Modernity and Caste: Institutionalization of Scavenging In Telangana

Introduction

Different schools understand and interpret the caste system in modern India in different ways. While some scholars argue that caste is no longer in existence, others debate that practices of caste are further strengthening and becoming a live force by adjusting with modernity in India. For some scholars caste practices and structures are traditional, while for some others caste is discrimination. In this thesis, I will try to investigate the ground reality of caste in today's Telangana and explore the relation between caste and the age old slavery of scavenging. Scavenging is caste based slavery because it is not a caste based occupations of Dalits but is a caste forced occupation.

The Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan, (National campaign for dignity and eradication of manual scavenging) says, "The Garima Abhiyan holds that manual carrying of human faeces is not a form of employment, but a custom integrally related to the caste system inequality and injustice". The manual scavenging he mentioned is above is the manual carrying of human faeces by humans but the manual scavenging is not limited to the cleaning of human faeces. This thesis, argues that all scavengers, sweepers, sewage workers and others who engaged in manually cleaning all types of waste are manual scavengers. Further argues that scavenging is the caste-forced occupation is the slavery of untouchable communities that even today practiced everyday by all secular modern institutions and is an unquestioned phenomenon in the civic bodies. This slavery of scavenging is not a hereditary occupation of Dalits. Due to the Brahmanical feudal caste practices, that denies all opportunities for Dalits for their development and forces them to remain in the slavery of scavenging today.

This introductory chapter is divided in to ten sections. In the first section, constituting an elaborate review of literature, I explore the existing scholarship on caste and how it works everywhere as an ideology of hierarchy.

1 Resource kit on manual scavenging, - Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan, Dewas, MP, year not mentioned, p.5
In the second section, _Mainstream Understanding of Caste_, explains the mainstream understanding of caste, synthesising the views of different scholars, which reveal that caste plays a determining role in the distribution of power, jobs and resources in contemporary India, and that modernity does not in any way challenge caste at conscious level and its symbolic boundaries.

The third section, _Reservations as a secular perspective_, engages with the non-implementation of reservations (related to the political and social questions of representation) to SCs (Scheduled Castes) and STs (Scheduled Tribes). Thus, no caste diversity exists in the public institutions, which are supposed to be modern and secular. The impunity of government administration in non-implementation of reservations is one of the factors that have forcing the SC, ST communities in to the slavery of scavenging and other menial jobs in all secular, modern public institutions, which are then disproportionately occupied by those with Brahmanical social and cultural capital and such occupation is historically sustained through feudal modes. The section on _Reservations_ offers an idea of the theme of the thesis, _Institutionalization of scavenging_; of the ways in which reservations for the SC, ST and OBCs are deliberately refused by the Brahmanical dominant caste people who hold decision-making powers in the state mechanism. The non-implementation of reservations and the recruitment of _only Dalits_, as scavengers in the civic bodies, municipalities, are the secret language of institutionalization of caste and caste forced scavenging.

The fourth section, _Towards a new presentation_, deals with the criticism of mainstream understandings of caste and argues that in modern India caste plays a significant role in social and economic discrimination of

\footnote{The term Brahmanic is used here for the jatis that believe in Brahmanic caste system as an ideology and practice prejudices against unprivileged communities; they are the non-Brahmin landed communities who lead the Brahmanic way of life. They are Kammas, Reddis, Velamas, Rajus and Kapus in the Telugu states, Marathas and Kunbis in Maharashtra. The Vellalarjatis, Thevar and Nadars in Tamil Nadu. Vokkaligas, Lingayats and Reddis in Karnataka. Patels in Gujarat, Jats, Rajputs, Bhumihars, Khatris, Kayasths, Yadavs and Kurmis in the various northern states. Baidyas, Kayasths in West Bengal; Karanas in Odisha etc.}
marginalised communities and also explores the issue of caste becoming a world problem.

The fifth section, ‘Statement of problem’, explains the research problem that is the link between caste and the scavenging profession. The sixth section, ‘Theoretical framework’, explains how caste operates everywhere as an ideology of hierarchy.

The seventh section, ‘Area of study’, describes the geographical area of Telangana state that is chosen for this research. The eighth section, ‘Objectives of study’, explains the objectives of this thesis. Ninth section explains the research methods that I adopted to complete this study and tenth section is the description of chapters.

1. Review of Literature

There is reasonable amount of literature produced by scholars on the role of modern practises of caste in determining the socio-economic status of individuals in Indian society. Some scholars like D L Seth, Lloyd L. Rudolf, argue that caste has delinked from its rituals and has secularised to adapt to modernity, while Dipankar Gupta argues that caste is not hierarchal in its organisation and implementations in Indian society.

D L Seth says,

―Modernisation of India's economy and democratisation of its political institutions, have released new economic and political power in the society. The hierarchically ordered strata of castes now function as horizontal groups, competing for power and control over resources in society‖.3

Lloyd L. Rudolf says,

―The development of modern communications, the spread of literacy,
and rising prosperity has contributed to the horizontal consolidation of caste communities in India and, as solidarity has increased, caste has been politicized and drawn into the political system as a major actor”.⁴

Examining the question of hierarchy and difference in caste, i.e., jati, Gupta contends, “Caste cannot be looked at in terms of hierarchies but in terms of discrete categories or classes”.⁵

The recent studies, explained the position of caste is significant in the distribution of power and resources across caste lines in modern India.

Caste in modern India is alive and kicking, it has gone nowhere. Surindar Singh Jodhka observes that,

–Since the 1950s the process of economic growth and institutionalisation of democratic politics have transformed almost every aspect of Indian society, including the institution of caste. However, the reality of caste has certainly not disappeared. Though some caste groups have horizontally consolidated themselves into “caste associations” and political formations, the elements of hierarchy and inequality continue to be reproduced even today in many different ways, in other words, caste is alive and kicking, not merely in the form of substantialized identities but also as a source of privileges and deprivations. Instead of it fading away, many would argue that the public presence of caste has grown in India over the years”.⁶

I also argue that the democratised, secularised and modernised caste is as hierarchical as the communal traditional caste and is the reality of today in Telangana when we look at the caste practises.

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⁵ Dipankar Gupta (ed.). *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1991, p.113
Caste is the living reality in Indian modernity; as Balagopal observes,

“Caste is very much a living reality. Caste was one of the principal
determinants of the distribution of recourses and power in medieval
India. And the principal theoretical justification of exploitation; today
it continues to play both the roles, in spite of a certain amount of
capital penetration and political democratization, the principal
difference being that it is today juridically displaced from the high
place it had in the age of Dharmashastras. Caste is juridically dead, but
very much alive politically and ideologically”.7

However, this reality of caste is not discussed or considered while
dealing with the issues of the marginalized while framing the policies for the
empowerment of those communities. Whilst, Balagopal observe above, that

"Caste is juridically dead, he means that caste no longer
supported by the justice system overtly, due to certain provisions in the
constitution of India, but it lives through the ideology of judges and
judgements and their interpretations. He further adds that, A sad fact
about the Indian judiciary is that where the judges have felt an urgent
ideological compulsion they have let mere canons of discipline stop
them".8

On the forms of reconfigured caste in the modernity, K.Satayanarayana
and Susie Tharu observe in the introduction of their edited book  No Alphabet
of Insight, that Caste is configured as a form of power, it has structured social
relations... it works in a renewed and updated forms in modern context and
modern institutes”.9

Gopal Guru and Sundar Sarukai concede with the observation above,

-In spite of various attempts to eradicate active caste consciousness in

7 K Balagopal, −This anti - Mandal Mania” Aloysius (ed.), −Reservations, A Socio
legal perspective” Critical Quest, 2010, p.25-26
8 Ibid., p.50
9K. Sathyarayana and Susi Tharu (Eds.) No Alphabet insight, New Delhi, Penguin
Books, 2011, p.11
our society, it continues to erupt in the most obnoxious ways thus consolidating caste identity. The active and effective presence of this caste consciousness has spread from the confines of the family to the political arena, from the private to the public spaces.”

Anand Teltumbde explains how caste is still a life world of the people in India. He says,

—Caste, contrary to its commonplace notion, is not a static category, and has been constantly evolving through splits and mergers, in turn giving birth to new castes which, according to their material strength, stake claim to a higher ritual position vis-à-vis other castes in their respective locale. Likewise, geography determines the varying modes of living of people, which also made a difference to the social position of different castes. Caste thus constitutes a life world of the people in the subcontinent with fluid boundaries”.

Some of the progressive intellectuals equate Dalit assertion with identity politics, hence describing it as casteist and communal. However, Bhangya Bhukya observes that the caste identity assertion of the marginalised communities is part of modernity. He says,

—Modernity and identity politics are thus integral or inter-dependent despite the contentious relation between them. Identity politics is not simply self-assertion against the grand homogenisation of modern nation and state that reinforced Hinduism in a newer way, but also an attempt to carve out a place within it”.

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10 Gopal Guru and Sundar Sarukai, A Public debate on caste, Available at http://barefootphilosophers.wordpress.com/tag/gopal-guru/, seen on 12th December 2014


12 Bhangya Bhukya, Being Dalit, Being Modern: Caste and culture in Hyderabad State, NMLM occasional paper, 2015, p.1
Citing the post Mandal atmosphere in modern institutions such as universities and government institutions and private institutional workspaces, many studies have pointed towards the reconfigured presence of caste in modern institutions that often play a vital role in the systematic exclusion of Dalits, Adivasis and minorities. This systematic exclusion is performed in the name of merit, efficiency, articulations, logic, communication, and performance. One important aspect of such modern forms of exclusion is that as N. Sukumar pointed out — it seems to unite the perpetrators at the same time that it isolates the victims. While the “excluders” produce exclusion by collectively expropriating public space and refusing to share social opportunities”. The language of this peculiar kind of modernity legitimizes the systematic exclusion and caste discrimination practiced by the dominant castes.

