

PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION FOR SCHEDULED CASTES IN RAJASTHAN

SITA RAM BAIRWA

Lecturer in Political Science, Rajesh Pilot Govt. P.G. College Lalsot, Dausa, India

ABSTRACT

The Scheduled Castes (SCs) is a group of historically-disadvantaged people recognised by the Constitution of India or the people who are placed at the bottom of the traditional caste system. People of this group in the history performed unclean occupations of the society. As per the recommendation of the Government of Independent India, the President of India in October 1950 included a number of castes in the list of Scheduled Castes following the provisions mentioned under Article 341 (SC) of Constitution of India. The article provides rights to enjoy the social welfare schemes of the government and be a part of the development of the nation to the people who are the member of this category. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 lists 1,108 castes across 25 states in its First Schedule and as per the latest amendment in 2008, the list included 1208 scheduled castes across India. The Scheduled Castes of India are put under the reserved categories following the guidelines of the Indian Constitution. The reservation policy became an integral part of the Indian Constitution by the efforts made by Bhimrao Ambedkar, who fought for the rights of the oppressed and depressed classes. Provisions for Scheduled Castes mentioned Under Part XVI-Special Provisions Relating to Certain Classes in the Constitution of India.

Key words: Scheduled Castes, Constitution and Society.

INTRODUCTION:

Article 335 : Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts.- The claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State. 289B Provided that nothing in this article shall prevent in making of any provision in favour of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes for relaxation in qualifying marks in any examination or lowering the standards of evaluation, for reservation in matters of

promotion to any class or classes of services or posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State

Article 341: Scheduled Castes (1) The President 296 [may with respect to any State 297 [or Union territory], and where it is a State 298, after consultation with the Governor 299 thereof,] by public notification 300, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State 301 [or Union territory, as the case may be. (2) Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any caste, race or tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification. Article 15(4), 16(4A)&(4B), 320, 330, 335 provide the Constitutional Safeguards also to SCs and STs. In the 89th Amendment of the Constitution it was decided to have a separate National Commission for Scheduled Castes & separate National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. This came into effect on 19 February 2004 The erstwhile National Commission for SCs & STs was bifurcated into two different Commissions with actual bifurcation date being 1 December 2004. After bifurcation there are at present 12 State Offices under the jurisdiction of NCSC. These are located at Agartala, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Patna, Pune & Thiruvananthapuram. The functions, duties and power of the Commission is laid down in clauses (5), (8) and (9) of the Article 338 of the Constitution, by the rule specify;

AN OVERVIEW OF THE INDIAN CASTES SYSTEM:

The Indian caste system “describes the social stratification and social restrictions in the Indian subcontinent” 8. The word caste comes from the Portuguese word *casta* which means “pure breed”, “unmixed”. The word “caste” does not have an exact translation in Hindi. It gathers two concepts together which are linked but different and even sometimes antagonist: the Varna and the Jāti. To understand the concept of Varna we need to look back at the Purusha Sukta which is the 10.90 hymn of the Rig-Veda, one of the holiest texts of Hinduism. This hymn is dedicated to

Purusha, the “cosmic-man” (see the extract above). In primitive Hinduism, people understood this text in the way that society needs to be organised on an organic schema and divided into 4 Varnas or castes. The highest caste is the one of the Brahmans and gathers all together people of intellectual activities such as the priests, the teachers and the professors. The second Varnathe Rajanyas - draws together the kings, princes, administrators as well as the knights and warriors. The Vaisyas is the third Varna and is composed of the artisans, traders, businessmen, farmers and shepherds. The lowest Varna is the one of the Sudras, i.e. the servants. The belonging of a child to a Varna is strictly dictated by his/her birth into a family of this particular Varna.

