

## Chapter 2

# Evolution of caste system in India and Review of Literature

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## **Chapter 2**

# **EVOLUTION OF CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Socio-economic Relevance of Caste system in India**

Hindu social organization from time immemorial has expressed the feature of caste system in India. When analyzed to the depth, it is seen that the division of the society had been inevitably linked to the occupation, economic production, access to property and wealth. History shows that caste and class have been influencing the socio-economic and political system of the Indian society at large. The adaptive nature of the caste system has been all- pervading and all-powerful.

### **2.2 Definition of Castes**

Social Scientists have viewed and interpreted caste through many angles. Suragit Sinha<sup>1</sup>, (1968) defined caste system as a hierarchy of endogamous groups, organized in a characteristically hereditary division of labour, wherein the functions of caste specialization and hierarchy were originally linked. M.N. Srinivas<sup>2</sup> (1977) defined caste as a hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group, having a traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. He also points out that a caste itself seems to be usually segmented into several endogamous sub-castes. Moreover, fairly close correlation existed between caste system and distribution of land- holding and power.

Socio-economic inter-dependence existed all the time with occupational specialization. According to E. R. Leach<sup>3</sup>(1960) a certain minimal set of primary characteristics embodied the real essence of the caste system, namely, endogamy, restriction on commensality, hierarchical grading, restrictions on contact in matters of food, sex and ritual practice, attributes of traditional occupations and birth-ascribed features. He noted that the caste groups had lived, not in isolation but in the midst of other groups with which they had rigidly defined customary relationships in economic, political, social and religious matters. In much of India the village was organized into a network of hereditary patron-client relationship known as *Jajmani*<sup>4</sup> system. The various non-land holding castes such as washer men, carpenters and field labourers did customary service to landowners. The relationship between castes was hierarchic and transactions among groups were expressions of principles of precedence, obedience and subservience.

According to J.H. Hutton<sup>5</sup>(1977) a caste system divided a society into a number of self-contained and completely segregated units (castes), their mutual relations being ritually determined in a graded scale.

### **2.3 The Origin of Caste System**

The history of the social origin of the scheduled castes or the untouchables is age old. Among the early Hindu epics, Dharmashastras and Smritis dealing with the origin of varna system, the Rigveda is the oldest one which describes that all the four varnas i.e., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra are originated from the different limbs of the Almighty.<sup>6</sup> According to the Rigveda the origin of

Brahmin is supposed to be from the mouth, Kshatriya from the arms, Vaishya from the chest and Sudra from the feet of the Almighty. According to Gita the origin is supposed to be done by the Creator himself on the basis of "Guna" (quality) and the "Karma" (action).<sup>7</sup> From the above extracts of ancient epics it is clear that the untouchables owe their origin to the traditional varna and caste system. It can, therefore, be observed that the untouchables and the untouchability are by-products of Hindu caste system. According to the code of Manu, all those who were born out of the pratiloma marriage <sup>8</sup> were assigned the lowest rank in the varna hierarchy.

Regarding the origin of caste system two types of inferences are prevalent. The first is that it was the outcome of a confluence of two totally different social streams. The second holds that it signified the slow evolution of certain indigenous societies.

Gerald D Berreman<sup>9</sup>, (1979) for instance, belonged to the first group. He suggested that caste originated as an intermediate stage when the pre-stage, kin-based ethnic groups or tribes of South Asia came under the control of State organized, stratified, conquering people of Indo-Aryan origin around 5000 years ago. The indigenous small-scale ethnic groups were slowly absorbed into the emerging larger and more complex polity. The caste system originated and persisted as a form of institutionalized inequality in which ethnically distinct social entities were absorbed into a status and economic hierarchy.

Francoise Houtart and Genevieve Lemerceinier<sup>10</sup> (1981) also subscribe to this view. According to them Aryan dominations over the Dravidian led to the final institutionalization of religious, political

economic and other service functions among the various lineage structures.

