



## Role of Reservation in Development of Dalits: A Sociological Study (A Case Study of Agra City)

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**Abstract:** The form of social organization, division and stratification in every country is the result of its own geographical conditions, needs of life, cultural traditions and the process of historical development. A unique feature of India's social system is its caste system. Which holds a unique place in the social system. In the context of India, the focus of anthropologists and sociologists on the study of the untouchables, now known as Dalits, represents a major trend in Indian sociology. Dalit history in India is very old. Dalits were deprived of all types of rights. Reservation system was started for the salvation of Dalits. The history of reservation in India is very old, reservation for upper castes in jobs and education had started in India even before independence. Reservation in India started with the formation of Hunter Commission in 1882. Reservation has played a special role in the socio-economic development of Dalits. Reservation was started in Kolhapur state by Sahu Ji Maharaj in 1901. This notification was the first government order to provide reservation in India for the welfare of backward classes, hence today Chhatrapati Sahu Ji Maharaj is also called the father of reservation by the Bahujan Samaj.

**Keywords:** Dalit background, Reservation, Constitutional Provisions

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### **Introduction**

The form of social organization, division and stratification in every nation of the world is the result of its own geographical conditions and needs of life, cultural traditions and the process of historical development. We find evidence of the arrival of Aryans in the Rigvedic period. Andronova culture reflects all the important elements of Aryan life.

Which includes storage, widespread use of horses and wheels, funeral rites, underground dwellings made of birch bark and other woods, and drinking of Soma, hence this culture was called Proto-Indo-Iranian. It is said that the Aryans came to settle in Afghanistan. This is evidenced by the rivers here named after Aryans. Initially the Aryans lived in the geographical area bordering Eastern Afghanistan, North-West Frontier Province, Punjab and Western Uttar Pradesh. Indus River was an important river for the Aryans. In the later Vedic period, the word Arya became synonymous with Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Thus the Vedic Aryans started the Varna system. At present the word Dalit is used for Shudras. The British used the term depressed class for them. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule addressed him by the name Atishudra. Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar used the word untouchable and the words Scheduled Caste and Tribe are used in the Indian Constitution (Chaudhary, 2008).

### Meaning and Definition of Dalit

Dalit, we mean a person or community who is neglected and suppressed in all spheres i.e. religious, economic, social, political and moral. The word Dalit came into use for the first time under the 1919 Montagu Chelmsford Act. The meaning of the word Dalit includes the suppressed, crushed, neglected, lower than animals, deprived and prohibited class.

**According to Slater**, “There was considerable similarity between the Dravidian and ancient Mesopotamian cultures and the semi-civilized Aryans had acquired it from the Dravidians. According to him, various gods were worshiped in Hindu religion, similarly the caste system also existed in the then society” (Verma, 2021).

**According to Narayan Surve**, “There are mixed definitions of the word Dalit. This means not only Buddhists or backward castes, all those who are suffering in the society are Dalits” (Ramachandra, 2012).

### Concept of Reservation

Reservation is a form of affirmative action. It makes arrangements for fixed seats in government institutions for the Dalit exploited classes existing in a backward and unrepresented situation. Reservation in India was started in 1882 by Maharaj Sahu Ji Maharaj of Kolhapur. This reservation was implemented for the first time in Maharashtra. He started providing reservation for social reform. Reservation on religious basis in Indian history started with the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. Provision for communal representation was made in this Act. In the Second Round Table Conference in 1931,

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar had demanded separate representation for Dalits. In 1932, Poona Pact was signed between Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar. Under this, instead of separate representation for Dalits, they made reservation on the basis of population in the central and state legislature. In 1932, religious reservation was strengthened by the Communal Award of British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. In the original Constitution of India, under Article 334, the system of reservation (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) was fixed for 10 years. By the 104th Constitutional Amendment in 2019, reservation in the House has been extended for further 10 years (2030). Reservation was started to bring equality in the society and for the upliftment of the untouchable classes which were being exploited for centuries. To provide a permanent identity to this class or community which has been rejected for a long time in the country, to stop the injustice being done to the backward castes in the country, to integrate them into the mainstream of the nation and to improve their social, economic, religious and reservation was started for political development.

### Indian Constitution and Dalit Reservation

Discrimination, backwardness and exclusion due to specific historical process due to birth in Dalit caste, practice of untouchability and violence have always been used by the dominant castes as weapons of social control and oppression against Dalits and are being used even in the present. Are going. This is done under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and United Nations conventions like Article 5(b) of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Caste Discrimination, 1965 and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, and they are like Dalits. Have special importance for socially excluded communities. Due to the activism of the legislature, untouchability has been constitutionally abolished under Article 17 of the Indian Constitution. This is further strengthened through the provisions of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1955 which provides for some of the main types of practices of untouchability. Along with this, under Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution, caste discrimination has been banned in the access of Dalits to public places and public employment.

