

Chapter – I

Introduction

Caste system continues to survive as a significant aspect of our society over the centuries. In Indian politics, caste plays a vital role as the political behavior of the mass is often influenced by caste consideration. Andre Beteille aptly said, “Caste enters much more directly in to the composition of political elites at the state level”.¹ Particularly in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh caste has been a major and dominant factor in politics.

The electoral politics in Andhra Pradesh is virtually caste politics. The Reddy's, Kammas and Velamas constitute the three angles of Andhra Pradesh political triangle. The history of development of political parties in Andhra Pradesh can be legitimately described as a history of competition between Reddy and Kamma communities.

Political awareness and participation of backward communities, identities have surfaced as a strong force in contemporary Indian Politics. The situation demands for redress of the inequalities and exploitation generated by this age old system. However, a changed situation has stimulated fresh thinking in academic circles on the questions of the essence and dynamics of caste.

The origin of caste system in India cannot be ascertained. The Indo-Aryan literature is available from Vedas and Upanishads throw light on the caste system. The *Rig-Veda* hymn of *Purushasookta* contains the earliest reference to chaturvarna.

¹ Dusrathi Bhuyan (2006), “*Castism in Indian Politics*”, Anmol Publication Pvt., Ltd., New Delhi.

According to it, the great Purusha's mouth became the Brahmin. His two arms were made into the Rajanya (Kshatriya). His thigh turned into Vaishyas and from his two feet, the Shudras were born. The Taittiriya Samhita ascribed the origin of Chaturvarna to the limbs of the creator and interpreted it theologically. It gives divine justification for their functional division. In Gita, Lord Krishna says the fourfold order was created by him on the basis of quality and action. Thus, the Hindu Dharma Sastras take caste for granted. All Puranas assume the existence of caste and if a person commits evil acts he will be born in a low caste or even as an animal.²

The Caste system in India is generally related to the occupational pattern of different groups. Caste is the general form of social organisation in India and it differs from the social groups. Noted Sociologist G.S. Ghurye observes: 'Caste in India is a Brahman child of the Indo-Aryan culture cradled in the land of the Ganga and Yamuna and hence transferred to other parts of the country.'³

The caste is the most salient feature of the Hindu social structure. It divides and stratifies the Hindu society into a number of sub-groups, separate and yet integrated. 'In India, the caste system comprises a large number of groups whose mutual relations are of an extremely complex in nature.'⁴

² Panicker, K. M. (1995) *"Hindu Society and the Cross Roads"*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.

³ Ghurye GS (1972), *"Caste and Race in India"* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd) p.106

⁴ Andre' Be'teille (1992), *"Society and Politics in India"*, *Essays in a Comparative Perspective*, London School of Economics, Monograph on Social Anthropology, No. 63, (Delhi: Oxford University Press) p.42

Buddhism was the greatest challenge to the priestly elites of Brahmanism and on the other hand it gained popularity among masses. Many kings found Buddhism more suitable and they contributed to its spread in India and abroad. There were no restrictions to join Buddhism. Buddha made the low caste people as saints and tried to annihilate the caste system.⁵ The caste system describes the social stratification and social restrictions in the Indian sub-continent. Social classes are defined by thousands of endogamous, hereditary groups, often termed as jatis or castes.⁶ India has been for about 3000 years, a country with a highly rigid caste-based hierarchical structure, with ascending order of privileges and descending order of disabilities, which was formed on the basis of a need to form a social order in ancient India.⁷

Meaning and Definitions of Caste

There are different opinions among historians and scholars with regard to the origin of caste system, though it is admitted that it was a very ancient institution. As part of a social system, the word 'caste' refers to stratification along lines of descent. In a caste-ridden society an individual is born into a given social category and remains there for life. The word 'caste' has been derived from the Portuguese term 'casta', meaning race, breed, family or lineage. The caste system existed since when the society was composed of birth-ascribed hierarchically ordered and culturally distinct groups.⁸

⁵ Michael, S.M. (1990), *"Dalits in Modern India, Vistaar and Values, Vistaar, New Delhi.*

⁶ Balyly, Susan (1990), *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge), pp.9-25*

⁷ R.S. Sharma (1980), *"Shudras in Ancient India", (Motilal Banarasidass, New Delhi), p.108*

⁸ Rajani Kothari (1970), *Caste in Indian Politics, Orient Longman, new Delhi.*

According to **Prof. Rapson**, “the origin of the caste system was due to the distinction between the whites and the dark complexion of the Aryans and Non-Aryans”.⁹

V.A.Smith argues that a caste system may be defined as “a group of families internally united by peculiar rule for the observance of ceremonial purity, especially in the matter of diet and marriage”.¹⁰

According to **Ketkar** “A Caste is a social group having two characteristics: (i) membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons so born; (ii) the members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group.”¹¹

G.S.Ghurye writes “this racial origin of the principal feature of the caste system is further supported by the early term ‘varna’ meaning colour used to specify the orders in society. Later on the word ‘jati’ is specialized to denote caste.”¹²

According to **Dr B.R.Ambedkar**, “Caste system is not merely division of labour. It is also a division of labourers”.¹³

⁹ Mahajan, V.D. (1960) “History of India”, (S.Chand & Company Ltd., New Delhi), p.86

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ambedkar, B.R. (1989), “Dr. Babasahed Ambedkar Writings and Speeches”, Vol.I, (Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, Bombay), p.7

¹² Gurye G.S. (1950), “Caste and Race in India”, (Popular Prakashan, Bombay), p.176

¹³ Ambedkar, B.R. (1978), “Annihilation of Caste”, Beem Publication, p.49

M.N. Srinivas defines caste as heredity usually localised group, having a traditional association with an occupational and particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed among other things by concepts of pollution or purity, and generally, maximum commonality occurs with the caste.¹⁴

Origin of *Jati* and Caste:

Normally, the English speaking Indians refer to their caste as their community. The word *Jati*, most often used, as the Hindu word for caste has several meanings. Bhargava's Standard Hindu-English Dictionary translates *Jati* as "Birth, Life, Race, Sex, Lineage, Parentage, State, Tribe, Caste, Sect, Genes, Species, Nature, Family, Sort, Kind, Name, Order, Nation, Section, Peoples, Clan, Community, and Breed". The anthropological term also suggests that it is a group into which one is born in which one has parents as well as linear ancestors.