The successive invasions of the Aryans destroyed the Dravidian civilization. Afterwards the Aryans settled among the waterways of the Indo-Gangetic plain and established clan villages with pastoral-agrarian economies. There were warrior clans and farming clans among them. They established several monarchies or clan type republics comprising the king, extended families, and other functional groups. The warrior clans which conquered Dravidian territories and carried over decentralized political power such as defense, collection of tributes etc, became an overlord caste - the Kshatriya. Division of labour among the farming and other functional clans led to the development of productive forces and specialization in different types of craftsmanship. The peasant and artisan groups which emerged thus became the Sudra caste. They had to pay tributes in return for seigniorial services. The accumulation of tribute thus received became the capital for trade. Early trading activities were between rulers, later they became the specialized occupation of specific social groups of merchants who came to be known as Vaisyas.

The vanquished Dravidians were assigned the most menial jobs. They remained outside the caste-based lineage structure of the society. The religious agents formed a specific group of their own, the Brahmins, and managed to occupy the apex position in the social hierarchy. The society had its base in the groups comprising the producer clans and the outcaste groups. Its superstructure was constituted by the religious, political and trading groups. They usually occupied the dominant positions.

Usually social ranking depended on labour. The higher the group the less was the role in production. Non-productive work became symbol of purity and manual work symbolic of impurity and profanity. These levels attached to every group and every member; eventually led to the segregation by every social group, of all the social groups inferior to it in rank. As a result, the outcaste groups were looked down upon as impure and detestable human beings to be shunned by society. This must have been the origin and evolution of untouchability.

But Mortan Klass<sup>11</sup> (1980) does not agree with this. He opines that the birth of the caste system might be due to the internal mechanics of the South Asian social system itself. The system earlier characterized, by a non-stratified and equalitarian set up transformed itself over time, by its own internal dynamics into a complex, stratified caste-system. He does not however advance any proof in this respect.

#### **2.4 Evolution of Untouchability**

Ghurye<sup>12</sup> (1961) observes that when the Indo-Aryans came over to India and established their social organization, they made a four-fold division. The division Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra was actually based on occupations and emerged as the caste system regulating a very rigid way of life of Hindus and Hindu Religion. Each caste was entitled to fulfil a rigidly prescribed obligation or duty, which was clearly prescribed within which people of that caste were to condition their existence. In this social setup the phenomenon of pollution between certain castes was introduced, named untouchability. This was a code of conduct to be observed by all castes, which had settled rules of pollution between and among castes.

In fact the entire social behavior or activity of this caste-oriented Indian society was driven by this discipline of pollution caused by the physical nearness of human beings of certain castes. It is to be remembered that, it was a priest-dominated, religion-centred life style that gave birth to the caste system overwhelming all human activities by untouchability. Untouchability was the measuring rod by which the social status and position of the caste were measured by Hindus declaring them as upper castes or lower castes. In course of time various privileges became the birth right of the upper castes and disabilities were piled upon the others.

### **2.5 The Scheduled Castes in India**

In Indian social hierarchy the SCs have been considered one of the weakest constituents. They have been attributed so many nomenclatures such as untouchables, harijans, dalits, panchamans, atisudras, avarnas and antyajias<sup>13</sup>. The term depressed classes refers to those caste which belong to the lowest rung of the Hindu caste hierarchy and whose touch or proximity, is considered polluting by the caste Hindus.<sup>14</sup> The term is a British innovation from an article written by Annie Besant in the *Indian Review*, (1909) with the caption '*the uplift of the Depressed Classes*'<sup>15</sup>. The word *Dalits*<sup>16</sup> denotes poverty and their oppressed condition. The 'servile classes' phrase was used to denote the servile nature of their working relations with the higher castes and the degraded nature of work with which they were involved like scavenging, sweeping, etc.<sup>17</sup> The Scheduled Castes were named as *Harijans* by Saint Narsimha Mehta and Mahatma Ghandhi popularized this concept<sup>18</sup>. The *Harijans* are those who are entangled in sub-

human social existence, abject poverty, economic exploitation, and a sub- culture of submission and political powerlessness.

The SCs were the former untouchable castes of Hinduism. Besides the four traditional castes there was another group of persons even during the early days of Chaturvarnya, who came to be described as untouchables because they were of darker skin and were engaged in unclean occupations. These people were the outcastes and as such were socially ostracized by caste Hindus. As the lowest strata in the society, the untouchables formed the fifth varna *Panchamas/ Chandals*<sup>19</sup> or the 5<sup>th</sup> caste. They were assigned a position very much lower than that of the Sudras. Their hereditary occupations were street sweeping, scavenging, weaving, tanning, flaying and the like. They were expected to do all the dirty jobs in society, which others were restrained from doing. And this group was denied the right to enter the temples and worship with other Hindus, schooling, use dress and ornaments which will mark them off as upper caste people, to draw water from public wells and to improve their economic and educational conditions.

