Chapter-6

Conclusion

After all considerations, discussed in the previous chapters on the mobilization of the backward castes in Andhra Pradesh, such as social deprivation, social mobilization and social transformation one can come to a conclusion that the backward castes in Andhra Pradesh are socially heterogeneous and stratified, economically iniquitous due to external and internal differences, politically marginalized; in terms of mobilization highly fragmented and have insufficient nature of state policy support.

In terms of social deprivation, the Backward Castes are given lower position, except untouchability, they are also facing as many problems as dalits. Throughout the Indian history the backward castes remained as either producers or service providers for the ruling groups in specific and people in general. Traditionally they are the practicing artisans, handicraftsmen and occupational groups such as weavers, fishermen, shepherds, buffalo rearers, bamboo workers, toddy tappers, washermen, barbers etc. The occupational differentiation in the process of historical changes has led to the heterogeneous character and stratification. The social formations based on the heterogeneity and stratification has been characterized as the 'caste system'. Socially divided caste system and nature of caste-based exploitation was subjected to changes. Roots for the origin of caste system lies with the Indus valley civilization; at the time of Aryan civilization the caste system is legalized through the Dharmasastras. During the phase of caste-feudalism the backward castes were exploited in the name of jajmani. In response to the new ideas, the lower caste movements came up during the colonial period against the caste-feudalism.

These lower caste movements are Self-Respect movement in TamilNad, non-Brahmin movement in Karnataka, Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana movement in Kerala, anti-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra and post-independent electoral alliance in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and backward classes.
identity at the national level resulted in the appointment of Kakakalelkar and Mandal Commissions. These movements not only led to the identity formation and affirmative action policy but also gave spurt to social transformation of the iniquitous, oppressive social order. The impact of these social movements, in terms of ideology, strategies and tactics on the lower castes is essentially long term, in spite of all its limitations. In continuation of these movements, the social mobilization of the backward castes has been taking place in Andhra Pradesh since independence.

There is a similarity in social deprivation, against which the social movements took place all over the country during the colonial and the post-colonial periods. All these movements questioned the upper caste domination and demanded for policy of affirmative action in educational institutions, employment and political institutions and realized some of the demands. Like any other state in India, the backward castes in Andhra Pradesh also suffered from the hierarchically ordered, socially restricted interdinning, interactions, lack of choice of occupation, segmentally divided caste system. In the traditional society these communities had sources of livelihoods and interdependent life, which was destroyed during the colonial period. The colonial rulers followed the policy of exporting local raw material and importing machine based products from England. Therefore, the local products were unable to compete with the machine-based commodities of British. As a result of which the artisans and local producers suffered a lot.

In the post-independent period for those people who are still depending on the traditional occupations, the Government of Andhra Pradesh introduced the occupational cooperative societies in response to the pressure from the caste associations. Until the introduction of new economic policies in 1990s, the occupational cooperative societies have economically strengthened the backward castes. When the globalization process was begun in the country the traditional occupational cooperatives started declining. As a result of which the dependents
are forced to become farm and non-farm labor, therefore, now there is an increase in the percentage of labour force, which is more than the population growth due to lack of alternative source of livelihoods.

In terms of changing agrarian relations also the position of the backward castes is depressing due to the close relationship between caste and land. A number of studies across the state revealed that higher the caste more quantity and quality of land and lower the caste lesser the land and chances of being small and marginal farmers and agricultural laborers. A few of the backward castes emerged as small and marginal farmers due to the occupational cooperative societies, which helped them for economic consolidation; Therefore, they have purchased small pieces of land but a lot of backward castes continue to be a part of labouring class. Therefore, there is a clear-cut division within the backward castes that the landed BCs and landless BCs. These two types of BCs are subjected to deprivation of education and employment opportunities.