The term *Jati* includes all the three transformations, viz. a tribe, caste and community. According to Andre Beteille, the word *Jati* may be used to refer to linguistic, regional and religious categories of persons, when the term *Jati* is used in a caste context Andre Beteille states that it might refer to a caste association. Thus, *Jati*, the Hindu word is used synonymously with the anthropological term sub-caste to mean an endogamous large scale dissent group. The term caste is generally used to refer to a set of *Jatis*, sharing the same name, occupation and ethnic history.¹⁵

¹⁴ Srinivas M.N. (1977), "*Social change in Modern India*", Orient Longman, New Delhi

¹⁵ Andre Beteille (1969), "*Caste old and new*", (Asia Publishing House, Bombay)

Although broad caste segments are found all over India, yet, there are some important regional differences in castes. **Kolenda** aptly illustrates that caste is a hierarchy of increasingly inclusive segments such as domestic family lineage, caste quarter/clan, sub-caste and finally merging into caste. It is maintained that a Jati is confined to a major geographical area in view of political, linguistic and geographical barriers.¹⁶

For instance, Brahmins who are traditionally house-hold and temple priests, a few among them learned in Sanskrit and religious works are found all over India but they do not form a single *Jati*. Even within the same region, there may be a number of different Brahmin *Jatis*. It is reported in the Census (1901) that a million and half of the population of Bombay Province were divided into more than two hundred groups between which marriage was forbidden.¹⁷

Ever since 1940s, a number of Indian, British and American Social Scientists have attempted to analyse the Indian caste system. The first important feature is the collection of the information about the caste system by participant observation in the life of an Indian community, usually in a village. The second feature focuses upon life as it is being lived at present supplemented by historical information which has been recorded in gazetteers or other documents of local region.

¹⁶ Pauline Kolenda (1997), "*Caste in Contemporary India*", Rawat Publication, New Delhi, p.19

¹⁷ Census of India (1901), Vol-9, p.278

The third feature is a holistic approach. In other words, caste relations are treated as just one work of Indian life, the other intentional aspects being family life, religion, kinship, economy and politics with a social structure studied within a locality. The fourth feature concerns with the examination of social relations between caste and within local caste segments. The fifth draws the boundaries of a caste system as coinciding with the boundaries of a village. From such observations, a comprehensive image of the Indian caste system may be summarized as below:

- i) Caste as a system operates only within a limited locality, a single village or a few link villages;
- ii) A village or local population is composed of a series of mutually exhaustive castes;
- iii) A dominant caste or a dominant family or set of families possess a preponderant political and economic power over others in the locality. The dominance is rooted in monopolistic system over able land and in physical forces;
- iv) Each caste has an occupational specialty and offers it to other castes in exchange of food products or services. This exchange of food, goods and services, the barter system, is a ritual system concerning with purity and pollution as well as an economic system popularly known as the *Jajmani* system. It functions, so that the highest caste remains pure while the lowest caste absorbs pollution from them;
- v) Caste within a local caste system tend to be mutually ranked according to their respective degrees of pollution in this ritual system;

- vi) Efforts to improve caste rank in this local caste hierarchy are made by middle and lower caste, especially by means of discarding the polluting customs and by emulating the customs of higher castes;
- vii) The political power is monopolized by the dominant caste family or families while the non-dominant castes tend to support their patrons within the dominant segment;
- viii) Disputes are usually settled either by councilors within a caste segment or by one or more elders of the dominant caste or family;
- ix) The caste segment itself is an endogamous descent group. It is broadly recognized both as matrilineal as well as patrilineal;
- x) Each caste segment tends to live in its own quarter, inversely; untouchables live in isolation from those of purer castes either in a separate hamlet or on the outskirts of the village.

India presents a unique spectacle of unity and diversity. It is because it has not only a few dominant religious groups on the horizontal plane, but also an array of caste groups on a vertical dimension. Similar to castes among Hindus, several castes among other religious groups are also found. These caste groups are placed on a hierarchical plane exhibiting a paramedical structure and closely knit together. On an exhaustive discussion in the preceding pages, it may be pointed out that the caste system is traced from ancient Indian tradition in terms of Chaturvarna falling into four groups viz., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vysya and Sudra on functional basis.

Caste System in Medieval Period

During the middle-ages, the Varna system was metamorphosed into caste system. It is a typical hierarchical system that promoted division of labour which led to division of labourers. This second process is unique to caste system. The service castes of sudras were further divided into touchable and untouchables based on wrong theory of purity and impurity.¹⁸

Mahatma Joti Rao Phule redefined this division of Bahujans as two categories of producer sudras and ati-sudras (Dalits). In the subsequent periods in the form of Bakti movements many social revolts surfaced for the cause of Sudras and Atisudras.

In the modern age, some of the agricultural castes of the sudras adopted certain processes of social change viz., sanskritisation and westernization. In order to elevate their social status in the social hierarchy, the dominant castes tried to imitate the upper castes and lead such a life style. As a result they were recognized as dominant, if not forward castes. These sudra- dominant castes in turn led to some powerful anti-Brahmin movements in some parts of India. They have successfully established their supremacy in place of Brahmins during this period. However, the non-agrarian majority sudras had remained as serving castes.

