

The Management of Inclusive Growth in India

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Abstract

Human Discrimination is one of the major problems all over the world. It causes problems of unequal educational, social, political, psychological and economic growth. In India, caste-based discrimination is one of the major problems. Due to caste discrimination practices, people belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) were treated unequally and were deprived of growth for many years. This created unequal growth opportunities for people of SC, ST, and OBC. The "caste-based reservation policy" has effectively managed the imbalance brought about by caste-based discrimination. It has provided opportunities for growth to the discriminated people. Many people criticize the caste-based reservation policy, and there have been debates for its abolition. This paper studies the problem of caste discrimination, its impact on society, current discrimination practices, the Reservation Policy, and its effects on improving the conditions of discriminated people in India. This research paper highlights the merits of caste based reservation policy. Similar affirmative actions can improve the conditions of many people globally discriminated in different ways.

Keywords: *Caste Based Discrimination, Educational Growth, Social Growth, Political Growth, Psychological Growth, Economic Growth, Educational Growth.*

Introduction

India was trounced as there was no unity among the people of India before independence. People of India were divided on the basis of caste and religion. Later people of India realized the importance of unity and equality and after independence, the constitution provided ample opportunities for growth to all Indian citizens in a united way. The constitution also provided special provisions for improving the condition of discriminated people, and the country flourished rapidly. The problem of human discrimination is found everywhere in the world, it depends on various factors, including race, religion, and gender in different contexts. India suffered two major human discrimination, i.e., based on gender and caste. The current study discusses caste-based discrimination in India. The caste system in India divides society according to the "Jati" (Birth Category) of the people. A person belongs to the Jati or Caste that they are born into or the Jati or Caste of their father. In India, marriage is strictly followed by social and community rules, where a person belonging to a particular caste will marry with the another person belonging to the same caste only. As a result, caste membership prevents individuals from becoming more diverse, and a barrier is created for many years. The caste system is the basis of caste-based discrimination in India.

The origins of the caste system in India is the subject of several theories. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the first law minister of Independent India but faced discrimination many times in his life due to his birth into a scheduled caste (earlier known as Untouchables/Dalits). He claimed that in the second century BC, Brahmins (Forward Caste in India) enforced the Manusmriti, a set of laws that classified individuals into four groups: Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Shudra. Brahmins were revered as the group of people with the highest caste followed by Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras were considered as the group of people with the lowest caste. Instead of dividing people according to their work, education, or merit, it divided people based on place of birth (Kalita, 2018). According to Borooah, Diwakar, Mishra, Naik, & Sabharwal (2014) Hindus are those who belonged to this four groups of Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Shudra whereas untouchables were those who were from outside the caste system and physical contact with them was considered polluting. Many historians believe that the caste system originated during the Vedic Age, i.e., from c. 1200 B.C.E. to c. 600 B.C.E. (Sardesai, 2008). People's vocations served as the foundation for the caste system and individuals were free to shift careers before the Vedic era, but this was forbidden during the Vedic era, and a caste system as labor was assigned based on ancestry (Smith, 1994).

In India, caste-based discriminated people are categorized into three major categories as per the constitution of India, i.e., Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC). According to census 2011, SC and ST population proportions are 16.63% and 8.63% respectively (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2019). OBC form 52% of the overall population (Madame, 2018). Article 341 of the Indian constitution defines who would be called a Scheduled Caste in India, and Article 342 defines who would be called a Scheduled Tribe in India (Borooah, Diwakar, Mishra, Naik, & Sabharwal, 2014). The term 'Scheduled Caste' was first used by the Simon Commission in 1935 and later enlisted through Article 341 of the Indian Constitution by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in 1950. During the British Rule period, Scheduled Castes were known as depressed classes, and they belonged to the category of people who were considered impure and untouchables. For generations, they were psychologically suppressed as untouchables, preventing them from assimilating into mainstream culture and preventing them from gaining influence over economic, political, educational, religious, and social advancement.