The state welfare initiatives and progressive people associated with such initiatives see caste as a thing to be fought in distant places, while continuing to think that they are all free from caste, but social reformers and revolutionaries in India have challenged these articulations of caste and their caste practices. For example, Gandhi identified untouchability as a problem that was totally outside the Hindu Brahmanical cultural system. He said, “Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin I do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger”.

However, Ambedkar challenged this position of Gandhi by pointing out that notions of caste were embedded in the Hindu Brahmanical cultural system. Hence, caste as an outside distant thing, which one can fight without shedding away their own cultural biases, is an idea which itself reinforces caste hierarchy that is why Ambedkar said, “Caste is a notion, it is a state of the mind, and the destruction does not therefore mean the destruction of

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13 The Mandal Commission appointed in India in 1979 by the Janata Party government under Prime Minister Morarji Desai with a mandate to “identify the socially or educationally backward. It was headed by Indian parliamentarian B.P. Mandal to consider the question of seat reservations and quotas for people to redress caste discrimination


physical barrier. It means a notional change.”

Here, Ambedkar is clearly challenging the Gandhian liberal notion of reformed caste practice without untouchability and the proposed radical break within the socio-cultural system that produces and reinforces caste consciousness. Unfortunately, the Indian mainstream and its protagonists have accepted the Gandhian model as the archetype for caste reform. This model has in fact never challenged the caste consciousness. Instead, it has enshrined the values of caste hierarchy in all modern spaces.

As pointed out by Aloysius,

—Caste-Varna as retrieved and reset in modernity has not changed it colours in contemporary India. If at all, its stranglehold on the social polity is expanding as well as tightening. Ascriptive hierarchy, as the basis of social status as well as the method of surplus distribution within society is firmer than ever.”

Without attentive effort to address the deep-rooted bias against the marginalised communities in the caste-based society, the change will not happen on its own. Fred W. Riggs observes the phenomenon of this modernity when he says, —The negative aspects of modern public administration are most visible in the new states that are unable to establish effective institutions of representative government”.

Caste being a traditional hierarchy and since there were no effective efforts towards caste democracy, the traditional caste hierarchy has remained unchanged in the modern days as well. Fred. W. Riggs again says,

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16Ibid, p. 37.
18Fred W. Riggs, Modernity and Bureaucracy, Public Administration Review, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Jul. - Aug., 1997), Wiley on behalf of the American Society for Public Administration, pp. 347-353,
Modernity, therefore, has vastly expanded the functions of traditional bureaucracies, transforming them into formidable dragons. The dragon of modern bureaucracy resembles traditional bureaucracy as a form of hierarchic organization designed to dominate and control subject populations and to do so efficiently. Its new forms evolved in the context of modern imperialism: In order to rule their empires, even the most democratic modern states developed mechanisms of colonial administration that permitted far-away metro poles to maintain long-term domination over conquered peoples. In short, no bureaucracies, modern or traditional, are democratic; they are instead administrative and hierarchical”.

He adds,

"However, democratizing countries were able to import bureaucratic structures and bring them under popular control. Under such control, representative governments could use bureaucracies to provide public services that have become increasingly necessary for the populations of all modern states. However, modern bureaucracies can also function as organs of domination and exploitation, as we can easily see in many countries where arbitrary and oppressive-even totalitarian-regimes rely on bureaucracies to sustain and maintain their ruthless domination. The key variable has not been any fundamental transformation in the structure of bureaucratic organization – rather, it has involved the establishment of new political structures able to maintain popular control over the conduct and performance of appointed public officials”.

As observed above, the state institutions in Telangana, the national secular institutions and liberal caste reformers follow the same paradigm without challenging the deeply entrenched caste consciousness; this often helps them to conceal their caste markers. The dominant / oppressive caste people in modern spaces act as unmarked citizens while they identify caste as

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19 Ibid, p.1
20 Ibid, p.1
something that operates only in pre-modern, distant village spaces. So often, they try to argue the existence of this ‘distant’ caste and wage rhetorical wars against caste bias, but at the same time, they maintain their own caste privileges, associations and practices. This has in fact legitimized their deliberate caste practice and caste discrimination in modern times. The dangerous aspect of this paradigm is that the modern, unmarked, covert and sanitized caste bodies often objectify the people coming from marginal communities into such spaces and mark them as casteist. Meanwhile, in modern places, they themselves make their own caste interest formations by using modern languages such as professionalism and continue to follow caste-based practices. The liberal caste frame then never challenges the caste consciousness of modern minds.

As A.S Ajith Kumar points out,

―Placing caste in the past or in 'not-yet modern' villages doesn't disturb the modern caste mindset. No one, not even a hard-core casteist would mind admitting that there was caste in the past. The progressive liberals would be comfortable with this position. It is when we speak about the modern caste practices that the progressive liberals get disturbed because this places the progressive liberals within the sphere we are talking about caste‖21.

This situation is a challenge for a welfare state, which speaks of human rights, equality and social justice. The state apparatus should be ready to unpack the modern forms of caste discrimination and caste hierarchal power relations objectively; as the progressive liberals in state apparatus will never understand the problem and complexity of any incident of caste discrimination. However, the irony is that the people government agencies, who claim to be working for human rights, empowerment, social justice etc. for the ‘benefit’ of the marginalized simultaneously, practice the same modern

caste rationality that is in contradiction to the basic principles of human rights and social justice.

Neutrality in a caste-based society must be seen with suspicion, as no fact is independent. Whatever is presented as fact is usually loaded with value with either positive or negative implications in them. Hence, whatever is pronounced and acted upon remains relative and subjective. However, quite often it is presented in the guise of objectivity, neutrality and as unbiased. Oppressive/dominant caste individuals will never accept the fact that they discriminated a person due to his oppressed caste status. The perpetrator legitimizes his position and tries to avoid responsibility to the act of discrimination, arguing that his actions are procedural, which resulted in discrimination. Otherwise, he will argue that the incident of discrimination was "not intentional" and hence, causing a misunderstanding or gap in communication. What is missing here is the fact that they constitute modern institutional spaces and structures for the benefit of dominant/oppressive castes. This atmosphere often alienates and discourages people from marginalized communities. The language of understanding of these institutions then acts as a matter of exclusion and humiliation.

2. Globalisation of Caste

As observed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, "As long as caste in India does exist, Hindus will hardly intermarry or have any social intercourse with outsiders; and if Hindus migrate to other regions on earth, Indian caste would become a world problem." What Dr Ambedkar foretold in 1917, has become the truth today. Those who migrated from India to different countries have formed their caste organizations in other countries such as the United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, South Africa and UAE. Below are the links to a few of the websites of caste-based organizations across the world. (SEE ANNEXURE- I)
The feudal Velama and Reddy castes of Telangana have started their caste organisations in all the countries where they have migrated to and settled in. This is an important dimension of the caste system in contemporary times. Feudal caste Hindus carries their caste along with them wherever they go. As a result, caste inequalities are spreading all across the world. Velamas have started the ‘Velama Association of North America’ and Reddys and Velamas together have started the ‘Telangana Development Forum’ under the leadership of Reddys. Both these feudal castes suppress Dalit assertions in Telangana as well as in the other countries such as America, London, Canada and the Gulf countries.

The atrocities towards Dalits, namely, those of untouchability, humiliation, denial of equal opportunities and violation of human rights are similar in India as well as in other countries where there is a notable Indian presence. In addition, the caste practice of honour killings has migrated to the United States, United Kingdom and Canada along with caste Hindus.

Monica Davey writes,

“In 2008, a so-called upper caste man, Subhash Chander, who lived in Oak Forest, suburb, south of Chicago in USA set fire to his pregnant daughter, his son-in-law and his 3-year-old grandson, and killed them all because he didn’t approve of his daughter’s marriage, as his son-in-law was a lower-caste man from India”

As caste and its evil social practices spread across countries, the Dalit groups have started fighting back. Because of the prolonged battle carried out by several anti-caste organizations, the Government of the United Kingdom introduced a law, The Equality Act 2010, which treats caste as an aspect of race. The Equality Act aimed at ensuring equality to diverse ethnic migrant groups in the UK. In 2013, when the UK government wanted to bring an Anti-

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24 *Caste discrimination and harassment in Great Britain*, Government Equalities office, Research Finding Paper No 2010/08
Caste legislation, which is a special legal measure against caste discrimination in the UK among the Indians, Hindu fundamentalist groups such as Hindu Forum Briton, Hindu Council UK, National Hindu Students' Forum (UK) in the UK opposed it.

The government then ordered a study on the presence of caste discrimination in UK. Dr Meena Dhanda, Reader in Philosophy and Cultural Politics, University of Wolverhampton headed a team of academics to conduct the study on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. The research was a part of the commission's Caste in Britain project, undertaken at the request of the Government, to help inform the introduction of a new statutory law. This followed the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 that required that the government introduce a statutory prohibition of caste discrimination along the lines of the British equality law.\(^{25}\)

Noting the severity of the problem of caste discrimination, the European Parliament (EP) recognised caste-based discrimination as a human rights violation and adopted a resolution condemning it and urging the European Union institutions to address it, in October 2013. The EP consists of 28 member-countries of the EU. Acknowledging that caste-affected communities are still subjected to 'untouchability practices' in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the October 10 resolution stressed the need to combat discrimination based on work and descent, which is also practiced in Yemen, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal and Somalia\(^{26}\).

Though caste continues to penetrate the globe, the colonial misunderstanding of caste often repeats historical mistakes specifically in Telangana and in general in India. For instance, dominant caste individuals who do not have a proper understanding of the caste system and its socio-economic and cultural dimensions, are the ones who primarily frame the laws

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and policies for the empowerment of the marginalised communities, and they only run the state apparatus in India. This has resulted in caste-based discrimination of Dalits. Ambedkar has clearly argued this in a different historical situation, about the social fabric of India which by default bestows privileges, prestige, and confidence to the Brahmins in accordance with the Manusmriti, thus making the Brahmins the 'governing class' who deliberately excluded all the means for the 'servile class' to achieve self-respect and development.

