An Analysis of Backward Classes Movement in India

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Abstract
An attempt is made in this paper is to analyse the backward class movement in India, its effects on Indian society. Due to the negative implications of caste system backward class movement arises. It also includes Dravidian movement, SNDP Movement and Mahar Movement. In other nations, people are not divided like this. The caste system in India creates a bundle of social problems as a few castes are deliberate as greater to others. The social distinctions on the foundation of the caste system have been perpetuating because of the long tradition in giving significance to castes. There are violence and terrorism as people belonging to one caste attack people belonging to another caste. Backward Caste/class movements emerged among depressed castes and deprived sections of society in different parts of India with the broadening of the national move¬ment. The disparity among the religious and the caste movement is that while the former attacked evils of Hinduism, the latter exhorted its supporters to seek solutions to their problems within the outline of Hinduism, i.e., lacking reject their religion.
Keywords: Backward Class, Movement and Discrimination.

Introduction

In India the Backward Classes Movement taking place in the early hours of the 20th century. British Government introduced here English medium schools and colleges and the Western education, the superior castes like the Brahmins made use of them. Hence, they could easily get the jobs in the government services and increase their prestige. This further augmented the cultural, social, and economic detachment between them and the lower castes. Now the lower castes became more aware of the situation. As M.N. Srinivas describe, the lower castes feel that mere Sanskritisation was not adequate. It did not afford them a great deal extent for social mobility.

They have become additional resolute to gain Western education to be eligible themselves for the most recent jobs in administration and the new professions like law, medicine, engineering, etc. Higher caste supremacy in education and the new occupations, therefore, provided the conditions for the Backward Classes Movement as M.N. Srinivas has pointed out that such movement was expected in India where only one caste, the Brahmins, enjoyed prevalence in higher education, in their professions, and government employment. The cultural opening between the Brahmins and others became incredibly much dissimilar at the moment.

The actual feature of this movement is that it is caste based. In the Indian context, "backward classes" form a comprehensive or 'closed' position groups or castes. Caste associations came into survival in diverse parts of the nation to press their claims for novel designations and occupations. Many published journals devoted to caste welfare, composed funds for giving scholarships and building hostels for students from particular castes, and undertook reform of caste customs.

The competent youths of the lower castes soon realised that it was difficult to get admission in the professional courses and the post-graduate courses. They are unable to compete with the upper caste youths such as Brahmins. Hence they are not able to jobs in the government services. They felt that they were discriminated against by caste. This led to anti-Brahmin belief.

The aspiration for mobility among the backward caste came from the census procedure also. The caste 'sabhas' gave their representations to the census authorities to demand of individual castes to belong to a scrupulous ' varna' and not to an inferior one. For example, the two castes of Tamil Nadu, the Vellalas and Padaiyachis wanted to be recorded as ' Vaishyas' and' Vaniya Kula Kshatriyas' respectively, and not as 'Shudras'.

A lot of such claims were made in the 1931 census. The 'Sabhas' also altered the lifestyle of castes in the Sanskritisation's direction. This included the giving up of meat (pork and carrion beef) and liquor, and the donning of the sacred thread, the shortening of the mourning period like that of the Brahmins. In very 'low-castes' cases, it included non-performance of a traditional degrading duty such as 'Carvee' or beating the 'tom-tom' on their ceremonial functions. The upper caste people are having a difference of opinion about these trends. On various occasions, they used potency to make the lower caste people execute their traditional customs.

Now, the lower castes also demanded a separate electorate. Dr Ambedkar fought for it. This made the backward class movement as political. The Justice Part in Madras Presidency was formed to safeguard the interests of the dominated Non-Brahmins castes'. Its newspapers in English and other languages try to educate Non-Brahmins and their case. Caste organisations also started many periodicals in different parts of India. 'Backward Classes Movement' meant 'the non-Brahmin Movement' in its earlier stage. The notion-Brahamin Movement had two objectives:

1. Demanding the approve of supplementary concessions and privileges (which would cause discrimination against the Brahmins) to surpass Brahmins in education and social position.
2. Achieving "Swayam Maryada' ox self-respect. Self-Respect Movement in Tamil Nadu started by E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker. This movement was against Brahmin, North, Hindi, Sanskrit and anti-God. Ramaswamy Naicker founded the Dravida Kazhagam—DK. (Dravidian Federation) in 1945.

In 1949, his supporter Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam-D.M.K C. founded by Annadurai which wiped out the Brahmins domination in Tamil Nadu politics. But now they are not very much anti-Brahmin. In Tamil film industry, penetration DMK was more.

"Therefore, the intent of the Backward Class Movement at this phase was to bound them in the fields of education and appointment to government posts Brahmin is the monopoly." The resistance to Brahmin dominance did not come from the low and the oppressed castes. These were high caste groups with a social position next to the Brahmins. They incorporated not only the Hindus but also the Muslims, Christians and other communities who also suffered from the same social disabilities. Therefore it is pertinent to use the term "Backward Classes", and not 'Backward Castes".