The word 'dalit came to light in the 1930s though it is not known who exactly used the word and when. This term was found in a Marathi daily "Dalit Bandu" which

¹⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/caste/p1>

was founded in 1930. The word was also used by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar during the same period in his Marathi writings and speeches.¹⁹

The 'untouchables' who were driven away from caste system are now reasserting themselves as Dalits to protect their interests and fight for justified rights in all walks of life. Meanwhile, the people who are out of caste system, civilization and social life came to be known as Aboriginal or Adivasis. At present these social groups are also expressing their identity as Schedule Tribes (STs) and fighting along with Dalits, also known as Scheduled Castes (SCs), for self-respect and social justice in India. Besides, the Backward Classes (BCs) are also on the race with the marginalized communities on the one hand and with the upper castes on the other hand, so as to secure their rights and opportunities in the society²⁰.

A Study of Backward Classes: Munnurukapu Community

Therefore, who are the backward classes? Who are the forward classes? These two questions are creating social tensions. According to Andre Beteille, *"in every complex society of course there are individuals who may be considered as economically or educationally backward; generally such people have also a low social status however, backwardness as understood in the Indian context has number of distinctive features two categories (1) it is viewed as an attribute not of individuals but of certain clearly defined social segments in which membership is generally acquired by birth; thus, the backward classes may in theory include individuals who are highly advanced*

¹⁹ John C.B. Webster (1999), "Who is a Dalit", In: *Dalits in Modern Indi-vision and Values*; S.M. Michael (ed.), (Vistaar, New Delhi), p.68.

²⁰ Ibid.p78

*both, educationally and economically.(2) membership of the backward classes entitles one to certain advantages and concessions specifically conferred by the government".*²¹

The Backward Classes constitute an important section of Indian society. They account for more than 40 per cent of total population of the country. In any case, it is difficult to answer to questions like, who are the Backward Classes. The Backward Classes constitute different categories of people who may be considered as backward economically or educationally, and in general, have a low social status.

In Andhra Pradesh, more than 45 per cent of the people belong to the Backward Classes. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has recognized the socially and economically Backward Classes and categorized them into five groups, viz., A, B, C, D and E, depending on their backwardness.²²

Incidentally, Backward Classes in India is a vulnerable class. There is no unanimity on the meaning of the BCs among the scholars. The BCs are part of Indian Hindu social system of numerous Backward Classes those who are identified with the Munnuru Kapus (MK) community are primarily concentrated in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh. The socio-economic status of this community in the hierarchy of caste system is considered middle level in the state. Still, they enjoy a low social status in

²¹ Beteille Andre (1991) *Society and politics in India: Essays in a comparative perspective*. The Athlone press. London.

²² Subhaschandra Reddy K. and Vaikuntham N. (1982), "Backward class movement", in BAV Sharma and K.M. Reddy (eds.) *Reservation Policy in India*, Light Life Publishers, Delhi.

rural areas which are generally based on occupations like farming, weaving, carpeting, pottng, among others.

Interestingly, even if they are poor they enjoy a higher social status than the other artisan Castes. Most of these community members are agriculturists by profession, though some in the urban areas are engaged in business and other service activities. At present, backward communities are slow in adopting modern techniques of cultivation and they are equally slow in as learners, education, business and politics.²³

Political Awareness

Political Awareness referred to the knowledge about political phenomena. Political process is a key concept in understanding the political system. Lack of political awareness and passivity of general masses make the political system irresponsible and ultimately non-functioning. Nature of perceptions and evaluations of the voter towards objects of political world such as parties, issues, leaders and candidates, in a sense, can be regarded as end result of a process of complex working of these factors and forces within the individual. In understanding the voting behavior of individual, these perceptions, evaluations and attitudes are of great significance:

- firstly, because their empirical ascertainment is the only way of getting at the motivations of individuals who have voted in a particular way, and
- secondly, they immediately precede the voting act and in this sense are related to it.

²³ Narsimlu Bojjam (1968), “ *Munnurukapu Kula Abhyudaya karyakalapalu 1920-67*”

If one is to know why an individual voted as he did, as a part of explanation one can know (a) what he perceived, (b) how much did he perceive, and (c) what was the manner in which he appraised what he perceived. These questions relate to substantive, quantitative and qualitative dimensions of what one can mean "Political Awareness".²⁴

The substantive aspect examines the voters' awareness of parties, issues and political leaders. The quantitative dimension relating to the size of image is as important as affecting the range of choices. For example, the fact that a voter knows only about the Congress Party, its leaders and candidates may be the reason why he or she voted for the Congress because others did not have a chance to enter in this choice making process at all. It is the qualitative dimension, which is important more than the quantity of awareness in explaining the posture of voter in preferring one party to the other.²⁵

The available research literature shows a number of variables which may tend to affect political awareness levels. This research as indicated earlier shows time and educational attainment is probably the most important factor in determining a person's political knowledge. Prof. Milbrath comments that "persons with high socio-economic status, especially higher education are more likely to have greater knowledge of and

²⁴ N.G.C. Kini (1974), *"The City Voter in India"*, Abinava Publication, New Delhi

²⁵ Milbrath Lester (1965), *"Political Participation"*, how and why do People get involved in politics, MC Nally, Chicago, p.18.

sophistication about politics this proposition is almost a truism, since education is designed to increase knowledge and sophistication”²⁶

Political Participation

Political participation, a necessary ingredient of every political system, fosters stability and order of reinforcing the legitimacy of political authority. That is why in modern political democracies, idea of political participation seems to be well matured. Every individual now-a-days considers political participation as a civil duty, as a sign of political health and as the best method of ensuring that one's private interests were not neglected.²⁷

Some social scientists broadly define political participation as being the process through which the individual plays a role in the political life of his society and has the opportunity to take part in deciding the goals of the society. Participation refers to actions through which ordinary members of a political system influence or attempt to influence outcomes.²⁸

Thus, the term 'political participation' refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers directly or indirectly. In the formation of public policy these activities include voting, seeking information, discussing and proselytizing, attending meetings, contributing financially, and communicating with representatives. The more 'active' forms of participation include formal enrolment in a

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ R.E. Dowse and John A. Huges (1972), *“Political Sociology”*, London, John Wiley

