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**INCLUSIVE POLICY OF RESERVATION AND
OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF DALITS:
A STUDY OF JATAVS OF MUNIRKA
VILLAGE IN NEW DELHI**

Introduction

Caste is an all-pervasive of the Indian society. It is marked by feature such as hierarchy, purity and pollution. The position of the Dalits has a bearing on the social structure of the 'caste society', that is, division of Hindu society into caste groups. Brahmins occupy the top position in the caste hierarchy, while at the lowest level are the untouchables. In between there are several caste groups. The value of pollution/purity pervades all aspects of social life including food, cloth; metals, occupation etc. Thus, not only are persons and caste pure/impure or less pure/impure, but everything in Hindu society is viewed in terms of the value of purity – pollution; for example, silk is pure and cotton is impure, gold is pure but silver is less pure (Dumont 1970). Unlike Adivasis, Dalits have always been an integral part of the dominant culture, society and economy, but placed firmly at the bottom, below the ritually sanctioned line of pollution. The Hindu theology-the notion of Karma (duty) and the Dharma (moral code), has further reinforced the hierarchical caste system. Since deprivation of Dalit is closely linked with the process of caste and ethnicity based exclusion, therefore it is imperative to discuss such deprivation to understand the concept of social mobility among Dalits.

Dalits and Reservation Policy

The physical surroundings under which the Dalits and Adivasis have been constrained to live, is one of the special reasons of the special claims made for them. More specially, these two categories were mostly placed beyond the bounds of the larger society, the Adivasis on account of their isolation in particular ecological riches, and the Dalits on account of the segregation imposed on them by the rules of pollution.

Although the deprivations traditionally suffered by the Dalits and the Scheduled Tribes were different in their specific manifestations, there is a

certain logic in treating them together from the view-point of protective discrimination.

It is necessary to provide special facilities to those who have been kept out of the mainstream society. Special care has to be taken to ensure that they are able to exercise their rights as full citizens in the new legal order. These concerns were subsequently written into the Constitution of the Indian Republic as Directive Principles, which enjoined the State to promote distribution and control of material resources to sub serve the common good and prevent concentration of wealth in the hands few. Articles 14, 15, 16 and 29(2) of the Constitution of India seek to protect the weaker sections of the country from discrimination and violence of the powerful segments of the population. Apart from protection, opportunity in the form of Article 46 of the Constitution, that 'shall promote with special care the educational, economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the SCs and STs and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation'. Central to this directive and other related provisions is reservation, which is used here as a package of Constitutional provisions and their intended follow-up programmes for social advancement of the weaker sections, in particular the scheduled castes. Since disabilities have been imposed on entire communities, those measures should have the highest priority which directly benefits the largest number of individual members of those communities. The reason why caste is taken as criteria for equalization is that in order to bring about equality between individuals, we should first bring about equality between groups.

Occupational Mobility

Occupational Mobility leads to change in the socio-economic status of an individual or group. It is an upward mobility. Thus, when we study social mobility, we analyse the movement of individuals from positions of a certain rank to positions either higher or lower in the social system, and accentuated by privileges and prerequisites accruing in proportion to its difficulty and responsibility. Consequently, all mobility is a consequence of changes in the structure and all significant changes in the structure pose questions about the locus of political power (Davies 1970).

A number of studies have analyzed social mobility through both single and multiple approaches. The single approach (Lipset and Bendix 1959) emphasizes the criterion of occupation for determining social status whereas the multiple approaches (Lipset and Zetterberg 1956) include more than one criterion for determining social status. They viewed social mobility as shift and ranking occupations, consumptions, social power and social class composed of individual accepting each other as equals and qualified for intimate association. Their view appears to be more amenable to understand social mobility in caste based society. However, based on changes in position in social hierarchy, direction and time span, the term social mobility has been further

