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Socio-economic status of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

The origin caste system is in the Varnashrama dharma the division of society into four Varna's (four caste) viz., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra. It was believed and preached that for the prosperity of the world the creator created the four varnas. The creator created these varnas from different parts of his body i.e., the brahmin was born from his mouth; the kshatriya from his arms; the Vaishya from his thighs and the Sudra from his feet. He created Brahmins with gayatri (metre); the kshatriya with Trishtubh; the Vaishya with Jagathi and the Sudras without any metre. The first three varnas are twice born (Dwiji), the first birth being from the mother and the second from the investiture with the sacred griddle. In the second birth Savitri is the mother and teacher is the father because he gives instruction in the Vedas, therefore the first three Varnas are born twice while the Sudra is born only once among the brahmin the kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Sudra varnas, each preceding varna (caste) is superior by birth to the one following. It is popularly held that in the beginning there were only three varnas and the fourth varna of the Sudra is an outcome of the fight between brahmins and kshatriyas for the supremacy in the varna (caste) hierarchy.

Keywords: Scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, Sudra, untouchability

Introduction

Status of Sudras

Many restrictions were imposed on the Sudras of which a few could be mentioned in brief. The Sudra was prohibited from milking a cow whose milk was to be used for Agnihotra from witnessing performance of sacrifice from taking soma drink from initiation (upanayana or the wearing of the sacred bread), from studying the Vedas, and from kindling the sacred fire (right of sacrifice). The Sudra had few privileges because of his lowest position in the varna system. Untouchability in ancient India. Sudras were divided into 'bhojyanna' (food prepared by whom is not partaken by brahmins) and 'abhojyanna' (food prepared by whom is it partaken by brahmins). The first includes owned slaves. Historically untouchables were abhojyanna and therefore, were not Dasas or slaves or domestic servants in ancient times. Sudras known as Chandalas, Vishadas, Vartyas or untouchables are out of the varna system. They lived outside the localities, for example Madiga, an untouchable caste in Karnataka state, Mong and Mahar castes in Maharashtra, Adi Dravidas in Tamil Nadu, Chamars in North India and domes in Bengal live on the outskirts of village. There was no fifth varna in the earlier smritis but untouchables were referred to as Panchamas. (N.D.KAMBLE Page 30) Those people belonging to the last varna namely the Sudra and Varna's include many caste groups which have suffered social and economic inequity since the ages. Particularly those people who were outside the varna system were known as a varnas or Panchmas or Antyajas. They were external in the sense that they were required to stay outside the village settlement. The concept of pollution was attached to them and they were treated as untouchable castes. These castes were systematically listed in 1931 census of India. These untouchables' castes in India were officially defined as depressed castes in 1932. Gandhiji named them Harijans where 'Hari' means God., 'Jan' means people and thus "Harijan" means people of god. this word in Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi and other languages means a child whose father's identity is unknown and hence a bastard progeny. Therefore the name Harijan was not their reaction to the world caste or even to the word untouchable is not that sharp. As a result there was a wild very an agitation and a strong opposition to the bill using the word Harijan in the Bombay legislative assembly. it was duly replaced by the term scheduled castes 3 in 1938 and it continues to be used as scheduled castes in government records and circulars even

to-day. The expression scheduled castes was first coined by the Simon commission and embodied in the government of India act of 1935. While the castes were listed systematically in the 1931 census of India, the terms scheduled castes (sc) was applied to these castes for the first time in the government of India act of 1935. Until then they were known as untouchables, depressed classes or exterior castes. Then the government of India published a list of scheduled castes under the government of India (scheduled castes) order, 1936. With the coming into force of the constitution of India, the Scheduled castes have assumed certain essential rights and benefits. Under article 341(1) of the constitution of India, the President of India after consultation with the governor (act 341 (1), may specify "the castes, races, tribes or parts of groups within castes or races, tribes which shall be deemed to be Scheduled castes for the purpose of the constitution "however, according to act 341(2), the parliament of India by law can include or exclude the above mentioned groups from the list of the scheduled castes. Such scheduled castes can be notified separately for each state accordingly the president has notified the scheduled castes in the orders called constitution (scheduled castes) order, 1950. The constitution (scheduled castes) part-c status order 1951 and the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes' lists (modification) order 1956. The constitution of India supreme law of our country. It, however, governs almost all aspects of our social life. It constitutes India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic and pledges to secure for all the citizens including the scheduled castes, justice, liberty and equality. It is therefore, of special significance for the scheduled castes and other weaker sections of the society who were deliberately deprived of justice, liberty since time immemorial.