They were compelled to live segregate on the outskirts of villages and towns under most filthy and miserable conditions and were ill clad and half starved. Even now, in many places they could not at all enter the streets or lanes used by caste Hindus<sup>20</sup>. In the southern regions of India besides touch pollution, distance pollution also was observed. Distances were prescribed for untouchables to keep away from the different levels of upper caste people.

It was, however, the British Government's programme of education and social reforms, much more than the work of

missionaries that paved the way for the mitigation of the social misery of SCs. The British were not so much interested in the radical reform of Hindu society. But their educational system created a new generation of intellectuals and reformers who were imbued with liberal ideas. The founding of the Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj and the teachings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Kesav Chandra Sen, Sreeramakrishna, Swamy Vivekananda, Vagbhadananda and Aagamananda and the social works of Thanthei Periyor, Sri Narayana Guru, and Srimath Ayyankali all had one common aim to purify Hinduism from the evils of caste and to raise the status of the lower caste communities. Moreover, Indian National Congress which crystallized the social thinking of the time officially took up the work of uplifting the depressed classes on a national scale.

### **2.6 Mahatma Gandhi and the Scheduled Castes**

However it was only after Mahatma Gandhi took up the work of redeeming the untouchables, the matter received any momentum. Gandhi called them “Harijans”-Children of God and organized a network of agencies to work for their uplift. He also carried out campaigns against untouchability through the press, the pulpit and the platform. He edited a weekly journal called the ‘Harijan’ to highlight the magnitude of the problem and to channelize popular opinion and effort in uplifting the untouchables, and wrote articles giving the lists of temples, schools, wells, etc. which were thrown open to them. In 1932 the All-India Anti-Untouchability League was formed under Gandhi’s inspiration. This was later called Harijan Seva Samaj and it soon engaged itself in vigorous propaganda against

untouchability and for getting open for Harijan use roads, schools, temples, dharmasalas and public ghats.

### **2.7 Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**

The role played by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, himself an untouchable, in the cause of Harijan uplift was especially significant. He believed that unless the untouchables enjoy political power they will not be able to raise themselves up. He argued that the depressed classes should be entitled to special protection more than any other religious minority in the country. While framing the Constitution of India, Ambedkar who was one of its architects, secured necessary constitutional guarantees for the uplift of Harijans.

### **2.8 Constitutional and Legal Safeguards**

“The framers of our Constitution desired to secure justice for all citizens in social, political and economic spheres. They realized that the inequitable forces embedded in the socio-economic system and political organizations had resulted in deprivation and disadvantages for the poor and the weaker sections of society. So they considered it necessary to provide specific safeguards in the Constitution for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who were the most deprived, weak and vulnerable amongst the various sections of Indian society. The various safeguards and protective measures sought to ensure them all-round development and progress, so that they could form part of the mainstream of society”<sup>21</sup>

While drafting the Constitution for independent India, the Constituent assembly also used the word *Scheduled Caste* for these social, economic and religious backward castes. After the adoption of

the Constitution, the Government of India issued (SC) order 1950 which empowers the President of India to notify the list of Scheduled Castes. It reads.

“The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory and where it is a State, after consultation with Governor thereof, by public notification specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purpose be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to the State or Union Territory, as the case may be”<sup>22</sup>.

The term *Scheduled Castes* has not been properly defined by the Constitution. Article 341 of the Constitution only states how the castes, races or tribes or parts thereof are to be scheduled as Scheduled Castes. The first list of castes was notified in 1950,<sup>23</sup> as per the provisions of the Constitution and thereafter in 1951,<sup>24</sup> 1956,<sup>25</sup> 1962,<sup>26</sup> 1964,<sup>27</sup> 1968,<sup>28</sup> 1978<sup>29</sup> etc. and lastly in 2002<sup>30</sup>. Thus the depressed classes identified by the British regime before independence, with some additions, were classified as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the new Constitution the deserving section among the caste groups as well as the aboriginal tribal communities are specially listed for the purpose of extending to them preferential treatment. It also gave provision for assisting the SCs who were neglected and exploited.