particularized. Sorokin (1955) classified it into horizontal and vertical social mobility. Horizontal Mobility means movement within the same stratum and level with hardly any ups and downs in status. Contrariwise in vertical mobility involves transition of an individual from one social stratum to another. Caplow (1964) defined social mobility as movement of individual upward or downward with a gain or loss social rank. Turner (1969) distinguished mobility in the terms of contest and sponsored mobility. Lynch (1969) pointed out that political participation as an important channel of this type of mobility. When mobility is the product of open competition between individuals it becomes contest mobility. The contest is judged to be fair only if all players compete on equal footing and victory here is solely by one's own effort. Under sponsored mobility, however, competitiveness as well as own efforts are at discount. Here, the mobiles are chosen and sponsored by the established elite. Recruitment of Dalits and other backward classes (OBCs) to the Government service under the Indian Constitution also, in a sense, belongs to this category as they enjoy the sponsorship of the State in the form of reservation. Further, two other classification as coined by Tumin et al. (1965) and Sharma (2006) are being progressively adopted in analyzing social mobility. In correlation with parental status and their progeny, Tumin et al. (1965) classified social mobility into four categories, namely high stationaries (high social status children having high status of fathers)-horizontal; upwardly mobile (high social status children having low status fathers)-vertical; downwardly mobile (low social status children having high status of fathers)- vertical; low stationaries (low social status children having low status of fathers)-horizontal. Sharma (2006) concentrating on downward mobility, classified it into general decline (total decline of a unit of society-individual, family etc.) and domain specific (decline of a unit of society-individual, family etc. in a particular aspect-economic, occupation etc.). Domain specific decline as the one to affect the depressed classes very much since all their attempts at mobility in caste hierarchy are frustrated by the forward castes consequent to which they lose their traditional occupation and find themselves in a state of unemployment. While reviewing the studies on social mobility, Kaur (1986) has dealt in detail and analyzed various issues involved. Kaur argues that the assumptions underlying the methods of measurement of social mobility are: (i) Occupation is an important index of social status, (ii) there is temporal stability in occupation (iii) the present status of son is determined by the status of his father.¹

Data and Methodology

This study sets out to examine the inclusive policy of reservation as a determinant of occupational mobility among the Dalits and in particular among the Jatavs community of Munirka village in New Delhi.

Universe: The study is restricted to the Munirka village in New Delhi. The study is further focused towards the Government employees who are

heads of the households. A total of 30 Jatav's households are selected in study through random sampling.

Sources of Data: A detailed interview schedule was used to collect information on the socio-economic and educational and occupational background of the respondents. Besides the facilities they availed and the problems faced by them.

Data Collection: The study is mainly based upon primary as well as secondary data. Secondary data have been collected from published literature. Primary data have been collected on the basis of interview from the selected respondents and used interview schedule to collect the data from all the heads of the 30 households. Special care and precaution had to be taken at the time of interview because most of the respondents were sensitive about their caste identity. Most of the interviews were conducted with prior appointment. Most of them, at first instant, used to suspect the researcher, his motives and were apprehensive about the research. Further, the respondents used to regard it as unnecessary interference in their social life and encroachment on emotional life. Consequently, it used to take time to convince them and establish a rapport.

Data Analysis: The filled in interview schedules of heads of 30 households were edited, codified and fed into the computer along with table plans with simple frequency and cross-tabulation. The unit of analysis has been the heads of the households who are employed in various government departments.

Background of the Study

The paper is based on the field work carried out in the Munirka village which is situated in South Delhi adjacent to the Jawaharlal Nehru University. The Jats are the dominants caste in this village, though there are other castes too such as Jatavs, Potters, weavers and Brahmins. The residential pattern of village is by and large on caste lines. The fact that it is located in the midst of Urban Delhi has raised the rental value of houses and rooms in Munirka. In addition, this village has also attracted investment from outside, primarily of the small scale variety. Such investments, more than anything else, have given a fillip to the village economy. They have generated jobs, encouraged local enterprise, and also, quite significantly, enhanced rental values. The population of the village has been growing rapidly. Though the village has undergone changes at almost every level, yet it remains, in terms of its appearance and morphology of a village. Culturally too it is quite distinct from the urban areas surrounding it. In other words, though Munirka has changed, it has not become the same as the urban world outside it, nor has it been able to fully retain its past traditions and culture in their primitive forms.

