

EMPOWERMENT OF WEAKER SECTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about the empowerment of weaker sections. Weaker section the most deprived section of the society on social, political and economic level. Their condition is much worst in rural areas as compared to urban areas. In rural areas on education basis as well as on social and political basis they are on the initial stage of development ladder.

There overall development is needed for the welfare of our society as well as for the economic security of our country. For this very purpose Government has launched many schemes such as Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, Janani Suraksha Yojana, Rashtriya Bal Swasthaya Karyakram, Midday meals schemes, Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development Scheme for Women, Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme for Women, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Ajeevika, Indira Awaas Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Awaas Yojana, etc. Moreover, free school uniforms, books, coaching for higher studies and Scholarships were also provided from state and Center Government in lakhs for the students of backward areas and weaker sections. They also get reservation in Government jobs and education. Along with launching schemes weaker section expecting from the Government to make a regular go through, the implementation and the consequences of their respective schemes and plans.

Keywords: Empowerment Deprived Entrepreneurship Consequences Implementation.

In India weaker section implies those people who are economically , socially, educationally, politically and physically weak .They are unable to meet even their basic amenities of food , shelter and clothing .They are dominated and oppressed by the other sections of the society from centuries and on the top of that they become the victims of many deprivations such as poverty , unemployment , illness , illiteracy ,backwardness, indebtness , bondage, exploitation and many other evils .Their condition is much more worst in rural areas as compared to urban areas. In rural areas on **social** –unaware about the basic rights to live in society , **political** – unaware about the schemes ,safeguards and other relative measures provided by the government for their upliftment , **economic**-unable to fulfill even their basic necessities and **education**- unable to get educational facilities due to poverty ,ignorance ,backwardness etc , basis , they are still on the initial stage of the development ladder .

PRE INDEPENDENCE ERA

Before independence many atrocities were imposed on weaker sections - scheduled caste , scheduled tribes , women , disabled person and many other minorities - of the society . They suffered from many civil, social , economic , and political disabilities in various aspect of life .They had no right to maintain any social contact with the other sections of the society . They were prohibited from using public wells and even denied from using common cremation ground. They were not allowed to participate in any religious activities and were also denied to visit religious places .They were also prohibited from entering restaurants, hotels, shops, and educational institutions. In addition to this they had no social , political , and judicial power . Thus they were fully exploited by the other sections of the society on socially, politically and economically.

Similarly, members of Scheduled tribes were exploited economically by the non – tribals and as a result they were reduced to the state of poverty and become the victim of indebtedness and land alienation. Women section , on the contrary , enjoyed a respectable position in ancient India . During this period women hold equal status to men . They are free to participate in various religious ceremonies , festivals , perform inter –caste marriage and even remain unmarried if they so desired .But with the passage of time , their status deteriorated to the lowest level . Many social evils like – **Sati Pratha , Pardha System , Polygamy , Female Infanticide , Child – Marriage** etc . reduced their status to the lower level .

ROLE OF SOCIAL REFORMERS

Social reformers pay special attention to improve the social and economical status of the weaker sections of the society as their participation was needed to attain the goal of National freedom . Thus the progress of the weaker section becomes one the major objectives of these Social reformers . The **Satya Sodhaka Samaj** , the **Arya Samaj**, the **Brahmo Samaj** were established with an objective to eradicate the bad custom of untouchability from society and to provide respectable position to the members of Scheduled caste and scheduled tribes . Social reformers such as **Swami Dayanand Saraswati , (1) Swami Vivekananda , Raja Ram Mohan Roy , Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar , Jyotiba Phule , Dr . B.R. Ambedkar** contributed a lot to improve their condition in society Dr B. R. Ambedkar, especially, played an important role in abolishing untouchability and contributed a lot towards the welfare , protection and development of these sections . They raised their voice against social evils like - Caste System , Untouchability , Child Marriage , Religious Dogmas , Superstitions , Sati Pratha , Pardha System , Female Infanticide etc . Their main contribution was towards the upliftment of the status of women and Shudras by providing them respectable position in the society . They contributed a lot in the field of education , agriculture , widow remarriage , inter caste marriage , removal of untouchability etc . As a result of their efforts women and other lower sections of the society contributed in various ways in the freedom struggle of the country .

POST INDEPENDENCE ERA

After Independence Government of India made serious attempts to enhance the status of women and lower section of the society . As their over all development –social , political and economic - was needed for the welfare of our society as well as for the economic security of our country. For this very purpose government of India has focused on the welfare and upliftment of weaker section through its many constitutional provision and welfare schemes .Government by giving them reservation in jobs ,education and by giving them special representation in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha's tries to enhance their status in society . Government also set up separate department and advisory councils for their welfare so that they overcome from their miserable conditions **CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR THE WEAKER SECTIONS OF THE SOCIETY.**

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES (2)

Art. 15 (5) : This clause was added in 93rd amendment in 2005 and allows the state to make special provisions for backward classes or SCs or STs for admissions in private educational institutions, aided or unaided.