Ambedkar observes,

―Starting with the Brahmins who form a strong and powerful element in the governing class in India, it is no exaggeration to say that they have been the most inveterate enemies of the servile classes, the Shudras (the old name for the non-Brahmins) and the Untouchables who together constitute about 80 or 90 percent of the total Hindu population of India. If the common man belonging to the servile classes in India is to-day so fallen, so degraded, so devoid of self-respect, hope or ambition, and so lifeless, it is entirely due to the Brahmins and their philosophy. The cardinal principles of this philosophy of the Brahmins were six to use a correct expression. techniques of suppression (1) graded inequality between the different classes; (2) Complete disarmament of the Shudras and the Untouchables; (3) Complete ban on the education of the Shudras and the Untouchables; (4) Total exclusion of the Shudras and the Untouchables from places of power and authority; (5) Complete prohibition against the Shudras and the Untouchables acquiring

27Among all the Dharmashastras, Manusmriti is one of the most systematically formulated works, the Brahmins laid down the laws and regulations suitable for the kind of society to ensure their hegemony at the juridical level. They gave shape to it through a complex and competent form of writings to legalize and perpetuate the caste system, which was the life giver for the foundation of Vedic society. The Manusmriti provided an apparently a scientific and historical basis for the creation of an unequal and unjust society. It showed its ruthlessness in obstructing the progressive evolution of society, ensuring its continuance in a static and lifeless form. It played a vital role in providing the basic ideas for the development of fascism and imperialism all over the world
property, and (6) Complete subjugation and suppression of women. Inequality is the official doctrine of Brahmanism and the suppression of the lower classes aspiring to equality has been looked upon by them and carried out by them, without remorse, as their bounded duty.  

Therefore, without recognising the genealogy of the cultural, social, moral authority in the Indian social fabric, no reforms will be constructive for the annihilation of caste and the development of untouchable communities, the unmarked Indian Brahmanical governing class not realising this truth.

3. Mainstream Understanding of Caste

The European understanding of caste and tradition in India is influenced by a Brahmin-centric worldview. Colonial knowledge production about India and its past were accessed from Brahmanical sources that were taken for granted as authentic. As Debjani Ganguly observes, “The predominance of Brahmins as informants, no doubt, led the British, to write accounts of ancient India in terms of Brahmanical sociology of knowledge.”

Surindar S. Jodhka’s observation supports and strengthens the above argument, that Brahmanical theories of caste played a critical role in shaping Indian nationalist imaginations. He says,

—Hierarchies of divisions have existed in the subcontinent in a wide variety of ways for a very long time. However, they were first articulated in the language of caste, as we understand it today, by travellers from the west. Even the word ‘caste’ has its origin in the writings of Portuguese seafarers who arrived on the west coast of India for trade. The later orientalist and British colonial administrators developed ‘theories’ of the caste system, which helped them make sense of India and situate it in their emerging perspective of human
evaluation. These writings turned out to be extremely influential in later sociological and social anthropological conceptualisations of caste. These theories about the caste system and Indian society also played a critical role in shaping the nationalist imaginations of Indian tradition, and over the years, became a constitutive element of the Indian self.”

Caste thus understood and institutionalized by colonial forces was derived from the understanding of Brahmanical forces. Now, even annihilation of caste is also sought to be delineated by people from dominant castes who have access to the knowledge of their colonial masters. However, their representation often silences and suppresses the voices of lifelong victims of caste oppression. Moreover, through different platforms they have been continuing their caste hegemony and diverting the radical idea of caste annihilation into caste reform. Once native informants now act as authentic reformers.

In the European context, social exclusion and marginalisation has historically been understood as the problem of individuals, which can then be solved through liberal individual rights, but in the Indian context, exclusion and marginalisation is practiced and sustained through community dynamics. Even a liberal individual cannot simply undermine his community (caste) inheritance in modern spaces. Those “unmarked” liberal individuals who claim to be experts in effecting the development of the marginalised often use their liberal credentials as camouflage to brutally suppress or invisibilise the marginalised bodies in their spaces.

The state interventions, policies and welfare activities reflect understandings of caste, which are historically rooted in the colonial knowledge production in India which was aided by Brahmanical collaborators, and which subscribes to the hegemonic idea of the Chaturvarnya and that Chaturvarnya means division of society into

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31 The general proposition that the social organization of the Indo Aryans was based on the theory of Chaturvarnya and that Chaturvarnya means division of society into
hierarchical social relations. They see caste as a normal and natural Indian social order. According to their understanding, caste cannot be destroyed but may be reformed.

The British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent has strengthened the Brahmin-imagined Chaturvarnya caste system, which demarcated the Brahmin as the highest ranking of the four varnas. In Hindu India, through the British colonial rule, Brahmins and other allied dominant castes have strengthened their socio-economic positions by occupying all available positions of power. When the untouchable defensive castes, the so-called lower castes, demanded the same treatment from the British rulers, the dominant castes had strengthened the Indian national movement to counter the aspirations of the Indian depressed classes.

Aloysius observes,

“With the establishment of Pax Britannica the vanquishing of the rajas and maharajas on the one hand and the switchover from other sword wielding to pen pushing as the new method of ruling other- the British discovered the religio-culturally but scattered dominant, the Brahmanical (the people of different castes who by birth first, but more importantly conscious – moral adoption believe in practice and stand to gain by Varnashrama in social relations), particularly of the surplus producing river valley as the eminently suited and valued collaborator for the delivery of their colonial objective. This discovery and the mutual beneficial partnership that ensured between what was even flaunted as the reunification of the two long lost brothers of the same stock.”

In other words, Hadwa Dom clearly states, “The Brahmins of India actively collaborated with the English colonialists in their conquest of India.”

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four Classes Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (soldiers), Vaishyas (traders) and Shudras (menials)

32 Aloysius, *Brahmanical inscribed Body politic*, p.8, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2010
As a result, the English rewarded them by inventing the designated ‘Leaders of Hinduism’ for their loyal servants, their Aryan Brahmin cousins.\textsuperscript{33}

Hadwa Dom further observes,

‘During British control of colonial India, many missionaries and humanitarians from Britain and other western countries decried the Hindu caste system as unfair. At the same time, the British government in India had often been perfectly happy to align itself with the Brahmins in order to preserve stability and introduce at least a facade of local control in the colonial regime’.\textsuperscript{34}

The Brahmins were in alliance with the British scholars who studied the caste system. They portrayed themselves to be untouchable friendly and caste practices as a cultural heritage of this country. The very idea of caste system that the foreign academicians, the British and other Europeans had gained was from Brahmins and other allied caste oppressors, and not from the victims of the caste system. The colonial powers, influenced by the manipulated knowledge produced by the Brahmanical forces enabled dominance of the caste hierarchy. It continues to hold sway in all walks of India’s life, be it in the judiciary, media, academics, civil service, politics and others.

4. Reservations as an Anti-Caste Perspective

The reservations (Representation) system is one instrument that attacks caste system and its socioeconomic power relations by providing opportunities for SC/ST and marginalized communities for their socio-economic development. The state institutions are considered modern and secular, and it is expected that the implementation of reservations will take place smoothly, thereafter resulting in reduction of age-old caste inequalities in modern India.


\textsuperscript{34} Kallie Szczepanski, \textit{Photo Essay: British India}, available at http://asianhistory.about.com/od/india/ss/Photo-Essay-Colonial-India_11.htm, seen on 23\textsuperscript{rd} October 2015
However, what is observed is that the reservations system is wilfully neglected, deliberately misinterpreted, and not implemented properly. This is certainly, because the ideological state apparatus coincides with the ideologies of caste. This phenomenon has resulted in the appearance of caste in an institutionalized form. It is now visible that the face of public institutions is constructed by the Chaturvarnya system of caste hierarchy.

Defining this caste-divide in Indian social life, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the chairperson of the drafting committee of Constitution of India argued,

—There is no nation of Indians in the real sense of the world; it is yet to be created. In believing we are a nation, we are cherishing a great delusion. How can people divided into thousands of castes be a nation? The sooner we realize that we are not yet a nation, in a social and psychological sense of the world, the better for us”.

—However, the Brahmanical governing class in India cherishes the delusion that India is a nation, refusing to acknowledge the fact that the Indian society is divided on several caste lines. Every caste has its own distinct practices but at the same time is governed by the Brahmanical framework of social, economic and political hierarchies. This reality makes it impossible for any caste to represent another caste as social interests are hierarchized. This makes “equality” an impossible ideal in political practice.

—When Indian National Congress and its leader M.K.Gandhi claimed that they represent all castes including the untouchables before the British, during the Round Table Conferences, Dr Ambedkar pointed out that,

“The Congress has been, loudly and insistently claiming that it is the only political organization in India, which is representative of the people of India. At one time, it used to claim that it represents the Musalmans also. This it does not now do, at any rate not so loudly and

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36 The three Round Table Conferences of 1930–32 were a series of conferences organized by the British Government to discuss constitutional reforms in India.
insistently. But so far as the Untouchables are concerned, the Congress maintains most vehemently that it does represent them. On the other hand, the non-Congress political parties have always denied this claim. This is particularly true of the Untouchables who have never hesitated to repudiate the Congress claim to represent them”.37

Hence, Ambedkar demanded fair representation in the entire system of governance and administration, on 16 August 1932; the then Prime Minister of Britain, Ramsay Macdonald responded with the 'award' known as the Communal Award. According to it, separate representation was to be provided for the Forward caste, Lower caste, Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, Europeans and Untouchables (now Dalits). The depressed classes were assigned a number of seats to be filled by election from special constituencies in which voters belonging to the depressed classes only could vote. Gandhi, who fasted in protest against it, opposed the Award and blackmailed Dr Ambedkar, who was then forced by Caste Hindu leaders to come for negotiations with Gandhi. Dr.Ambedkar reluctantly agreed (initially opposed it) to a single Hindu electorate, with seats reserved for Untouchables within it. This came about at the Poona Pact38 on 24 September 1932. Thus, the term, –reservation39— was widely adopted by the government functionaries, media and academicians, instead of the more dignified word –representation”.