²⁸ Naga, Jack H. (1987), *“Participation, Prmceton Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersy*

party, canvassing and registering voters, speech writing and speech making, working in campaigns and competing for public and party office.²⁹

From most of the political philosophers have celebrated popular participation as a source of vitality and creative energy, as a defense against tyranny, and as a means of enacting the collective wisdom by involving many affairs of the state, participation should promote stability and order: and by giving everyone an opportunity to express his or her interests, it should secure the greatest good for great number. Further, the community should gain by drawing upon the talents and skills of largest possible number of people.³⁰

Awakening of suppressed Castes

In India, the British India period was indeed the darkest phase but, it was also the period when reformers dawned on the scene and gave a new sense of direction to society. These reformers gave India a new thought process and helped it re-discover its soul. No country could boast of such a wide array of reformers like India. These social reformers instilled a sense of pride in things Indian and helped in India stand up to the British supremacists. They also strove to rid Indian society of the evils and outmoded practices. Many of them kept aloof from politics and struggle against the British. But, they helped the cause of freedom in an indirect manner. Leaders and reformers like Mahatma Joti Rao Phule, Sahu Maharaj E.V. Ramsami Naicker,

²⁹ M.C. Closkey and Herbert (1990), "Political Participation", in: David L. Shills, (ed.) *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, Vol.12, pp.252-253

³⁰ Ibid

Narayana Guru, and B.R.Ambedkar have left their historical mark in the fight for an equal society and self-respect.

Mahatma Joti Rao Govindarao Phule, also known as Mahatma Joti Rao Phule, was great social reformer, who belonged to Mali caste. He was the ideological harbinger of the non-brahmanic movement in Maharashtra. Phule rejected the Hindu scriptures, the caste system and the Hindu religion as interpreted by the Brahmins. Joti Rao Phule was the first Indian to proclaim in modern India, the dawn of a new age for common man, the downtrodden, and the underdog and for the Indian women. Phule and his wife Savitribai Phule were pioneers of women's education in India. His remarkable influence was apparent in fields like education, agriculture, caste system, women and widow upliftment and removal of untouchability. He is most known for his efforts to educate women and the lower castes as well as the masses.

He after educating his wife started the first school for girls in India in August 1848 In September 1873. Joti rao, along with followers, formed the Satyashodak Samaj with the objective of liberating the bahunas and shudras protecting them from exploitation and atrocities. It was his aim to reconstruct the social order on the basis of social equality, justice and reason.³¹ Phule's theory of caste exploitation was focused more on 'cultural and ethnic factors than economic or political ones. Phule felt that the caste system was causing so many problems in this society hence he worked to fight against

³¹ S.M. Michael (1999), "*Dalits in Modern India – Vision and Values*", Vistar Publication, New Delhi, p.53

caste domination, inequality and oppression.³² Phule advocated a sense of social justice.

After Phule, E.V. Ramswami Naicker, a Balija Naidu, emerged as a leader for the oppressed sections. He spent his 50 years among the down trodden communities by explaining the value of education and the ill effects of social evils, superstitions and the social attitude towards the upper castes. He stressed on the greatness of self-esteem and self-confidence. His use of the word 'self-respect' achieved much popularity, in which the words liberty, equality and fraternity were underlined. In the words of an eminent author on the subject, the movement significantly called 'self-respect movement' or Dravidian movement was started by Naicker. He was convinced that if a man develops self-respect, he would automatically develop his self.³³ His work has greatly revolutionized Tamil society and has significantly removed caste-based discrimination. He was honoured by the UNESCO for his contribution.

Narayana Guru was a Hindu saint and social reformer of India. The Guru was born into an Ezhava family. The Ezhava community and other communities that were regarded as "Avarna" faced much social injustices in the caste- ridden Kerala society. He condemned the Hindu caste system in the South India. He fought against the non-entry of low caste people into the temples, and consequently, reformed temple system in Kerala. He helped to develop other low castes in social, economic, educational and

³² Omvedi Gail (1971) "*Joti Rao Phule and the Ideology of Social Revolution in India*" *economic and Political Weekly*, September 11 p.173

³³ Krishnan (1996), "*Periyar Father of the Tamil Race*", (Emerald Press, Madras), p.64

cultural fields by taking help from Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP), which he explained his movement that empowered Ezhavas.

He encouraged inter-caste marriages in order to eradicate the caste system. Narayana guru's slogan was one caste; one religion and one God. There were two objectives in his slogans. One was to establish schools for Ezhavas themselves. After thirty years of long struggle, he changed Ezhavas from their untouchable status to backward class status³⁴.

Chatrapati Shahu Maharaj of Maharashtra, though from a princely clan, was a true democrat and social reformer. In fact he was the first to introduce the concept of reservation in India. Shahu Maharaj is credited with doing much to further the lot of the lower castes. He did much to make education and employment available to all. He not only subsidised education in his state eventually providing free education to all, but also opened several hostels in Kolhapur thereby facilitating the education of the rural and low-caste people. His educational institutions include Victoria Matrha boarding schools, Miss Clarke boarding school. He also ensured suitable employment for students thus educated, thereby creating one of the earliest affirmative action program in history³⁵.

It is impossible to understand the contemporary Bahujan Samaj revolt without understanding the ideas of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar. He has become a symbol of vision for the masses, a vision of freedom from unequal socio-cultural, religious deprivation,

³⁴Balakrishnan P.K.(1954) *Narayana Guru, Kottayam, DC books.*

³⁵ Chatrapati Shahu the pillar of social Democracy (1994). *Government of Maharashtra*

economic backwardness and political inequality. Dr Ambedkar attacked Brahmanism and Hindu caste structure and tried to build an alternative society that was egalitarian and based on human values.³⁶

Caste and Development

English education, urbanization, Freedom movement and Vishalandhra movement gave early leadership advantage to Brahmins in Andhra region. However the formation of Kamma, Reddy, Velama caste associations around 1910 and participation in Non-Brahmin movement led to the rise of caste power. Kisan movement (1930s) produced the leadership from dominant landed castes. The growth of left movement (1934-47) promoted the leadership of peasantry from Reddy and Kamma castes. Abolition of Zamindari system (1948) accentuated the process of Brahmin migration and that led to land transfer to Kamma and Kapu castes. Hyderabad Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act (1950) protected six lakh tenants, largely belonging to landed castes³⁷.

