

**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE BACKWARD CASTES'
MOVEMENT IN KARNATAKA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD**

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CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled "A Sociological Study of the Backward Castes' Movement in Karnataka with Special Reference to the Post-Independence Period" submitted by Shri V. Umesh for the Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other Degree of this or any other University. We recommend that this dissertation to be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of M.Phil degree.


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CONTENTS

Acknowledgement

Chapter One	-	INTRODUCTION	1-17
Chapter Two	-	A GENERAL SURVEY OF BACKWARD CASTES' MOVEMENT IN SOUTH INDIA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KARNATAKA	18-39
Chapter Three	-	BACKWARD CASTES' DYNAMICS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE KARNATAKA	40-52
Chapter Four	-	ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE TO BACKWARD CASTES' STRUGGLE IN KARNATAKA	53-81
Chapter Five	-	CONCLUSION	82-86

Appendix

Bibliography

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

The universal feature of social structure is the classification of society into various classes or strata that form a hierarchy of prestige and power. This has throughout the history attracted the attention of philosophers and social theorists like Marx, Weber, Pareto and Durkheim to name a few. They have been concerned with economic, social and political inequalities based on stratification.¹ The study of the ways in which different societies are stratified, and the consequent inequality among different strata continues to be a major concern of social scientists, even to this day.

The concept of social stratification has been defined by many, but the one given by Sorokin is quite comprehensive. He says,

Social stratification means the differentiation of a given population into hierarchically superposed classes. It is manifested in the existence of upper and lower social layers. Its basis and very essence consist in an unequal distribution of rights and privileges, duties and responsibilities, social values and privations, social power and influence among the members of a society.²

Although social stratification is a universal phenomenon, its types and manifestations vary from one society

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1. Tumin (W.M.), Social Stratification: The Forms and Functions of Inequality, Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, New Delhi, 1969, pp.1-11.
 2. Sorokin (Pitrim A.), Social and Cultural Mobility, The Free Press, New York, 1959, p.11.

to another, and within one society, it differs from time to time. Slavery, estates, caste and social class and status have been the commonly distinguished four main types of social stratification.³

Slavery is an extreme form of inequality in which certain group of individuals are entirely without rights.⁴ It existed in ancient Greece and Rome as well as in the eighteenth century America. In the feudal estates of medieval Europe, a precise sense of rights and obligations existed among the labour, nobles, clergy and commoners.⁵ These two types of stratification are not found in pure form today.

Social classes are the characteristic groups of the industrial societies which have developed since the seventeenth century. Their classification is based on the economic criteria (Marx). There is a general disagreement among sociologists on the issue of the cohesiveness of the different classes, their role in society and their future.

Caste as a form of social stratification in India:

The origin of the caste in India is traced to the ancient 'varna'⁶ system of the vedic period. In 'Purushasukta'

3. Bottomore (T.B.), Sociology: A Guide to Problems and Literature, Blackie and Son (India) Ltd., Bombay, 1979, p.185.

4 & 5. Ibid., pp.185-202.

6. 'Varna' literally means colour. It was used to differentiate between the dark-skinned natives and fair-skinned 'aryans'.

of 'Rig-veda', there is a mention to this 'varna' system. The 'varna' system divided society into four groups, viz., Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, each with a specialised function to perform. Srinivas opines that the "ordering of different 'varnas' is clearly intended to support the theory of Brahminical supremacy."⁷

In course of time 'varna' order became rigid and occupation became hereditary. Ghurye feels that this is a post-vedic development. In India today, instead of four 'varnas', we have hundreds of 'jatis' or castes, each is an endogamous group.

Many have defined caste system. "Caste is undoubtedly an all-India phenomenon in the sense that everywhere hereditary endogamous groups which form a hierarchy...with one or two occupations,...Relations between castes are invariably expressed in terms of pollution and purity."⁸ Dumont says that, "the caste system divides the whole society into a large number of hereditary groups, distinguished from one another and connected together by three characteristics: separation... division of labour...and finally hierarchy."⁹

7. Srinivas (M.N.), Social Change in Modern India, Orient Longman Limited, Bombay, 1977, pp.4-5.

8. Srinivas (M.N.), Ibid., p.3.

9. Dumont (Louis), Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications, Paladin, London, 1970, p.57.

It is difficult to give a comprehensive definition of caste, because of the complexity (time and space factor) of the phenomena. Hence, it would rather be useful to look at its characteristics. Ghurye¹⁰ lists following six of them:

- (i) Segmental division of society
- (ii) Hierarchy
- (iii) Restriction on feeding and social intercourse
- (iv) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections
- (v) Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation
- (vi) Restriction on marriage. Caste endogamy is an important feature even to this day.