Reservations in favour of the backward classes (Shudra-BCs) were introduced long before independence in a large area, comprising the

38 The Poona Pact refers to an agreement between Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Gandhi signed on 24 September 1932 at Yerwada Central Jail in Pune (now in Maharashtra), India. It was signed by Pt Madan Mohan Malviya, some Hindu leaders, Dr BR Ambedkar, and some Dalit leaders to break the fast unto death undertaken by Gandhi in Yerwada jail to annul Macdonald Award giving separate electorate to Dalits for electing members of state legislative assemblies in British India.
39 Reservation in India is the process of setting aside a certain percentage of seats (vacancies) in government institutions for members of backward and under-represented communities (defined primarily by caste and tribe). Reservation is a form of quota-based affirmative action. Reservation is governed by constitutional laws, statutory laws, and local rules and regulations
presidencies and the princely states to the south of the Vindhyas. Chatrapathi Sahuji Maharaj, Maharaja of Kolhapur in Maharashtra, introduced reservations in favour of backward classes in as early as 1902 to eradicate poverty from amongst them and to give them their due share in the state administration. The notification of 1902 created 50% reservations in services for backward classes/communities in the State of Kolhapur. This notification was the first government order providing for reservation for the welfare of depressed classes in India. Also in 1882, the Hunter Commission was appointed; Mahatma Jyotirao Phule made a demand of free and compulsory education for all along with proportionate reservation/ representation in government jobs.

The governing class of India does not willingly implement the present reservation system. The present reservation policy remains on paper; the Brahmanical governing class of India has consciously and in many ways resisted the implementation of reservations for the Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC). It has as a general practice refused to honour the practice of reservations as a Constitutional principle of social justice. Instead, it has adopted different strategies to recruit their own kith and kin in positions of power that are actually reserved for SC, ST and OBC categories. As Ravikumar says about this situation, “The SC, ST and OBCs have reservations, but Brahmins and their allied castes have ‘preservations’.”

It is important to take note of the rising practices of casteism and religious fundamentalism in India. The dominant castes are trying to grab the public resources. The Brahmin Sanghatan for instance has been protesting for funds for Brahmin entrepreneurs; Jains have been protesting to protect the

40 Marc Galanter, Who are the Other Backward Classes: An Introduction to the Constitutional Puzzle 1812, available at: http://marcgalanter.net/Documents/papers/scan nedpdf/WhoAretheOtherBackwardClasses.pdf, seen on 2 September 2015
41 R Ravikumar, Secretary, National Dalit Forum, interviews conducted on the status of reservations in the 100 central government funded research institutes. Interviewed by Karthik Navayan on 6th August 2015 at his residence
right to die-ritual tradition- Santhara\textsuperscript{42}, Marathas, Jats, Gujjars, and now Patels\textsuperscript{43} are fighting for reservations, Sindhi communities organise yearly processions of their God Jhulelal\textsuperscript{44}, the Sikh council has been resisting against weddings between Sikhs and non-Sikhs\textsuperscript{45}. There are many more such examples. There is a strong relationship between casteism and religious fundamentalism. The dominant castes are fighting to accumulate more and more wealth and resources, while the pleas of the most disadvantaged in this country remain unheard. On the other hand, the Brahmanical dominant castes fight for the protection of their caste practises and grab public resources, while opposing reservations to the marginalised communities. Marathas, Jats, Gujjars and Patels are asking for reservations for them but have historically been at the forefront of the anti-reservation disturbances since the beginning of 1990s, the Mandal period.

The reason behind the oppositions for the implementation of reservations to the marginalized communities is that they attack caste system. Balagopal clearly pointed this out in his famous article, “This anti-Mandal Mania”, where he says,

“The highly emotional oppositions to reservations therefore must be seen not in the context of employment and unemployment, but in the context of caste system, and political power. It is precisely because


\textsuperscript{44} http://www.udaipurblog.com/cheti-chand-new-year-eve-for-the-sindhi-community.html (seen on 31st August 2015)

reservations attack the caste system, an attack that the Indian polity can ill-afford, that there is so much fuss against them”.46

Hence, the Indian mainstream understanding of caste by the media, academia and judiciary has resulted in creating an opinion against reservations among the administrators, which makes implementation of reservations an impossible fantasy. Balagopal made the correct arguments about the mainstream intellectuals and their false understanding of caste based reservations. He says,

“The pamphleteers against reservations which are glorified by the names of editors of newspapers and professors in our universities have the cheek not only to claim that it is reservations that provoke casteism, but also to add the patronizing bit of advice that since employees who get into offices and institutions on reservations are humiliated and insulted at the place of work, it is in the interest of their own self respect to give up reservations, which is rather like a thief saying that he has the habit of pocketing other people's valuables when he is in the mood, and so they, have better not possess any”.47

The anti-reservation phenomenon, which is in line with the castiest morals of dominant caste administrators who interpret the laws, judgments and frame their own circulars against the concept of reservations have actually suppressed the entire essence and spirit of reservations, misinterpreted them, and created technical hurdles against the marginalized. Here is an important example from Jawaharlal Nehru University, referred to by Balagopal, on the ways in which the dominant caste professors interpreted the Supreme Court judgment against the OBC students.

Balagopal says,

“The extraordinary interpretation put by the Jawaharlal Nehru University on the order of 14 October 2008 passed by the Supreme Court. It should be obvious to even a child that what the court said was

46 K Balagopal, "This anti Mandal Mania", —Reservations, a socio-legal perspective” (ed.), Aloysius, critical quest, 2010,p.21
47 Ibid, p. 23
that if a student in general has to get. Say, 40 marks in the qualifying test or interview or whichever combination of two the institution prescribes, to be eligible for selection to a course. Then in the case of OBCs, it will be sufficient if the candidate gets 30 marks. It takes exceptional intelligence to read it as anything else. But they evidently possess that in that university. A committee of five teachers concluded that, what the Supreme Court meant when it spoke of relaxation of not more than 10 in the cut-off marks was that the marks obtained by an OBC candidate must be within 10 marks of the least marks obtained by those who have qualified in the general category for the OBC candidate to be eligible for selection! Social scientists for some time now have been speaking much of the legitimacy of diverse "readings" of "texts" but one does hope that in the JNU they have not carried it to misreading of plain English”.

The above example is only one of many; such erroneous interpretation against reservations is a very common phenomenon in every educational institute, government department, and it is a very sorry state of affairs for the implementation of reservations.

Aloysius clearly pointed out the limitations imposed on the implementation of reservation policies in contemporary India, and the ways in which reservations are misinterpreted and used for the political mileages of the ruling classes. He says,

“The constitutionally mandated issue of reservation for the so-called backward and scheduled castes, in all its complexity continues to be riddled with conflicts, confrontations and controversies in practically all spheres of collective life here. This clearly indicates that the issue along with several other similar issues of empowerment of the weaker sections, despite being enshrined in and mandated by the law of the land, is neither expressive of, nor based on, nor backed by national consensus, but was brought in to meet other exigencies. An important but disastrous result of such ‘mere legal’ inclusion

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48 Ibid, p.56
being, that the different dimensions of the issue are interpreted (and also implemented) not in the spirit of the constitution, or in sympathy with the mass of excluded but variously in the interest of the different influential lobbies of the entrenched social groups, leading to the virtual negation of all intended benefits to the disempowered”.

Uday Singh proposes a number of measures that are required for the proper implementation of reservations. According to him,

Reservation has not been implemented properly until date. There is no authority answerable for the deficiency. In case of faculty, reservation policy guidelines itself are inconsistent. The SC/ST Liaison Officers and SC/ST Commission have no powers to protect the claims of SC/ST candidates. There are many more such problematic things. There should be a Reservation Act that includes every level of reservation with a Reservation Commission, which will be responsible for the implementation of reservation act”.

Reservations have played an important role in producing a middle class in the Dalit Community, despite several limitations and loopholes. However, the higher judiciary remains an untouched area for Dalits. A number of studies have pointed out that 94.01% of the judges in Supreme Court, the apex court of India and the High Courts, the federal courts, are Brahmins and their Brahmanic allied dominant castes. According to a survey conducted by the Outlook magazine in 2007, Brahmins are a micro minority community that constitutes 5.6% of the total population of India, but they occupy 47% of the chief justice posts and 40% of associate justice positions between 1950 to 2000. Around 75-90% of the Class I-Class II officers in the Indian administration, professors, lecturers and readers in all government-funded central and state universities are from Brahmin and Brahmanic allied dominant castes. 88% of most significant positions in the media are also occupied by the

50 Uday Singh, email communication posted in the our-media@googlegroups.com on 2 September 2015 on the subject of Debating Reservation: Rationalities and Social Justice.
same castes. More than 80% of the land holdings, including other resources and means of production rest with Brahmanic dominant castes. In 1991, 70% of the total SC households were landless or near landless (owning less than one acre). This increased to 75% in 2000. In 1991, 13% of the rural SC households were landless. However, in 2000 this saw a decline to 10%. As per the Agricultural Census of 1995-96, the bottom 61.6% of operational holdings accounted for only 17.2% of the total operated land area. As against this, the top 7.3% of operational holdings accounted for 40.1% of the total operated area. This gives an indication of land concentration in the hands of a few.

Despite the fact that the practice of reservation has been on for more than half a century, the total strength of SC, ST and OBCs in central and state government jobs is only around 20%, but they constitute 85% of the people in India.