Another deprived group of people called Scheduled Tribes are native people, also known as Adivasi, and are defined by communities under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution. They are tribal people of India who live in hilly and forest areas and are deprived of means of development. They worship nature and prefer their norms and culture. Other backward classes consist of educational and economically backward people. Under Article 340 of the Indian Constitution, a commission was set up in 1953 to determine the condition of backward classes. The commission, under the chairmanship of Kakasaheb Kalelkar, submitted a report in 1955 but never implemented it. In 1979, a second backward classes commission was set up under B.P. Mandal, which submitted its report in 1980. In 1990, the central government implemented the proposals of the second commission and provided reservation to other backward classes (Singh, Bajpai, Yadav, Prasad, & Pinho, n.d.). Reservation Policy provide educational, employment and political reservation for SC and ST people and for OBC it provide educational and employment reservation. Reservation policy is also included in several government schemes, development programs, and welfare measures. In 2019 Indian government introduced a 10% educational and

employment reservation for general category people who belongs to Economic Weaker Sections category.

Caste-based discrimination is evident in India, and regular incidents can be seen in the media and newspapers. A telephonic survey was conducted by Coffey, Hathi, Khurana, and Thorat (2018) in Delhi, Mumbai, and Rajasthan & Uttar Pradesh to find out the ground reality of practicing caste-based discrimination. When non-Dalit Hindu respondents were asked if someone in their household practiced untouchability, the findings showed that this was most common in rural Rajasthan, an Indian state, where 66% of non-Dalit Hindu female respondents and 50% of non-Dalit Hindu male respondents agreed that someone in their family practiced untouchability. When it was further inquired whether they practiced untouchability, it was discovered that the percentage was highest in rural Rajasthan, where 34% of non-Dalit Hindu males and 54% of non-Dalit Hindu females alone practiced untouchability. Similarly, the percentage of Non – Dalit Hindus practicing untouchability in other major Indian states is shown in Table 1. Respondents were asked whether caste-based reservation should be provided for the development of the people, only 32% of respondents from Uttar Pradesh, 37% of respondents from Mumbai, 40% of respondents from Delhi, and 43% of respondents from Rajasthan supported the caste-based reservation. The study revealed that 59% of respondents from Uttar Pradesh, 47% from Rajasthan, 43% from Delhi, and 50% from Mumbai favored the merit system and opposed caste-based reservation. Support for the reservation system was low among forward castes and Brahmins. Even after legal protection, and strict regulation by the government, one can see discrimination based on caste. It is one of India's major problems and a hurdle to its development.

S. No.	Respondent's Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Untouchability Practiced by	Family or Self	Family of Self	Self	Self
1	Rural Rajasthan	66	50	54	34
2	Rural Uttar Pradesh	64	43	48	28
3	Urban Rajasthan	50	33	31	15
4	Urban Uttar Pradesh	48	42	35	18
5	Delhi	39	27	21	12
6	Mumbai	NA	21	NA	10

Table 1. Percentage of Respondents Agreeing to Practice of Untouchability according to SARI – Social Attitude Research India, 2016

It is clear from the responses that non-Dalit Hindus have less confidence in the reservation policy. Since India is a vast country, discrimination practices can't be stopped without a reservation policy and strict legal enforcement against discrimination practices. It is evident that after imposing a reservation policy and strict legal enforcement against discrimination practices, the instances of caste discrimination are reduced. Reservation policies have worked effectively in managing problems of unequal educational, social, political, psychological, and economic growth and inhumane treatment of SC, ST, and OBC people.

Research Methodology

One of the major problems today in India is that people oppose affirmative actions like reservations taken in the past for the upliftment of discriminated people without understanding their significance. The current study will make such people aware so they can understand the

requirement of such affirmative actions for the upliftment of people discriminated against for thousands of years. This study reviews pertinent literature that demonstrates the origin of caste-based discrimination, the effects of caste discrimination on Indian society, and the persistence of caste-based prejudice in India. Research Gap found that most studies include the outcome of discrimination as unequal educational, social, political, and economic growth but do not involve the psychological impact of discrimination. This article study the reasons behind the educational, social, political, psychological, and economic regression of SC, ST and OBC people. The current study review the literature that give evidences that the reservation policy has facilitated the advancement of Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and Other Backward Classes people in India. Finally, it explores the impact of the reservation policy on the lives of SC, ST, and OBC members, and its significance as a means of promoting prosperity, peace, and harmony in Indian society.