With this background of caste system, we are now in a better position to understand the term "backward castes". There is no dispute regarding the fact that in India, Brahmins are at the top and the 'untouchables' at the bottom of the social hierarchy. But, there is difference of opinion regarding the determination of the status of the intermediary castes.

Under the sole criterion of untouchability, the Constitution of India under Article 341,¹¹ classified them as 'Scheduled Castes',¹² (Article 342, refers to the Scheduled Tribes). The necessary concomitants of untouchability are

10. Ghurye (G.S.), Caste and Race in India, 1961, pp.2-17.

11. The Constitution of India, Government of India, Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs, New Delhi, 1977, p.142.

12. Gandhi called them 'Harijans'.

various disabilities in the matter of entry into temples, shops, hotels, etc. The Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1956 enumerates the removal of few such disabilities. But, when we speak of "backward castes" we do not mean these scheduled castes.

The term "backward castes" is not defined in the Constitution of India, like 'scheduled castes', though there is a mention to the "socially and educationally backward classes of citizens..."¹³ The State Governments, under Article 15(4) and 166A,¹⁴ can appoint commissions to look into the matter of social and educational backwardness of different castes, and make reservations accordingly, in educational institutions and government services.

The term 'backward class' may include members belonging to castes which are ritually high (for example, Brahmins), but economically backward. On the other hand the term 'backward castes' refers to the members of both ritually and economically backward castes. Thus, 'backward caste' refers to the non-scheduled caste as well as non-Brahmin castes, which are economically backward. The following table will help us in understanding this point clearly.

13 & 14. The Constitution of India; op.cit., p.7.

TABLE

<p>I</p>	<p><u>Brahminical Castes</u></p> <p>1. Brahmins - Shaiva, Vaishnava and others</p>	<p>Marginal Castes</p> <p>(1) I and II</p>
<p>II</p>	<p><u>Middle Ranking Castes</u></p> <p>1. Business - Bania, Banajaga and others</p> <p>2. Cultivating - Jat, Vokkaliga and others</p>	<p>e.g. Lingayat</p> <p>(2) II and III</p>
<p>III</p>	<p><u>Lower Castes or Backward Castes</u>¹⁵</p> <p>1. Artisaans - Kammara (smith) Kumbara (potter) and others</p> <p>2. Service oriented castes - Dhobi (washerman) Hajama (Barber) and others</p>	<p>e.g. Vokkaliga</p> <p>(3) III and IV</p>
<p>IV</p>	<p><u>Scheduled Castes</u></p> <p>1. Those defined by the Constitution and are below the pollution line</p>	<p>e.g. Voddars</p>

These four categories are not watertight compartments. There are certain marginal castes, which do not fit into any one category as such. For instance Lingayats¹⁶ of Karnataka

15. For list of backward castes, communities and tribes in Karnataka, see Appendix.

16. For details on Lingayats, see Chapter Two.

claim superiority to Brahmins. They do not eat food cooked or handled by the Brahmins. They have their own priests.¹⁷ A large chunk of Lingayats are businessmen and cultivators. Hence, they are a marginal caste belonging to both Brahminical and middle ranking caste groups.

Similarly, there are castes which fall in the categories of both middle ranking as well as backward castes. Some sections of Vokkaligas are considered as backward castes and others as belonging to the middle ranking castes. In the same manner, some Voddars of Karnataka are grouped as scheduled caste, and others fall in the category of backward castes.

In spite of these limitations, different non-scheduled castes can be categorised as backward and non-backward, on the basis of their general social and economic conditions. This is what many backward classes commissions have done.

Attempts at mobility by various castes:

A society is always dynamic and not a static entity, and Indian society, with its elaborate caste system is no exception to this rule. The Indian caste system has been undergoing changes due to variety of factors. Sociologists

17. For details on this see Srinivas (M.N.), Religion and Society among Coorgs of South India, Oxford, 1952.

attribute these changes to Sanskritisation, Westernisation,¹⁸ modernisation¹⁹ and politicisation²⁰ of different castes. This is an all-India phenomenon, in the sense that everywhere we find attempts at mobility by the castes which are lower down in the social hierarchy.

Srinivas identifies two processes of change (mobility) in Indian caste system. They are 'Sanskritisation' and 'Westernisation'. By Sanskritisation he means:

...the process by which "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste. Generally such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste...²¹

This process occurred throughout Indian history. In Karnataka, Lingayats have acted as a great sanskritising agent²² and helped many castes to improve their status.