The name Munirka can be etymologically traced to one Afghan Munirkhan to whom the village once belonged. In the village the best lands

and the core dwelling area belonged mostly to the Jats. The other caste groups which came later were allowed to settle but mostly on the exterior boundaries. The Jatavs, Mehtars and the Potters for instance live at the back on the cliff side which is in south direction.

The total 30 heads of households of Jatavs family has been selected through random sampling. It is observed that 28 of the households' heads are born and brought up in Munirka village. Only 2 are migrated from outside. Occupation wise they all are employed in various government departments and a majority of them hold occupation at medium and high level.

Findings and Discussions

The major issue intends to deal with the nature and extent of occupation mobility due to reservation policy both at 'intra-generational' and 'intergenerational' levels.

At Intergenerational level an attempt is made to assess and examine the various jobs held by respondents, reasons for leaving such jobs, type of first job and comparison between first job and present job. Here attempt has to see whether present job is under reserved quota, promotion or under open competition.

In order to examine the Intergenerational mobility, respondents' present jobs will be compared with their fathers. Thus, the occupational mobility will be examined at two generation levels i.e., respondent-father. Here attempt has to examine the extent of contribution of reservations in occupational mobility.

Occupations of Respondents

The occupations of respondents are categorized into three categories i.e. low, medium and high (Table1). It is found that majority or 50 per cent respondents are engaged in medium level jobs. Those engaged in high level occupation are 33.33 per cent, while 16.67 per cents are engaged in low level occupations. Thus, a majority of the respondents are engaged in high and medium level occupation.

Occupations of Fathers

Occupations of fathers have been categorized similar to that of respondents i.e., low, medium and high and in addition two more categories: very low and lowest have been created. These two categories includes the jobs like leather tanning, shoe making, weaving, scavenging and landless, manual laborer etc. Table 2 gives distribution of fathers by occupation. It is found that a majority or 43.33 per cent fathers are engaged in very low level of occupation, whereas 26.67 per cent fathers are engaged in their lowest occupations. Only

16.67 per cent fathers are engaged in low level occupation. There are 10 per cent fathers who are engaged in medium level occupation. It is seen that a majority of the fathers are engaged in traditional occupation like tanning of leather, shoe making, weaving, scavenging and landless, manual laborer etc. in the categories of very low and lowest. These occupations also not have regular income and have very low prestige in society. Moreover, these occupations do not require any formal educational qualifications.

On comparing the respondents' and their fathers' occupations we found that respondents are engaged in better/higher occupation than their parents (Table 3). For example, all our respondents are engaged in high, medium and low level occupation whereas majority (70%) per cent fathers are engaged in very low and lowest occupations. Thus, it is revealed that respondents' occupations do not correspond with fathers' and the respondents are highly mobile compared to their fathers.

It revealed that a majority or 46.67 per cent respondents got their current jobs through promotion under reserved quota whereas 23.33 per cent under got through direct appointment under reservation. Those who got their present jobs through promotion with open competition are 20.0 per cent. It is interesting to note that 6.67 per cent of them got their present jobs through direct appointment under open competition. This means, in all there are 26.67 per cent respondents who get their present jobs in open competition which are of course based on their previous job experience and they are not just new or fresh entrants in the job market (Table 4).

It is seen from Table 5 that an absolute majority of the respondents started their occupational career from low level jobs: 63.34 per cent. Only 13.33 per cent and 10.0 per cent of them took up their first job at very low and medium level respectively. The nature of such low and very low level jobs has been like peon, attendant, helper in office, clerk, record keeper, keeping accounts, watchman etc. this may be due to their poor economic conditions that they are forced to get into jobs for providing financial support to their families.

Reasons for leaving first Job

The entry point into first job is crucial for future prospects and therefore nature of job, type of organization and mode of entry into i.e. whether under general or reserved quota determine the job security, income guarantee and promotional prospects. Our respondents are mainly in government organizations because there are constitutional provisions and legal support for further scope. We have collected information about the reasons for leaving the first job and found a variety of reasons (Table 6). It is seen that a majority or 26.67 per cent respondents reported that they gave up first job because they got government job. It may be noted that all of these respondents equated

government job with better job. And 13.33 per cent each of them give the reasons like the job was on leave vacancy, temporary, low paid, etc. Three respondents gave it up for the reason of social discrimination.