Each society is classified. But it differs from society to society. Classification of Indian Hindu society is caste system based. The most noteworthy feature of the Hindu society is a caste system. In some classifications, this system is based on the principle of attainment and in the other societies it is based on the ascription principle. But, the caste system in India is purely based on the principle of attribution.

Effects of Caste System in India

However, the caste system originally performed its optimistic functions well, over time it became degenerated, and instead of doing social good it

caused great harm to the society. The caste system developed an insular feeling and made the people unduly conscious of their castes. Many a time caste interests were given more priority than national interest. Hence the whole system stood against national unity. Democracy necessitates human equality, but the caste system thought in inequality, and so in a hierarchical arrangement where Brahmins were at the top, whereas the Sudras were at the least rung of the stepladder.

In the caste system, the inferior castes were dormant and subdued by the superior castes. The Sudras were extremely ill-treated and not allowed in public places. Even their shadows were considered profane by the higher caste people. Inter-dining and inter-mixing with the lower castes were not allowed. Thus the system was solely based on the exploitation of the lower castes. In the national interest, it is indispensable that all the sections of the society should contribute to the social welfare, but the subjugated sections did not have any voice in countrywide development and progression.

In a conventional caste-ridden society, the Sudras were completely aware that they could not make successful in the Hindu society. As a result, some of them leaked out the planned secrets at the time of the invasion. They also cooperated with the invaders. Their betrayal ultimately became responsible for the fall of the Hindus. The supremacy of Brahminism became intolerable on the part of the Sudras, who were the most neglected people in the Hindu society. They have effortlessly attracted Islam's ideology and philosophy and Christianity. Many of them accept the new faiths. In this way, the caste system contributed to the extension of Christianity and Islam in India.

One's birth itself caste system status and role are fixed up and ability, personal endeavour or diligence became meaningless to bring about any transformation. Acceptance of one's hereditary status became mandatory. The higher castes believed that they had exclusive wisdom. They expected all other castes should consult them and work for them. This created a wide creek between the higher and the lower castes.

The Brahmins, teach and preach religion because they were at the top of the caste hierarchy, were supposed to. But over time, they became indifferent to their admitted profession and did not allocate this task to themselves. They knew that they are not able to throw out of their castes, despite their hypocrisy. As a result, they start to live on the labour of other castes without any useful contribution to society. Thus a class of loafer came into existence in the Hindu social system.

Untouchability is the worst aspect of the caste system. Social, economic, political and religious disabilities are suffered by untouchable. By using religion, they were exploited in the most inhuman manner. Untouchables were placed in the lower castes category. Children were not allowed to be educated, and they were assigned to take unclean occupation. The Sudra women were not allowed to wearing presses in the manner the Brahmin women dressed. Public well, ponds, places of worship etc., are not allowed to use. The fear of the rage of God and religious conventions made the lower castes follow all the religious prescriptions and prescriptions. The women were utterly neglected in the caste system — a very conservative and traditional type of status they enjoyed. They were denied the advantage of higher education. They were not allowed to voice their opinion in public affairs.

The higher castes women led uncertain life because they practice child marriage and prohibition of widow remarriage. The desire for male made women produces more and more children who affected their physical and mental condition. Higher caste males were sexually harassed lower caste women sometimes. But they could not protest against them due to the prevailing social pattern. In a nutshell, women enjoyed a very low status in the caste system. Against this background, the backward class movement has been raised in India.

Backward Class Movement in India

Important backward class movement in India are Satya Shodhak Samaj, Shri Narayana Dharma 1 humiliation, which made him struggle against caste inequalities. He strongly opposes the Brahmanical domination in the name of religion. He was also an attacker of Indian National Congress for neglecting the weaker sections.

His organization's aim was to achieve social justice for weaker sections of the society. He opened

all castes schools, orphanages for the children and women. He was elected Poona Municipal committee member in 1876. His writings include Dharma Tritiya Ratna, Ishara, Life of Shivaji, etc. He was honoured with the title of Mahatma in 1888. In the Indian National Movement, Dr B.R. Ambedkar took up the mantle of fighting for the cause of twentieth century's depressed castes. His efforts come to a climax in the form of validation of the reservation system for socially needy sections in the Constitution of India.

Shri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam Movement: Under the leadership of Shri Narayana Guru, the non-Brahmin movement found reflection in Kerala who belonged to the backward Ezhava caste. Outside the Kerala State, he established the SNDP Yogam with its branches. He launched a two-point program for the betterment of the Ezhavas to root out the practice of untouchability.

As a second step, Narayana Guru constructed temples, which were open to all castes. Rituals regarding marriage, religious worship, and funerals were simplified. Narayana Guru achieved success to transform the untouchable groups into a backward class. Gandhi's faith in Chaturvarna was criticized, which he considered the parent of the caste system and untouchability. His slogan was "One religion, one caste and one God for mankind".

Justice Party: In reaction to the elementary nationalist movement, represented by the nineteenth-century Hindu revivalism, with this Brahmin caste improve its position. The non-Brahmins of Madras Presidency sought to associate with the colonial regime, hoping that foreign rule would protect their job and somewhat neutralise power differences.