However, in primitive Hinduism, the code of conduct dictated by another important book, the Manu Smriti - also known as the Law of Manu - has led to the creation of a fifth caste (stricto sensu they are considered as “outcaste”) of people who do not belong to any Varna. Because they do not belong to any Varna, they have then been considered as impure and their visual and physical contact as a stain. This explains why they have been looked on as untouchables. Because of this outcaste status, those people have been imposed with the more undesired - impure - menial jobs. The concept of jâti, which literally means birth, points out another hierarchical division of the Indian society into communities and sub-communities originally on the basis of the people’s professional occupations 9; although the jâti system has usually been found to be hereditary. The membership to some linguistic or religious communities may also define a jâti. Most of the jâtis does fit into the Varna system. However, it has to be noted that their ranking inside the Varna system is “fluid and ambiguous” as the jâtis present claims and counter-claims of their Varna affiliation (Kothari, 1997). The possible (rare though) ascent of their jâtis is the only way for lower-castes born people to climb up the Varna ladder. This particular upward mobility is called sanskritisation 10 and can only be obtained under several strict conditions which include, among other things, the emulation of the rituals and practices followed by the higher castes.

POPULATION OF SCHEDULED CASTES STATUS IN CENSUS 2011:

Determination of Scheduled Castes population is mandatory in each decennial Census since 1951. The lists of the Scheduled Castes are notified in respect of each State and Union Territory separately in pursuance of Articles 341 of the Constitution. These lists are State and Area specific and are valid only within the jurisdiction of that State or Union Territory and not outside. In each decennial census since 1951, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes population have been enumerated. According to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Act, 1990, Scheduled Castes can only belong to Hindu or Sikh or Buddhist religions. No SC list exists for Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Lakshadweep and A&N Islands. Similarly Punjab, Chandigarh, Haryana, Delhi and Pondicherry do not have Scheduled Tribes. Consequent to the promulgation of Constitutional Orders/Amendments from 2002 to 2008 new entries have been added both in the SCs and STs lists of 22 and 20 States/UTs respectively. In the SCs list 20 new Castes have been added as main SCs in ten States and one Union Territories. The number of main Scheduled Castes has increased from 1221 to 1241 during the last decade. In addition, 115 sub entries as synonyms/ subgroups/ sections have been notified along with the main SCs in 15 states.

Table 1

Population of Rajasthan in Census 2011

Population	India	Rajasthan
Total Population	1,210,193,422	6,86,21,012
Male	623,724,248	35,620,086
Female	586,469,174	30,000,926
Growth Rate	17.64%	21.44%

Urban Population	27.82% (2001)	23.4\$ (2001)
Sex Ratio	940	926
Literacy	70.04%	67.06%

Literacy Rates Of SC's at country level

Category	1971	1981	1991	% increase
General Population(including SC/ST)	29.45	36.23	25.21	77.28
Scheduled Castes	14.67	21.38	37.41	155.01
Gap between SC's and General Population	14.78	14.85	14.80	0.13

Literacy ratio among scheduled castes population vary from rural to urban as well as male to female. The literacy rates among scheduled castes population are higher in urban areas and urban males. Gender disparity educational development is more pronounced in backward states. Even the states like U.P., Rajasthan and Bihar have witnessed low literacy rates among scheduled castes population with high rate of gender disparity and gaps between rural and urban areas. Details are in Table No. 2.3.

Tab 2

Literacy Rate for Scheduled Cstes in Census 2001 in Rajasthan

2001	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Rajasthan	49.86	66.93	31.18	61.35	76.83	44.22	52.24	68.99	33.87
India	51.16	63.66	37.84	68.12	77.93	57.49	54.69	66.64	41.9

Tab 3

Literacy Rate for Scheduled Caste (SC)

State/Sex-wise Literacy Rate of Scheduled Castes in India(Census 2001)									
State/UTs	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Rajasthan	49.86	66.93	31.18	61.35	76.83	44.22	52.24	68.99	33.87
India	51.16	63.66	37.84	68.12	77.93	57.49	54.69	66.64	41.90

