Chapter-4

Dalit Welfare and Development in Independent Telangana

Dalit consciousness reformist tradition has deeply rooted in the rejection of Hinduism and its age old oppressive mechanism by and largely meted with humiliation. This reformist tradition was aimed to educate Dalits with firm self-esteem and dignity. This reformist tradition has motivated to articulate the educational and cultural endeavours to claim the equal citizenship as an indigenous sect. the Hyderabad state has witnessed a wide range of activities and educational programs carried out by the Dalit activists, leaders and intellectuals. Bhagya Reddy Varma, B S Venkat Rao and ArigayRamaswamy were prominent among the other activists instrumental to realising modernity with considerable impact on Dalit lives.

The round table conferences (1930-1931, 1932) have reshaped the Dalit mobility towards the modernity by shifting the caste discourse. In fact, the Hitakarni Mahasabha, Depressed Classes federation and All India Scheduled Caste Federation were instrumental and departure at modernity and made institutional access for the welfare of the Dalits.

4.1 Origin and history of Dalit Welfare

Panchamas or Depressed Castes popularly referred as ‘the Chandalas’ the lowest strata of Hindu social order, often referred in Hindu ancient literature and sanctioned unequal rights and duties by the birth. These communities largely socially degraded, culturally lowered and pushed them live outside the Indian village by assigning menial jobs and untouchability. Several attempts have been laid down by the reformers, activists and leaders to bring about the social change and eradication of
untouchability with the passage of time and space. The livelihood, least-paid or no paid service renders, disappearance of patron-client and self-sufficient economy, feudal caste Hindus ruthless exploitation have further marginalised depressed castes and permanently forced into segregation without ordinary human rights made to lead miserable life on outskirts of the village and exposed to the full brunt of natural calamities like famines and pestilence.

Broadly, there were two kinds of national reformist traditions have effectively worked for the Dalits upliftment and have initiated several welfare activities to eradicate untouchability. The reformist tradition has been stated by the two major agencies with a respond to counter the proselytising zeal of Christian missionaries which provided basic services to depressed caste. The reformist tradition aimed at bringing back the depressed castes into Hindu religion fold. This reformist tradition had witnessed broadly from Hindu reformists and Gandhian national congress at one hand and Dalit consciousness or autonomous/Indigenous Depressed castes itself.

4.2 The Hindu reformist tradition

The enlightened Hindu reformers in the 19th century began to respond to the larger religious conversion of Dalits into Islaam and Christianity as their last resort and found an equal status with loyalty. The Hindu reformers realised that it was their social responsibility to address the challenges posed by the Hinduism and its reformatory mechanism by creating relief and space for Dalits into Hinduism. With a respond to challenges, Hindu reformers have established Hindu social organisations broadly look at Dalit social problems. As the result, the Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj and their allies have started to offer educational programs and eradication of untouchability within Hindu fold. However, the PrarthanaSamaj, Sevasamithi,
Ramakrishna Mutt and the servants of India society have undertaken the task of eradicating untouchability in the 19th century. ‘Sudhi’ movement was initiated by the Arya Samaj aimed to reclaim to the Hindu fold of those Harijans who have embraced Christianity in Andhra Pradesh. Several attempts have been made by the ‘Sudhi’ movement and reclaimed several converted Harijans and their families to the Hindu fold. UnnavaLaxminaraya, author of Mala Palli, TripuraneniRamaswamyChoudary are instrumental to promote ‘Sudhi’ movement by the Arya Samaj in Andhra Pradesh.

The Telugu speaking land also witnessed the social reformist tradition, particularly Hindu reformers and attributed to eradication of untouchability and Dalit educational actives. KandukuriVershalingamPantulu (1848-1917) had started a school for Panchama children with the aid of Rs. 70,000 from the Maharaja of Pithapuram. Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham has founded a school (Ram Mohan Patashala) for Panchamas at Rajamoundry in 1909 and was ran for 13 years. Vankataratnam Naidu R (1862-1939) has provided education for Dalit girls at his own residence along with his daughters. Andhra Deena SevaSangh (1907) has initiated 9 day choools and 12 night schools and also technical training centres for weaving, tailoring, painting and so forth for livelihood projects for Dalits.