18. Srinivas (M.N.), op.cit.

19. Singh (Yogendra), Modernisation of Indian Tradition, Thomson India, Faridabad, 1977.

20. Kothari (Rajai), ed., Caste in Indian Politics, Orient Longman Ltd., New Delhi, 1969 (introductory essay).

21. Srinivas (M.N.), op.cit., p.6.

22. For detailed presentation of this see Chapter Two.

After the advent of the British, many changes started taking place in India. The British brought with them new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and values. During the nineteenth century the British slowly laid the foundations of a modern state by surveying land, settling the revenue, creating a modern bureaucracy, army and police, instituting law courts, codifying law, developing communications - railways, post and telegraph, roads and canals - establishing schools and colleges, and so on. Whatever be the motives of the British in starting these things, it gave rise to far-reaching consequences in Indian society.

Although only a small proportion of the Indian population came under the Western impact, this in itself was a major jolt to a tradition bound society. Western education and the enlarged bureaucracy opened up new avenues for mobility. But then, the traditional elites - Brahmins and upper castes - were able to extend their dominance to new situation also. This has been the main reason for backward castes' movement in many parts of India.²³

The vertical mobility in India was, to a large extent, confined to a small group, which made use of the Western education to get government jobs, and to go up in the class-

23. This point has been discussed elaborately with reference to Karnataka and South India elsewhere in the subsequent chapters.

hierarchy. Because of the slow progress of literacy in India and the lack of entrepreneurial and other careers, the vast masses continued to be not only poor but also bound by the caste tradition. The formal and informal sanctions, continued to define, shape and maintain the basic distinctions within and between castes. The sanctions employed by the upper castes, aimed at preventing the lower castes from moving upward in the caste hierarchy. As a result the earlier caste imbalance was not fully rectified.

The rigid stratification and perpetuation of inequality, though not approved by the lower castes did not do much to ameliorate their condition. This was basically due to the domination of upper castes in the social, economic and political fields.

The 'politicisation of caste',²⁴ due to the introduction of parliamentary democracy and universal franchise, drew many castes into politics. The lower castes which did not have a say in the decision making, became aware of their strength. Inspired by the new equalitarian minds spreading across India, attempts were made to fight the upper castes' supremacy. The lower castes wanted a share in the new educational and employment opportunities. This awareness has been responsible for the attempts at mobility by the backward castes in India.

24. Kothari (Rajni), op.cit.

In the attempts at mobility by backward castes, we can identify two stages, viz., "contest mobility" and "sponsored mobility".²⁵ The backward castes once they became aware of their low status and realised their strength (numerical), tend to contest for mobility. They are likely to force the governments to reserve seats in educational institutions and government services. When this is conceded by the Government, it comes to be defined as 'sponsored mobility'. Thus backward castes' movement can be studied at two but closely related levels, they are:

1. Social movements against inequality
2. State sponsorship in social mobility.

Social Movements against Inequality

Spontaneous popular or social movements is a concerted action or agitation, with some degree of continuity of a group which fully or loosely organised is united more or less with definite aims. It follows a designed programme, and is directed at change (or to counter movement at preservation of status-quo) of patterns and institutions of the existing society.²⁶ Thus, the aim of social movements is to change the existing order which is not in one's favour. To achieve ^{this} they

25. On this terminology see Turner (R), Sponsored and Contest Mobility and the School System, American Sociological Review, Vol.25, 6, 1966, p.856.

26. Dictionary of Sociology and other Related Sciences, Fair Child, H.P. ed., New Jersey, 1976, p.286.

may adopt either non-violent or violent means. The ideas of liberty and equality are common to all social movements.²⁷ And the backward castes' movement was no exception to this rule. It was aimed against the established order and the realisation of equality of status with other upper castes.

Since the early times, many enlightened persons in India have fought against the caste inequality. Beginning with Gautama Buddha in the fifth century B.C. to Mahatma Gandhi in the twentieth century, they have opposed the exploitation of lower castes by the upper castes. Buddha was the first to raise his voice against the Brahmin domination. In the twelfth century Veeracharya movement under the leadership of Basavanna championed the cause of masses. He fought against the Brahminical order and caste-inequalities.

Spontaneous popular movements against the caste-inequalities assumed greater proportion during the British rule. Mahatma Gandhi made a concerted effort to improve the status of the untouchables, who were the most exploited lot. Dr. Ambedkar's effort in this respect in Maharashtra is noteworthy. As the effort of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar is basically concerned with the untouchables, it does not

27. International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Vol.14,
The Macmillan Company, the Free Press, 1968, pp.438-452.

come under the purview of present discussion, as this study concentrates on non-untouchable backward castes.

Many of these social and cultural movements - aimed at improving the condition of lower castes - were led by upper-caste enlightened Hindus, like Dayananda Saraswati. In some cases, like Jyoti Rao Phule of Maharashtra and E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker of Tamil Nadu, the leadership came from the lower caste itself. Of late, this has been the trend. This is basically because of distrust which the lower castes have against the upper castes, as regards their ability in delivering the goods.

