



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

History

BACKWARD CLASSES MOVEMENT IN KARNATAKA

KEY WORDS:

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ABSTRACT

Backward classes movement in Karnataka has its reference ever before 19th century. Ramanujacharya, Basavanna, Akkamahadevi, Manteswamy, Kanaka Dasa, Purandara Dasa had laid foundations of self respect movement in Karnataka even before 19th century. The current paper confining to 19th and 20th century movements makes an effort to delineate the awakening in castes and communities in Mysore kingdom. Besides western education and upliftment of dalits the paper also focus on Anti-untouchability league of Mysore 1930. Dalit associations play a major role in the backward class movement. The paper highlights Justice Leslie Miller committee-1918. L G Havanur Commission, Second backward class commission, third backward class commission. Progress in dalit movement and contributions of Devaraj Urs.

Introduction:

The Manu-Dharmashastra (Manusmriti) compiled by Manu, had condemned all backward classes to servitude. All working classless including formers, crafts men and others come under this category. Holeyas and Madigas were condemned as untouchables.

The backward class movement in Karnataka dates back to 12th century A.D. The beginning of self respect movement can be taken back to 'Kalyana Movement' pioneers of Basavanna, Allama, Akkamahadevi. This vachana sahithya movement created ripples centuries back have been concretized in 19th and 20th centuries and continue to play a prominent role even today in the contemporary movements. The bhakthi movement with the philosophy of equity. Compassion and humanness propelled by Ramanujacharya, Kanaka Dasa, Purandara Dasa and a host of others continues to play a role in the modern day movement even today.

Though the effort to give movement to the backward class between 1790 and 1890 in Karnataka by the state and select associations, the backward class movement did not see a new awakening until the intervention of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.

Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, The most benevolent ruler of the state encouraged the uplift of backward class by appointing Justice Leslie Miller commission in the year 1917. In 1918 December 9 issued an order implementing the reservation policy for backward classes. The miller committee report was bitterly opposed and argued and the jobs should be given on merit by Brahmin leaders and Sir M. Vishwesharaiah before the Maharaja and requested to reject the report, But Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV rejected the appeal and said that backward class people were also the subjects of the state. Dewan Sir M. Vishwesharaiah resigned on the ground the merited persons will be deprived of their opportunities in high posts if the reservation is implemented. This policy was similarly implemented by his successor Dewan Kantharaja Urs. Accordingly 25% of the posts were fitted by the backward classes. By 1926 42% of the posts were given to them. Score out of eight amuldar posts were given to the backward classes which inaugurated a golden age for all the backward, depressed and suppressed classes of the state. The next Dewan, Mirza Ismail succeeds to implement the reservations and improves it to 75%.

Awakening in Politics and Education

The education had played major role in the awakening of backward class movement. In 1917 Justice Party had come into existence in Karnataka then the state of Mysore.

Chiktiyars and Naadars were the leaders of Justice Party. These committees demanded equal opportunities in Government jobs. A conform of backward communities was

organized in Mysore under the leadership of Annaswamy Mudaliyar of Madras. Around 3000 members belonging to 30 backward communities participated.

Anti-untouchability league (AUC):

AUC was started by Murugesan Pillai an untouchable leader in 1930 at Mysore with the support of Lingayaths, Vokkaligas, Reddies and two liberal Brahmins. The league had come under the influence of Mahathma Gandhi and were working for the upliftment of Pachamas. In course of time Vokkaliga, Thigalas, Muslims and other communities come forward to start schools, colleges and hostels for the upliftment of their community students. Later Kurubas, Vaishyas and weavers also started.

Dalit Associations:

In 1920 dalit leaders also come forward to form the own association to run free hostels and schools. As the daliths were financially weak they could not start hostels or schools like other communities. Aadi Dravidan Abhivruddhi Sanga was started by Murugesan Pillai at Bengaluru. Aadi Jambahava Sanga was started to claim equal benefits in political representations. Siddhartha education society was started by H.M. Gangadharaiah schedule caste who converted to Buddhism and took the name Siddhartha for his education society.

Kengeri Gurukulashrma, Malleshwaram Dana Seva Sangha, Kaniyar Sangha were other associations founded by Dalits. These associations campaigned for prohibition of liquor and removal of untouchability.

Praja Mitra Mandali (PMM) Bangalore 1917:

This was the first political party formed by the backward classes in primarily state of Mysore. PMM convened a conference in 1929 and was presided by Arcot Ramaswamy Mudaliyar of Justice Party in Madras. The conference gave a call for the revolution against the Brahmin domination in India as laid down by Manu. This resulted in securing good number of jobs to some of the slightly advanced and qualified committees like veerashivas, vakkaligas, muslims secured good number of jobs other under privileged committees did not get enough jobs for lack of qualifications.