4.3 The Gandhian reformist tradition

“I would rather that Hinduism died than that un-touchability live. I will not bargain away their (Harijans) rights for the kingdom of the whole world.” –Gandhi.

Gandhi had coined the term ‘Harijan’ which connotes the sons or children of the god. He named the Dalits as ‘Harijans’ who occupies the lowest strata of Hindu society and have been subjected to variety of handicaps and disabilities within the traditional Hindu social system. Y B Abbasayuly (1976) articulates the social status of Dalits in
the Hindu society that Harijans at the lowest rung of Hindu social order have been excluded from the upper section of society and indispensably integrated element of the local society as a serving class. He further notes that thus, doctrinally they were not a part of Hindu society but existentially they were an integral part of local communities. A great stimulus to the movement against untouchability was received when the government of accepted a resolution moved by Dadabai Nowroji in favour of depressed castes in 1920. As the result, Madras government has appointed a commissioner of labour to look after the welfare of depressed castes. Indian national congress (INC) has initiated awakening process among the Harijans and passed a resolution at the All India Depressed Classes Conference (1917) in Calcutta. The Madra government has provide educational facilities to Harijan children, like free elementary education, tuition fee concessions, industrial scholarships, vocational training and also opened Harijan boys’ hostels in 1921.

The followers of Gandhi and bearers of INC in Andra Pradesh have responded to Harijan movement and started welfare programs in accordance with the INC. as the result, several Ashramas were formed. The Sitanagaram Ashram (Rajamundry), Pallepadu Ashram (Nellore), Gandhi Ashram (Komaravolu) and harijanSevakSangh (Guntur) were the prominent and instrumental to carried the educational and development activities for the welfare of Harijans. The post-Puna pact (1932) has gained a momentum of Harijan movement at national level by the Gandhi and INC. an All India Anti-Untouchability League (1932) was set up at Delhi with branches and provincial boards throughout India. All India HarijanSevakSangh was initiated by Madan Mohan Malvia for the removal of untouchability. Gandhi initiated a weekly called ‘Harijan’ which influenced his followers to informed activities to eradicate
untouchability and to reclaim Dalits to Hindu fold. Gandhi’s visit to Andhra had made a considerable impact and gained sums towards Harijan welfare.

The Indian constitutional has enriched the principle of equality and social justice by guarantying the special provisions and constitutional safeguards for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. These provisions are aimed to secure the right to life, social security and dignity to lead a decent life in independent India. The basic premise of the provisions is to bring about the social change to hitherto been marginalised and excluded communities and fomenting a greater social inclusion. Apart from reformist traditions, the state government has created the Harijan Welfare Department (HWD), exclusively for the Dalit issues and challenges pertaining to the welfare Dalits. The HWD acted as the sole responsible government organ to planning and execution of the development schemes at state level created for the Dalits development. The HWD has carried out various developmental activities under the five principal departments i.e. i. Housing schemes, ii. Economic schemes, iii. Educational schemes, iv. Social security schemes and v. other miscellaneous schemes.

4.4 Welfare and Development schemes and their limitations

The major concern of the welfare and developmental schemes is to eradicate socio-economic disparities in the society and to bring the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes educationally, economically, and socially into a state of equality and dignity. In this regard, a wide range of developmental schemes have been articulated towards realising the objectives and have gone a radical change with passage of time and space. The establishment of Scheduled Caste Finance Corporation (SCFC) (1974) was the landmark and instrumental in serving financial assistance and economic development to an extent.
The Six Point Formula (1975) was another milestone, aimed to promote the economic development schemes for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in every state. This formula broadly serves the economic needs categorically under the Regional Planning and Development Committees. The six-point formula has initiated financial assistance catered broadly 1. Community irrigation wells, 2. Loans to Cobblers, 3. Supply of Oil engines or Electric motors and pump sets, 4. Supply of animal (milk product business), 5. Sheep rearing, 6. Purchasing of tractors for agricultural needs, 7. Supply of Poultry units.

