of reservation. The actual intension of the reservation by the constitution makers was the social and economic upliftment but now a days it only became a matter of economical upliftment. Because reservation policy is closely associated with social justice. One of the other important fact by the critics of the reservation policy is that it promotes caste system in India. To address this question, we needed further studies and analysis. Varna system and sudra status are existing various part of India in its worst manner is a reality. In one side all are arguing against caste system and other side strongly recommends reservation system. This is a contradiction and must find out solution for all these contradictions. This research paper to be discussed about the Dr. B.R.Ambedkar's contribution on Reservations and Social Justice.

Keywords: Four-Fold Theory, Reservation Policy, Varna, Social Discrimination, Quotas, Depressed Classes, Devaswam.

Introduction

Statement of the problem

“..... Justice is another name of liberty and also equality and fraternity”

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar

Social justice and reservation policy are two important terms which we can't neglect in a modern society. Both terms are closely associated and always comes together. These terms are like the two sides of a single coin of which equal relevance. “Social justice” in India is a vast topic and if it comes in association with “Reservation”, again it makes the issue more complicated. It can only be explained with much relevant materials. In the history of reservation, one thing is common to all most all countries which provides reservation, there were social stratification exists in these countries either in the name of cast, creed, colour, ethnicity or language. In the ancient world reservation means reservation for certain jobs or reservation to live in certain areas or reservation to practice certain profession and were limited to people on the basis of their cast, creed, colour, language or ethnicity. For someone it is a type of humiliation and for some others it is a type of pride. The most important point regarding in this reservation is that there is no social justice in it but social discrimination.

The later Vedic period (1000 BC – 500 BC) in the Indian history marks the beginning for „Varna’ based social order’ Initially the tribal Rigvedic society was divided in to three groups- warriors, priests and the commoners on the basis of their occupation. The Sudras appeared towards the end of the Rigvedic period only as mentioned in the 10th mandala of Rigveda. This Varna based social structure gradually gained much popularity in the society and is still continuing in its worst form. In this Varna based social structure it is very hard to change one's profession because Varna and profession are mutually intermingled. In this social spectrum it is clear that one's Varna decides his social status not economy. The economy and Varna are also connected because a Sudra Varna's economic world are of limited scope. In this regard the British government in India and some princely states before independence and later the government of India introduced various measures to lift the social order of the Sudras and the idea of reservation in the modern sense came to forefront in this regard.

Reservation in India

The history of reservation goes back to “Malta” where the system of reservation begins even before Indians think of it’ It is frequently believed that the US pioneered affirmative action in the 1960. The history of reservation in India is said to begin in Tamil Nadu, with its history and context of caste movements, is special, and has had reservation since 1831 when, under pressure, the Raj initiated the idea of quotas. Non-Brahmin movement was seen in Tamil Nadu and Madras presidency was the first presidencies in the country, framed Grant in Aid Code in 1885 to regulate financial aid to educational institutions providing special facilities for students of depressed classes. In 1927, the presidency issued “Communal Government Order “making reservation quota on caste basis. In the state of Travancore (modern-day Southern Kerala) there were huge mass protest organised by the Travencorians for proper representation of Travencorians in Government jobs against the recruitment of non-natives, mainly Tamil Brahmins, into public



service, superseding qualified people from Travancore. The resentment of the people against the appointment of Non Malayalees to the higher posts led to the creation of a mass memorandum and presented it to the ruler of Travancore, Dharma raja, on 1st January 1891 demanding the appointment of Malayalees to the higher posts. The petition was signed by 10,028 persons of all cast and creed in the state of Travancore. G. Parameswara Pillai, an expelled student of University College at Thiruvananthapuram was the brain behind the move. It was followed by an agitation started by the backward classes especially Ezhava community and submitted a Memorandum to the Maharaja of Travancore signed by 13,176 people called “Ezhava Memorial”. The brain behind the movement was Dr. Palpu, an Ezhava community member and a doctor by profession but denied job in Travancore because of his community. The aim for the memorial is to acquire permission from the government for getting admission to backward classes in Government schools and colleges and also for their entry in government services.