State Sponsorship in Social Mobility

Although it is sometimes convenient to distinguish between social and political movements, it should be noted that these movements have political implications even if their members do not strive at political power.²⁸ The contest mobility will have to be reinforced by sponsored mobility. The backward castes will work towards the realisation of this end.

Social movements may get political support and may result in the enactment of necessary social legislation. Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of the upliftment of Harijans was

28. Ibid., p.439.

given expression in Indian Constitution. There is 15% reservation for Scheduled Castes and $7\frac{1}{2}$ % for the Scheduled Tribes in the parliament, assembly, educational institutions, government jobs, etc. The untouchability has been legally abolished. Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Ambedkar.

Under Article 15(4) and 16(4)²⁹ of the Indian Constitution, the state governments can appoint commissions to look into the matter of social and educational backwardness of different castes, and make reservations accordingly. This has become a great source of sponsored mobility in post-independent India. Different castes bring pressure on the government to make reservations for them, in educational institutions and government jobs.

There were many counter responses challenging not only the backward castes' movement, but also the social legislation which were in favour of backward castes. The degree of such opposition may vary from place to place and time to time. But, nonetheless upper caste Hindus fought for the maintenance of status-quo. For instance, in Bihar the upper caste Hindus started an anti-reservation movement in 1979.

The backward castes' movement, to realise their aim - of attaining equality with upper castes - should not only

29. The Constitution of India, op.cit., p.7.

precede but also reinforce the social legislations. This is important because, firstly, to resist the opposition from the upper castes, and secondly, to see that governmental policy of reservation is implemented properly. Whether this is happening or not in India today is a very vital question, which has to be looked into.

The General Features of Backward Castes' Movements in India:

The caste conflict before 1947 was basically between the Brahmins and the middle ranking castes. This was because Brahmins had political power and had cornered the government jobs. The middle ranking castes were able to get the support of the other non-Brahmin castes - backward castes and the scheduled castes. In short there was 'fusion' of all the non-Brahmin castes.

The 'fusion' of non-Brahmin castes did not last long. The beneficiaries of the earlier backward castes' movements were particularly the middle ranking castes. In the post-independent India, we see a new trend of 'fission' between the middle-ranking castes on the one hand, and backward castes and scheduled castes on the other. And 'factions' within the middle-ranking castes speeded up the process of 'fission' of different non-Brahmin castes.

The backward caste movements in both pre and post-independent India, first aimed at capturing the political power

in the provincial or state governments. During this period many caste conflicts and caste alignments took place. Once the backward castes start having greater say, in the state politics, they tend to work for the sponsored mobility of their caste-members.

The main objective of this study is to trace the organised attempts of the backward castes in Karnataka to improve their social status, and the governmental measures following it. In this study an attempt is made to study the nature of caste-conflict and caste-alignments during the backward castes' movement in Karnataka since 1900.

Although a reference has been made to the backward castes' movement in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, this study concentrates particularly on the post-independence Karnataka, because of the scarcity of time and resources. It is only after independence that the Central and State Governments introduced many measures for the upliftment of backward castes.

Karnataka has had a long history of movements which aimed at the upliftment of the backward castes. Veeroshaina movement of the twelfth century, was one of the most popular and successful movements, which helped many backward castes to climb up the social ladder. That apart, Karnataka was one of the first governments to appoint a committee to look into

the question of backwardness of different castes. Miller's Committee was appointed by the Maharaja of Mysore as early as 1919. Since then, in response to the social movements and pressures by the backward castes, Karnataka Government has appointed two committees (1964 & 1972) and has taken various socio-economic measures to ameliorate the condition of them. In Chapter Four a review of these two committee reports as well as the Government's socio-economic measures is attempted.

The present study is based on secondary sources, as such has its own limitations. The approach will be historical although the study covers the contemporary backward castes' movement in Karnataka.

CHAPTER TWO

A GENERAL SURVEY OF BACKWARD CASTES'
MOVEMENT IN SOUTH INDIA : WITH A
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KARNATAKA

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A GENERAL SURVEY OF BACKWARD CASTES' MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH INDIA: WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KARNATAKA

The backward caste movements in Karnataka should be studied as part of South Indian social and political history because of two reasons: (i) the geographical proximity of the State with Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and (ii) many districts of Karnataka were under the direct administrative control of the earlier Bombay, Madras Presidency and Hyderabad province, until the Reorganisation of State in 1956. These reasons apart, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu provide two important but different types of backward castes movements in the modern period.