### Articles of the Indian Constitution and their Provisions

- **Article 15(4)**- Refers to the specific context for development.
- **Article 16(4a)**- The facts speak in favor of the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe in the case of engagement of any class or affiliation in non-Services of the State.

- **Article 17-** Puts an end to untouchability.
- **Article 46-** The State needs to promote with special attention the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections and especially the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- **Article 243(d)-** Provides for details of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Panchayats in the same proportion as the population of Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes in the village.

### Review of Literature

- **Pandey (2006)** Throwing light on the biography of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, he has said that he was born in a Mahar caste. His caste was called untouchable caste. After studying knowledge in America, London and Germany, Dr. Ambedkar learned the secret that knowledge crowns a man with power. Under the influence of John Dewey, Dr. Ambedkar could understand the effectiveness and usefulness of education for the upliftment of the untouchables and Dalits and he considered their educational and cultural progress to be extremely essential for the upliftment of these classes.
- **Chaudhary (2008)** Has studied the origin of Shudras in depth in his book 'Haashiye Ki Vadhyakini'. He has said that the oldest written evidence regarding the origin of the varna system is the Vedas and the oldest among the Vedas is the Rigveda. Shudras were called by different names. The British called them depressed class, Jyotiva Phule called them Atishudras and Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar used the word 'untouchable' for them. The words Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe have been used in the Indian Constitution.
- **Aggarwal and Gonsalves (2010)** has written in the book titled Dalits and Law that even after almost six decades of independence, social evils like casteism, caste system, untouchability etc. are deeply rooted in India. He says that we have seen such cases where upper castes used to throw excreta into the wells of Scheduled Caste people, but neither the police nor the judiciary intervened.
- **Naveen and Kumar (2020)** Has studied the ancient history of India in depth. In this the author has described the period of human development. In this the author has clarified that the later Vedic society was clearly divided into four varnas – Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. The profession of each varna was determined.

Varna was not based on birth. Both the upper varnas captured power, prestige and privileges while marginalizing the so-called lower varnas.

### Objectives of Study

- To discuss the Socio-Economic condition of Dalits.
- To analyze the increase in Educational and Employment Opportunities of Dalits through Reservation.
- To study the challenges arising in the lives of Dalits.

### Research Methodology

Descriptive and Explanatory method has been used in the research paper. It is based on primary and secondary sources. This includes interview schedule, books, articles, published and unpublished magazines and research papers.

### Area of the Study

Kaushal Pur and Nagla Padi areas of Agra city have been selected for the research. These areas have been selected on the basis of Dalit majority areas. The total estimated population of these areas is around 6000. Out of which 140 representatives have been selected through empirical sampling method.

### General Information of the Respondents

**Table 1 Age and Gender of Respondents**

<i>Age ratio/Sex</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Under 18 years</b>	22	10	32	22.8%
<b>18 to 30 years</b>	25	12	37	26.4%
<b>30 to 40 years</b>	23	14	37	36.4%
<b>more than 40 years</b>	19	15	34	24.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>140</b>	100%

It is clear from the above table that the percentage of respondents below 18 years of age is 22.8%. The percentage of respondents aged between 18 and 30 is 26.4%. The percentage of respondents aged between 30 to 40 years is 36.4% which indicates that most of the respondents belong to this category out of which 19 are male respondents and 15 are female respondents.

### Socio-Economic Status of Respondents

After independence, the Constitution provided many social, economic, educational and political rights for their upliftment. Untouchability is considered illegal in Article 17 of the Constitution. But if seen at present, even today the social condition of Dalits has not changed to a great extent. Their socio-economic status still remains low because they were deprived of all facilities for years.

**Table 2: Socio-Economic Status**

Sl No	Socio-Economic Status	Number of Respondents		Total	Percent
		Male	Female		
1	Low levels	34	26	60	42.8%
2	Medium level	29	18	47	33.5%
3	High level	20	13	33	23.5%
Total		83	57	140	100%

It is clear from the above table that the percentage of respondents from low level in socio-economic status of the respondents is 42.8%. The percentage of respondents with middle level is 33.5% and the percentage of respondents with high level socio-economic status is 23.5%. This makes it clear that the highest percentage of respondents are from low level respondents.

**Table 3: Reasons for Low Level of Socio-Economic Status**

Sl No	Reason	Number of respondents		Total	Percent
		Male	Female		
1	Illiteracy	21	13	34	24.2%
2	Poverty	22	11	33	23.5%
3	Discrimination	20	17	37	26.4%
4	Drug abuse	26	10	36	25.7%
Total		89	51	140	100%

It is clear from the presented table that among the reasons for low socio-economic status of the respondents, the reason for discrimination has been selected by more respondents whose percentage is 26.4%. 24.2% of the respondents believe that illiteracy also plays an important role in low socio-economic status. 23.5% of the respondents say

that poverty plays an important role in low level of socio-economic status. Due to which people are deprived of getting a good education. 25.7% of the respondents believe that drug consumption leads to the socio-economic degradation of people.