Ideological Thought on Reservation

A second ezhava Memorial was submitted to the Viceroy Lord Curzon in 1900 during his visit in Travancore but failed to make any improvements in the attitude of the government. Even though both memorials were failed but paved way for the future continuous struggle of the down trodden to sharp their demands. An important political movement of Travancore in the beginning of the 20th century was the “PaurasamathvavadaPrakshobanam”. This is a joint agitation conducted by Avarna Hindus, Christians and Muslims for the appointment of these community members in Revenue-Dewaswam department. As a result of this the government separated the Revenue and Devaswam departments in 1922 and allowed these community members for appointments in the Revenue department. The agitation was a partial success in this regard.

The history of reservation in India is also the history of south India too because most of the movements regarding representation of backward classes in public services and in education became the order of the day in end of the 19th century and also the beginning of the 20th century and it continued further. “Now look at the situation in Karnataka where Brahmins had their monopoly in education and employment. There was a system of reservation existed there during 1850s for non-Brahmins. There is a system of recruitment through nomination was introduced in the state of Mysore in 1914 by the Maharaja of Mysore”. In 1918, the Mysore government appointed Sir. C.Miller as commission to study the indicate representation of non-Brahmins in government services of Mysore and his recommendation were accepted and remedial measures were set off by the government and as a result of this the representation of the backward classes increased further in gazetted and non-gazetted posts.

The next important contributor in this regard was the Bombay Presidency. The role of Jotiba Phule is notable. When the English administration of Lord Ripon appointed a Commission under the chairmanship of Hunter on 3rd Feb., 1882 to study the education system in India, Jyotiba Phule met him and shared his concerns and experiences in this regard and demanded for the reservation of backward communities in primary and secondary education. (The Indian members of the commission were Syed Ahmed Khan, Mr. Haj Ghulam of Amritsar, Mr. Anand Mohan Bose, Mr. P. RanganandaMudaliar, Babu Bhudeb Mukherjee, Justice K. T. Telang and Maharaja Jyotindra Mohan Tagore. Dr. W. Miller was the representative of the missionaries in the Commission. Mr. B. L. Rice, the then D.P.I, of Mysore was appointed the Secretary of the Commission). As a result of this the commission made references in this regard. 26th July (1902) in Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj of Kolhapur issued orders for reservation of 50% posts in the state services for the backward classes was a landmark declaration in this regard.

The history of reservation in India is also mixed with communal politics. It was the British rules who introduced Minto Morley reforms of 1909 and Montague Chelmsford reforms of 1919 to divide the unity of Indian masses and though that way to cease the efforts of freedom fighters from their ultimate goal, i.e., complete independence. But the British government was partially success in their business of dividing India in communal line. The entry of Mahatma Gandhi to Indian freedom struggle destroyed the calculations of the British rulers of dividing the Indian masses in communal line and Gandhi gave new vision and direction to the Indian freedom movement in total.

Communal Politics

On august 16, 1932,the prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald made an announcement in the British Parliament about the representation of Indian communities in the Provincial Legislature popularly known as the communal award, it provided for separate electorates for Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Anglo Indians and Europeans. Secondly, the depressed classes were assured separate special constituencies with right to vote in the remaining general constituencies’ also. It was a landmark achievement for the depressed classes in administrative spectrum of India it helped them to reduce their anxieties about their future in India.