Post Independent movements

Backward class movement gained constitutional provisions under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and this extended social, economical, political and judicial equality to all. The basic rights were specified under articles 14, 15, 16 and 29th Justice Mithar Committee report gave an comilus to the backward classes to make use of facilities extended. In 1958 government passed a statement and mark 75% reservations for backward classes. ST and ST's in educational institutions. Supreme court declared this as invalid stating no particular

yardstick was followed. The second effort by the Mysore Government in 1959 was invalidated again for want of proper yardstick. The Nijalingappa Government opponent Mysore Backward Groups committee in 1960. As per the Balaji and other students v/s state Supreme Court verdict, the government gave up deviding backwards on the basis of caste. Along with other points the annual income (less than 1200 rupees per annum) was added in 1963 and run order was passed. Accordingly, 15% was reserved to SC's 3% for ST's and 30% for the OBC. This reservation reduced from 68% to 48% and was in practice fill Havanur commission.

L. G. Havanur Commission (1978)

Chief Minister Devaraja Urs Government constituted Havanur Commission classified backward committees as 1) backward committees, 2) Backward castes, 3) Backward Tribes and Muslims were classified among backward class as a first amendment. 50% of the reservation was raised to 58% by the Devaraja Urs Government.

In 1979 once again reservation for the backward groups depending on the individual income, caste and tribe was revised. As per the recommendations of the commission a separate department was founded in 1979 for the education and economic development of the backward classes. The Director is a senior IAS Officer.

The commission directs to delet Banajiga, Urs, Devanga, Ganiga, Darji and Rajaputs from the backward lists. The agricultural once again approach the supreme court. As the trial is still pending the Gundu Rao government amount to set up another commission for the revision of the list. In 1985 the Janatha Government headed by Ramakrishna Hegde set up a New Commission headed by Justice Venkataswamy.

Justice Venkataswamy Commission – 1986 (Second Backward class Commission)

There were some loop holes in the Havanur Commission Report. Lingayaths argued that they had not secured jobs on par with Brahmins and demanded to drop Veerashiva Community from forward groups. Vokkaligas also opposed the report. As a result the report was rejected by the government. After the rejection the government prepared Ad-hoc list of backward class. Schedule Castes (SC's) were given 16% reservation and sechedule Tribes (ST's) were given 6% reservation and provided 67% reservation in education and 63% in government jobs.

Third backward class commission (Not implemented)

As the two of the second backward class commission numbers write letter to Chief Minister Hegde that social backwardness as well as economic backwards should be taken into account in finalizing the list.

As a result Hegde government points third backward class commission and divide to opponent one man commission because Chinnappa Reddy refuses to include any number in the commission.

This commission focuses on economic backwardness with social backwardness. Lingayath and Vokkaliga committess represented to the commission about this backwardness when compared to Brahmin community. Keeping these in view most backward sub-caste in Lingayat communities were included in backward list. He did not include vokkaliga committee on the ground that they were economically forward.

Veerendra Patils government was willing to implement the report but the government fell due to cultural quarrel. S. Bangarappa the new Chief Minsiter (1990-92) did not show any interest in the report. Mean time Karnataka also witness Lambani and Bhovi community movement in the year 1998 and 1999 respectively.

Year 2005 wiellness A Him-Da Movement from Hubbaalli under the leadership fo Siddramaiah (Alpasankthya-Hin-Hindulida-Da-Dalitha) Siddaramaih arranged a rally of AHINDA from Hubballi and later similar rallies will be held in different parts of the Karnataka. A-Hin-DA confirms increased the popularity of siddaramaish the head of Kuruba community of the JDS party. To curtile the strength of Devegowda started another movement and starts inner reservation movement to weaken the A-Hin-Da by raising the inner reservation among these classes. Among Dalits Madigas were in a majority when compared to Holeyas. But they were poorly represented in parliament Legislature, Panchayat Raj and other local bodes including government jobs.

Christian Dalit Movement

Many dalits were converted to Christianity with the hope of joining the main gram of society and religion. Father Fernadez and other Christian fathers approached the government to extend reservations for Christian dalits also. There were Buddhist dalits sikh dalits, hundu dalits. As a result reservation was extended to them also. When government extended reservation benefits to Dalit Christians, Buddhist and Hindu dalits protested it. Because a large number of Christians were dalits and demanded additional and separate reservation. These agitation is still going on.

Conclusion:

The Backward Class movement which gained momentum with the implementation of Millar report commission by Krishna Raja Wodyar IV has come a long way in Karnataka. The dreams of Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar and other champions of Backward class movement has preloaded into individual community whole. There is not dispute that every community should have equal rights and opportunities politically, economically and socially.