The nature of caste conflict in different states of South India - why was it militant in some and not in others, is looked into in this chapter.²

Many studies have been made by sociologists on the social movement of backward castes in South India. The works of Hardgrave,³ Rudolph,⁴ Harrison,⁵ Dushkin,⁶ Omvedt,⁷

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- ✓ 1. Venkata Ramanappa (M.N.), Outlines of South Indian History with special reference to Karnataka, New Delhi, 1975, pp.255-259.
 2. The case of Maharashtra and particularly Tamil Nadu among the neighbouring states has been taken up for detailed discussion, due to availability of literature.
 3. Hardgrave (Robert L.), Jr., The Dravidian Movement, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1965.

Irschick,⁸ Manor,⁹ are commendable in this direction. They show in brief the caste conflicts in cultural, social and educational context in various states of South India. The operation of contest and sponsored mobility has also been clearly brought out by these studies. They point out to the reasons which were responsible for the backward castes' movement - the economic

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4. Rudolph (Lloyd I.), "Urban Life and Populist Radicalism: Dravidian Politics in Madras", in Rao (M.S.A.) ed., Urban Sociology in India, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 19 pp.418-442.
 5. Harrison (Selig S.), India, the Most Dangerous Decades, Oxford University Press, 1968, pp.96-136.
 6. Dushkin (Leela), "Non-Brahmin Movement in Princely Mysore", unpublished Doctoral Thesis for University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1974.
 7. Omvedt (Gail), Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The non-Brahmin Movement in Western India, 1873-1930, Bombay, 1976.
 8. Irschick (E), Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism 1916-1929, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969.
 9. Manor (James), "The Evaluation of Political Arenas and Units of Social Organisation: The Lingayat and the Okkaligas of princely Mysore", in Srinivas (M.N.), Seshaiiah (S), Parthasarathy (V.S.) ed, Dimensions of Social Change, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1978, pp.169-187.

backwardness of certain castes, and their exploitation by the advanced castes. A brief review of these studies is attempted in this chapter.

In the two regions of pre-independent South India, viz., Hyderabad Nizam Province and the Travancore-Cochin Princely State, we do not find any notable backward castes' movement. The backward castes movement before independence, was basically aimed at Brahmin domination in the social, and political field, and there was no such large scale Brahmin domination in these two areas.

The Brahmins of Hyderabad province did not have any disproportionate representation in the state government services, nor did they dominate in the educational field, like the Famil Brahmins in Madras presidency. Dushkin points out "...in the state of Hyderabad, with its sizeable component of Muslim officials... there was no non-Brahmin movement."¹⁰ And also, the Muslim nobles wielded the political power, and not Brahmins like Madras presidency.

In Kerala there was a large chunk of Christian and Muslim population which was not educationally and economically backward. The Namboodri Brahmins did not dominate the Western education or government services. It was the non-Brahmin

10. Dushkin (Leela), op.cit., p.12.

Nayar caste, which took the lead instead. The SNDP* movement in Kerala started by Narayan Guru has also helped some backward castes like Ezhavas to improve their status.

Thus, in the pre-independence Hyderabad province and Travancore-Cochin region, we note the absence of any backward castes or non-Brahmin movement. In this connection, we may note Onvedt's remark, "Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are states whose degree of rural impoverishment and proletarianisation are among the highest in India", hence, "...produced strongest movements of cultural revolt in India."¹¹ This was not so severe in other parts of South India.

Two important backward castes' movements stand out in the pre-independent South India, they are: (i) Jyoti Rao Phule's movement in the Bombay presidency¹² (1870-1930), (ii) The non-Brahmin movement in Madras (1900).

Jyoti Rao Phule's Movement in
the Bombay Presidency (1870-1930)

Phule was born in 1827 to a Mali (gardner). He took to social service early in his life, he made efforts at

11. Onvedt (Gail), op.cit., p.265.

12. For the purpose of this study south of Vindhyas is considered as South India. And Maharashtra is one of the neighbouring states of Karnataka. Hence, the Phule's movement, which took place there, has been included in this study.

* SNDP stands for "Sri Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalaka".

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at educating women and other low caste members. This met with a serious opposition from the Brahmins. He was undeterred by this, and as early as 1873 started the 'Satya Shodak Samaj',¹³ with the basic aim of improving the status of lower caste members, and to fight the Brahminical supremacy.

The Satya Shodak Samaj was a contemporary of other social and religious organisations of the Hindu renaissance period like the Prarthana Samaj started by Mahadev Govind Ranade in 1867 (Bombay), Arya Samaj started by Swamy Dayananda Saraswati in 1877 (Lahore). To popularise his views, Phule began publishing a newspaper called 'Din Bandhu',¹⁴ in 1875.