Art. 16(4): This clause allows the state to reserve vacancies in public service for any backward classes of the state that are not adequately represented in the public services. Art. 16 (4A): This allows the state to implement reservation in the matter of promotion for SCs

and STs.

Art. 16(4B): This allows the state to consider unfilled vacancies reserved for backward classes as a separate class of vacancies not subject to a limit of 50% reservation.

Art. 19(5): It allows the state to impose restriction on freedom of movement or of residence in the benefit of Scheduled Tribes.

Art. 40: Provides reservation in 1/3 seats in Panchayats to SC/ST.

Art. 46: Enjoins the states to promote with care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections, specially SC and STs.

Art. 164: Appoint special minister for tribal welfare in the states of MP, Bihar, and Orissa.

Art. 275: Allows special grant in aids to states for tribal welfare.

Art. 330/332: Allows reservation of seats for SC/ST in the parliament as well as in state legislatures.

Art. 335: Allows relaxation in qualifying marks for admission in educational institutes or promotions for SCs/STs.

Art. 338/338A/339: Establishes a National Commission of SCs and STs. Art. 339 allows the central govt. to direct states to implement and execute plans for the betterment of SC/STs.

Art. 340: Allows the president to appoint a commission to investigate the condition of socially and economically backward classes and table the report in the parliament.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR WOMEN

Art. 15(3): It allows the state to make special provisions for women and children. Several acts such as Dowry Prevention Act have been passed including the most recent one of Protection of women from domestic violence Act 2005.

Art. 23: Under the fundamental right against exploitation, flesh trade has been banned.

Art. 39: Ensures equal pay to women for equal work . Art.

40: Provides 1/3 reservation in panchayat.

Art. 42: Provides free pregnancy care and delivery.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR CHILDREN

Art. 19 A: Education up to 14 yrs has been made a fundamental right. Thus, the state is required to provide school education to children.

Art. 24: Children have a fundamental right against exploitation and it is prohibited to employ children below 14 yrs of age in factories and any hazardous processes. Recently the list of hazardous processes has been update to include domestic, hotel, and restaurant work.

Art. 45: Urges the state to provide early childhood care and education for children up to 6 yrs of age.

SCHEMES LAUNCHED BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT

In spite of these constitutional provisions many welfare schemes are launched by the Government to enhance their status on economic, political , and social basis .The State Government have separate departments to look after the welfare of Scheduled Caste , Scheduled Tribes , Other Backward Classes, Women and Children .

SCHEMES FOR SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES (3)

JAWAHAR ROZGAR YOJANA – Scheme started by the Government of India with an objective to strengthening rural economic infrastructure by providing employment to poor rural people special preferences were given to the members of Schedule caste and Schedule tribes . Moreover 30 % of the employment opportunities are reserved for the women of rural areas .

INDIRA GANDHI AWAAS YOJANA – Scheme started by the Government with an objective to provide financial help to the weaker section of the society to upgrade their standard of living by replacing their temporary houses with permanent houses .

RAJIV AWAAS YOJANA – Centrally sponsored scheme with an objective to provide housing facilities to the members of Schedule caste and Schedule tribe absolutely free of cost .

Beside these schemes , In 1992 a National Commission was set up for the welfare of Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribes . Its main objective was to make over all development of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe . Apart from this Commission (4) many other important organization came into existence – The Harijan Sevak Sangh Delhi ,The Hindu Sweeper Sewak Sangh ,New Delhi and the Bharatiya Adimjati Sewak Sangh ,New Delhi . The main purpose of these organizations was to eradicate untouchability from the society . Along with these Organizations many schemes were also sponsored by the center .Some of the important centrally sponsored schemes are ;

coaching and training for various competitive examinations IAS,IPS etc. in order to improve the representation of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in various services, providing post –matric scholarships to students for higher education , launching vocational training in tribal areas and educational complexes in low literacy pockets for promotion of female literacy in tribal areas ,construction of hostels for providing residential facilities to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes girls studying in schools ,colleges and universities , financial assistance to reputed social science research institutions for research in development and problem of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes , providing textbooks to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes students of medical/engineering courses , and scholarships and passage grants for higher education abroad .

In government services ,allotment of special quotas , promotions for higher positions and concessions such as relaxation of age limit , relaxation in the standard of suitability , relaxation of the qualification and experience , have also been provided to them .

SCHEMES FOR WOMEN

Similarly for the welfare and development of women many schemes were implemented by the government . The main objectives of these schemes are to bring about a radical change , development and advancement in their position . Several measures were taken by the Government of India to eradicate gender inequality, early marriage, female mortality , female foeticide , female infanticide , dowry , domestic violence etc to empower women in social , economic and political sphere . Government give much stress on the welfare, protection and development of women by providing them various educational and health facilities.