The concept of social welfare as the mechanism to empower the marginalised sections has got critical acclaims in practice in the early 1980s in Andhra Pradesh. A series of development activities being carried out and are subjected to empower the Dalit through institutional access and capabilities. The ministry of social welfare has created by Andhra Pradesh government to address the issues and challenges faced by the Dalits in everyday relations. The social welfare department has created three offshoot wings i.e. Commissioner social welfare, A.P. Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (APSWREI), and A.P. Scheduled Caste Finance Corporation (APSCFC) to integrate the services and schemes pertaining to the Dalit empowerment.

4.5 The Commissioner Social Welfare

It is prime executive body of the social welfare and aimed to provide institutional access to development subjected to marginalised sections and poor. The most development policies and schemes are being disseminated by the commissioner social welfare with its branches. The major programs since its inception are 1. Post-matric scholarships, 2. Best Available Schools, 3. Hostels for boys and girls, 4.

The planning allocation and utilisation of financial resources popularly known as ‘the Sub-plan for SCs and STs. The Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan (SCSP) and Scheduled Tribes Sub-Plan (TSP-Tribal Sub-Plan) are the major policy since the post-independent India to empower the marginalised sections with a special focus. The objectives are to provide theoretical access and institutional access that subjected to promote education, infrastructure, improvements of tendering. The self-employment creation is also one of the broader objective. The agrarian sector particularly minor irrigation and land purchasing are the major invested areas of the sub-plan. The minor investment has allocated to the housing, habitate improvement, drinking water facility, road infra-structure to tribal villages and eradication of social prejudices mainly ‘Jogini and untouchability’

4.6 Education Development

Various institutions, agencies and individuals have made enormous efforts to bring about social change in Dalit lives and their upliftment. The tremendous services rendered by the Christian missionaries, particularly in the field of education and health were instrumental and made a greater contribution to the welfare of Dalits. Perhaps, the Christian missionaries and their consistent activities were inspired the Indian society to take-up social reforms on rationalistic and humanitarian grounds.
4.7 Implementation of Reservations in Education

Scheduled Castes as a collective form of socio-political recognition with the constitutional provision made by the 1935 Act. The social disabilities are acted as the main criteria to be listed into a community in the schedule and from then onwards, marginalised communities popularly known as Scheduled Castes (SCs). The term scheduled castes itself is a collective term and was neutral in its connotation. These communities highly subjected to undergo with suffering from the social disabilities in general, and untouchability in particular. The re-organisation of SCs are conducted on the basis of habitations, social and cultural heritage and are considered the prime objectives that been formulated by the legal framework by the constitution of India in 1950. As the result, the list of scheduled castes was notified by the president of India under the article 341, Indian constitution. The scheduled castes have provisionally been specified separately in relation to each of the states and union territories in accordance with the provisions in article 341.

The consistent struggle of Dalits against caste violence and its oppressive mechanism have brought the collective consciousness through consolidating Dalit leadership. A wide range of Dalit activism, community consciousness, and mobility among Dalit communities have posed the new challenges. The struggle for recognition, redistribution and social justice have brought a new discourse within the Dalit movement and shaped the perspective of social justice from below. Therefore, Madiga Dandora movement has emerged and acted as a vanguard to struggle for social justice within the Dalits. The Dandora movement with the grand volume of massive manifestations, protests and people demonstration pressurised the state

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government to chart out equal share in constitutional provisions and state policies according to proportional representation within the Dalits. As the result, Andhra Pradesh government has constituted the Ramachandra Raju Commission to resolve the unequal sharing of constitutional provisions for educational and employment sector within the Dalits. Ramachandra Raju commission reveals that the most of constitutional provisions (reserved seats education and employment) meant for Dalits are being availed by the two larger communities only i.e. Malas and Madigas out of 59 communities. The Malas and Madigas have availed the provisions with the ratio of 64:36 which fell down beyond the proportionate representation. The social conditions of Malas are advanced and appropriated the major share of constitutional provisions.