Footprints of Caste Discrimination in India

Today’s major problem in India is wealth distribution; though wealth is increasing, its distribution is unequal. This is mainly due to the caste system that has prevailed in India for so long. The caste system provided the opportunity to the forward caste people to access educational, social, political, psychological, and economic benefits, while people from SC, ST, and OBC were deprived of it. In a report by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation under the Indian Government, the Average Value of Assets per household as of 2018 owned by ST, SC, OBC, and Others (Including Forward Castes) are shown in Table 2 (*All India Debt and Investment Survey - 2019, 2021*). The average value of assets owned per household by Others (Including forward caste) is high compared to ST, SC, and OBC, as shown in Table 2.

	ST	SC	OBC	Others
Rural	Rs 8,84,000	Rs 8,79,000	Rs 16,45,000	Rs 26,03,000
Urban	Rs 18,90,000	Rs 13,15,000	Rs 21,20,000	Rs 40,54,000

Table 2. Average Value of Assets per household Owned by ST, SC, OBC, and Others (Including Forward Castes) in Rural and Urban Areas in India.

The average Value of Assets (AVA), Average Amount of Debt (AOD), and Debt to Asset Ratio (DAR) per household as of 2018 of ST, SC, OBC, and Others (Including Forward Caste) is given in Table 3. The economic indicators also indicate that there is unequal development among people of SC, ST, OBCs, and Others (Including forward caste). One can say that Indian society is suffering from the social evil of “The rich get richer and the poor get poorer”. In contrast, people with fewer assets find it more difficult to receive loans and funds as there is a low availability of collateral. This makes it simpler for those who own more assets to obtain loans and funds to engage in activities that expand their wealth.

	Rural			Urban		
Category	AVA	AOD	DAR (%)	AVA	AOD	DAR (%)
ST	Rs 8,84,000	Rs 24,000	2.7	Rs 18,90,000	Rs 80,000	4.2

SC	Rs 8,79,000	Rs 37,000	4.2	Rs 13,15,000	Rs 69,000	5.2
OBC	Rs 16,45,000	Rs 66,000	4.0	Rs 21,20,000	Rs 1,15,000	5.4
Others	Rs 26,03,000	Rs 90,000	3.5	Rs 40,54,000	Rs 1,52,000	3.7
All	Rs 15,92,000	Rs 60,000	3.8	Rs 27,17,000	Rs 1,20,000	4.4

Table 3. Average Value of Assets (AVA), Average Amount of Debt (AOD), and Debt to Asset Ratio (DAR) per household as of 30/06/2018 of ST, SC, OBC, and Others (Including Forward Caste) in Rural and Urban Areas of India.

Bharti (2018) analyzed the data from the ‘Indian Human Development Survey 2011–12’ and found the annual income of households in India was around Rs 1,13,200 (Rs 9433 Per Month). The yearly income of SC and ST was found to be 0.8 and 0.7 times India's average income per household, respectively. OBC was found to be 0.9 times India's average income per household, while Forward caste was found to be 1.4 times India's average annual income per household. From the ‘Indian Human Development Surveys 2011–12’ and ‘National Sample Survey 2011–12’, it was computed that SC and ST people have a low share of income and consumption, followed by OBC, as shown in Table 4. However, OBCs have better income and consumption share compared to SC and ST people; they have a low share of income and consumption relative to their population (Himanshu, 2018). The MPCE (monthly per capita expenditure), i.e., average monthly household expenditure on goods and services, is given in Table 5, which indicates the disparity in the household expenditure of SC, ST, OBC, and Others (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2023).