With regard to political representation the backward castes are highly marginalized due to lack of either ownership of the physical property or Constitutional Guarantees. Therefore, since independence the landed dominant castes particularly Reddies and Kammas are in position of power. The Congress, Communists and Telugu Desham are the political instruments for their rule. In their struggle for power the faction ridden Reddy and Kamma castes sabotaging the backward castes to protect their interests. As a result of which the backward castes are divided and so manipulated they are not able to strike political unity.

As aware of the nature of deprivation such as social, economic, education, employment the backward castes, while being a part of on going grass roots movements, in order to over come the contradictions they started mobilizing themselves through four instruments viz, caste associations, federation of caste associations, political parties and non-party grass roots organizations.

As far as caste associations are concerned, they are started by the first generation of leaders during pre-independence period, while actively
participating in the contemporary political movements like national, anti-
zamindari, anti-jagirdari, for the social reform within the caste. As a part of which
the caste associations started mobilizing the people for the caste consolidation,
co-operative societies, construction of hostels, scholarships and trusts etc.
Therefore, it is the castes associations, which have contributed to the rise of
Backward Castes Associations, making of the leaders through training to
participate in the political movements and pressurized for the formulation of
social welfare policy of the post-independent state Government.

The basic motive behind the establishment of the federation of caste
associations was to train and make the backward castes to take active part in the
newly independent democratic political system. At the same time they also
realized that in a caste ridden social system it is difficult for backward castes to
compete with the landed upper castes. Therefore, reservations in the education
and employment assume importance. From the very beginning of the BC
associations the leaders have been demanding for the reservations but the
Governments at the center and state did not care but bowed the seeds for the
division and factions among the backward caste leaders. That explains why the
backward castes are fragmented.

There is a clear-cut demarcation in the political parties with regard to
backward castes issues. From the very commencement of the occupational
cooperatives to present day issues the left, both Parliamentary and non-
Parliamentary parties have directly or indirectly supporting the cause of the
backward castes. For a long time the Congress party maintained distance from
the backward castes due to its feudal character, by the time it has realized their
importance the Congress Party lost the power. Janata party and Janata Dal
played vital role in getting the identification for the backward castes at the
national level by appointing the second national level Backward Classes
Commission under the chairmanship of B.P. Mandal and implementing it. At the
state level the rise of Telugu Desham party met some of the aspirations of the
backward castes by accommodating the backward castes elite to maintain the vote bank to win over the opposition parties. But the backward castes play subordinate role in the Telugu Desham party also.

One interesting observation on the political parties with regard to backward castes is that elite class among them is accommodated in order to protect the power of the dominant caste in the state by avoiding unity and formation of alternative political platform. The lower class within the backward castes are dissatisfied with the performance of the state and find the space in the grass roots organizations. These organizations have got the caste and class character and concentrated on the neglected people in the society. Some of the issues, which are taken up by the non-party grass roots organizations are, broadly, linked with structural aspect like land, anti-upper caste atrocities, anti-arrack, child labour, proportional representation etc. But in these organizations also their role in the decision-making is not that significant.

Though the backward castes in Andhra Pradesh has got a long history of mobilization still they are not consolidated to replace the dominant caste hegemony in the state and there is no independent backward castes movement. That is why they are presented in two camps like political parties and non-party movements. The former has been preventing them from forming an alternative political platform and the latter is not consolidating as united front to challenge the dominant caste\class rule in the state.

In response to the backward castes fragmented mobilization the Government of Andhra Pradesh has introduced the ineffective, for instance occupational co-operative societies, Adarana and anti-poverty programmes, incremental policies like affirmative action in educational institutions employment and local body institutions and insufficient social welfare hostels, scholarships, residential schools, study circles. The institutional arrangements are also made to implement these policies, but are lacking sufficient funds, power, staff, and monitoring mechanisms.
The strong criticism among the social scientist has been that whatever demands have been made and achieved the privileged section within the backward castes have got benefited. Therefore, there is a class differentiation within the backward castes. This differentiation posed a big problem along with the heterogeneous and stratified mobilization of the backward castes in Andhra Pradesh to resolve the contradictions.