Special Provisions for the Scheduled Castes

The constitution of India envisages a new social order, obviously based on democratic values of liberty, equality and justice. In order to achieve the constitutional goal, it was of course necessary to bring all the weaker sections, including the scheduled castes, on par with other sections of the society. However, the scheduled castes being deprived of their legitimate rights and privileges in the past, were unable to stand on their own without the State support. Therefore, the constitution provides certain safeguards to them as under Abolition of untouchability; Article 17 of the constitution states, "untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law." It was mandatory on the part of the state under article 17 read with article 35 (1) of the constitution, to provide for punishment for various offences of untouchability by appropriate law although the constitution came into implementation in 1950, the law providing punishment for the offences of untouchability was passed by the parliament in 1955 itself. The act originally named as 'the untouchability offences act, 1955' has been amended and renamed as 'a "the protection of civil rights act, 1955"' in the year 1976. Due to untouchability, the scheduled castes remained educationally backward. In order to improve their education level, the constitution provides as under Article 15 of the constitution prohibits any discrimination on the ground of religion, caste race etc. However clause (4) of the article 15 states that "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 scheduled tribes" article 46 states, "the state shall promote with special care educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes." (MAIN BOOK Dr H.C UPADHYAY, 1991 scheduled caste and scheduled tribes in India Anmol publications New Delhi page no 41, 42 & 43 ISBN 8170414520 ARTICLE constitutional safeguards for the scheduled castes – R.K. Kshirsagar)

Political Reservations

In order to secure political participation and adequate representation of the scheduled castes in the legislature provision for political reservation has been made in the constitution. Article 330, states, seats shall be reserved in the house of people for (a) the scheduled castes, the number of seats reserved in any state or union territory for the scheduled castes shall bear, as nearly as may be, the same proportion to the total number of seats allotted to the state or union territory in the house of the people, as the population of the scheduled castes in the state or union territory in respect of which seats are reserved, bears to the total population of the state or union territory. Article 332, states, seats shall be reserved for the scheduled castes in the legislative assemblies of the states, thus the number of seats reserved bears the same proportion to the total number of seats in legislature allotted to the state as their population in that state bears to the total population. The castes or communities which are included in the list of scheduled castes under article 341 of the constitution are eligible to contest the reserved seat. The notification to the effects is to determine who is to be deemed to be a member of scheduled caste for the purpose of the constitution. The scheduled caste, who were subjected to untouchability are the worst sufferers of acute poverty. In order to secure socio-economic justice of them, it was necessary to provide for their economic development in the constitution. The constitution under article 88 states that "the state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life" although shall is written after the state it is qualified by as effectively as it may written after protecting moreover the words welfare of the people social order justice, social, economic and political and national life seem to be ambiguous. However article 39 states that the state shall direct its policy towards securing (a) that the citizens, men and women equality, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood the constitution specifically states under Article 46 that "the state shall promote with special care the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." It is a very significant provision for the scheduled castes which pledge to promote their economic interest with special care. Steps are being taken to promote economic interest of the scheduled castes. Certain amount is being earmarked by the planning commission in the five year plans for the economic development of the scheduled castes. A new strategy has been evolved during the sixth

five year plan (1980-85), which comprises (1) the special component plans of the states and the central ministers, the special central assistance and (3) scheduled castes development corporations in the states. The scheduled castes development corporations are formed by various states in order to mobilize institutional credit for the development schemes submitted by the SC entrepreneurs. The central government provides assistance to the states for share capital investment in their corporations in the ratio of 40:51. Article 338(1) of the constitution states "there shall be a special officer for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to be appointed by the president". Accordingly the special officer designated by as commissioner for SC and ST has been appointed on November 18, 1950. Article 338(2) states that, "it shall be the duty of the special officer to investigate all matters relating to the safe guards provided for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes under this constitution and report to the president upon the working of those safeguards at such intervals as the president may direct". Thus the commissioner for S.C and S.T is expected to investigate all matters relating to the safe guards provided for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under the constitution.