The Constitution of India includes several articles which are meant for the abolition of all sorts of disabilities. At the very outset the Preamble in the Constitution says,

“We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its

citizens, justice, social, economic and political liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, and equality of status and opportunity, and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the Nation' <sup>31</sup>. The important articles of the constitution are:

### **2.9 Fundamental Rights**

- (14) Equality before the law,
- (15) No caste discrimination by government or private persons in regard to use of public facilities, special provisions in favour of the untouchables and backward classes permissible,
- (16) No caste discrimination in government services; reservation of places permitted for untouchables and 'backward classes',
- (17) Untouchability abolished and enforcement an offence,
- (19) Right to conduct all sorts of occupations and industries by the untouchables,
- (23) Forced labour abolished; no caste discrimination in regard to compulsory public service (amended and enforced in 1976),
- (25) (2-b) freedom of religion qualified to serve temple-entry laws and state power to legislate social welfare and reform,
- (29) No castes discrimination in admission to state aided educational institutions.

#### **2.9.1 Directive Principles**

- (44) Personal law to be replaced by 'uniform civil code'
- (45) State shall protect and promote interests of 'weaker sections of people specially untouchables,

#### **2.9.2 Other Provisions**

- (325) No person to be ineligible for inclusion in, or to claim to be included in, a special electoral roll on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex
- (330) Reservation of seats for SCs and STs in the houses of the people.
- (332) Reservation of seats for SCs and STs
- (335) Claims of untouchables be considered in appointment in government services.

The Untouchability (Offences) Act 1955, outlaws all the imposition of disabilities on the ground of untouchability in virtually all fields of activity except home life, private religious ceremonies, and private employment. Article 17 as already discussed above is also meant for the abolition of untouchability and specially in section I, II, III, VI and VII of that, provisions have been made for each and every individual irrespective of caste discrimination to utilize all public facilities such as well, tank, religious places, river bank, crematorium ground, shops, restaurants, hotels, rest houses, public vehicles, hospitals, educational institutions and so on.

### **2.10 Positive discrimination**

Besides this the Indian Constitution (1950) set forth a number of other provisions for the eradication of social inequalities, discriminations and the practice of untouchability with a view to improve the social and economic conditions of the scheduled castes and also to maintain an order of equality and liberty in society. The government has provided some special reservation or in other words the "positive discrimination" especially in the field of education, occupation and political representation which aims at the elimination of social, economic and educational inequalities. The main reasoning

behind the government's policy of reservation was that great and undesirable inequalities existed between the SCs and non-SCs. By temporarily creating conditions of equal and favorable treatment for the SCs, the Indian Government hopes eventually to achieve conditions of equality in the society at large. The provisions for "positive discrimination" or special reservation, thus, may be grouped under three headings; education, government job and political representation. This provision of reservation was originally to be in effect for ten years from 1950 to 1959, however, it was extended for several times and has been still continuing as the achievements were not up to the level of government's expectation. In the educational sphere, the governments at the centre and the states have various schemes for providing matric, graduate and postgraduate scholarships, free remissions, books, boarding grants and so forth, to the members of the scheduled castes. This provision also includes a few overseas scholarships.

In addition to above reservations, the Government of India as well as the State Governments sponsor welfare programmes from time to time and campaign for the eradication of untouchability and casteism. Provisions are included for scholarships and other incentives for education, special component plans, tribal sub-plans, (for various state governments) Integrated rural development and tribal development programmes. Schemes for assisting small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers, assistance for industrial pursuits, scheme for introducing land reforms, allotment of land and housing, generation of employment, minimum wage laws etc. are among the major components in the package of multidimensional strategy for the

overall development of the target group. During the Five Year Plans, crores of rupees have been invested for the SCs under these welfare programmes.

Despite all these provisions and policies of Government, the most wretched aspect is that it has failed to undertake studies of the effectiveness of laws and policies. The Government is aware of everything about its goals and Institutions it has set up under the programme of reservations or protective discrimination, special privileges and abolition of untouchability among the SCs. But there is a big gap of systematic, and timely monitoring and effective evaluative studies of the programmes. Moreover, no creative attempts have been made to measure the return of the welfare programmes.