³⁶ Keer, Dhananjay (1954), "*Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Life and Mission*", *Popular Prakasham, Bombay*, p.270

³⁷ Markandey Kalpana and Simhadri Somanaboina (2014) *Election Atlas of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana*

Great personalities who fought for social justice

Table-1.1

S. No.	Name	Date of Birth	Date of demise	Life span in years
1.	Mahatma Joti Rao Phule	20-02-1828	28-11-1890	63
2.	Savitriba Phule	03-01-1831	10-03-1897	66
3.	Sree Narayana Guru	20-09-1854	28-09-1928	74
4.	Shahu Maharaj	26-07-1874	06-05-1922	48
5.	Periyar Rama Swamy	17-09-1879	24-12-1973	94
6.	Dr.B.R.Ambedkar	14-04-1891	06-12-1956	65
7.	Ram Manohar Lohia	23-03-1910	12-10-1967	57
8.	Bindheswari Prasad Mandal	25-08-1919	13-04-1982	62
9.	Vishwanth Pratap Singh	25-06-1931	27-11-2008	77
10	Manyasri Kanshiram	15-03-1934	09-10-2006	72

Source: K.Kondal Rao, “*B.C. Vadam*”.

Role of Caste Associations

Backward communities are demanding their lion's share in every aspect of development in society. These caste associations are asserting their rights and privileges from the government. Their bargaining power has been enormously increased. They are not only demanding the seats at the time of Assembly elections, but also demanding their right to have a share in all the governments in tune with their

population. Over the years, most of the caste associations have become well organised and economically sound.

The Munnurukapus Caste Association is the first association in Andhra Pradesh to hold elections on a democratic basis, which had injected a new vigor into the life of caste association and encouraged the proliferation of other such organizations.³⁸ It is appropriate to point out that in the past many castes hesitated to be called backward, despite their poor economic conditions. They had a lurking apprehension that they would not be able to improve their social status by identifying themselves as backward. But, this perception has changed as it is no longer true as the state has provided certain privileges to the backward castes in the form of reservations in education and employment.

These castes have realized that they could improve their status by improving their economic conditions rather than observing rituals as is followed by the upper castes. Thus, there is a competition among the backward castes towards that end.³⁹ Further, members of these lower castes have realized that they could improve their social status and gain political power by improving their economic condition rather than by simply acquiring the Brahmin or Kshatriya status. Thus, the social hierarchy-based rituals and status have become redundant gradually.⁴⁰

³⁸ Venkatesu E. (2005), “Backward Classes and Mobilization Process in Andhra Pradesh”, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, p.368

³⁹ Ghanshyam Shah, (1985) *Caste Conflict and Reservations*, Centre for Social Sciences, (Surat: Ajanta Publications,

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 4.

Review of Literature

Several studies have focused their attention on the caste system and how it influenced the public policy in India. Some of the studies that concern the rise and growth of backward communities in the country have also been reviewed as part of the research. Following is the summary of the studies carried out on the research problem.

Madhusudan Reddy K. (1982)⁴¹ says fair treatment of communities has remained an integral part of public policy of both the British and princely India. It has been found not only expedient but essential to deal with the problems of castes and communities occupying low position in caste hierarchy. The inherited injustice and oppression of traditional society spanning over many thousands of years necessitated a policy of preferential treatment which sought to safeguard the interests of the backward classes.

M.V.N. Reddy (1990)⁴² in his study aims at an analysis for the intractable issue of reservation policy as implemented by the central and state government in India as a measure of protective discrimination to bring up the economically and educationally disadvantaged sections in society. The studies carried out in this area so far have mainly focused on such a broad term such as the impact of pro and anti-reservations agitations.

⁴¹ Madhusudan Reddy K. and B.A.V. Sharma (1982), (eds), *“Reservation Policy in India”*, Light Life Publishers, New Delhi.

⁴² M.V.N. Reddy, (1990), *“An Appraisal of Reservation Policy”*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Political Science, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Narsimlu Bojjam (1968)⁴³ is an important scholar working for reforms among Munnuru Kapus. He also took the initiative to start the Hyderabad State Backward Classes Association. He is one of the founding fathers of Munnurukapu movement in particular and the backward caste movement in general in the state of Hyderabad.

Pauline Kolenda (1997)⁴⁴ rightly argues that Bailey's theoretical systems of Indian Society of 'Closed Social Stratification and Dumont' theory of hierarchy are seen to be applicable to the traditional Hindu social system. The most important feature of these studies is the collection of information about the caste system by being part of the villagers and by residing, observing and participating in the daily life of an Indian community.

Michael S.M. (1999)⁴⁵ argued that many communities revolted against the Brahminical scriptures and puranas and the caste system it propagates. This set the state for the liberation of the sudras from the hegemony of Brahmanism. He felt that these scriptures, puranas and Hindu caste system were created to exploit and humiliate the sudras and Ati-sudras.

Rudolph and Rudolph (1969)⁴⁶ discussed in detail the role of caste associations in modernization and horizontal and differential mobilization. One important point

⁴³ Narsimlu Bojjam (1968), "*Munnurukapu Kula Abhyudaya Karyakalapalu 1920-67*", Venkata Rama Paper Product, Hyderabad.

⁴⁴ Pauline Kolenda (1997), "*Caste in Contemporary India*", Rawat Publication, New Delhi

⁴⁵ Michael S.M. (1999), "*Dalits in Modern India Vision and Values*" Vistar Publication, New Delhi.