- The backlog in Dalit and Tribal appointments reported to be 25,000 in the State (the state here is Tamil Nadu and the similar situation prevails in other states too) and 1,000,000 in Union Government services. Some vacancies have not been filled since 1978. This is reported by the national daily, The Hindu, Feb 2, 1999.\(^{54}\)

This is the story of public sector. When it comes to the private sector, which is answerable to none, the story enters a more vicious cycle. The government sector, which claims to be working for the welfare of the marginalized, is disproportionately occupied and operated by privileged sections with Brahmanic cultural capital. They write policies and strategies; and they make interventions for the sake of the marginalized communities. However, none of these processes involves those affected sections that they claim to represent. The lack of access to resources and opportunities in the

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\(^{54}\) *Dalit Reality*, Peoples Democracy, Chennai edition published on April 6-12, 2015
state apparatus for the underprivileged castes and classes is the result of deep-rooted prejudices, which the powerful privileged castes carry along with themselves. The more they claim to adhere to the values of equal opportunity and inclusion in the language of modernity, the less is the possibility of them identifying and overcoming their own biases.

Those who are opposing reservations to the marginalised castes have been demanding that reservations should be based on the economic criteria instead of that of caste. Nevertheless, this argument is not at all valid in the interest of social justice; it will maintain the caste order while dismissing any attempt from the marginalised communities to empower themselves. As Ghanshyam Shah says,

―If you have economic criteria and ignore caste, you end up helping only the upper castes. Because all castes have poor and jobs are limited. Say there are 100 jobs and 1,000 applicants, out of which 500 are poor. Of these 500, say 80 are upper caste poor and 400 lower castes. There is a strong possibility that 60 out of the 80 will get jobs. Only 20 or 30 of the 400 lower caste poor applicants may get jobs. This is how we reinforce the status quo‖.

The constitution of India provides equality before law for all its citizens. The spirit of the constitution should be correctly understood. When the constitution of India says that all citizens of the country are equal before law, it means that there are inequalities amongst the people of this country and all will be given equal opportunity. It does not mean that all people are already equal. If people are already equal, then the constitution does not have any role to bring equality. Therefore, the article 15 (4) in the constitution of India says,

56Constitution of India, Article 14 - Equality before law.—The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
(4) “Nothing in this article 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 or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes”. The Constitution does not recognise the economic status as criteria for special provisions. We find this is in article 16 (4), which says, “Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State”.

Now, some people demanding for reservations on the basis of an economic criteria means that they cannot confront the marginalised people achieving development and self-respect, which is contrary to the norms of the pre-existing caste system. Reservations began attacking the caste system following its introduction, but soon, and almost simultaneously, we find the caste system attacking on reservations. This is evident in the recent Marathas, Jats and Patidar/Patel community’s movement on the streets of Ahmedabad.

Explaining this move of Marathas, Jats and Patels to include them in the reservations, Fakru Ahmed Bashu argues that,

“While there is uproar from backward classes and downtrodden strata of the society to strictly implement the constitutionally earmarked reservations, there is, on the other hand, a vicious attempt through some recent events to bring the reservation system to an end. Upper caste people with stakes, who came out openly to oppose the Mandal commission report, thus creating violent human suffering during VP Singh's regime, are resurfacing on the scene albeit in a different form. The unruly movement witnessed recently in Gujarat involving people from the Patel caste to get themselves listed in the OBC category, is part of this phenomenon”. 57

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The so-called upper castes i.e. the Jats, Marathas, Gujjars and Patels are coming out on the streets demanding reservations, the Nairs in Kerala have silently organised themselves and lobbied with the state government to grab public resources. The government of Kerala established a commission, “Kerala state welfare corporation for forward communities”.58

It moreover, released Rs 10000000 (One Crore) for the coaching programmes of the Nair forward caste students. Reservation policy is meant for achieving social justice; they have now however become an instrument in the hands of the political masters for their political mileages; Fakru Ahmed Bashu further observes that,

“The UPA government, against the advice of National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), included Jats in the OBC category in March 2014 when the election dates were nearing. The Supreme Court quashed this decision stating that this is against the basic nature of reservations and hence is faulty. The Modi government recently filed a review petition in the Supreme Court pleading that Jats be placed in the OBC category. Additionally, the Modi government argued that it is not bound to follow the NCBC advice. Similarly, the Mumbai High Court cancelled the decision to include Marathas in OBC category. The Maharashtra government announced that they would approach the Supreme Court against the high court decision. It seems the BJP does not wish to lag behind the Congress and is bent upon uprooting the reservation policy. In 1999, the Vajpayee-led NDA government included the Rajasthan Jats in the OBC category for the first time. That fire is still simmering till date”.59

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59 Ibid
Many dominant castes have been demanding for reservations, but none has been raising the issue of 50 percent restrictions on reservations, ordered by the Supreme Court. Questioning the rationality of this restriction, Balagopal says,

—Why 50, why not 49 or 51 or 70 for that matter... that the total reservations should not exceed 50 percent, which is entirely arbitrary and has no rational basis what so ever. In any case it is obviously a matter for the legislature to prescribe any such restriction and not the court‘. 61

There then needs to be an intervention from the legislature to remove this illogical limit because by keeping the reservations limited to 50 percent, it is impossible to include more communities into the fold of the reservation. If Patels and other dominant castes, who want to be included in the reservations they should be included as they feel deprived and backward, but then 50 percent limitation should be removed so as to accommodate them. However, they are silent on the 50 percent limit and only demanding for their inclusion in to the reservations fold reveals the Hindutva conspiracy of upper castes against the spirit of reservations.

The reservation for the marginalised communities has always had opposition from Hindu fundamentalist groups. The RSS for instance says,

—Senior Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideologue M.G. Vaidya has argued that caste-based reservation given to the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in government jobs and educational institutions should be done away with as caste is —no more relevant.”62
It has to be understood this is the backdrop against which upper castes are now coming to the streets demanding reservations for themselves. In this context of demand for reservations by the so-called upper castes Jats, Marathas and Patels, Vivek Kumar says,

‘...do not agree with this argument. I think those who are mooting this idea are doing in frustration or out of their ignorance about the logic and basis of reservation. By even mooting this idea we dilute the principles of reservation and spread the idea that reservation can be granted to anyone. One should not forget and misunderstand the logic of reservation. There are very significant, fundamental and structural principles based on which this reservation was conceded to SCs, STs and to some OBCs after intense debates in the constituent assembly and centuries of movements by them. There is an element of social justice in the reservation of SCs, STs, and OBCs. It involves historical corrective of injustices done to SCs and STs. The most important point is 'Reservation for SCs and STs is directly connected with the issue of representation. It was because they did not have any representation in any sphere of life, that is, in social, economic, political, educational, etc. sphere for thousands of years and therefore they were supposed to get representation in these Institutions. Therefore, reservation is not poverty alleviation programme. The founding fathers of nation did not think to remove poverty of scheduled caste persons through reservations. In fact, there are so many poverty alleviation programmes being run in India. One such programme is MNREGA; the other is Prime Minister's Rojgar Yojana etc. They always thought to grant SCs and STs Self-representation through reservation. In the light of the above, we cannot concede reservation to Upper Castes. Second, we cannot concede reservations on economic basis’.”

Kuffir Nalagundwar also questions the rationality of the demand of reservations for the Maratha, Jats and Patels, He says,

—The Jats of Punjab and Haryana are special sons-in-law of the Indian state. Nearly half of all procurement of cereals, wheat and rice, undertaken by the Indian government is from Jat farmers. They own over 70% of the land in those two states and probably half of legislative positions and two-thirds of chief ministerial positions until now. Where is the rationality in the Jats demanding reservations? The Marathas own nearly 85% of land in Maharashtra, run most of its sugar and other agro-processing mills, and occupy 40-55% of elected legislative positions, majority of chief ministerial positions. Where is the rationality in the Marathas demanding reservations? Or in the Lingayats being given reservations or the Gounders being given reservations? 64

The anti-reservationists argue that reservations were meant to be given for only 10 years after the initial implementation but they continue to be given even after 50 years. This is a misunderstanding caused by the inability to differentiate political reservations from reservations in education and employment. With regard to this, Vivek Kumar says that,

—There was no time limit fixed for reservation for SCs and STs in bureaucratic jobs and in educational institutions. Only political reservation under article 330 and 332 of Indian Constitution, which reserves seats in Lok Sabha and in Vidhan Sabhas of different States were for 10 years. However, these reservations have been given new life with different amendments. 65

Right now, there is only meagre implementation of reservations in politics, public employment in administration and education. The media is

65 Ibid
completely out of reservations as it is claims itself to be private sector. Astonishingly, the state owned judiciary has remained untouched by reservations, since the present reservations policy is not applicable to the judiciary. The National Commission for Scheduled Castes has conducted a study on the issue of reservations in the judiciary and has submitted its report to the President of India on 21st February 2013 and presented it in the Parliament on 11th December 2014, which has however not been discussed yet. In this report the NCSC recommended reservations in the judiciary and proposed required constitutional amendments. The report argues that,

“The administration of law and justice is closely linked with the social philosophy of the judiciary which in turn is linked with the social background of those who dispense justice. Judges are not super human beings. Howsoever objective and fair they may be in their decisions they are bound to be influenced by their likes and dislikes/prejudices. In an environment of ongoing social struggles the resultant bitterness is likely to influence their judgement if they happen to share the sentiments of their own warring communities.”

The NCSC report further says that, “Unfortunately the composition of higher judiciary shows that judges continue be drawn mostly from the very section of society which is infected with the age old social prejudices.” It is proved in all the cases of Dalit massacres in the country starting from that of Kilavenmani in 1969, judgments acquitting culprits in Tsundur, Karamchedu, Shankar Bigha, Kambalapally, Laxmapur Bathe etc. are examples that the judiciary is Brahmanical and therefore never punishes the dominant caste culprits who killed Dalits. Therefore, there is a need for the implementation of reservations in the judiciary and for it to be further extended to the private sector.

Here are some more truths about reservations, which reveal the greatly limited implementation of reservations in the country. The fourth report

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67 Ibid
(1996-97)\textsuperscript{68} of National Commission of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes put together the data of comparison of percentage of population of various castes and communities and their representation in class I government and non-government services in the year 1989.