4.8 Land Question

The historical inequalities in India have led to deprivation of marginalised groups such as SCs, STs and BCs. The approach of the development is to provide theoretical access and institutional access to socio-economic and political variables. The state government has initiated the development programs aimed to build their capabilities, which outlines raising the literacy level, improving access to healthcare, helping them establish secure livelihoods and ensuring that they have access to state and civil institutions.\(^\text{35}\) The advent of green revolution has further consolidated the feudal dominant castes with unlimited excess surplus at one hand, and marginalised the labours with the socio-economic inequalities at another hand. As the result, the marginalised communities have systematically excluded with multiple forms of vulnerability and the right to livelihood becomes highly questionable. Andhra Pradesh state has responded to context and initiated a series of social welfare programmes specifically targeting Scheduled Castes. The welfare programs broadly cover the

housing schemes, land redistribution schemes and programmes to promote employment diversification amongst the Dalit community. The state’s development approach including ‘the vision2020’ and its paradigm towards upliftment of Dalits significantly ignores the differently constructed reality for marginalised groups seeking to secure their livelihood. Therefore, state developmental approach towards Dalits is largely neglected the socio-cultural factors have resulted in vain. As Jayashree (2003:05-08) emphasis that the majority of Andhra Pradesh Dalits lie outside mainstream socio economic processes (state’s developmental approach) many subsisting below the official poverty line due to socio-religiously ascribed deprivation under the caste system.

4.9 Political Participation

The social exclusion forms in modern times are highly evolved around the question of unequal distribution and share of imperatives in social, economic and political variables. A wide range of framework on Dalits marginalisation in modern times with reference to caste discrimination can be departure at social justice claims, significantly the redistribution mechanism, from landlord to tiller, north to south, rich to poor and owners to the workers in the world. Indian perspective at the age of identity politics largely problematized the caste system that subjects Dalits to widespread caste discrimination on the basis of descent (birth into a particular caste) and work (historically prescribed, immutable degrading occupations). The multiple forms of social exclusion in modern times have made Dalit lives and livelihood into

36 The official terminology used to connote those communities listed by the Government of India as Dalits for the purposes of accessing special development, protection and positive discrimination schemes.
deep rooted vulnerability. It is argued that, in a caste-based hierarchical society, where the fundamental social structure is itself based on social exclusion due to caste discrimination. Indian social order with graded inequality, the caste becomes a key factor in understanding how marginalisation from economic, social and political spheres leads to poverty.\(^{39}\) Therefore, the caste factor highly reflects and limits their socio-political and economic base and mobility, hence marginalising them in the process of development. The social exclusion report (1996) and several UN bodies (1998) have explored the socio-cultural and economic challenges and attribution of social exclusion of marginalised sections in the world. The UNDP study (1996) on India, underlines that the economic marginalisation process subjected that, Dalits, as the lowest caste in the social hierarchy, are denied the means and abilities that would allow them to participate in market exchange inland, labour, credit and output markets. This means an inability to protect themselves from risks and thereby increased vulnerability.\(^{40}\) Political marginalisation is also the prime factor that attributed unequal access to civil and political societies. As the result, Dalit communities have become more contested.\(^{41}\)

4.10 Implementation of SC/ST Act 1989

There are few hypothetical assumptions that led to draw the preventive mechanism against caste atrocities in the society. The major concern here pertaining to the legal intervention and identifying the caste violence against Dalits s indeed, appraisals of legal safeguards and other protective measures like Protection of Civil


\(^{40}\) Ibid.

Rights Act 1955 and so forth could not departure at Dalits social security. Therefore, the status of caste violence remained unpunished despite concrete laws. Who generally commit atrocities vigorously and what perpetuate unprecedented caste violence systematically rooted in social system is bye and largely ignored and hence failed to understand its consequences. Therefore, the are the laws providing enough substance to address the caste violence? Even if so, Are the laws become effective to ensure justice or are any other sociological factors to be inculcated in laws to address and deliver justice and prevent the atrocities? In order to address these hypothetical assumptions, the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities would somehow managed to negate solutions with legal safeguards.