Phule aimed at complete eradication of caste system, superstition and inequality. He was opposed to the sanskritic Hinduism and viewed Mahabharata and Ramayana as a portrayal of Brahmin domination. For a long time Phule did ^{not} co-operate with the Brahmin dominated nationalist movement and continued to maintain the lower caste nature of his movement against Brahmins. However as late as 1930s the Satya Shodak Samaj ultimately collaborated with the national movement.

13. 'Satya Shodak Samaj' in Marathi means the Truth Seekers Association.

14. 'Din Bandhu' means the 'brother of the poor' in Marathi.

Unlike most of the preceding movements, in Phule's movement, the leadership and initiative came from the backward castes themselves. These backward castes included Malis, Telis, Kunbis and Satis. In many of the earlier movements, leadership was mainly provided by the upper caste Hindus.

Omvedt holds the view that "Phule's theory of exploitation was focussed on cultural and ethnic factors rather than economic and political."¹⁵ Both culturally and ethnically Brahmins were considered superior then, and Phule's movement was basically aimed against them. This alone is not enough to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people concerned. Probably this is one of reasons for the decline of the popularity of the Phule's movement and Satya Shodak Samaj. The political and economic domination of Brahmins and other upper castes continued.

Although Phule's contribution to the cause of welfare of the Backward Castes in the Bombay presidency was characterised by "rigorous cultural revolution", the impact of the movement was insufficient to fulfil his desire for rationality and equality for the backward castes. This was because the movement was confined to small area around Poona and did not take a political character, which was important

15. Omvedt (Gail), op.cit., p.112.

for any movement to be successful in modern India. Nevertheless Phule's movement's main contribution lies in the fact that it provided inspiration to many later backward castes' movements, particularly to the Dravida Kazhagam.

Non-Brahmin Movement in Madras

While Phule's movement was one of the first movements by the backward castes to fight the upper caste domination, the non-Brahmin movement¹⁶ in Madras was the most popular and successful movement in the modern Indian history. This movement has been the subject of study of many scholars like Hardgrave, Rudolph, Harrison, Irschick, Beteille and others. They give a clear insight into the movement - the reasons which were responsible for the movement, its historical development, the aim of the movement and the means which they adopted to achieve it, the reaction of the Brahmins who were the target of the movements and the final outcome of the movement.

The non-Brahmin movement in Madras assumed political dimension in the beginning itself. An important consequence of politics (in the Madras presidency) has been the transformation

16. The non-Brahmin movement is also known as the 'Dravidian movement'.

of caste from a guardian of the traditional order to an agent of political democracy.¹⁷ The impact of politics on caste was first felt in Madras presidency, as it was one of the first area where Western political system was introduced. Politicisation of castes in Madras since the formation of Justice Party in 1916, gave rise to far-reaching consequences. A new political spectrum encompassing city and village came into being.

Like other Brahmins in South India, Tamil Brahmins have a tradition of Sanskrit scholarship, but what distinguished them from others, was the striking lead they obtained over everyone else, including non-Tamil Brahmins in Madras presidency, in English education and entry into bureaucracy.¹⁸ It should not be assumed that all non-Brahmins were economically and politically weak. In fact ^{many} the businessmen and landlords were non-Brahmins.

Brahmin domination extend^{ed} to the field of Western education and bureaucracy,¹⁹ and to some extent in the Madras

17. Rudolph (I), op.cit., p.418.

18. Ibid., p.419.

19. Beteille (A), 'Caste and Politics in Tamil Nadu (unpublished), (quoted by Srinivas (M.N.), Social Change in Modern India, 1977, p.102) gives the following figures of Madras presidency: "between 1892 and 1904, out of 16 successful candidates for the I.C.S., 15 were Brahmins; and in 1913, 93 out of 126 permanent district munsifs were Brahmins; and in 1914, 452 out of the 650 registered graduates of the University were Brahmins."

Irishick(I), op.cit., p.113, gives the following figures: "In 1918 the Brahmins in the (Madras) presidency numbered 15 million out of a total of 42 millions (many Kannada, Telugu & Malayalam speaking areas were under

presidency politics, and Nationalist movement.

It is because of this dominant position of Brahmins that the non-Brahmins of Madras presidency revolted against the Brahmins in the beginning of this century. The non-Brahmin movement was led by economically and politically well-off castes like Vellalas and Chekkiers from Tamil speaking area, Kammas and Reddis from the Telugu speaking area, and Nayars from the Malayalam speaking area.

Non-Brahmins argued that if the historically suppressed sections of Indian society were to obtain their share of new opportunities, they would have to be granted some concessions and privileges at least for a certain period. This theory of "social justice" of non-Brahmins resulted in the formation of the Justice Party in 1916, as opposed to the Brahmin dominated Congress.²⁰

The Justice Party held its first conference at Coimbatore in 1917. They started three newspapers, one each in English, Tamil and Telugu.²¹ In the 1920 election to the

Footnote 19 continued....