Table showing the details of implementation of reservations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Caste/ Communities</th>
<th>% of Population in the year 1989</th>
<th>Representation in Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Brahmins</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>70.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Raj puts</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kayasths</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Baniyas</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Total Percentage of Population and Representation of So-called upper castes</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>82.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SC/ST/OBC</td>
<td>68.85</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>10.13</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9.31</td>
<td>6.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table clearly shows that the implementation of reservations for SC/ST/BCs is in a ridiculous situation. Even after monopolising so many jobs, the so-called upper castes demand reservations based on economy as a criterion to acquire reservations for the poor in their castes. Reservations aimed to give representation to the castes that are excluded from all walks of life. However, that has not happened and that is the story of more than fifty years of independent India. Without reservations, the so-called upper castes have grabbed more than 80 percent of total services but they are only 15 percent in the entire population of country.

In some communities, there is no individual who has entered into the school, college, university, public employment, assembly, parliament and any political or social position. As Kuffir Nalagundwar observed in his article, 'The Ratha Yatra of Hardik Patel',

\textsuperscript{68}National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 4\textsuperscript{th} Report, 1996-97, 9197-98, p.22
In the past one decade, among the communities recognized as backward in the state of Andhra Pradesh are the Siddula, a community which has a population of only 5,000; their traditional occupation is selling of Kumkum, gulal, combs and manual labour; only 10% are literate. It was never referred to earlier in any ethnographic records; it has no presence in government even at grade 4 level or in any professions. The Arava community is only 3,300 strong; 93% of its members are engaged in manual labour; only one member is employed in government. Their per capita incomes are around 1/8th state's average. Kurakula - their traditional occupation was to sell vegetables but 97% of them are now engaged in manual labour, earning around 1/10th the state's average income. The Samanthula are another such community, which recorded as the poorest community in the state in the Andhra Pradesh in the Multi-purpose Household Survey held in the year 2000. It took the Indian state 60 years to 'discover' these jatis. Now the ruling classes are proposing that the Patels are as wretched as these lost communities are.69

Some Dalit communities in Telangana exist only in the gazette of the state but there are no efforts by the state administration to trace them and to change their fate. Some communities live as unidentified people and as nomads, beggars, rag pickers, pavement dwellers and manual scavengers. All of them belong to the Dalit and other marginalised communities. Leaving them at their fate, now the so-called Brahmanical forward castes are mobilising all their socio-economic and political strength to dismantle the concept of reservations to dismiss all efforts of marginalized communities for their development. The recent Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) survey by the government reveals the truth and farce of these reservations. According to a news analysis in Indian Express, —only about 4 per cent each of rural Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste households have a member in a

government job, according to the findings of the Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 released earlier this month.” This would then mean that 96 percent of SC/ST families do not have access to government employment even after 65 years of implementation of reservations. This clearly shows the discrimination and bias against SC/STs in the administrative domain of all sectors in this country. This non-implementation of reservations of SC, ST and OBC marginalised communities is the phenomenon of caste acting as a state apparatus. Thus, caste has been institutionalised in modern institutions as an ideology of hierarchy.

5. Towards a New Presentation

Being a living reality of Indian modernity, the ideology of caste in the state apparatus restraining any form of development of untouchable communities. The poor-implementation of reservations that meant for the empowerment of SC ST BC communities to be understood in this context. This thesis presents the insights from fieldwork that shows that ground reality of caste in today Telangana region, taking an example of scavenging, where this age-old caste forced slavery of untouchable communities is continuing today with all modern means in the civic bodies of Telangana.

The findings from fieldwork, which include interviews of Dalit Activists and victims from Telangana villages and interviews of 100 sanitation workers employed with the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), interviews with the officials of the GHMC and South Central Railways. A survey under right to information act – 2005, the collected data on the caste composition of scavengers and review of literature suggests that the mainstream understanding on caste and scavenging is different from the ground reality.

70Mahim Prathap Singh, Census counts just 4% SC, ST families with a member in a govt job, Indian Express, 14th July, 2015, available at - http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/census-counts-just-4-sc-st-families-with-a-member-in-a-govt-job/#sthash.8Bts4ZEO.dpuf
This thesis examines and presents the feudal caste practises with Brahmanical cultural influence in Telangana society, which is based on the Chaturvarnya principles of hierarchy. Those caste practises are reconfiguring in modern secular institutions such as municipalities and the railways and this has resulted in the fact that all sanitation workers and manual scavengers are from untouchable communities. This has thus institutionalised caste hierarchies in modern secular public institutions.

The problematic arguments by scholars that caste is disappearing, that caste is not a hierarchy, and that caste is secularizing etc. do not resonate with the living reality of caste in Telangana. This may be understood when we engage with the history of caste practises that have resulted in upholding age-old caste inequalities in modern Telangana leading to the institutionalisation of caste.

6. Statement of Research Problem

Scavenging in India is a caste-forced slavery of untouchable communities from the time immemorial; it is directly linked with the caste system, which in turn is linked with the disapproval and under development of the untouchable communities. However, there are legislations, and commission for the total eradication of manual scavenging and rehabilitation of scavengers, the situation remains the same due to non-implementation of the legislations and schemes. Moreover, the practice of caste system by all the modern secular institutions made it impossible for the eradication of manual scavenging. There is no social acceptance to the law in the caste society and there is no awareness in the caste society to respect fellow untouchable individuals whom they are forcing to clean the human faeces with bare hands. Actually scavenging is the instrument in the caste society, to humiliate and discriminate untouchable communities.

Therefore, there is a need of a political will and a comprehensive understanding to eradicate this caste based slavery. There is a need to inculcate the values of equality and fraternity among the institution and
individuals who are practicing and forcing untouchables in to scavenging slavery day-to-day. It also needs to create awareness to the producers of the waste, on the segregation, disposal of domestic waste, because Brahanical dominant castes think that they will become impure if they touch the waste, these beliefs are rooted in the Hindu Brahmanical caste notions. Without recognising the fact that scavenging is a problem originated from the caste system, it is impossible for the eradication of manual scavenging and those efforts are futile.

However, the recently initiated Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) of government of India with specific below mentioned objectives.

1. Elimination of open defecation
2. Eradication of Manual Scavenging
3. Modern and Scientific Municipal Solid Waste Management
4. To effect behavioural change regarding healthy sanitation practices
5. Generate awareness about sanitation and its linkage with public health
6. Capacity Augmentation for ULB’s
7. To create an enabling environment for private sector participation in Capex (capital expenditure) and Opex (operation and maintenance)\textsuperscript{71}

The mission statements not discussed about the people who are engaged in the scavenging from centuries. Also in contrary to its objectives this SB mission has took inspiration from M.K. Gandhi, who advocated for the caste based occupations, that is to force the untouchable communities into scavenging slavery. The mission’s objectives and its inspiration are contrary to each other. If at anybody has to represent cleanliness in this country, it is only Saint Gadge Baba, a great environmentalist and a spiritual leader from Maharashtra. Choosing Gandhi who advocated for caste-based occupations itself reveals the political unwillingness of the state apparatus for eradication.

of manual scavenging. The Swachh Bharath mission in its present form, which does not question the caste-based slavery of scavenging communities, is actually a warning to the scavenging communities to stop their political assertions and get back to their “traditional” caste based occupation that is caste-based slavery of scavenging.

This situation is the result of ignorance of caste by the scholars and intellectuals who are the primary opinion makers, and who denies the caste in modernity while maintaining caste in modern forms. They are the ones, who falsely claim that scavenging is a secular profession and valorised scavenging is a social service. Some of the mainstream intellectuals argue that caste is not a social hierarchy but only a social difference. Some mainstream intellectuals argue that Dalits themselves wanted to engage in the filthy jobs because it is a government job. These all are the misconceptions surrounded around the caste and scavenging, which makes any reform for the empowerment of those communities futile. Vivek Kumar observes the same that,

—The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign) glosses over issues of caste, which is inextricably linked to sanitation work across the country, and the rights of sanitation workers. It incorrectly tries to draw legitimacy from Gandhi’s thoughts on hygiene and cleanliness”.  

More than a century ago in 1909, regarding caste and occupation, Sridhar V Ketkar observed,

—Today a man can take to any occupation without changing his caste. The only exceptions are that no body of good (dominant, mine) castes would like to take to the occupation of shoemaker or scavenger, and no

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man who is not born as a Brahmin would be accepted as a priest in the community.”\(^73\)

28 years after Ketkar’s observation, in 1937, M.K. Gandhi stressed on the caste-based occupation and said that, —One born a scavenger must earn his livelihood by being a scavenger and then do whatever else he likes. For a scavenger is as worthy of his hire as a lawyer or your president. That according to me is Hinduism”.\(^74\) These Gandhian ideas in India have become the policies, circulars, laws, judgements and government orders, so that today we can see the continuation of this caste based slavery of untouchable communities in all the public and private institutions which are supposed to be secular and modern. This slavery continues with different language with different methods.

Ambedkar effectively argued against Gandhi when observed that,

——.. in India a man is not scavenger because of his work. He is a scavenger because of his birth, irrespective of the question whether he does scavenging or not. If Gandhism preached that scavenging is a noble profession, with the objective of inducing those who refuse to engage in it, one could understand it. But why appeal to the scavenger’s pride and vanity in order to induce him and him only to keep on to scavenging by telling him that scavenging is a noble profession and that he need not to be ashamed of it”.\(^75\)

These Ambedkarite ideas were ignored and never considered as important while framing the policies for the upliftment of the marginalised, so that even today the caste forced occupation of Dalits remained intact.

Dalits are forced into the scavenging profession by denying their proportion in the other dignified government employment. It is not true that Dalit wanted scavenging jobs as a choice, in contrary to this reality, Arundhati

Roy says, "With deepening poverty and the steady evaporation of government jobs, a section of Dalits has to fiercely guard its 'permanent' state employment as hereditary shit-cleaners against predatory interlopers". This statement is it is not truth; it is denigration of scavenging castes.