	Income Share/Population Share		Consumption Share/Population Share	
	2004-05	2011-12	2004-05	2011-12
SC	0.71	0.79	0.76	0.69
ST	0.68	0.67	0.78	0.8
OBC	0.89	0.92	0.92	0.93
Others	1.45	1.39	1.09	1.33

Table 4. Relative Income and Consumption of SC, ST, OBC, and Others (Including Forward Castes People)

Social Groups	Average MPCE 2022-23	
	Rural	Urban
ST	3098	5472
SC	3571	5386
OBC	3935	6245
Others	4472	7382
All	3860	6521

Table 5. Average MPCE 2022-23 of ST, SC, OBC, and Others (Including Forward Castes)

India ranks 111 out of 136 countries in the global hunger index. With children under 5 years of age, child wasting rate of 18.7% worldwide (highest in the world), and child stunting of 35.5% worldwide, India has the poor under-nutrition in the world (*Global Hunger Index Scores*

by 2023 *GHI Rank*, 2023). Since there is a direct relationship between income, assets, education, nutrition, and health, the condition of SC and ST children is worse in India. Under 5 years of age children, the stunting problem was found highest in ST with 44%, followed by SC (43%), OBC (39%), and Other (31%), respectively, for the year 2015-16. Similarly, according to the 2011 census, the overall literacy rates for SC and ST were 66% and 59%, respectively, which is another sign of inequality (Himanshu, 2018). The dropout rate of young children attending classes 1 to 8 doubled in India in 2021–22. The dropout rate is found highest in ST (26.9%), followed by SC (22.5%), OBC (20.04%), and least in General Category (Including Forward Caste) students (15.6%) (Mahendru et al., 2023). Caste plays a major role in Indian society, and discrimination for hundreds of years in the past shows its evidence now in the form of unequal income, wealth, and consumption among the different categories.

Discrimination Practices in India

Caste-based discrimination has been practiced in India for many years. Many incidences of caste discrimination can be found before the independence of India too. In a prologue by Ambedkar (1935) named *Annihilation of Caste*, many incidents of caste discrimination have been discussed. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar felt pain and pity that many people defended the caste system. He cited an incident printed in the *Times of India* reported on January 4, 1928, which showed condition of people of Scheduled Caste. The upper caste residents of Kanariya, Bicholi Hapsi, Bicholi Mardana, and other 15 villages of Indore district (middle India) forced members of a specific caste - Balai (untouchables in early times), to obey their rules. The rules included the prohibition of wearing laced-bordered pugree (cloth to cover the head), not wearing colorful dhotis (pants), compulsory conveying the message of the death of a Hindu to his/her relatives, playing music in other Hindu weddings, and the prohibition of wearing gold and silver ornaments by Balai women and rendering their services to other Hindus without demanding any remuneration. The upper caste elements forbade the Balai people from drinking water from wells, allowing their livestock to graze, and passing across other farms' land when they objected to these regulations. This compelled many Balai people to abandon their native lands and relocate to neighboring communities.

Though incidences of caste-based discrimination are reduced due to strict law enforcement, one can see its incidences even now after 76 years of independence. Rohit Vemula Case (Farooq, 2016), Payal Tadavi Case (Saxena, 2019), Hathras Case (Biswas, 2020), Jitendra Murder Case (Khare, 2019), Gujarat Wedding Processions Attack Case (Kaushal, 2019), Pradeep Rathod Case (Ethirajan, 2018) are some of the examples that hint at the practices of discrimination in the current period. According to a news article from BBC (2018), people from SC and ST are either tortured or killed for irrelevant reasons like riding a horse at a wedding, sitting in a cross-legged position in front of upper caste people, swimming in a well belonging to upper caste people, and wearing royal shoes. Jayesh Solanki a 21-year-old boy, was beaten to death for watching people dance during festivals, some men were beaten up for keeping modish mustaches (BBC, 2017). Throughout India, Dalits are forced into a state of psychological inferiority. Many Dalits even decide on suicide because of such psychological stress. One of the incidents is in the state of Gujarat, where more than 30 Dalits have tried to take their own lives (Khare, 2016).