Schemes like –

RASHTRIYA MAHILA KOSH – Scheme started by the Government of India with an objective to improve economic condition of the poor women by providing them easy loans to start their own income generating resources like handicrafts , agriculture , shop keeping etc .

JANANI SHISHU SURAKSHA KARYAKRAM – Scheme started by the Government to provide best health facilities to the pregnant women for their delivery .

JANANI SURAKSHA YOJANA – Scheme started with an purpose to promote Institutional delivery among the poor pregnant women to avoid maternal mortality and infant mortality .

MOTHER AND CHILD TRAKING SYSTEM – The main motive of this scheme is to provide medical facilities including pregnancy care , medical care and vaccination during delivery and after delivery to mothers and their children .

Along with these schemes the National Commission for Women was set up in 1992 with a view to safeguard the legal rights of women .To improve their position in society many constitutional provisions were provided to them by government . According to these provisions seats were reserved for them in the local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities at local levels , in Vidhan Sabha at State levels and in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha at National level laying strong foundation for their participation in decision making . Special measures will be taken to provide them adequate health facilities like safe drinking water , toilets facilities and sanitation along with these facilities special attention will also be given to solve the problem of nutrient deficiencies . A separate department was set up by the Center Government to look into this matter . Many other schemes such as Child Development Services Schemes , Support to Training and Employment Programme For Women , Crèche /Day Care Centers for the Children of Working and Ailing Mother , (5) Hostels for Working Women , Welfare of Street Children Integrated Child Development Service , etc were implemented by the Center g Government for their holistic development . Center g Government formulated plans , policies and programmes for their overall development .Many Non – Governmental organizations also working in the field of women and child development in coordination with the Government for their welfare and development

SCHEMES FOR CHILDREN

Several measures were taken by the Government to ensure that adequate facilities should be provided to the children before and after birth . Government give much stress on their full physical , mental and social development and implemented many child welfare programmes for their over all development .

INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES – Centrally sponsored scheme launched with the purpose to provide supplementary nutrition , vaccination, health check-up and health education to the children . For this purpose Government provided free education , free uniforms , free books and even free coaching for higher studies like M.Phil and Ph.D . Scholarships were also provided from State and Centre Government to the students of weaker section so that they continue their education without any financial difficulty .

SARVA SHIKSKA ABHIYAN – Scheme implemented by the Education department with an objective to provide quality education to all the children .

MID –DAY MEAL SCHEME – Scheme implemented by the Government to provide nutrition food to the children attending school .

In spite of these schemes Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya , Integrated Programmes For Street Children , Crech Scheme For The Children Of Working Mother , Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship and many more schemes were launched by the Government with an objective to provide adequate education facilities , health facilities for their betterment of them as well as for the betterment of the Nation

CONCLUSION

The paper concluded that the weaker section - Scheduled castes , Scheduled tribes , women , children , Disabled Persons and other minorities -are the most deprived section of our society . Many disabilities were imposed on them in social , political and economic field . They are at the lowest level of the society and are being oppressed , exploited and dominated by the higher section of the society . Lack of awareness about their legal rights , lack of education , poverty , their bad social conditions , lack of health facilities unemployment ,backwardness , all are the major factors that are responsible for their miserable condition .The Government of India take special measures to improve , to enhance and to develop their status in society by framing many legal provisions - (**Art. 15 (5),16(4), 16(4A) ,16(B) ,19(5) ,40 , 46, 164 ,275 , 330 /332,335, 338/338A/339,340 , 15(3) , 23 ,39 ,40 ,42 , 19(A) ,24 , 45)** and by implementing many schemes – (JAWAHAR ROZGAR YOJANA , INDIRA GANDHI AWAAS YOJANA, RAJIV AWAAS YOJANA, RASHTRIYA MAHILA KOSH, JANANI SHISHU SURAKSHA KARYAKRAM, JANANI SURAKSHA YOJANA, MOTHER AND CHILD TRAKING SYSTEM , INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES,

SARVA SHIKSKA ABHIYAN , MID –DAY MEAL SCHEME) Many facilities -

social , economic , political , educational , health , legal , and physical facilities are provided by the Government to the weaker section of the society for their betterment as well as for the betterment of the whole country as these weaker sections constitute an important part of the country .Education facilities , legal rights and their changing social conditions create new opportunities for the members of the weaker sections . But at the same time there is no denying the fact that only a small segment of these weaker sections take the advantages of all the schemes implemented by the Government. Poverty Indebtedness, Exploitation ,Inequality ,Malnutrition and other ills are the main obstacles in the path of their progress . Hence more efforts are required from Government of India to increase the awareness among them to improve and enhance their social , political and economic status in the society .

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