Apart from the above observations from Ketkar, Gandhi and Ambedkar, recently some scholars argued that there is no link between caste and the scavenging profession. 54 years since Gandhi stressed on the caste-based profession, in 1991, Bindeshwar Pathak observed, –Scavengers were a special class and, not a caste, united in their miseries and social degradation." In 2015, another scholar Tulika Tripathi after conducting a study wrote that the link between caste and the scavenging profession is weakening. She observes, –The Safai Karmi Scheme of the Uttar Pradesh government reveals the apparent weakening of the age-old link between caste and occupation, with Other Backward Classes and even upper castes competing with Scheduled Castes to secure the job of a sanitation worker in villages."

Arguments by Bindeshwar Pathak, Arundhati Roy and Tulika Tripathi, are not true to the commonsense and as a living experience of Dalits in Telangana. There is a strong connection between discriminatory caste practises and scavenging slavery; it is the hierarchal caste system that is forcing Dalits into scavenging. More than 90 percent sanitation workers in the state of Telangana, working in all municipalities, including the GHMC are Dalits, majority of whom are from the Madiga caste and are mostly women. The feudal caste practises in the Telangana villages prevent any forms of development of Dalit communities and hence, have been forcing them to the

75 B R Ambedkar, what congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables, chapter xi, Gandhism The Doom of the Untouchables, available at - http://www.ambedkar.org/ambcd/41L. What%20Congress%20and%20Gandhi%20CHAPTER%20XI.htm
78 Tulika Tripathi, Safai Karmis of Uttar Pradesh, Caste, Power and Politics, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol - L No. 6, February 07, 2015
slavery of menial jobs such as scavenging. This thesis examines the connection between caste practises and scavenging slavery in the Telangana state. It also examines caste practises in the villages and migration of Dalits to cities such as Hyderabad and tries to respond to the questions around caste and modernity. How caste is institutionalized by engaging with the questions of — why 90 percent of Dalits are the sanitation workers?”, “why this slavery of scavenging is continuing today in secular and modern public institutions?”, “what compelled them to accept scavenging works in modern secular institutions such as municipalities, railways and other public and private institutions?”

7. Theoretical Framework

In addition to other dimensions, the core principle of caste is hierarchy. According to Ambedkar, “Caste is a hierarchy in which divisions of labourer are graded one above the other”. Sridhar V Ketkar observes that hierarchy is an important element of the caste system in addition to the endogamy. He says, “There are two important elements in the Hindu caste system; for example, endogamy and hierarchy”. Caste is an ideology, Balagopal writes, “Caste is material relation of productions as well as an ideology”. Caste is then an ideology of hierarchy that places Hindu Brahmanical dominant castes on the top of the caste ladder and untouchable/marginalised communities at the bottom. This ideology is now that of the governing classes of India i.e. the national ideology. G. Aloysius observed in his book Nationalism Without a Nation in India, “Vedic Brahmanism as an ideology re-engulfed the subcontinent now transformed into colonial state, thus creating a pan-Indian religio cultural nationalism”. In other words, he clearly pointed out how Indian nationalism has absorbed the Brahmanical ideology. He says, “Nationalism itself was neither a monolith nor a nationalist ideology the

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79B R Ambedkar, Annihilation of Caste, Prabuddha Bharat Pustakalya, Nagpur, 2011, p.34
80Ketkar V Sridhar, History of Caste in India, Tailor and Carpenter, Newyork, 1909, p.27
81K. Balagopal, Dalitha, Perspectives Publications, Hyderabad, 2001, p. 32
82G. Aloysius, Nationalism Without a Nation in India, oxford university press, 2012, New Delhi, p. 146
monopoly of the dominant communities”.\textsuperscript{83} Braj Ranjan Mani conceded the same in his book \textit{Debrahmanising History}, where he says, “The national leadership, contrary to the official depiction, did not strive to build a casteless, equalitarian ideology. Instead, Brahmanical ideologues eulogized the caste culture and structure of ancient India in the name of nationalism”.\textsuperscript{84} Moreover, this ideology is believed, preached and practised in the everyday functioning of the entire state apparatus.

This Brahmanical ideology has become equated with nationalism through the transfer of power from British to the Congress Party. Perry Anderson argues, “There was no overthrow of the Raj, but a transfer of power by it to Congress as its successor. The colonial bureaucracy and army were left intact minus the colonizers”.\textsuperscript{85} When power was transferred to the Congress from the British, Ambedkar clearly pointed out what was to happen in this country in the hands of the governing class of the Indian Congress. He says, “The governing class in the Congress has lost all its fervour for revolution, for driving the British out. Having now got a field to exploit the masses they want to stick on the power and authority to do the job thoroughly and do not wish to be disturbed by any thought of anti-imperialism at all. Not being radical party the Congress cannot be trusted to undertake a radical programme of social and economic reconstruction without which the Untouchables can never succeed in improving their lot”.\textsuperscript{86} He further clearly pointed out that, “Congress far from planning for democracy is planning to resuscitate the ancient form of Hindu polity of a hereditary governing class ruling a hereditary servile class”.\textsuperscript{87} That is what has happened in the country and Telangana region as well.

The Congress party, subsequent to its transfer of power in 1947, in the 15 general elections, won an outright majority on six occasions and has led the

\textsuperscript{83} G Aloysius, p.138
\textsuperscript{84} Braj Ranjan Mani, \textit{Debrahmanising History}, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 2005, p.20
\textsuperscript{85} Perry Anderson, \textit{The Indian Ideology}, Three Essays Collective, 2012, New Delhi, p.104
\textsuperscript{86} B R Ambedkar, \textit{Selected works of Ambedkar}, Chapter 6, Gandhi and his fast, pp.945-946
\textsuperscript{87} B R Ambedkar, p.2218
ruling alliance four times, heading the central government of India for 49 years. The same Congress party under the leadership of feudal Brahmical dominant castes, Reddy, Kamma, Komati and Brahmins ruled united Andhra Pradesh for 40 years. It has won all the state elections from the emergence of the state in 1953 until 1983, for 30 years. After that from 1989 to 1994 (5 years), and 2009 to 2014 (another 5 years), it has ruled the Telangana region for 40 years in total. Here, we can observe what Althusser says about the holding of state power for such a long period. According to him, “To my knowledge, no class can hold state power for a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the state ideological apparatus.” Following Althusser, I would then argue that the Hindu Brahmanical caste ideology has exercised its hegemony in all ideological state apparatuses. Louis Althusser recognises →religion, education, family, and legal, political, trade union, communications and culture as the ideological state apparatuses”. Advancing his arguments further, he says, “The unity of these different regional ideologies being assured by their subjection to the ruling ideology.” The ruling ideology in India then has control over all the ideological state apparatus.

Therefore, the ideology of the Hindu Brahmanical caste hierarchy has strengthened in post independent Indian states including that of the Telangana region. What Ambedkar had said has become the truth of today, that a hereditary governing class ruling a hereditary servile class. This is the result of a situation where there was/is no satisfactory alternative to the Hindu Brahmanical (Caste) ideology except, as Perry Anderson puts it →Hindutva offers a much more aggressive vision of the nation”. It means that the alternative mainstream ideology to the Congress ruling class of India also offers the same Hindu Brahmanical ideology but in an unsophisticated form and which is in reality more aggressive than latter.

89Ibid, p.16
90Ibid , p.36
The Hindu caste ideology has become the ruling class ideology through the ideological state apparatus. As Louis Althusser argued, the ideology of ruling class does not become the ruling ideology by grace of god, not even by virtue of the seizure of power alone, it is by the installation of the ideological state apparatus in which this ideology is realized and realizes itself that it becomes ruling ideology. The seizure of power in India was transfer of power from the British to Congress and the seizure of power in Telangana happened by the overthrow of the Nizams by the Indian army. As Althusser explained, That the ideologies were realised in institutions, in their rituals and their practises in Ideological state apparatus. So that, no institution or any part of the state is free from this Hindu feudal Brahmanical ideology of caste hierarchy.

This thesis will examine the effect of hegemony of the Hindu caste ideology in the state institutional setup. It will there by argue that the traditional caste hierarchy is reconfiguring in contemporary times through modern means of administration, bureaucracy, politics and judiciary by placing Brahmanical dominant castes at the top of the hierarchy and forcing Dalits to menial, filthy jobs and only to lower positions in all state machineries. This is apparently visible in all modern institutions. The conventional understanding of caste has resulted in the continuous reproduction of the age-old caste hierarchies, as argued by F. Franco and Sarver V. Sherry Chand in their article _Varna ideology as Social Practise, The understanding of varna as social practice underlines its pervasive influence at all levels of social life. The cognitive and nomic structure, which includes language, is constantly shaping the consciousness of all members of society. The patterns of behaviour enforced and transmitted by various institutions ensure the reproduction of the varna ideology._ In addition, it also led to the institutionalizing of caste with modern verities in contemporary times. The ideology of caste has its material existence. As Althusser pointed out that, the ideas or representations etc. which seems to make up ideology

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92 Louis Althusser, p. 52
93 F Franco and Sarver V Sherry Chand _Varna ideology as Social Practise, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 2009, p. 27
do not have an ideal or spiritual existence but a material existence”.

The Hindu Brahmanical Ideology of the governing class has resulted in materialising caste hierarchies in the Telangana region too.

The policies and practices adopted by the modern state are designed not to address the caste inequalities, but only to blanket over caste in the name of empowerment of untouchables/marginalised. These attempts are not innocent; a critical understanding of the internal dynamics of their operation can reveal the same. Despite the fact that the constitution of India has been in force for more than half a century, there is no visible or substantial change in the lives of the communities. Those, particularly the SCs, STs and other marginalized communities continue to be at the lower strata of the society devoid of socio-political, economic and welfare measures of the so-called egalitarian state. One reason that has led to the failure of government functionaries is their (conscious) inability to understand the social, political and cultural dynamics of the Indian caste system. Without proper understanding of the caste system, one cannot comprehend the resulting systematic exclusion, which in fact has led to the perennial poverty of these communities. Furthermore, this thesis seeks to understand the institutional setups and argues thereby that any developmental and empowerment agenda adopted by the state is inherently ‘exclusive’ and therefore bound to fail in the promises that they make.