⁴⁶ Rudolph and Rudolph (1959), "*The Modernity fo Tradition, Political Development*:", (Orient Longman, New Delhi).

emphasized by these writers is that changes in culture, structures and public functions of caste are necessary but not sufficient conditions for democratic incarnation. A profound change in the nature of human sensibility is also required, that is, universalization of fellow feeling, because the traditional society patterns the emotional universe narrowly.

Rajni Kothari (1970)⁴⁷ offered a theoretical framework to understand the role of caste in modern democratic political system. He adopted the liberal democratic theoretical approach to study the changing nature of caste in the age of electoral politics. He observed that the democratic, for that matter, any type of politics, does not operate in the vacuum, but requires a social base. In the Indian context, the caste system fills the gap, i.e., provides social base for democracy to function. This work has a number of essays on political mobilization of various castes in various states in the country such as the Nadars in Tamil Nadu, the Kshatriya Mahasabha in Gujarat, and of course the Kammas and Reddies in Andhra Pradesh.

M.S.A. Rao (1978)⁴⁸ studied two backward caste movements – the SNDP movement in Kerala and the Yadava movement in Bihar – from the theory of relative deprivation. He maintains that organization, ideology, collective mobilization and leadership are the essential elements of any social movement. He also assessed the nature of social change among Ezhavas (Gouds) of Kerala and Yadavas of Bihar due to

⁴⁷ Rajni Kothari (ed.), *“Caste in Indian Politics”*, (Orient Longman, New Delhi)

⁴⁸ M.S.A. Rao (1978), *“Social Movements and Social Transformation – A Study of Two Backward Classes Movements”*, (Manohar Publishers, New Delhi)

social mobilization. These two communities were highly successful in terms of education, employment, economy, politics and culture in the post-independence period.

According to **Ram Reddy** (1989)⁴⁹ the policy of accommodation is a strategy for colonial and post-colonial rulers in the state. In the area of Madras Presidency, colonial rulers accommodated the growing elites in the pre-independence period. The politics of patronage and populism perpetuated provincial dominant caste rule by accommodating the emerging elite from among the backward castes, lower castes and other sections. This process of accommodation prevented political consolidation of the backward castes in particular and other lower castes in general to form an alternative political platform.

M.N.Srinivas (1978)⁵⁰ studied a village in Karnataka and introduced the concept of 'dominant caste'. He contended that a large and powerful caste group could more easily dominate if its position in local caste hierarchies was not too low. His concept of 'dominant caste' operates at a different domain. Focusing on the social and political behavior of the numerically largest caste in an area, which makes a decisive impact on the political process in an area, he captures the nature of a rising trend of backward class politics. Vokkaligas and Lingayats form the dominant and opposing caste groups in Karnataka

⁴⁹ Frankel and Rao (1989), *"Dominance and State Power in Modern India – Decline of a Social Order"*, Oxford University Press, Delhi

⁵⁰ M.N. Srinivas (1962), *"Caste in Modern India and other Essays"*, (media promoters, Bombay), p.57

Balagopal (1988) ⁵¹ criticizes the studies on peasant movements in the post independence period which overemphasise the so-called 'objective condition' and ignore subjective consciousness and the intervention of political parties in organising the peasants. Famine was almost a regular feature of India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it as continued to be so to some extent even after independence, though it is now called 'drought' and not famine. Poor people live in conditions resembling famine as they are unable to buy food which is at times scarce and expensive.

M.S.A. Rao (1979) ⁵² divides non-upper castes/classes into three categories. The upper most categories of the backward castes consist mostly land owners. There are several such castes in different parts of the country, such as the Jats, the Ahirs, and the Gujjars in Punjab, the Marathas in Maharashtra, the Vellalas in Madras, the Kammas, the Kapus and the Reddis in Andhra Pradesh, the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats in Karnataka. Ranking below them are tenant cultivators, artisans and other service castes. They include the Ahirs and the Kahars in Bihar, the Kolis in Gujarat and the Vaddars in South India. They are considered caste- Hindus, above the pollution line. They have not enjoyed political power in the recent past.

⁵¹ Balagopal (1988) *Probing in the political economy of Agrarian Classes and conflicts, Hyderabad: perspectives*

⁵² M.S.A. Rao (1979) *Social Movements among the Backward classes and Blacks: Homology in the sources of identity, in Social movements in India, Monohar publication Delhi*

Gail Omvedt (1976)⁵³ argues that the non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra included both an elite-based conservative trend and a more genuine mass-based radicalism. It attained conservative goals, but radical goals have not been attained. The Maharashtrian Brahmin intelligentsia, though still dominant in educational and cultural institutions, has been swept from political power by rich peasant non-Brahmin elite, with strong roots in the villages and with an institutional basis in rural cooperatives and educational societies.

Marc Galanter (1984),⁵⁴ an American writer, is still relevant to the study of castes. He presents a study of positive discrimination (affirmative action) in the form of reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs. A careful perusal of his work shows that the author was not as familiar with the OBCs as he was with the SCs and STs. This is perhaps due to the fact that his study, though published in 1984 was researched before 1979, when the problem of the OBCs had not attained sufficient momentum and importance as it is today.

Christophe Jaffrelot (2003)⁵⁵ did extensive work on backward classes, Mandal commission and its after-effects. This book is a commendable contribution to this scholarship. Dalits and 'other Backward Castes' together a low castes for the purpose of this easy, we exclude the scheduled castes from the backward caste and treat them separately. Though the movements pushing for the benefits of the backward classes

⁵³ Gail Omvedt (1976) *Cultural Revolt in a colonial society: The Non-Brahmin movement in Western India, (1873-1930) Bombay*

⁵⁴ Galanter Marc (1984), "Competing Equalities – Law and the Backward Classes in India", Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

⁵⁵ Christophe Jaffrelot (2003) 'India's Silent Revolution : The Rise of the low castes in North Indian politics , Delhi

have not been well documented nor the academic contribution in favor of the affirmative action for the backward classes finds ample visibility. South India had many social movements but the political translation was best managed in the northern states.