Madras presidency), but 70 per cent of the arts graduates, 74 per cent of law graduates, 71 per cent of engineering graduates, and 74 per cent graduates in teaching were Brahmins. Out of 390 higher appointments in Education Department 310 were held by Brahmins, in the Judicial Department, 116 out of 171, and in the Revenue Departments, 394 out of 679."

20. Hardgrave (Robert L.), op.cit., pp.16-18.

21. As mentioned earlier, Telugu as well as Malayalam and Kannada speaking areas were under Madras presidency.

newly constituted Madras Council, the Justice Party won 63 seats out of 98, as Congress withdrew from the election. The non-Brahmin upper castes were able to get the support of many lower castes, herein we see a 'fusion' of all non-Brahmin castes to fight the Brahmin domination.

But then, the Justice Party's success was shortlived, in the 1926 elections, it won only 22 seats while the newly formed Swaraj Party won 41 seats. This was because: (i) many Justice Party members joined Congress after 1925, (ii) after winning the election in 1920, the non-Brahmin upper castes like Vellala, Reddy, Kammas, Maidu, Chetty and Nayar alienated the Harijans and other low castes. A fission among the non-Brahmin castes took place, (iii) they did not give representation to the lower castes in the ministry, (iv) the social role of Justice Party became narrower and conservative, unwilling to fulfil the promise made to the lower castes. There existed a difference between the 'ideology' of Justice Party and its 'practice', (v) the Justice Party had not penetrated the rural areas. As a result of all these factors Justice Party began to decline in popularity after 1926.

The next phase of non-Brahmin movement was started by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker,²² an ex-Congressman who broke away

22. E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker is popularly known as E.V.R. and 'Periyar'.

from the Congress, because of attacks on him and non-Brahmins within the Madras Congress organisation and formed his own group, called 'Swayam Maryada' or Self Respect Movement in 1925.²³ While the Justice Party attacked the political and administrative domination of Brahmins, the self-respect movement attacked the Brahmin supremacy in social spheres.

The self-respect movement was dedicated to give non-Brahmins a sense of pride based on the Dravidian past. It was in nature anti-Brahmin, later became anti-Hindu and anti-North. Ramaswamy Naicker shunned the Mahabharata and Ramayana, opposed Varnashramadharm and other Aryan/Brahminical practices. He started a Tamil Weekly 'Kudiurs',²⁴ which became the mouth-piece of the self-respect movement. After a tour of England, Russia and European countries in 1931, he became even more materialistic and bitterly criticized the Brahmins.

In course of time, the non-Brahmin movement or Dravidian movement developed secessionist tendency. When the Muslim League demanded Pakistan for Muslims, Ramaswamy Naicker demanded 'Dravidisthan' for the non-Brahmins of South India. Many of his followers courted arrest for this cause. Throughout the Second World War, Ramaswamy Naicker carried on his

23. Irschick (E.), op.cit., p.103.

24. 'Kudi Urs' in Tamil means people's government.

propaganda for separate Tamil country. To achieve this, the Justice Party was formally changed into 'Dravida-Kazhagam'²⁵ on August 27, 1944.²⁶ But five years later Anna Durai backed by some of the members of 'Dravida Kazhagam', who disliked the autocratic methods of Ramaswamy Naicker broke away and formed a separate party - 'Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam'. It played a vital role in Tamil Nadu politics and worked for the upliftment of the backward castes. Again in the 70s another split took place, and the group led by M.G. Ramachandran formed All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.²⁷ This party came to power in the 70s and still going strong in Tamil Nadu.

The non-Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu was successful to a large extent because of its political nature - first, the Justice Party and next the Dravida Kazhagam. Whereas Phule's movement remained as only a social movement, and did not record much success. Another factor is the leadership; in Tamil Nadu the non-Brahmin upper castes who were economically strong provided the leadership and were able to carry the

25. 'Dravida Kazhagam' in Tamil means the organization of the Dravidians.

26. Hardgrave (Robert L.), op.cit., p.28.

27. For detailed presentation of Tamil Nadu politics in the 70s, see Ramaswamy's 'From Silver Screen to Chief Ministership', M.Phil dissertation (unpublished), Bangalore University, 1979.

non-Brahmin movement for a long time. Although Justice Party alienated the lower castes and Harijans, later not only these groups but also lower caste Christian converts were co-opted in the movement. In spite of assuming political dimensions, the non-Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu did not lose its zeal for ritual and social reform, and was militant in character. It was because of these reasons that the non-Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu registered success.