8. Area of Study

The physical area of study is the state of Telangana. This 29th state of India was formed on 2nd June, 2014 with 10 districts, Adilabad, Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Khammam, Mahaboobnagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, Rangareddy and Warangal. These were earlier part of united Andhra Pradesh for 58 years from 1956 to 2014. The region of the present 10 districts of Telangana along with Aurangabad, Beed, Nanded, Parbhani districts of present Maharashtra and Bidar, Gulbarga, Osmanabad and Raichur districts of Present Karnataka were part of the princely state of Hyderabad, ruled by the

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94Louis Althusser, p.35
hereditary Nizams for 224 years, from 1724 until 1948. This princely state of Hyderabad merged with the Indian union through military operation (Operation Polo) in September 1948. The Indian Armed Forces invaded the State and overthrew its Nizams.

The present Telangana\textsuperscript{95} state has an area of 1,14,840 Sq Km and is surrounded by Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh in the North, Karnataka in the West and Andhra Pradesh in the South and East directions.\textsuperscript{96}

9. Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to understand the role of caste in the Telangana society, to engage with the ways in which caste shapes the lives of Dalit communities. Caste practices in Telangana, their causes, and consequences and the modern forms of caste manifestations in Telangana villages also constitute important segments of this thesis. It also examines the public appearance of secular institutions, how they pursue caste and explores whether those institutions are free from caste biases.

I will also engage with the connection between feudal caste practices and the slavery of scavenging in Telangana. Another objective is to record the day to day lives of sanitation workers, their experiences of migration and employment as sanitation workers. An important question for this thesis then is, “What is the role of the caste system and its socioeconomic practicalities that force Dalits into menial works?”

\textsuperscript{95}Major cities of the state are Hyderabad, Warangal, Nizamabad and Karimnagar. Capital city is Hyderabad with 10 Districts, 42 Revenue Divisions, 158 towns, 6 Municipal Corporations, 38 Municipalities 25 Nagra Panchayaths, 9 Zillah Praja Parishads, 443 Mandal Praja Parishads, 8778 Gram Panchayaths, 464 Revenue Mandals, 10761 Revenue Villages, 10128 Inhabited Villages, 633 Un-inhabited Villages, 83.58 Lakhs Households with House hold size 4. The Rural Population in Telangana is 215.85 Lakhs that is 61.33 percent of the total population. Urban Population is 136.09 Lakhs that is 38.64 percent of the total. Scheduled Caste Population is 54.33 Lakhs that is 16.3 percent of the total, Scheduled Tribes Population 32.87 Lakhs that is 9.3 percent of total population

\textsuperscript{96}Information sourced through official website of Telangana state – available at http://www.telangana.gov.in/about/state-profile , seen on 29th September 2015
10. Research Methodology

Blended research methods used to complete this study including the usage of primary and secondary data and both qualitative and quantitative components in the case study approach. I have reviewed the existing literature on the subject of modernity and caste and on the relation between caste and the scavenging occupation in India.

GHMC (Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation) and Railways (South Central Railways) are the biggest employers of sanitation workers. Secondary data is obtained from these institutes. The information on the caste background of scavengers shows that almost all of them are Dalits, a few from the BC and ST communities are engaged in the scavenging work and there are none from Brahmin, Reddy, Velama, Komati or any dominant BC communities.

Neither GHMC nor SCR maintain a list of all their scavenging workers and even the scavengers are not part of their human resource structure. The SC-ST Employee’s Association of the GHMC however maintains a comprehensive list of the same. Since all sanitation workers are SC, STs, it became a necessity for the SC-ST Employees’ Association to maintain the said list. The list comprises of the workers who are regularised and who receive monthly salaries through the state treasury. They do not have a list of contractual workers who majority and numbering at about 20000, they form 90% of the total number of sanitation workers. The list of contractual sanitation workers is not available with the GHMC or with the SC/ST Employees’ Association.

A series of petitions were filed under the Right to Information Act, 2005 to the GHMC and South Central Railway to obtain the data of caste background of the scavengers employed with them. Both these institutions have supplied information but not in the format that was asked of them. The way they responded reveals that they may not want to share the data might be because this data reveals the very nature of those institutions, for this reason
they may not have documented it. The responses received from the GHMC and South Central Railway is given in the Annexure–IX of this thesis.

100 respondents are interviewed in 4 months time between December 2014 to March 2015 in the GHMC areas, in Secunderabad division, the specific locations are Tarnaka, Mettuguda, Padmarao Nagar, Chilukala Guda, Seethaphalmandi and in Kapra circle Nacharam and Mallapur. 50 reports is given below as annexure – VIII

The interviews were conducted in Telugu as the respondents spoke only in Telugu and later these were translated into English. All the respondents were adequately informed about the purpose of the interview and that of this study. They agreed to disclose their names and other personal details. Therefore, the names and other details are real.

The questions in the interview, aimed to understand the caste discrimination they face in the villages and those in Hyderabad as well, the city to where they have migrated for their livelihood. What made them to take up this work, whether any one in their family has worked as scavengers earlier etc. constitute some of the questions in the interview. These reveal that they were the victims of feudal caste practises in the villages, which forced them to run away from the villages. In addition, some of the respondents explained the newer forms of caste discrimination on Dalits in urban spaces. The manifestation of caste remains the same in the rural and urban but in different forms. For conducting these interviews, Erra Narsimha a social activist who belongs to the Madiga community helped me connect with the scavenging women and men.

Personal interviews were conducted with the officials at the GHMC and the South Central Railway; to understand what these institutions speak about scavenging in modernity. Moreover, the attempt was to understand the institutional setup and the procedures they have for dealing with the scavengers. To understand the contemporary caste practises in the villages and discrimination on Dalits, I have conducted interviews with several Dalit human rights activists. Battula Ramprasad (Mala Sankshema Sangham),
Renjarla Rajesh (Samatha Sainik Dal), Mukka Ilaiah (Human Rights Forum), Athram Bujanga Rao, Teacher and Human Rights Activist in Utnoor of Adilabad district, Chirra Tirupathi, Teacher and Dalit Rights activist belongs to Madiga community, S. Jeevan Kumar, President Human Rights Forum, S Varun Kumar, editor, Samanthara Magazine, Ganumala Gnaneshwar, working editor Neeli Jenda., I have also spoken to victims of caste atrocities such as Maggidi Manga (Thengalla Pally, Adilabad)

I have also interviewed several people from the civil society, Vidya Bhushan Rawat, author and social activist, Bezawada Wilson, a crusader against manual scavenging in India and the leader of the Safai Karmachari Andolan and Kotesh Devulapally, R. Ravikumar, S Jeevan Kumar, Ganumala Gnaneshwar, Varun Kumar and other political social activists and reformers who are working on the issue of manual scavenging, practice of untouchability and caste discrimination. For the purpose of this thesis, I have translated some of the existing Telugu texts on caste and manual scavenging.

11. Scheme of Chapters

This thesis is divided in to five chapters apart from introduction and conclusion 1) Social landscape of Telangana and caste practices. 2) Modernity and Caste in Telangana 3) Caste and scavenging in Telangana 4) the scavenging world 5) Scavenging and civil society

The first one is the introduction and review of literature explained about the situation of caste in modernity the first chapter ‘Social landscape of Telangana and caste practices’ examined the social shaping of the region of Telangana, the variables and processes that structure the internal characteristics of its social landscape and how they reflect their symbolic and material dimensions. This chapter is divided into 8 sections 1) Telangana’s caste system, 2) Feudal and Brahmanical – the dual nature of caste system 3) Caste based communities in Telangana, 4) The untouchable communities of Telangana 5) Caste organisations and political negotiations 6)
Telangana dalits blocked by caste 7) Caste practises forcing Dalits to scavenging work

The second chapter, _Modernity and Caste in Telangana_ will explore the caste practises that remained intact and adjusted to the modernity in villages as well as in the cities. It also discusses the modernity of the Telangana society and the institutionalisation of caste practises in modernity. Discussed how feudal caste traditions and the parallel societal understanding of caste by state apparatus and civil society reproduced caste hierarchies in the state administration. The metaphor of Chaturvarnya caste structure that was resulted in literal village structure in Telangana now appeared as slums and Bastis in the urban spaces, the towns and cities and Dalits as sanitation workers. This chapter divided into 5 sections 1) medievalism to modernism 2) Merger of Hyderabad state into Indian union 3) Modernity of Telangana society 4) The festivals in Telangana and Dalits 5) Modernity feudal caste practises and atrocities

Third chapter _Caste and Scavenging in Telangana_ deals with the origin and practice of scavenging and connection between feudal caste practices how they are forcing Dalits into the slavery of scavenging. This chapter is divided into 8 sections, 1) Scavenging is the slavery forced on Dalits 2) Attacks on Dalits to force them into scavenging 3) Caste system was the origin of scavenging 4) Modernity of caste based scavenging 5) Supreme court of India recognized the fact 6) Scavengers in Telangana 7) Caste composition of public institutions 8) Categories and practises of scavenging

Fourth chapter, _The Scavenging World_, documents the day-to-day life of scavengers in Hyderabad and in Telangana. This chapter divided into 10 sections, 1) Migration of Dalits to cities 2) Caste forced scavenging in Telangana 3) Recruitment as scavengers 4) Scavengers lives in unhealthy conditions 5) Narratives of scavengers 6) Harassments and accidents on the roads 7) Corruption on the name of scavengers 8) It is not Sanskritisation9)
Scavengers die before their retirement age 10) Modern day caste forced slavery

Fifth chapter _Scavenging and civil society_ is about civil society in Telangana and its interventions on the issue of caste and scavenging. This chapter is divided into 6 sections 1) civil society in India 2) Telangana civil society 3) Civil society and Dalits in Telangana 4) Civil society interventions on scavenging 5) Dalit movement and scavenging 6) Dalit NGOs and scavenging

The conclusion summarizes the institutionalization of caste that led to the institutionalization of scavenging and explains the limitations and required further studies in this area.