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Education is an instrument of socialization is considered as a powerful catalytic agent for social change. This is most effective change agent for the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, removal of their disabilities and acceleration of the integrated process. Realizing the importance of education, the framers of the Constitution included in the Directive Principles of State Policy, provisions for free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years and for promotion with special care also the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and particularly Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and protecting from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Article 15 (4) enable the state to make special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward class of citizen or for the SC's and ST's. In pursuance of these Constitutional provisions a series of measures have been taken both by the Central Government and the state governmental to spread education and literacy among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes so that through educational advancement the other two disabilities, social and economic, may also be remedied. An elaborate programme of pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, reservation of seats in schools and colleges including

technical and professional institutions, establishment of hostels and Ashram schools for the children of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other incentives like mid-day meals, free text books and uniform etc. are in operation for the last five decades. Although, there has been a visible increase in the literacy rates of SC's/ST's during the last three developmental decades, the gap between the literacy rates of SC's/ST's and of the general population still persists. Further, this gap was found to be widening, decade after decade. There has been an increase of 161.95 per cent in the literacy rate among Scheduled Castes over the period of 1971 to 1991. However, the gap in literacy rate between the general population and SC's/ST's is much wider. About 37.41 per cent Scheduled Caste population and 29.60 per cent Scheduled Tribe population was reported to be literate against 52.231 per cent literacy rate for the general population.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES:

The brief overview of the demand for micro-financial services suggests the huge challenges and the opportunities the Indian market presents. Protective financial services may be critical for poverty alleviation, but they do little for helping people out of poverty. Hence, promotional financial services are required, primarily for enhancing livelihood among poor people. It is said that micro-finance can also harm poor people (Hume and Mosley, 1996). The increase in income of micro-credit borrowers is directly proportional to their starting level of income – the poorer they were to start with, the less is the impact of the loan. Secondly, poor borrowers from Micro-financing organizations often do not graduate to higher and higher loans, and consequently to productive small enterprises. While credit may initially be the ruling constraint for micro enterprises, to grow beyond a certain size, other constraints come into play. Micro-enterprises are therefore unlikely to grow substantially without inputs that can address these additional constraints. Livelihood promotion is complex, opening up multiple potential goals and interventions and demanding an understanding of individual household and enterprise as well as the economic systems or sub-sectors in which they operate. Intervening in livelihood promotion is far more challenging than developing the efficient delivery of financial services. The Micro-finance industry has, in fact, moved away from livelihood promotion. Using micro-credit to

promote livelihood may not be feasible with such a strategy. The necessary non-financial services that have to be added, and the investment in understanding the complexity of livelihood systems entail significant costs. They interventions may also require engagement with market actors. By 2008, at least one million SHG's with 17 million members are expected to emerge. As autonomous organization, SHG's share the challenges and dynamics of other small organizations. Forming new groups requires significant energy and the necessary group. Processes. Governments, donors, policy makers and resource providers need to be aware of the dynamics involved in these small organizations. The institutional challenges in micro-financing are three fold: How to support existing leading and social entrepreneurs and nurture new ones; at least one million SHG's will be require support; How to ensure the SHG's remain autonomous and are not captured by political and bureaucratic interests pursuing votes or targets? Will the emerging movement of SHG's be any better at preventing this than previous movements, such as cooperatives? How to support the SHG's movement so that it can go beyond financial service provision to support the development of a large number of livelihood among SHG members? Some would argue, this is inappropriate for such small organizations. Other, would say it is essential, given the livelihood India needs to generate, not the least for women?

As for credit, its usage among poor households in 1998 was estimated to be almost \$11 billion. It is clear from the rapid growth of self help groups and other community based intermediaries that if credit were more readily available, its usage would only go up, suggesting, that much demand for credit among poor households is also not met. Further the supply of insurance services to poor people is increasing, including low premium schemes, covering death, accidents, natural calamities, loss of assets etc. However poor people face significant risks in purchasing insurance. Moreover, the total current demand for micro-financial services is not being met and there is likely to be significant additional latent demand. In addition, demand needs to be enhanced by supporting the growth of micro-producers and community based organizations that will enhance their need and capacity for absorbing credit, as well as other financial services. The total outreach of specialized providers of micro-financial services is estimated to fall over-below one percent of credit usage by poor households. While banks have given a very large number of

small loans, the proportion of rural credit usage supplied by the formal sector stood at 56.6 percent in 1991 and it is much lower for the poorest households. Banks have not delivered effective micro-financial services, but they have been driven by mandatory targets and subsidies resulting in low repayment rates, leading to a vicious cycle of non-availability and non-repayment (Mahajan and Nagasri, 1999). Non-profit Micro-financial organizations face the following constraints (Matthew Titus, 2002): In most states the Registrar of Societies has not recognized micro-finance as a permitted activity for societies (NGO's). The Income Tax Act [Section 2(15)] does not define micro-finance as a charitable activity, so that NGO's engaged in micro-finance risk losing their charitable status.