### **Increase in Education and Employment of Dalits through Reservation**

The Indian Constitution has played an important role in the upliftment and development of Dalits (Scheduled Castes). Some fundamental rights have been provided to the citizens in Section IV of the Constitution. It is written in Article 15(2) that any kind of discrimination against any citizen on the basis of his religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth etc. shall not be allowed in (a) entry into shops, public places, (b) access to wells, tanks, there will be no use of roads, bathing ghats and public resting places. According to Article 15(4) the State may make special provisions for the upliftment of socially and educationally backward citizens or the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. In the field of education, reservation has been given to students of Scheduled Castes/Tribes to get admission in schools, colleges and universities. According to Article 16(1) of the Constitution, all citizens shall be given equal opportunities in matters of public employment. Articles 330 and 332 provide for reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes/Tribes in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of various states. Reservation has played an important role in the liberation of Dalits. Through reservation, poor, backward and disabled people have got a chance to express their talent.

**Table 4: Education of Respondents**

Sl No	Level of Education	Number of respondents		Total	Percent
		Male	Woman		
1	Secondary	15	17	32	22.8%
2	Higher Secondary	25	13	38	27.1%
3	Graduate	21	16	37	26.4%
4	Masters and above	19	14	33	23.5%
Total		80	60	140	100%

The above table shows that the percentage of respondents who have received secondary education is 22.8%. The percentage of respondents who have attained higher secondary education is 27.1% and the percentage of graduate respondents is 26.4%. The percentage of respondents who have received post-graduate and above education is 23.5%.

**Table 5: Employment of Respondents**

Sl No	Employment	Number of Respondents		Total	Percent
		Male	Woman		
1	Government job	21	10	31	22.1%
2	Private job	23	16	39	27.8%
3	Contract work	26	10	36	25.7%
4	Daily wage labour	18	16	34	24.2%
Total		88	52	140	100%

It is clear from the above table that the percentage of respondents doing government jobs is 22.1%. The percentage of respondents doing private jobs is 27.8%. The percentage of respondents working on contract is 25.7% and the percentage of respondents working as daily wage laborers is 24.2%. This shows that maximum of the respondents does private jobs.

**Table 6: Challenges Arising in the Lives of Dalits**

Sl No	Challenges	Response of respondents		Total	Percent
		Yes	No		
1	Lack of Education	25	7	32	22.8%
2	Lack of Opportunities	29	7	36	25.7%
3	Lack of Awareness	19	15	34	24.2%
4	Negative Attitude of Concerned Authorities	24	14	38	27.1%
Total		97	43	140	100%

It is clear from the above table that the respondents have considered lack of education as a major challenge, the percentage of which is 22.8%. The percentage of respondents who see lack of opportunities as a challenge is 25.7%. 24.2% of the respondents believed that due to lack of awareness they have to face more challenges and 27.1% of the respondents said that the negative attitude of the concerned authorities is also an important challenge.

**Table 7: Awareness of Constitutional Provisions among the Respondents**

Sl No	Constitutional Provisions	Number of Respondents		Total	Percent
		Male	Female		
1	Reservation Information	36	14	50	35.7%
2	Availability of Employment Opportunities	26	17	43	30.7%
3	Awareness regarding provisions related to education and employment	27	20	47	33.5%
Total		89	51	140	100%

It is clear from the presented table that how much awareness is there among the respondents about the constitutional provisions, in which the percentage of respondents having knowledge of reservation system is 35.7%. The percentage of respondents who are aware of the availability of employment opportunities is 30.7% and the percentage of respondents who are aware of the provisions related to education and employment is 33.5%.

### Conclusion

On the basis of the above analysis, it can be said in conclusion that as time passed, Dalits have started trying to enter modern institutions like bureaucracy, education and politics with the process of reservation. Using their constitutional rights, they demanded their self-representation in the institutions of education, production and governance. On the basis of research study, it is said that among the selected respondents, the percentage of respondents aged between 30 to 40 years is 36.4% which includes 23 male respondents and 14 female respondents. The study found that the level of socio-economic status of the respondents is very low which is seen in percentage at 42.8%. The percentage of respondents who said that the main reason for their low status is discrimination is 26.4%. In the educational level of the respondents, the percentage of respondents with education up to higher secondary is 27.1%. The respondents said that due to low education they have to do private jobs. Whose percentage was found to be 27.8%. People of Dalit community have to face various challenges in their life from the very beginning. The biggest problem in this is the negative attitude of the officers working in various institutions due to which their problems are solved very late. Whose percentage is 27.1%. There is no provision of reservation for Dalits in private sector industries,

universities and professional colleges. Reservation works as a weapon for Dalits to achieve equality with the upper castes.

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