Kancha Ilaiah (1996)⁵⁶ argued that there was a contradiction between two cultures, one, the productive culture of the Dalit-bahujans and the other, the unproductive culture of the Brahmins. The former is responsible for producing the entire material wealth, whereas the latter exploits Dalit-bahujans with the device of Brahmin class ideology often deploying Sanskrit language which was incomprehensible to the masses. He critically assessed the state, market and relations in civil society and the emergence of upper caste shudras as the ruling class, their ideology and process of action to legitimise them.

Krishna Reddy G. (1993)⁵⁷ discussed the changes in emergence of social groups with a special focus on backward classes. Social order is being challenged by the new emerging groups for a share in power. The constant struggle has witnessed upheavals leading to social tensions from the electoral politics perspective, whereby the backward classes were converted into political communities. The study traces the dynamics of backward classes' assertion in finding a place in the power structure in Andhra Pradesh.

⁵⁶ Kancha Ilaiah (1969), *"Why I am not a Hindu"*, (Samya, Culcatta),

⁵⁷ Krishna Reddy G. (1993), *"Backward Classes and Political power Structure in Andhra Pradesh"*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to Osmania University.

Ramchandram Valluri (1998)⁵⁸ in his study reveals that leadership plays an important role in shaping the social, political and economic status of any community. Identification of proper leadership and ensuring its accountability can provide the basis for effective implementation of various programmes of development. There is a constant and consistent demand for worthy leadership for the upliftment of economically and socially downtrodden people of the rural areas and efforts are being made towards that direction. Hence, the leadership in rural areas has acquired great significance. \

Bhaskaramma K. (1990)⁵⁹ talks of Scheduled Castes awareness on increased participation of women in politics. In her study, majority of the respondents were aware of increasing participation of women in politics. Political participation through election, through voting activity has been taking place at regular intervals, does not seem to have much impact on the life patterns of Scheduled Castes' women in Telangana. Her study proved that after a gap of 43 years of democratic rule women belonging to the depressed castes did register some degree of political awareness and political consciousness.

Mathur M.L. (2004)⁶⁰ critically examined and analysed history of reservation policies and programmes for backward castes from the beginning in different states recommendations given by various committees and commissions. The book focused on after-effects of announcement of Mandal Commission recommendations and

⁵⁸ Ramchandram Valluri (1998), *"Rural Political Leadership among Scheduled Castes – A Study in Telangana Region"*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to Osmania Univeristy.

⁵⁹ Bhaskaramma K. (1990), *"Political Awareness and Political Participation of Scheduled Caste Women - A Case Study of Telangana Region in Andhra Pradesh"*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to Osmania University.

⁶⁰ Mathur M.L. (2004), *"Encyclopedia of backward Castes"*, (4 Volumes, Kalpaz Publications Delhi)

development after the Mandal Judgment in 1992. The following are highlights of the book.

- Volume I discusses reservation concerning the origin and rational behind its history, problems faced backward castes in getting recognition for the purpose of reservation for a long period before and after independence.
- Volume II discusses the recommendations made by various committees and commissions in states and two important commissions set up by government after independence.
- Volume III examines compulsions under which the National Front Government announced 27 percent reservation for other backward classes and compiled views of cross sections of people such as lawyers, jurists, journalists and social scientists.
- Volume IV says that the Backward Castes have been striving hard to get reservation benefit in education under Article 15(4) and in employment under Article 16(4) of the Constitution of India for which they had to seek interventions in different High Courts and the Supreme Court of India.

Frankel and Rao's (1989)⁶¹ commendable work on the State policies in India covers political changes and political process and impact of policy rather than the institutions and individuals. According to the writers the rigid Indian social system started declining with the beginning of the democratic era. These essays also analyse the changing

⁶¹ Frankel and Rao, *"Dominance and State Policies in Modern India – Decline of a Social Order"*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989

power structure and sharing of power by the new castes that started playing a significant role in politics.

Ponna Wignaraja (ed 1993)⁶² deals with human development and participatory democracy as core values of the contemporary social mobilization. It is grassroots subaltern marginalized communities as the social basis. All these communities got their own historical socio-economic, political, cultural traits which are manifest in mobilization and for the paradigm shift in the developmental strategy and participatory democracy. There may be other intermediate process and pre transitional pathways to social change as the new social movements are located in various political spaces in the given historical context.

Rasheeduddin Khan (1969)⁶³ says that in a society where caste groups represent a distinct social identity it is obvious that they constitute the most persistent variable in the formation of a political order. They acquire a legitimacy to develop their own entity as competitive structure thereby stamping them over the political process. Social system in India is organised around caste structure and caste identities.

Selig Harrison (1965)⁶⁴ argues that since the founding of the Andhra Communist Party in 1934 the party Leadership has been the property of a single sub caste, the

⁶²Ponna Wignaraja (ed 1993), *"Social Movements in the South – Empowerment of the People"*, Vistaar Publications, New Delhi, 1993.

⁶³ Rasheeduddin Khan (1969), *"Political Participation and Political Changes in Andhra Pradesh; A Study of Electoral Politics in a Developing Participatory Democracy (memo)"*, Department of Political Science, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

⁶⁴ Selig Harrison (1965), *"India the Most Dangerous Decade"*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi

Kamma land lords. The main factor determining the strength of the communist in Andhra is the caste homogeneity of Andhra community leadership.

Venkatesu E. (2003)⁶⁵ in his study highlighted the importance of caste associations established by backward castes and their significance. In this work he also examined the theoretical aspects of caste association of the backward castes and their movements led by the Munnurukapu, Padmashali, and Gouds etc.

Venkateswarlu. Ch. (2009)⁶⁶ in this work tries to make an analytical study on Bahujanisation process, how the Bahujanisation process works and what would be the positive trends. He also examines as to what potential this process has. And there are some examples of possible course of the Bahujanisation process in Telangana.