### **2.11 The Bhopal Declaration - 2002**

It is a declaration containing 21-point action agenda for the uplift of SCs in India for the 21<sup>st</sup> century framed by prominent intellectuals and activists from various parts of the country assembled at the Bhopal conference during 12-13, January 2002. It was passed as a resolution after detailed deliberations and debates about the issues concerning the welfare and justice to be given to Dalits in India. It evaluated the pre and post independent periods of SCs and asserted that Dalits are still denied of their basic human rights and are also at the receiving end of the most brutal and oppressive forms of discrimination and exclusion.

It emphasizes Ambedkar's stress on struggle through democratic and Constitutional means and demands some amendments in Art.21 and effective implementation of the Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 & Rules 1995. The Declaration covers almost all aspects of SCs

including agriculture, education, employment and women's empowerment. As a prominent initiative and national concern the Bhopal declaration is a milestone in the history of SCs in India.

### **2.12 The Conditions of Scheduled Castes – Relevant Studies**

The fact is that the majority of the SCs have yet to free themselves from the stronghold of poverty and inequality and injustice. But the majority of the agricultural as well as industrial products of our nation are contributed by people belonging to the lower caste. Without their labour, our economy will show no growth. But the SCs do not appear to have become the owners of means of production at all. The extent of their acquisition is only meager. The vast majority of them probably still suffers from social disabilities and falls prey to atrocities from the owner class in many parts of the country. They have been struggling and suffering from many problems which are social, economic, political and educational in nature since time immemorial. In a caste-ridden society, all activities related to development revolve round the notion of caste and thus the SCs throughout the country still remain at the lowest rank in the caste hierarchy.

Several studies and reports have brought out instances of social segregation, deprivation and physical assault. Practices against the SCs in different parts of the country revealed that existing provisions for legal protection and governmental safeguards have not been effectively working. The gravity of the problem is continuously on the increase, as the articles in various journals and periodicals clearly testify. It is also to be pointed out that few of the studies cover the pathetic condition of the marginalised in habitats. Now we go through

major relevant studies about welfare of SCs in general and those in habitats particular.

M.N. Srinivas<sup>32</sup> (1957) essay is an effort to illustrate the fact that during the last century the institution of caste has found new fields of activity. Castes assumed political dimensions. Even though the provisions of constitutional safeguards to SCs have given them a new lease of life, they brought certain political dimensions along with it. The essay evaluates how that took place.

Mathew Zachariah<sup>33</sup> (1971) discusses the legal and other steps taken in India from 1950 to approximately 1970 for implementing educational discrimination in favour of certain 'weaker sections of the people'. He also examines the various problems which have arisen in the wake of the governmental policy of positive discrimination. One of the problems is the geographical scatter of SCs; they live among the rest of the population and 'they have been segregated rather than isolated'

The major argument R. Santhakumary,<sup>34</sup> (1976) puts forward in her study is that even though Governments' Harijan welfare programmes have benefited the SCs to some extent; they have not been able to make as much impact on them as was envisaged in the programmes. This has been due to the social barriers imposed by caste which affected both the motivation and ability to achieve the desired objectives. In the case of the lower caste, the lower was the motivation for achievement and the lower the ability to achieve. Because of this phenomenon she argues that the different subcastes within the SC hierarchy will be availing themselves of the welfare

programmes in different doses with those standing on the top of the hierarchy benefiting more in this process than those down below.

In the article P.Sivanandan<sup>35</sup> (1976) opines that in the matter of social development, though Kerala stands ahead of all other states in India, the pattern of distribution of social and economic opportunities within the state is highly inequitable among different social groups, particularly between Harijans and the rest of the population. The Harijans (SCs) generally face considerable disadvantages with respect to income earning opportunities like land holding, employment and education.

The Article is written as an answer to P. Sivanandan's article 'Economic Backwardness of Harijans in Kerala' in *Social Scientist*. He comments on certain aspects of the connection between caste on the one hand and economic-status or class on the other. E.M.S Namboodiripad<sup>36</sup> (1976) argues that the tremendous changes that have taken place in the occupations, life styles and cultural outlooks of these communities show that the caste ridden society in Kerala is undergoing the same bourgeois development as anywhere in India.