The Self-respect Movement: To improve the living conditions of the Dravidian people, the Self-respect Movement was founded by Ramaswamy Naicker in 1925. It was designed, to expose the Brahmin autocracy and the dubious methods by which they controlled all circle of Hindu life. "Dravida Nadu Conference" was organized for the advancement of a separate and independent "Dravida Nation". The demand was restated the following year in response to the Lahore Resolution passed by the Muslim League demanding the creation of Pakistan. Naicker supported the creation of Pakistan. The basic presupposition of the movement toward a separate nation was that the Dravidian non-Brahmin peoples were of different genetic stock and culture from that of the Aryan Brahman.

Naicker founded the Dravida Kazagham in the year 1944, and as their fellow members to wear black shirts. It was to embody the downtrodden condition of the present day Dravidians.

Due to split with Annadurai forming the Dravida Munnetra Kazagam with active support from Karunanidhi, Natarajan, and Sampath the movement is suffered. To build as a mass party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazagham organizes conferences.

Some of the big backward class movement which grew in the early 20th century were:

1. Dravidian Movement
2. SNDP Movement
3. Mahar Movement

According to MSA Rao, these backward class movements were transformative.

Dravidian Movement: Due to the advancement Christianity and the western education, the non-Brahmin in the Madras presidency region developed a new awareness as a result of which acrimony started growing among them against the domination by Brahmin and other higher castes in the profession as well as in politics, especially the Congress Party. They believed that, if they had to make successful careers, the domination of Brahmins in professional and political life had to be first overthrown.

By 1914 this conflict between the emerging non-Brahmin urban middle class and the establishment of the mostly Brahmin middle class and upper class took a sharp turn. The non-Brahmin caste uniting themselves and the Non-Brahmin Manifesto published in 1916 was followed by the formation of the South Indian Association in 1917. After the Montague Chelmsford Reforms 'South-Indian Association' was converted into Justice Party to counter the political influence of the Congress.

SNDP (Sri Narayana Dharma Pratipalan Movement)

This movement was launched among the Izhavas of Kerala by their leader Narayan Guru. Traditionally, Izhavas were untouchable castes of Toddy Trappers, e.g. they had to stay away thirty-four feet from the

Namboothiri. Brahmins suffered from many other disabilities both social and ritual. Access to Hindu temples and bathing tank of Hindus were denied. Women were not allowed to cover their breast or to wear any footwear, nor could they build a pucca house.

In the latter part of the 19th century with the spread of modern humanistic and secular ideas and also the spread of egalitarian-ideas through Christianity, Izhavas came to view their situation as one of the deprivation and exploitation. Under the charismatic leadership of Sri Narayan Guru, they rejected Brahminical domination and development of a new interpretation of Hinduism. Next 'according to MSA Rao, they adopted the strategy of withdrawal and self-organisation.

The new ideology was based on the principle of self-respect, honour and worth of an individual.

Later T.V. Madhavan led the Vaikum Temple Road Entry Movement in 1927, under the patronage of Mahatma Gandhi. After the two years of sustained Satyagraha, the Izhavas were granted the right to use the road which ran near the Vaikum Temple which was owned by upper caste this was a historic victory against orthodox ideas of pollution. Thus Izhavas community successfully raised their status in society.

Mahar Movement: Mahar is a numerically significant caste of Maharashtra who was traditionally considered as untouchable. Normally, they were allocated menial task like sweeping, digging groves, removing carcasses of dead animals, cutting woods and playing music on ceremonial occasion in the village. They were denied access to civil amenities like wells, school and even service of Brahmins and Barbers eta. In the early 20th century, the Mahars started organizing themselves in the fight against discrimination and proving their status. They insisted recruitment to military and police service in the conference held at 1902.

The ideology of the Mahars Movement was different from that of the SNDP movement. While the former relied on total rejection of Hinduism. The latter at the interpretation of Hinduism. The reason for adopting Buddhism was its egalitarian ideology. Consequently, Mahars could escape the stigma of untouchable and other forms of discrimination.

Furthermore, the collective mobilization of Mahars in the course of social movement created a new awareness among the Mahars regarding their educational, economic and political rights. They took to modern education in large numbers which enabled them to secure the new occupation in the urban areas. Thus the overall social status of the Mahars was raised.

Conclusion

By the above analysis and interpretation, it can be concluded that the Indian Constitution has provided us with a way of life that agrees with the ideals of democracy. These goals can only be established by providing social, economic and political justice to the people. India is a heterogeneous society having the divergence of economic, social and cultural nature. The framers of our Constitution were aware of a fact that in a caste-ridden society like ours, certain castes and classes were socially abused, economically convicted to live the life penury, and educationally intimidate to learn the family trade or occupation and to take the education set out for each caste and class by society, for centuries. The Constituent Assembly thought it necessary to include provisions in the Constitution which would serve as an exception to the general provisions guaranteeing equality to enable the government in helping the "Backward Classes" to catch up with rest of the society.

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