Ramana Medi (2008)⁶⁷ deals with the emergence of self- assertions and socio-political protest movements for equality, dignity and justice of lower castes in modern Telangana. The main objective of this study is to look at some of the aspects of the growth of backward caste mobilization among Munnurukapu and Padmashali,

Murali Manohar (2011)⁶⁸ submitted a special component plan for backward caste to the government of A.P and requested to allocate at least 25 per cent of the state budget to the all backward castes. It was also urged to establish caste and occupation

⁶⁵ Venkateshu E. (2003), “*Social Deprivation and Social Mobilization – A Cast Study of Backward Castes in Andhra Pradesh*”, Unpublished thesis, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, A.P

⁶⁶ Venkateswarlu Ch. (2009), “*Bahujanisation the emerging new Political Consciousness- A Study of Telangana Regime in Andhra Pradesh*”, Unpublished thesis, Department Political Science, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

⁶⁷ Ramana Medi (2008), *I Identity and caste consciousness among the Backward as in Telangana: A case study of Munnurupu and Padmashals (1920-1956)*, Master of Philosophy in the History, Department of History O.U,

⁶⁸ Prof. Murali Manohar K. (2011), *Backward Castes Special Plan (BCSP)*, Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule Academy of Backward Castes Development and Empowerment (ABCDE), Warangal, Andhra Pradesh.

federations to utilize the budgetary allocations. It argued for Jyothy Rao Phule centers in all districts and English medium schools in every mandal.

Ram Reddy G. and Sheshadri K. (1972)⁶⁹ conducted a study on Panchayat Raj in three blocks of Warangal district in the present state of Telangana. The study indicated that while Reddys, Kapus and Vysyas had a much less representation in the new Panchayat, the Backward Castes and Scheduled Castes improved their representation to a great extent. However, such a trend was not anticipated in other regions or districts.

Scope of the Study

The present study aims to broadly uncover the various aspects and trends associated with caste groups and on their impact on the socio-economic and political conditions of various communities. The study is confined to Nalgonda and Nizamabad districts in Telangana region. It deals with the political awareness and participation of backward classes. A few variables have been marked, which are to be considered as significant for the political awareness study.

Sampling Technique

“Multi-stage purposive sampling” was used to select the different stages which included two districts (Nalgonda, and Nizamabad). Of these two districts, 12 villages and 6 towns were as selected as sample villages and towns. The list of two districts Munnurukapu caste association was considered as the universe for this study. Further,

⁶⁹ Ram Reddy G. and Sheshadri K. (1972), “*The Voter and Panchayat Raj : A Study of the Electrol Behavior during Panchayat Election in Warangal District, A.P.*”

it is classified into two groups – political leaders and community members. The sample size was drawn randomly and stands at 330 which include 130 political activists and 200 community members.

Sampling unit

The sampling unit for the study is based on:

1. elected community representatives
2. community members
3. Community political Leaders.
4. community association Leaders

Objectives of the study

Some of the main objectives of present study have been given below:

- To study the political behavior and levels of political participation of Munnuru Kapu Community.
- To identify the processes and networks through which the association carries out its activities including politics and development.
- To analyze the impact of political participation on the living conditions of Munnuru Kapus
- To assesses the role of the Munnuru Kapus leadership in the electoral process.
- To explain the impact of specific socio-economic and political development on Munnuru Kapus

- To examine the interaction between caste and politics as well as significance of caste association in contemporary politics
- To understand how the caste associations became platforms for political leadership

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are broadly identified and the researcher's attempt is to examine their validity by empirical means:

- Caste is at the roots of Indian politics. However, the concept of caste is highly politicized and each caste association attempts to articulate its interests.
- Impact of socio-economic conditions has a logical correlation with the levels of political participation and shaping up of the forms of awareness among the Munnurukapu community.
- The Munnuru Kapus community associations have influenced both the government as well as political parties in the formulation of public policies and programmes.
- The initiation of government welfare policies has positive effect on the levels of awareness among the Munnuru Kapus.
- Political participation of the Munnurukapu people as reflected in the electoral process has improved the political awareness and position of this community.
- Higher the land holding higher the political participation.
- Higher the exposure to media higher the level of political participation.

Methodology

This research study takes into account the experimental and empirical method of research in investigating the Munnurukapu community awareness and participation in Telangana. In this regard, the data was collected from the library as well as observation and interview schedule methods. For the purpose of collecting the data, different methods of social inquiry were adopted.

A structured questionnaire exclusively for the rural political leaders and community persons of Munnurukapu community hailing from Nizamabad and Nalgonda districts of Telangana was formulated, administered and information elicited. Besides, the researcher also contacted a few political representatives, community leaders as well as political elite and ascertained their views on the various dimensions of caste associations and their impact.

Data Analysis

The data has been analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). It had been transformed into computer code and analyzed with the help of single variable or multi-variable tables. Statistical tools such as averages had also been used to analyze the data.

1.14 Chapterisation

The present study has been organized into seven chapters, a brief summary of which is given below:

- **The first chapter** deals with 'Introduction' the historical perspective and genesis of caste system in India. The methodology adopted for the study and the review of literature is also presented.
- **Chapter-II** discusses in detail the historical perspective of other backward classes movement in India covers The changing caste politics and participation from Independence to present day and awareness of Backward Community in Andhra Pradesh are presented.
- **Chapter-III** presents the socio-economic profile of Munnurukapu Community and Caste Association -Awareness
- **Chapter-IV** deals with the Political Power Structure in Munnurukapu Community in Telangana.
- **Chapter-V** exclusively deals with the Political Awareness of Munnurukapu community in power politics and analysis of leadership of the Munnurukapu community
- **Chapter- VI** describes at length the Political Leadership of Munnurukapu Community
- **The final chapter** summarizes the study and its findings besides offering certain suggestions for future study.