The Income Tax Act [Section 11(5)] does not allow NGO's to promote mutual benefit or commercial micro-financial organizations, as they are not allowed to invest in equity. The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act is ambiguous about receiving funds for micro-finance, whether the foreign funds are used as grants or loans. Non-profit micro-financial organizations have difficulty in raising deposits without contravening the Reserve Bank of India Act. With massive expansion, the performance of SHG's also becomes even more critical, especially as many SHG's are being promoted by governments and banks. Ensuring good performance and sustainability across such a vast number of small local organizations is a real challenge and will require significant resources for support and development. Moreover, as specialized micro-financial organizations grow, whether NGO's, cooperatives or companies, they will require increasing resources not just for capital but also for organizational and human resource development to ensure their becoming effective financial and developmental organizations. Another challenge is that the vast majority of resources are channeled through public agencies, which can be slow, rule bound and risk averse. Almost no attempt has been made to build more independent organizations for resourcing and supporting providers of micro-financial services that must emerge if the sector is going to massively expand and develop. In order to examine the problems, constraints and challenges of micro-financing, the concerned officials and non-officials were surveyed. Overall 174 officials and non-officials were

interviewed to analyze their view perception regarding SHG's approach and micro-finance. Most of the respondents were belonging to rural elite class.

DEMANDS:

This convention sets out the following charter of demands to ensure a better life for the crores of dalits in our country and it calls upon them to join the common movement of all toiling, oppressed and exploited sections of our country to win these demands and also to effect a radical social, economic and political transformation of our country.

LAND REFORMS:

The central and state governments must immediately set in motion a process of land reforms whereby land will be redistributed to the landless agricultural labourers and poor peasants gratis. All loopholes in the present laws must be plugged. All schemes to reverse land reform legislation and give away land to multinational corporations and big business houses should be scrapped forthwith.

RESERVATIONS:

All the backlogs in reserved seats and posts and in promotions for SCs, STs and OBCs must be filled forthwith with special recruitment drives. The three Constitutional amendments made to correct the three OMs issued in 1997 diluting reservations for SCs and STs should be implemented. The pre-1997 vacancies based roster should be restored. A comprehensive legislation covering all aspects of reservation for SCs/STs in employment and education both public and private institutions should be enacted.

SPECIAL COMPONENT PLAN: Special Component Plan should be properly implemented in all the states with proper allotment of funds according to the population of dalits. A National Commission should be set up to assess the real position of dalits including reservation. The state level commissions should be set up to oversee the implementation of all schemes connected with the SCs including reservation.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT:

Infrastructure development in the scheduled caste areas like road, water, health, culture and other needs has to be given proper importance. When allotting fund for infrastructure development, a separate allotment for scheduled caste areas should be provided.

A comprehensive National Programme of Minor Irrigation for all irrigable but unirrigated lands of SCs and STs through wells, community wells, bore-wells, community bore-wells and tube-wells, bandheras, check-dams, lift, etc., should be immediately undertaken and implemented.

ROOTING OUT UNTOUCHABILITY:

All forms of untouchability must be rooted out of the country by strengthening the relevant laws, ensuring their strict implementation and most importantly, by launching a mass movement of the people.

PROTECTION FROM ATROCITIES:

The Central Government should amend and strengthen the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, providing for special courts with judges, investigating officers and public prosecutors unburdened by any other work. Social and economic boycott and blackmail should be included as substantive crimes. Full economic rehabilitation of victims and their survivors must be ensured.

EMPLOYMENT:

The privatisation drive should be stopped as it leads to loot of national assets, greater unemployment, a curtailment of reservations and also a spurt in corruption. The Central Government should enact a bill to provide reservations in the private sector, which has been a long-standing demand of SCs and STs. Special schemes to provide self-employment to SC youth should be started. The Right to Work should be incorporated as a fundamental right in the Constitution.