Dr. Babu Vijayanath<sup>37</sup> (1982) Chairman, Commission on the socio-economic conditions of the SC/ST studied their problems and progress in detail and submitted a report in three volumes to the Kerala Government. This is an authentic study which brings to light the lives of the depressed classes and measures their socio-economic achievements based on their educational status, income, property of wealth, investments, savings, housing etc. It also covers the present status of the constituents of SCs, the intra and interrelationships etc. The impact of land reforms, spread of modern ideas, reservation etc.

are also looked into. Housing schemes, colonization problems and welfare measures are also analyzed. Perhaps this is the only study available which had gone through the crucial problems of habitats.

A study on Educational Achievements is a joint attempt of G.Viswanadham and K. Narasimha Reddy<sup>38</sup> (1985) to explore the determinants of educational achievements among the scheduled Caste students. This examines whether class-wise variations exist among SC children with respect to educational achievement. Being more specific, do the upper class children reveal higher academic performance than those coming from a lower class? The findings of the study suggest that unless structural changes are being brought about, SCs continue to remain backward educationally.

Balaji Pandey<sup>39</sup> (1986) discusses different commissions like the Kalelkar commission, the first education commission which discussed in detail all the aspects of education and its recommendations. Despite the fact that the causes for backwardness among the SCs were identified in the early years of independence, the official documents on education prepared in the years that followed continued to stress the same views regarding the progress in their education.

“Educational and social mobility” is an elaborate study of Prem Marian Pandey<sup>40</sup> (1988) on analyzing the influence of education in the social mobility of the SCs. Emphasis is given to tracing out the existing nature, trends and patterns of social mobility. It also attempts to find out a functional alternative to Sanskritisation and Westernisation in the social mobility of SCs. It revealed that in spite of educational achievement and better occupational status SCs are not accorded equal recognition in terms of prestige by the higher caste Hindus, as

the sentimental and psychological attachments of Hindus with their caste traditions have not died out. He observes that modern education is an effective mechanism to elevate their socially degraded status. It is a means of achieving upward mobility and thereby making change in social position outside the caste system.

P.Sivanandan<sup>41</sup> (1989) in his thesis brilliantly evaluates the origin of caste system in India and other countries. His main stream of study is social and economic influence of caste in Kerala. He studies the prospects of economic emancipation through Institutional reform and development programmes. According to him the major institutional reforms and economic development programmes initiated by the Government specifically aimed at the upliftment of the SC section in Kerala have only a modest impact. He illustrates this through the process of Land Reforms. He points out that the only area in which some significant improvement is observed is education. Programmes initiated in other sectors have remained more or less ineffective.

“A social force in Politics”, is a research work by M.P.S. Chandel<sup>42</sup> (1990) which deals with the importance and role of SCs in politics in the state of U.P. This study is vital in the sense that UP's role turns and twists the Indian politics and the latter affects all the third world countries. It evaluates that the problem of Indian casteism is no less serious than the nuclear holocaust to the world. It opines that even though the caste has remained as the most authentic determinant of social cohesion and composition, it failed to emerge as a decisive catalyst in Indian Politics.

According to Mahatma Gandhi<sup>43</sup> (1994) caste in its essential sense, is not one of arrogant superiority. It is the classification of different systems of self culture and it is the best possible adjustment of social stability and programme. He opines that a caste does not connote superiority or inferiority. It simply recognizes different outlooks and corresponding modes of life. Hence caste is to be denounced in so far as it produces corrupt and degrading social efforts.

Ashly Mathew<sup>44</sup> (1995) in Labour participation and social mobility among the Pulaya Women of rural Kerala investigates the influence of the changing labour participation on the social advancement of the Pulaya women. It examines also the factors of occupational mobility and important manifestations of improved social status. It has been found that there is significant inter-generational vertical occupational mobility among the pulaya educated women. The study found that the pulaya women who were carrying higher income were accorded higher status in society. Economic mobility has helped them to promote social acceptance and social mobility.