In higher educational institutions, caste-based discrimination is not done openly by some forward caste people. In a survey by Pandey (2018) at the Indian Institute of Technology (BHU),

students from the general category, OBC and SC/ST were asked about teachers' attitudes toward them. Most students from each category, i.e., general category (including forward-caste people), SC, ST, and OBC, found the teacher's attitude helpful or neutral. However, 13% of SC/ST caste students found the teacher's attitude hostile. Negative perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes about the ability of SC/ST students are still a major hurdle. SC/ST caste students face several reminders of their caste identity in higher educational institutes. In an experiment by Hoff and Pandey (as cited in Pandey, 2012) in rural Uttar Pradesh among sixth and seventh-grade students, no gap was found in students' performance when caste was kept anonymous. It was found that students in the SC/ST categories had internalized the discriminatory systems' values, which prevented them from attaining results on par with those of students in higher caste groups. Students of SC/ST have also suffered psychological damage as a result of caste-based prejudice, which will take time to heal.

According to studies on Indians' attitudes about the caste system, 3 out of 10 Brahmins and 4 out of 10 Jains do not want to live next to Dalits (Sahgal et al., 2021). In India, a person's social standing is still determined by caste. People who identify as SC, ST, or OBC do not face discrimination due to their poverty; nonetheless, they have a lower social rank within the caste system. Sadly, arranged marriages, which are a feature of Indian society, show how widespread the caste system is in the country. In India, intercaste marriages are still frowned upon, and the majority of marriages take place within the same caste. People who identify as SC, ST, or OBC endure prejudice in India, regardless of wealth or position in society. Those living in rural areas are also discriminated against as well as those in urban areas. Literate or illiterate, employed or unemployed, bureaucrats, judges, ministers, and even members of the SC, ST, and OBC who occupy constitutional roles may have experienced discrimination in their lives.

Implementation of Reservation Policy to Manage the Inclusive Growth

The first idea of reservation came in 1882 when the Hunter Commission examined the education system of India and social reformer Mahatma Jyotirao Phule demanded free education for all and the share of oppressed people in jobs in the British Government. The official beginning of the reservation policy in India for the upliftment of discriminated people started in 1901 by Shahu Maharaj. He wanted that all people of the princely state of Kolhapur in the Maharashtra area should get free education and should get equal opportunities in jobs irrespective of their castes. For that, in 1902 he built several hostels for discriminated people so that they could easily get free education and provided 50% reservations for people of discriminated classes in jobs. In 1908, the British government also introduced reservations for the discriminated people in the administration (Raj & Gokulraja, 2015).

Earlier, the reservation was provided to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people only, but later in 1992, it was provided to other Backward Class communities too. In the early 1990s, Prime Minister V P Singh announced a 27% reservation in government jobs for the OBC people too. Provisions under the Indian constitution provide benefits to the people of SC, ST, and OBC in education, scholarships, and jobs. The central governments and governments of different states of India also run many schemes for SC, ST, and OBC people. Political reservation is also provided by the Indian constitutions, and seats are served for parliamentary, state assembly, and local body elections. Currently, out of 543 seats in Lok Sabha, 84 seats (15.47%) are reserved for Scheduled Caste, and 47 seats (8.66%) are reserved for Scheduled Tribe (Raj & Gokulraja, 2015). People of the OBC category have 27% reservation in all local body elections, i.e. election of the

municipal corporation, gram panchayat, district panchayat, etc. Reservation is an effective management tool under the constitution of India. If properly implemented, it helps provide equal representation in society, opportunities to deserving candidates, implementation of justice, maintaining economic balance in society, and better administration.

Outcomes of Reservation Policy

The political reservation has increased the participation of people of SC, ST, and OBC in decision-making. Though it brings inexperienced and less educated people into politics, there is no evidence that it affects the quality of decisions. Reservation is a powerful tool in the redistribution of goods to disadvantaged groups (Duflo, 2005). Reservation leads to equal representation of people from SC, ST, and OBC. It improves the efficiency of organizations and results in higher productivity. One of the best examples is Indian Railways, where reservations have improved productivity (Deshpande & Weisskopf, 2014). It brings economic balance to society and gives a chance to unprivileged people to improve their economic conditions. It gives a chance to talented people to become a part of mainstream society. It allows the people from SC, ST, and OBC to lead their groups once they achieve a position in the mainstream. Other people of SC, ST, and OBC communities also get motivated as they may get a chance to represent their community and society.