The historical standards and measures have been set up by the UN bodies and Indian constitution to protect the rights of every person to propel and enjoy the rights irrespective of race, caste, creed and color.

‘Everyone has the inherent right to life. No one is to be arbitrarily deprived of her/his life.’  

‘No one is subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.’

‘Everyone has the right to liberty and security of persons’.  

‘No one is to be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with her/his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on her/his honour and reputation’.

42 Article 6 (1), ICCPR, and Article 21, Indian constitution.  
43 Article 7, ICCPR.  
44 Article 9 (1), ICCPR; Article 21, Indian constitution.
‘State to take measures to eliminate measures against discrimination of ideas of caste superiority which attempts to justify or incite violence against descent based communities’. ⁴⁶

Though the practice of untouchablity is abolished and forbidden by the article 17 of the Indian constitution, but it still persists to due its systematic character. Hence, the Indian parliament enacted the ‘untouchability offences Act 1955, which underwent amendment and renamed in 1976 to become the ‘Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act’⁴⁷ the untouchability according to PCR (1976) Act is a part and parcel of religious and social disability was made constitutionally punishable. But hindrances in practice or implementation of the PCR Act (1976) was significantly disastrous. The report card (2009) keenly observes that despite of the right to non-discrimination on the basis of race or caste enshrined in article 15 of the Indian constitution but the institutionalized form of caste discrimination practiced against the Dalits is pervasive. Therefore, the SC/ST PoA Act 1989 significantly empowered to speedy trail and deliver justice.

The national commission for SCs observes in its ‘first report (2004-05), a comprehensive study outlines that the key provisions should be drawn to prevent massive the caste violence on Dalits. The report suggests that not only the term ‘atrocity should clearly have defined but also should adopt stringent measures to provide for higher punishments against committing such atrocities against Dalits. It is also proposed to enjoin on the states and union territories to take specific preventive and positive measures to protect SCs and STs from being victimized and where

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⁴⁵ Article 17 (1), ICCPR.
⁴⁷ The Report card, 2009, pp.03.
atrocities are committed, and strongly recommends to provide adequate relief and assistance to rehabilitate Dalit victims.  

4.11 Globalisation and Dalits

Throat (2012:05) framework examines the contemporary patterns of social exclusion and economic discrimination with investigation of empirical evidences faced by Dalits and religious minorities like Muslims. Throat argues that the underlying attitudinal orientations with the caste notion and connectivity is broadly contribute to inequality in various spheres of life. Access to livelihood capitals, particularly employment in remunerative occupations, land, economic capital, education and skills, has traditionally corresponded to economic rights prescribed under the caste hierarchy. Therefore, no space exists to assert Dalits’ basic right to livelihood, as any assertion leads to an immediate backlash to retain unequal power relations between Dalits and dominant castes.

Moreover, the unprecedented radical shift in political changes and arrival of globalisation have further marginalised the Dalits and their livelihood. The globalisation and unfair-market economy that grants unequal access to conduct economic activities have further excluded the marginalised sections. According to Jayashree P (2003:02-03), globalisation is a social reality, broadly reflects on considerable factors of race, caste, ethnicity, gender, class, etc., which often dictate differential access of social groups to resources, ownership of means of production,

socio-political assets and opportunities for development.\textsuperscript{51} Jayashree (2003) critical framework conceptualises the globalisation and its impact on Dalits. She articulates that the globalisation-departured factors, further directly contradict two central tenet of human rights\textsuperscript{52}, the right to sovereignty and the overarching principle of freedom from discrimination and the right to equality to ensure that particularly poor and marginalised social groups within a country are granted equal access to the benefits of development. In other words, Dalits continue to be denied access to human capital, natural and physical resources and institutional power.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.