First job and the present job

It shall be relevant to see and compare first job and present job of the respondents when we study their occupational mobility (Table 7). It is found that a majority of the respondents or 70.38 per cent started their occupational career at low level jobs where as when they research the per cent occupational level 83.33 per cent of them are at medium and high level of occupations. Thus, it is seen that a majority of them have climbed up the ladder during the job career. This is because of the available opportunities in job market due to reservation in employment. We have analyzed the occupational background of the respondents. It includes whether present job is under open competition or reserved quota or whether it is based on reservation. It is found that majority of the respondents held their present jobs under reserved quota and promotion. In regard with type of first jobs, a majority of them (70.38%) held their first job at low level. The reasons for leaving first jobs are mainly that they got government jobs (better). We have compared first jobs with present and found that an overwhelming majority took up first job at low level and climbed up the ladder and reached present level of jobs.

Perception and Views about Reservation policy

The perception and views are sought and analyzed on the basis of the questions related to reservation policy; its use in improving socio-economic status, comparing respondent's status with their father's and social identity etc. they were asked specific questions and responses to the statement made. In addition, few specific experiences/instances of caste discrimination and untouchability have been recorded.

Education is a prerequisite for such facilities i.e. unless they get into education, they are not eligible they get into education; they are not eligible for such facilities and unless they have formal educational qualifications; they are not eligible to avail reservations in formal jobs.

Keeping in mind the ongoing controversy over the criteria for reservations i.e. whether it should be stopped or replaced by economic criteria, the question was asked to the respondents. It may be noted that an overwhelming majority respondents strongly expressed their views opposing the discontinuation of the reservation policy. The main reasons given are; it is too early to stop when the masses are still backward, behind and very few are being benefited. In addition, they also mentioned that the existing reservations are implemented marginally. However, almost all of them have been critical about the reservations in political representation expressing its weakness and

favour their discontinuation. Whether reservations should be on the basis of economic criteria, they have shown resentment about it because there are very few economically well-off SCs and social exploitation and stigma of untouchability continues. They argued that there is no guarantee of justice and that discrimination by high castes continues.

Further, we have asked a question as to how long reservation should continue. A majority of them reported that “till justice is done” or “till they become at par with general people” or “as long as caste system continues”. Which has been not clear or has been difficult to define for them. When we have asked to react to the statement like, “Over all implementation of reservations has been poor”, overwhelmingly, 98 per cent of them have reported that they agree to the statement. Further, the statement like, “only few well-of SCs are benefiting from the reservations” was made and it is revealed that 60 per cent of them disagreed to the statement and 40 per cent of them agreed to the statement. In order to assess their opinion about reservation policy, we asked them the question: What is the extent of reservation policy in improving socio-economic status (Table 8). It is found that a majority or 50 per cent respondents have reported that the reservation policy has helped them to ‘some extent’ to improve their socio-economic status, whereas 33.33 per cent of them have reported it has helped them to a large extent. Overall opinion seems to be positive so far their status improvement and reservations go. Only 16.67 per cent have negative opinion about reservation policy.

Intergenerational Comparison

The comparison between the status of two generations—son (respondent) and father is a good indicator of difference. The respondents were asked to state whether they were better-off than their fathers educationally occupationally, economically and socially (Table 9). It is found that a significantly higher proportion of them have reported that they are better-off than their fathers in all the four areas.

Summary and Conclusion

Occupation Mobility

The respondents have achieved upward occupational mobility to a greater extent. Their mobility is upward and of a long distance in nature. Thus respondents have an occupational status different from their fathers. Most of the fathers on the other hand, are engaged in lowest and very low level manual, traditional occupation that have low prestige in society.

Present Occupational Status

Respondents’ current jobs are not the first jobs. They changed many jobs because jobs were temporary, on leave vacancy, low paid, in private

organizations where feeling of job insecurity and social insecurity persists. Moreover, comparing their first jobs with present jobs, it is found that out of 30, 23 of them were engaged in low and very low level jobs and majority of them get these jobs under reserved quota. Comparing their first job with the present, most of them climbed up the ladder through reservations and promotions. These promotions also are based on reservation.