Simon Charsley<sup>45</sup> (1996) points out that the policies of protection and positive discrimination have been focusing on allocation of land, housing sites and houses themselves on loans (often on special terms) under numerous development schemes, and reservation in education and government employment. By reserving seats for SC members in representative bodies, he opines that a good number of these castes can be brought into politics.

“Caste system and Indian Society -Marxian Approach” is a study of social inequality in Indian society due to caste system and Marxian

concepts by V. Thankayyah<sup>46</sup> (2000). The subject of the study is the reasons behind making the majority 'untouchables' that paved the way for more complex and partial social structure of moral stratifications. In the work he substantiates the need for resistance of the secular powers and the dangerous religious politics practiced by the upper class. SCs and other backward communities are not given proper representation in parliamentary contests, other than reservations. If they make any claim, they were suppressed by saying that they were agents of castes. Actually this happened due to the opinion difference and diversity inside themselves.

A very systematic and earnest effort has been made by Hoshiar Singh (2001) and A.S. Malik<sup>47</sup> to assess the impact of various welfare schemes adopted for the development of scheduled Castes in Hariyana in their work Socio Economic Development of Scheduled Castes in India. It focuses on the socio-economic changes that have taken place consequent to the implementation of these programmes. It gives some valuable and constructive suggestions for the uplift of the SCs on the basis of critical evaluation of the welfare schemes.

In the thesis "Approaches to the socio-political Development of the scheduled castes: A study of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R Ambedkar." V.K.Nandakumar<sup>48</sup> (2001) analyzes the socio-political development of the SCs with reference to Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Both stressed the need for positive and progressive developments at the social and political levels to streamline social integration. The effort is to bring out the similarities and differences in approaches towards the issue of socio-political development of the SCs in Indian Society. Gandhiji stressed

constructive social programmes to ensure the dignity of the individual and the dignity of labour. Ambedkar stood for social and political reforms through a democratic order and constitutional methods.

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya<sup>49</sup> (2002) in his collection of political thoughts exhorted and led the SCs in their struggles for human rights. He believed that an agile society is moulded by the upliftment of SC/ST. He argues that the transference of caste to class can take place slowly. This internal movement is the total history of mankind. This book evaluates the supremacy of caste Hindus over SCs and other depressed classes. He believed that eradicating poverty by economic development can never eradicate the caste discriminations. It needs purposeful and continuous struggle.

Kunjhaman<sup>50</sup> (2002) systematically analyzed the factors underlying globalization and addressed appropriately the concerns and apprehensions of the marginalized groups about the changing development strategy. The study also focused on the future problems of the subaltern groups in a vivid manner.

In the book *Welfare of Scheduled Castes in India: Gandhi's Social Approach; Ambedkar's Political Approach; Constitutional Safeguards and Schemes for Welfare of Scheduled Castes*, Anil Bharadwaj<sup>51</sup> (2002) makes an analytical study of the approach and strategy adopted by the Governments to ameliorate the conditions of the SCs in the country, the various welfare schemes launched and their intended benefits, the quantum of funds spent and their sufficiency as to the task in hand. Whether the measures adopted over the years are in the right track and directions? Whether the benefits of welfare schemes have reached to the people for whom they

were intended to or have been appropriated by few in these castes? Whether the scarce financial resources have been used prudently and efficiently or have been frittered away and wasted upon some non-productive schemes? The author attempts to find out the answers to these and many other such questions”.

Prakash Louis<sup>52</sup> (2003) in the study related to scheduled castes and tribes evaluated the reservation policy in detail. These marginalized sections were found suffering seriously from socio economic and political disabilities. The percentage of the weaker sections employed in government services was also found to be abysmally low. One of the main inferences in the study was related to the role of the dominant castes in using reservation policy as part of an electoral tool.

Pratap Bhanu Mehta<sup>53</sup> (2004) reviewed the problem of extending reservation to the private sector and advocated the adoption of a middle path of affirmative action coupled with anti discrimination legislation to address the real problems confronted by the marginalized section of the society. Reservation based on caste was considered as a factor contributing to the perpetuation of casteism instead of putting an end to the antediluvian social structure.

