



POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEDULED CASTE COMMUNITIES IN TRIPURA

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ABSTRACT

A major part of Indian politics revolves on caste. The Indian political system is deeply entangled with caste, as Rajni Kothari has pointed out. Therefore, the politics of the body are governed by the interplay of these factors. The authors of this paper have shown the challenges associated with scheduled caste politics in Tripura and provided suggestions for addressing caste bias in the state. Research on the progress of Tripura's scheduled caste groups was conducted from several perspectives. If the research's recommendations in several areas are put into action, genuine benefits might be reached to the underprivileged, making the study useful to decision makers and other relevant agencies.

Keywords: Political, Development, Scheduled Caste, communities, Tripura.

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of recorded history, those of the Scheduled Castes have been the most marginalized people in our country. The scheduled castes are at the bottom of the social structure, while the Brahmins are at the top, according to the old caste system. There is no hope of altering this system since it was predetermined by God. As a result, the scheduled caste groups failed in their attempts to gain access to the country's economic and political systems. A degraded way of life brought on by prejudice that dated back a century was the result. When compared to the rest of society, the lower classes have the reputation of being untouchable (Abedi, 2010). Social isolation is maintained between the upper caste societies and the untouchable caste. The caste system has a profound impact on all of India's states, regions, and individual cities. And it has permeated every step of our journey through life. Its effects are seen in politics and beyond.



Political Development of the Scheduled Caste

Academics and researchers have a lot to say on the nature and direction of political change. Although certain features are relevant across cultures and help identify a country's degree of development, each country's socioeconomic and political environment has resulted in its own distinctive features of development. The method of assessing and establishing the institution, system, and mechanism that facilitates allocation of resources and values in such a way that conflict over access to usage of these resources and values does not re-emerge as violence. The Indian political system blends ancient practices with contemporary thinking. A person's actions may be influenced to a similar degree by the presence of contemporary democratic political system as by the existence of traditional social structure, organization, and institution (Arora, 2014).

Scheduled Caste in Tripura

Since the fifteenth century, Tripura has been governed by a line of kings known as the Maharajas of Tripura. Tripura is the only North Eastern state that borders the state of Bengal on three sides, hence its indigenous people have more opportunities to interact with Bengalis than those in any of the other North Eastern states. Dependence on Bengalis to administer the government of Tripura is another major factor contributing to the strong relationship between these two areas. The tribal monarch of the princely state encouraged the Bengalis to join the government since there weren't enough educated individuals in the state to do the job (Kawale, 2011). From peon to minister, they fill a variety of assigned roles. The monarch also wanted Bengal to settle its agriculture to enhance tax income. Since the tribals are used to shifting cultivation, the king instituted established cultivation and invited Bengali growers to construct ploughed agriculture or settled farming in the state. Plains Bengalis in the princely state are mostly Muslim and have been settling there for some time.

It's one of India's seven northeastern states, and it's called Tripura. As of the 2011 census, its population was 36, 71,032, making it the third-smallest state in India. In the decade from 2001 and 2011, the state's growth rate was 14.75 percent. The scheduled caste population of the state in 2011 was 6, 54,918 people, or 17.82% of the total population. Scheduled Caste people may be found all across the state of Tripura; they are not concentrated in any



one area. They represent the state's most marginalized population. Caste they are socially and economically marginalized (Jefferlot, 2011).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This report on scheduled caste politics in Tripura is grounded on extensive primary research. Both main and secondary data sets contributed to the current investigation.

The interviews and questionnaires used to gather primary data are cited below. The research was conducted in 24 villages spread over eight districts in Tripura, with a concentrated effort on four predetermined regions with a high concentration of members of a certain caste.

Books, journals, and other publications were consulted to gather secondary data. The Census report, basic statistics of Tripura, district statistical handbooks, and other similar documents and papers were also used.