A landmark announcement in 1932 by British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald came close to removing these anxieties. He accepted Ambedkar’s demand that it was necessary for the “Depressed Classes” to have separate representation in the central and provincial legislatures in order to protect their interests which ran counter to the interests of the dominant Hindu castes who also hogged most of the seats in the legislatures. This was the case because elections in British India were held under a very restricted



franchise based primarily on property, income and educational qualifications. Only about 13% of the population had the right to vote. The Dalits lagged far behind caste Hindus in all the three qualifications that determined the right to vote and, therefore, were not only under-represented but also represented by members of those cases that were opposed to according equality to them.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Contribution to Reservation

The situation of the depressed classes in India worsened day by day and the lack of their representation in administration always put aside their dreams for the future. They are always forced to hold the tail of their caste so that the general communities can avoid them in all the spectrums of social mobilisation. They lacked unity and strong and visionary leadership. The role of Dr. B R Ambedhkar was remarkable in this regard. He took this situation as an opportunity to present the real situation of Indian Depressed classes. This incident forced Mahatma Gandhi to sign Poona Pact with Ambedkar on September 24, 1932¹⁸ and the representation of Indian Depressed classes in the political spectrum of India came into forefront. This incident forced Mahatma Gandhi to work for "Harijan" Cause. It also helped the Indian political leaders to look in to depressed classes issues and Gandhi realises that untouchability was a social reality and without addressing this social evil the fruit of independence will bitter. So that Gandhi started "Anti Untouchability League". The culmination of this led to proper representation of depressed classes in the constitutional making body of India. Dr. B R Ambedhkar was elected as the chairman of the drafting committee. Dakshayani Velayudhan, the first and only Dalit woman in the Constituent Assembly out of total fifteen women.

Constitutional Provisions

The constitutional Assembly of India clearly and elaborately discuss the depressed class's issues. Untouchability and need for equality were major among them. As a result of this various articles were added to cease this social evil. Article 16, 17 etc. were added in the constitution in this regard. The constitution of India came in to effect in 26th January 1950. The constitution mention for reservation of Public Services and also reservation for seats in schools and colleges for SC's & STs. The Constitution of India states in article 15(4): "Nothing in [article 15] or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens of or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. "Article 46 of the Constitution states that "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 334 of the Constitution lays down that the provisions of the Constitution relating to the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and the representation of the Anglo-Indian community by nomination in the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies of the States shall cease to have effect on the expiration of the period of sixty years from the commencement of the Constitution.

The reservation history of India witnessed various committees' recommendations after independence and the governments of independent India took serious measures for the protection and welfare of Depressed Classes. The commission under Kaka Kelkar was appointed in 1953 was the first in independent India to study the issues of backward classes. The commission identified 2399 backward castes and 837 most backward castes. The commission recommended to government for reservation of OBCs in government services in different classes of posts. But unfortunately, the parliament did not consider the report.

Reservation politics

When Janata party came in to power in 1977, it appointed a second backward classes commission in 1978 to fulfil its promises made in the election manifesto. It recommended 27% reservation in public services for government services. There were wide spread agitations over this act of the government. The percentage of reservation for each category viz. SC, ST and OBC in Promotion and Direct Recruitment as these are the only two methods of recruitment to which the orders on reservation are applicable. In general, of SC, it is 15%, for ST it is 7.5% & for OBC it is 27%. After the Mandal commission recommendation of 1978, various state governments started allocating backward class status to castes in their states either for political benefit or for genuine purposes. In this point of view the Indra Sawhney case came to the supreme court of India in 1990. "Indra Sawhney Etc. vs Union of India And Others, Etc. on 16 November, 1992". In this case Supreme Court declared that reservation will not exceed 50% at any coast.

Summing up

Now a day's agitations by various communities continuing for backward status. Caste politics diluted the actual intension of reservation. The actual intension of the reservation by the constitution makers was the social and economic upliftment but now a days it only became a matter of economical upliftment. Because reservation policy is closely associated with social justice. One of the other important fact by the critics of the reservation policy is that it promotes caste system in India. To address this question, we needed further studies and analysis. Varna system and sudra status are existing various part of India in its worst manner is a reality. In one



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Last Saved By: Murali Korada
Total Editing Time: 78 Minutes
Last Printed On: 4/8/2021 7:09:00 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 4
Number of Words: 2,849 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 16,242 (approx.)