Susie Tharu and, Sanjeev<sup>54</sup> (2006) describe some critical issues that the Dalits had to encounter in the contemporary India. Cross sections of the Subaltern are illustrated in six deep and sincere studies by Partho Chatterji, Shahed Ameen, Gyanendra Pande, Ranajith guha, Susi Tharu, Thejaswini Niranjana and Dipesh Chakaravathy. These studies look different due to their style of narration, political and philosophical approach, scientific content and human touch.

These studies gave a scientific and realistic insight into the depressed classes particularly SCs. They point out injustice and stress the need to unite for defending a society which is denied of justice, even after six decades of independence.

Weisskopf<sup>55</sup> (2006) assessed the costs and benefits of positive discrimination as a means of reducing the social and economic marginalization of disadvantaged racial castes and ethnic communities and proposed the adoption of class-based preferences as an alternative to caste- based positive discrimination policy.

The extent of poverty and inequality is a systematic and scientific study by T.M. George,<sup>56</sup> (2007) to measure the extent of poverty and inequality in Kerala both in rural and urban areas for three decades from 1960-61. Being a major problem of developing countries, poverty reflects the existence of inequalities in the distribution of income. It observes that, without alleviating poverty and levelling inequality to a healthy extent, no country or state would be able to provide full social or economic life for all its people. As majority of the SC people came under the poverty line, these observations have far-reaching consequences.

To uplift the SCs at par with other communities and to evaluate the outcome of projects so far implemented by the State Government, periodical monitoring and review of results are necessary. For this purpose the Government of Kerala has constituted an apex body-SC State level Advisory body, which publishes annual reports<sup>57</sup> (2007). The body includes M.P.s, MLAs, former ministers and social workers. The Minister of Scheduled Castes is the Chairman and the Director of SC Development Department is the Convener. The

Advisory body evaluates the progress and drawbacks and prepares a detailed report which evaluates the welfare measures in general and Habitats in particular.

In a modest attempt to understand the phenomenon of caste clashes and Dalits rights violations in our neighbouring State, Tamil Nadu, J.Devakumar<sup>58</sup> (2007) observes that the caste has become so assertive in Indian politics that it led to caste violations. In most of the worst incidents there, the Dalits have been at the receiving end. Apart from loss of life and property the victims are often subjected to humiliation and inhuman treatment which results in loss of dignity and self respect. But now the Dalits are becoming more organised and they show signals that they are no longer ready to bear such treatment.

In his article M.R. Renukumar<sup>59</sup> (2007) makes an in depth study of the social status of Dalits in Kerala after Independence. According to him even after five decades of Independence the SCs in Kerala continued to be without power and resources to be reckoned with other section of the society. He illustrates this through the present state of Sachivothamapuram Colony, one of the earliest SC colonies in Kerala. He points out that the main reason for this is the SCs themselves, because they have no clear political stand, no unity to encounter the problems they face as single social entity.

Cherai Ramadas<sup>60</sup> (2008) presents an investigative report on the historical visit of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Centre Minister of Law and Justice, in Kerala in 1950. Documentary evidences are given on the fact that even though the then commissioner for the Advancement of Backward community requested the government secretary to make

arrangements for his visit to Harijan colonies, the request was denied. If it had happened it would have been a giant move to the progress of SCs and particularly those in habitats.

### **2.13 Research Gap**

As revealed from the review of literature, many scholars have examined and discussed the various dimensions of the problems and movements of SCs. But the review made it clear that the majority of them were centered on the problems of SCs compared to other communities. Only a few studies cover the problems of SCs with respect to education, housing and employment. The impact of welfare measures on education, deprivation and socio-economic developments based on the welfare measures is not properly studied. They viewed these matters only by conventional dimensions.

Moreover, very few studies had been conducted on the profile and problems of the SCs in habitats. Some of the problems faced by them are results of evil practices existing even now in the society while others are the results of colonization. It is believed that this is the only study related to these problems and has made a fruitful comparison with others. In this sense it is a novel and adequate endeavor in this peak time. Nobody so far made an attempt for a comparative study of the welfare schemes in habitats and non- habitats which needs utmost attention.

The lives of SCs in Habitats- the “slums inside the slums-as Ashok Bhoyar<sup>61</sup> (2007) rightly called them are forgotten by the majority of the scholars. Hence the present study is most relevant and will definitely fill this gap.

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