Chin and Prakash (2010) identified that political reservation for the Scheduled Tribe has reduced both incidences and the intensity of poverty. Similarly, the reservation in jobs has improved the condition of people belonging to Scheduled Castes. Cassan (2019) studied the impact of reservation policies by the government on Scheduled Caste people in India. The researcher found that it affects school attainment positively. The average educational attainment of Scheduled Caste people has increased due to reservation policies by the Indian Government, though it is less for females. Biswas (2018) found that many first-generation Scheduled Caste students attend higher education due to reservation policies by the government. Most of them come from disadvantaged backgrounds, but they understand the importance of education in improving their lives and in finding better jobs. For those who are highly educated and professionals, reservation policies play a key role in removing the drawbacks of society and improving the socioeconomic status of society. Though reservation policy has not completely eradicated the problem of discrimination in India, it has significantly managed the outcomes of discrimination practices for hundreds of years in the history of India. Now India is on track to become one of the superpower nations in the upcoming years.

Conclusion

According to the National Crime Records Bureau Report 2022, the total number of registered crimes committed against Scheduled Castes in 2021 and 2022 were 50,900 and 57,582, respectively. It shows an increase of 13.1% in crimes against Scheduled Caste people. Similarly, 10,064 cases were registered as crimes against Scheduled Tribes in 2022, while 8,802 cases were registered in 2021, which shows an increase of 14.3% in crime against Scheduled Tribe people (*Crime in India 2022 Statistics 2022*). Even after enforcing strict laws and legal actions, many

incidents of discrimination are regularly reported in India, which shows that caste-based discrimination is not eradicated from India. Recently, many incidents have been reported where the reservation policy is not implemented properly while doing recruitment for government jobs. Many general-category people in higher government positions have a prejudiced mentality and reject SC/ST and OBC candidates and give reasons that no suitable candidate is found, which keeps increasing the backlog of vacancies (Patel, 2024). This also has reduced the participation of SC, ST, and OBC people in the government jobs too. After economic liberalization in India, privatization increased at a rapid pace in India. Population increased rapidly, and the number of jobs reduced in the public sector. While there were no provisions for reservation in the private sector, people of SC, ST, and OBC found it hard to get jobs in the private sector. It has again widened the wealth gap between SC, ST, OBC, and general people.

The government must make provisions for reservation while making public-private partnerships, foreign direct investment policies, industrial policies, labor laws, and economic planning. The government must ensure that there is a scope for the growth of people of SC, ST and OBC through its policies. After the independence due to the reservation policy, the country has managed tremendous growth. The current study is important as it finds the effectiveness of the reservation policy in bringing positive changes in the educational, social, political, psychological, and economic status of OBC, SC, and ST people in India. Reservation policy has played an important role in managing the problems of OBC, SC, & ST people in India. Reservation in education, employment, and promotions has given discriminated people an opportunity to be treated fairly and equally. Reservation has successfully helped to reduce the educational, social, political, psychological, and economic gap between forward-caste and backward-caste people. It thus can be viewed as an effective management tool for the redistribution of educational, social, political, psychological, and economic power in society. The current study is important as it gives a real view of caste-based discrimination, reservation policy, and how implementation of reservation policy has led to the nation's inclusive growth. Before Independence, Indian society was divided, and there were few opportunities for SC/ST and OBC people to be a part of the mainstream. After the implementation of the reservation policy, the contribution of SC, ST and OBC people increased in the development of the nation which led the country's rapid growth. The current finds out that the reservations should be based on caste as the discrimination is made on the basis of caste. Such affirmative actions and policies can improve the conditions of discriminated people worldwide.

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