It must be noted that a majority of the respondents reported that they suffered from caste discrimination, untouchability, underestimation by their colleagues during their entire occupational span. Concrete incidences of social discrimination like blocking promotions, spoiling of confidential reports, assigning unimportant task and harassments, and undue transfer to remote places etc have been reported.

Reservation Policy

Almost all the respondents used the reservation policy for the employment and therefore, perhaps, they have been able to achieve such a high degree of mobility. All of them acknowledged the positive contribution of reservation policy. However, majority of them reported the improper implementation of the provisions besides being inadequate. However, majority of them favoured the discontinuance of political reservations for that do not serve the purpose.

Perceptions and views

A majority of the respondents reported that they are better-off than their fathers educationally, occupationally, economically and socially. Almost all of them expressed that the practice of untouchability continues. This view was supported by narrations of their own experiences of untouchability in the neighborhood, during their education and in employment; however, a resistance to some extent is reported perhaps because of their awareness and self confidence which they gained out of education and urban exposure. Further, contribution of reservation policy to improve upon their socio-economic status has been reported to be positive to great extent. Majority of them did not favour discontinuance of the reservation policy or its replacement by economic criteria. The reasons for such views have been given that there is no guarantee of justice if economic criteria are adopted and reservation policy should be continued till the SCs come at par with general people or full justice is done.

So, the conclusion drawn from this study is that there is very high degree of occupational mobility because of reservation policy. Since these modern occupations are considered prestigious compared to traditional ones, it may be assumed that our respondents have achieved upward social mobility.

Table 1
Occupations of Respondents

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Low	5	16.67
Medium	15	50.00
High	10	33.33
Total	30	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected during the fieldwork.

Table 2
Father's Occupations

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Lowest	8	26.67
Very Low	13	43.33
Low	5	16.67
Medium	3	10.00
High	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected during the fieldwork.

Table 3
Occupation of Respondents and fathers

Category	Respondents		Father	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lowest	-	-	8	26.67
Very Low	-	-	13	43.33
Low	5	16.67	5	16.67
Medium	15	50.00	3	10.00
High	10	33.33	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00	30	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected during the fieldwork.

Table 4
Respondent's Present Job though Reservation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Promotion Under reserved Category	14	46.67
Direct appointment Under reservation	7	23.33
Promotion through open competition	6	20.00
Direct appointment through open competition	2	6.67
Self Employed	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected during the fieldwork.

Table 5
Type of First Job (Other than Present)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very low	4	13.33
Low	19	63.34
Medium	3	10.00
High	1	3.33
Not Applicable	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected during the fieldwork.

Table 6
Reasons for Leaving First Job

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Got Government/Better job	8	26.67
Continued Education	2	6.67
Joined Legal Practice	1	3.33
Temporary/Leave Vacancy	4	13.33
Low paid/over qualification	4	13.33
Social discrimination	3	10.00
Not Applicable*	8	26.67
Total	30	100.00

*In this category all the 8 respondents got promotion.

Source: Compiled from the data collected during the fieldwork.

Table 7
Respondents' first job and present job

Category	First Job		Present Job	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very Low	4	14.81	-	-
Low	19	70.38	5	16.67
Medium	3	11.11	15	50.00
High	1	3.70	10	33.33
Total	27	100.00	30	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected during the fieldwork.

Table 8
Contribution of Reservation Policy in Improving Socio-Economic Status

Category	Frequency	Percentage
To a large extent	10	33.33
To some extent	15	50.00
Not at all	5	16.67
Total	30	100.00

Source: Compiled from the data collected during the fieldwork.

Table 9
Whether Better-off than Father

Category	Yes	No	Total
Educationally	27 (90.0)	3 (10.0)	30 (100.0)
Occupationally	25 (83.33)	5 (16.67)	30 (100.0)
Economically	27 (90.0)	3 (10.0)	30 (100.0)
Socially	24 (80.0)	6 (20.0)	30 (100.0)

Source: Compiled from the data collected during the fieldwork.

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate per centages.

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