Scheduled Tribes and Development

Tribal identity connotes two different cognitive realms. In a fundamental sense it implies the attributes by which a social entity may be categorized as a Tribe. But in a more general sense it implies a community of persons with all or some of the historic-culturally valued attributes of a tribe. The fundamental sees and having mechanism of reproducing itself, though not always without conscious or unconscious inclusive/exclusive/coalescence process as an adaptive mechanism to new needs and /or challenges.* Article concept of tribe; A Note K.S. SINGH page 90 The term Tribe has evolved from a Latin root the tribes, an English term which meant three divisions into which the romans were grouped. the concise oxford dictionary defines tribe;" as a group of (esp. primitive) families or community's linked by social, economic, religious, or blood ties, and usually having a common culture and dialect, and a recognized leader or any similar natural or political division." Every society has its own terms for such divisions. We have terms like jati and jana, kulam, samudaya, nyata, baradari, etc, for endogamous groups and a number of terms in bases for exogamous divisions. Page no 95 K.S SINGH Tribal communities along with others were granted limited franchise under the government of India acts of 1919 and 1935. the complete enfranchisement took place under the constitution of India. Not only were tribal enfranchised, they also given a complete set of political rights like other sections of the Indian people. These the fundamental rights include the rights to Equality freedom, religion, and culture and educational rights. Article 29 states that any section of citizens having a distinct language, script and culture of its own, shall have a right to conserve the same similarly, Article 46, under the directive principle of State Policy, provides for the promotion of educational and economic rights of Scheduled Tribes. Part VI of the constitution stipulates special political rights for Scheduled tribes and for special political dispensations under the Fifth and Sixth schedules.*Article empowerment of tribal institutions in Andhra Pradesh, Urmila Pingle page no 175&177, In spite of the establishment of integrated Tribal Development

agencies in Andhra Pradesh in the fifth five year plan 1974-79 very little development has trickled down to the poorest of the poor in areas having more than 50% tribal density. The social and economic indicators such as per capita income, infant mortality rate and functional literacy remain pitifully low as compared to those in the plains areas. In Hyderabad state under the Nizam's government till after independence of India has been documented in Furer - Haimendorf (1982). The state of Hyderabad was partitioned in 1956 and Telangana districts merged with the Andhra district to form the new state of Andhra Pradesh. Development programs Empowerment of tribal panchayats; the tribal areas regulation act of 1949 A.D was issued to invest and empower tribal panchayats the judicial functions to enforce the laws prohibiting transfer of tribal lands to non-tribal's in the notified tribal area of Adilabad district as well as other tribal areas of Hyderabad state. In 1956 after the organization of states and formation of the new state of Andhra Pradesh, the tribal areas regulation was repealed in 1963 and replaced by the Andhra Pradesh scheduled areas land transfer regulation, 1959.

Establishment of integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs)

URMILA PINGLE page no 179 In the year 1977, the fifth five year plan set up an integrated tribal development agency in areas with more than 50% tribal concentration. High priority was given to develop agriculture and minor irrigation in tribal areas. GCC (Girijan co-operative society) was set up as a wing of ITDA for facilitating the tribal's in marketing of minor forest produce and to supply the tribals many of their basic needs. This organization has evolved over the decades to become a single line administration converging all line departments under the project officer. Though large amounts of government funds have been spent for tribal welfare it has not radically transformed the economy of tribal's and has not tackled the fundamental problems that the tribal's face today. In the last decade the state government has made a paradigm shift towards decentralization of development programs. External funding from the world bank, IFAD and DFID, etc., have designed their program to help towards empowerment of community institutions. The Scheduled Castes^[2] (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged people in India. The terms are recognized in the Constitution of India and the groups are designated in one or other of the categories. For much of the period of British rule in the Indian subcontinent, they were known as the Depressed Classes. In modern literature, the Scheduled Castes are sometimes referred to as Dalit, meaning "broken/scattered" in Sanskrit, having been popularized by B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), the economist, reformer, father of the Indian Constitution, and Dalit leader during the independence struggle, himself a Dalit. Ambedkar preferred the term Dalit to Gandhi's term, Harijan, meaning "person of Hari/Vishnu" (or Man of God). In September 2018, the government "issued an advisory to all private satellite channels asking them to 'refrain' from using the nomenclature 'Dalit'", though "rights groups and intellectuals have come out against any shift from 'Dalit' in popular usage".

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