The research would also make use of a historical-comparative analytical approach, in addition to a behavioural one, to back up its conclusions. The application of a historical analysis to trace the evolution of scheduled caste politics in pre-independence Tripura. Using an analytical approach, we want to learn about the history and goals of scheduled caste groups in Tripura. Last but not least, the statistical approach used to evaluate the performance of government programs and the impact of the scheduled caste on Tripura's electoral politics.

RESULTS

Movements at the grassroots level that aim to increase the political influence of the scheduled caste group are on the rise. The degree to which scheduled caste groups are represented in the political process at each of the three panchayat levels was determined by an in-depth analysis. The scheduled caste group has the highest rates of political engagement of any demographic.

Therefore, the 73rd amendment act of 1992 was a significant step in ensuring that members of the depressed caste group in Three- Tire panchayat had equal opportunities to participate in politics. The following table shows the three-tire panchayat representatives



from each scheduled caste group. It also compares the turnout of the Scheduled Caste group in the 1994 Tripura panchayat election to that of the 2014 poll.

Table 1: Percentage of SC Representative in Panchayat Raj institution

Scheduled caste representative in Panchayat	1994	2014
Gram panchayat	22.79%	29.63%
Panchayat Samiti	24.48%	29.59%
Zila Parishad	21.42%	29.31%

- Scheduled caste members have a disproportionately high degree of involvement in local politics. There are three tiers to the panchayat system in Tripura. There are three tiers of government in India: the gram panchayat at the most local level, the Panchayat Samiti in the middle, and the Zila Parishad at the most central.
- Despite making up just 16.36% of the population in the 1991 census, those belonging to the scheduled caste group were awarded 22.79% of the seats in the panchayat election held in 1994. The same thing happened in the 1994 elections for the Panchayat Samiti and the Zila Parishad, when the scheduled castes ended up with more seats than they really had voters.
- These groups had a disproportionate amount of seats in the panchayat election of 2014. At the local level (the Gram Panchayat), 29.63% of Scheduled Caste members participate; at the next tier up (the Panchayat Samiti) that number rises to 29.31%; and at the regional level (the Zila Parishad) that number falls to 29.31%. The scheduled castes have a greater voting power than the general castes, and they are well represented at the polling station.
- The Congress party had a stranglehold on the scheduled caste group in the early years of democratic politics. The Tripura Tapashilbhokta Jati Samiti (Tripura Scheduled caste Association), founded by Sanatan Sarkar, is the sole group representing the scheduled castes in the state. The Congress party's leader



eventually saw an opening to integrate them all into a single group. All of the association's major leaders eventually joined the Congress party and ran for office as Congress candidates in Tripura.

- Conflict between two experienced leaders, Sri Sachindralal Singh and Sri Shkhamay Sengupta, damaged the Congress party's reputation in Tripura in the middle of the 1960s. Conflict inside the party and the emergence of a rival faction serve to undermine cohesion.
- Tripura's scheduled caste group has benefited from the communist party's ideological commitment to create a caste- and class-free society.
- The group representing scheduled castes was seen to not make demands that ran counter to the interests of the party. Scheduled caste groups' independence has been compromised by parties with centralized authority over them. This meant that the scheduled caste group in Tripura, like that in other states, was unable to form its own autonomous scheduled caste movement to advocate for its rights. The CPIM party has been successful in forming a caste-based scheduled caste structure in order to consolidate power inside the party.

CONCLUSION

All privileges and benefits were withheld from the scheduled castes. They had fallen behind in the evolution race. One of the most telling signs of progress is the evolution of the political system. In addition, study on Dalit studies has not yet been fully developed in Tripura. Scheduled castes in Tripura will get a more informed and self-aware understanding of the rights-based development strategy that our program aims to foster. The scheduled castes of Tripura will benefit from this initiative since it will increase their awareness and consciousness towards a rights-based approach to development. Government initiatives, particularly those concerned with the welfare of SCs, are routinely disregarded, and there is no reliable mechanism for tracking where the plans have gone wrong. As a result, most SC communities are still working to meet certain fundamental requirements. The analysis deduces the underlying political and administrative causes. It will raise awareness and encourage the government to act on its plans.



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