EDUCATION:

The commercialisation of education should be stopped since the massive fee and donation structure of private educational managements is something that socially and economically backward students cannot afford. For this, the central government must increase its own outlay on education to 6 % of the GDP. SC/ST students should be given special scholarships to pursue their studies. The stipends in Social Welfare hostels should be raised and the quality of these hostels improved. Steps should be taken to universalise primary education and expand secondary education. Special measures to curb the drop-out rate among SCs should be undertaken.

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS:

The Minimum Wages Act for agricultural workers must be stringently implemented throughout the country. A comprehensive bill for agricultural workers is another long-standing demand and it must be enacted without delay. Homestead land must be provided for SCs, STs and agricultural workers.

RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME:

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act must be strictly implemented all over the country by involving the people, their mass organisations and the panchayati raj institutions. It should be extended to all districts and also to urban areas of the country.

PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM:

The public distribution system must be universalised to ensure food to all. Until this is done, BPL ration cards must be issued to all poor families, many of whom are from SCs and STs. The grain under the BPL scheme should be made available at Antyodaya prices.

CREDIT:

Agricultural credit to peasants and agricultural workers must be made available at 4 % rate of interest. For SCs and STs in both rural and urban areas, credit facilities should be expanded and the credit given at concessional interest rates.

BONDED LABOUR AND CHILD LABOUR:

The total liberation and full rehabilitation of bonded labourers must be ensured. The pernicious practice of child labour must be abolished and children properly rehabilitated and educated. Similarly, total liberation and full rehabilitation must be ensured for Safai Karmacharis who are engaged in scavenging.

SCAVENGERS:

Ensure total liberation and full rehabilitation for scavengers (safai karamcharis), ban engagement of contract labour in safai services and other services where SC and ST numerically predominate and instead introduce necessary improvements by involving such Karamcharis; and reactivate the Central Monitoring Committee for Liberation and Rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis and State, Municipal and District Level communities.

INTERCASTE MARRIAGES:

Intercaste marriages should be encouraged by giving special subsidized housing and other facilities to married couples immediately after their marriage. We should consciously try to uphold such inter-caste marriages and make them an event of big social participation and sanction.

Solutions for the Special Problems of scheduled caste communities of India-

- It was to take into account the very real danger of PRIs and even municipalities being misused to institutionalize discrimination and empower the elite at the expense of the ordinary citizen that, when the Constitution was amended to incorporate Parts IX and IXA on

the Panchayats and the Municipalities, apart from reservations for the weaker sections, "social justice" was explicitly integrated with economic development as integral to the planning and implementation functions of elected local bodies as "institutions of local self-government."

- State governments need to recognize, as most in any case do, that constitutional and legal measures for social justice might set the stage but it is at the grassroots that the closest vigilance has to be maintained. Therefore, in addition to concurrent social audit by gram/ward sabhas, which is the most effective way of checking prejudice and discrimination, DPCs may exercise due diligence to ensure that the social justice component is integrated into all development plans and social welfare schemes; that social justice committees are established at all three levels in the PRIs as well as in the municipalities; that a grievance redressal machinery is built into the framework of the Panchayati Raj system: and that encouragement is given to the weaker sections to articulate their grievances in gram/ward sabha meetings.
- Although the Constitution provides for elections before the expiry of five years of the first meeting of the elected local bodies, there have been serious delays in many states in the conduct of timely elections. The Supreme Court has laid down the exceptional circumstances in which a slight delay may be condoned as unavoidable, but the practice of delaying elections on other grounds has become regrettably widespread. This is as true of elections as of bye-elections.
- The Constitution stipulates in Article 243E (4) and 243U (4) respectively that if a panchayat is dissolved for any reason, elections must be held within six months to reconstitute that particular panchayat. This provision has been so interpreted as to dissolve all panchayats and then avail of the six-month provision to not hold elections at all.
- States must commit themselves to holding elections within the time-period stipulated subject only exceptional conditions set out in the Supreme Court order.

- Complaints of electoral malpractice are widespread. State election commissions, in consultation with Central Election Commission, may consider ways and means of ridding local bodies' elections of el malpractice.
- The audit of the accounts of elected local bodies has generally been so tardy and haphazard as to virtually ceased to have practical effect in ensuring the integrity of PRIs.
- State Auditors-General, in consultation with the Comptroller & Auditor General of India, may be a to urgently identify and correct deficiencies in this regard.

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