It is interesting to note the reaction of Brahmins of Tamil Nadu, who were the target of the movement. It was a blessing in disguise for them. Tamil Brahmins emigrated to the metropolitan cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi to take up administrative, teaching and journalistic jobs. They took the lead in these fields, even among the Brahmins of other parts of India.

Backward Castes' Movement in Pre-Independence Karnataka

Karnataka was a vast empire under the Vijayanagar rulers. After the Battle of Tali Kota in 1565, the Vijayanagara rulers lost their empire to the Muslim rulers. Haider Ali once again united the Kannada speaking people whose son Tipu Sultan ruled up to 1799. In that year, in the Anglo-Mysore (the other name for Karnataka) war, he was defeated by the British. Mysore was reduced to a small principality. Large

Kannada speaking areas were merged with Bombay, Madras presidencies and Hyderabad Nizam's province.²⁸ This control over Kannada speaking areas by other states lasted until the State Reorganisation in 1956.

The backward castes' movement in Karnataka was not as militant as that of Maharashtra (Phule) or Tamil Nadu neither in the princely Mysore nor in the Kannada speaking areas in Bombay, Madras presidencies and Hyderabad province. Dushkin points out that, "Mysore already had its own version of this (the backward castes' movement) in the form of the Veershaiva or Lingayat movement beginning in the twelfth century."²⁹ It is relevant to trace briefly the social context of and the role played by the Veershaiva movement, in the upliftment of the lower castes in Karnataka.

Veerashaiva Movement: The origin of Veerashaivism or Lingayats is still not conclusively established.³⁰ It was Basavanna in the twelfth century A.D. who played a vital role in popularising the Veerashaivism. Later many saints and nuns carried forward

28. For the details regarding the medieval and modern history of Karnataka see 'Karnataka Through the Ages', Government of Mysore, 1964, (ed) Diwakar, R.R.

29. Dushkin (Leela), op.cit., p.295.

30. Sastry (K.A.N.), A History of South India, Madras, 1971, p.436.

the movement . In their endeavour, they received political patronage from the Hindu chieftains and kings, notable among whom were the successive kings of Vijayanagara and Hoysala dynasty and Yadava dynasty of Mysore.

Like Buddhism, Veerashaivism also revolved against Brahminism and caste inequality. It embraced members of different castes³¹ in its fold, including lower castes like washermen, barbers and smiths. There was also a considerable relaxation regarding the norms of ritual pollution.³² The Lingayat priestly sub-castes do not stand in the same relationship to the other castes, as Brahmins vis-a-vis the non-Brahmins, because every Lingayat wears a 'linga'³³ which he worships by himself.

Venugopal points out the factors responsible for the popularity of Veerashaiva movement.

Royal patronage, the saintly lives and deeds of the founders of the sect, the spread of vernacular Lingayat religious literature ('vachanas'), the missionary zeal of its activists led to the numerical expansion of the sect, founding of numerous 'muths' as religious and cultural centres, and its recognition and gradual accommodation in the wider society.³⁴

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31. People belonging to Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Saudra categories embraced Veerashaivism.
32. Parvathamma (G.), Politics and Religion, Sterling Publishers, Delhi, 1971, pp.84-105.
33. 'Linga' is a representation of phallus. The wearer of a 'linga' is a 'Lingayat'. They are also known as 'Veerashaivas'.
34. See page 33.

It is because of these factors from 1200 A.D. onwards, "The sect became a social movement of the first order."³⁵

Although Veerashaiva movement helped many backward castes to improve its status, it could not allow some castes like fishermen, hunters, and toddy-tappers, as they refused to adhere to the principles of Veerashaivism, viz. total prohibition of the consumption of meat and liquor. Even though Veerashaivism started as a revolt against the caste system, the subsequent leaders could not prevent it from becoming a closely knit caste group among its followers. As a result even the subject began to practice sub-sect endogamy. Veerashaivism "was therefore a change in the social system but not of the system."³⁶

But nevertheless Veerashaiva movement in Karnataka gave an outlet for the lower castes to assert their position in the caste-ridden society and reduced considerably the need for any backward castes movement in the modern period, on the lines of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

34. Venugopal (C.N.), "Factor of Anti-Pollution in the Ideology of Lingayat Movement", Sociological Bulletin, Vol.26, 1977, p.231.

35. Ibid., p.234.

36. Ibid., p.238.

Non-Brahmin Movement in Princely Mysore

The Brahmins of princely Mysore made use of the Western education although not to the extent of Tamil Brahmins. They dominated the social and political life in the princely Mysore. "So far as old Mysore³⁷ was concerned, the rule of the Diwans can be looked upon as the most conspicuous component of Brahmin monopoly."³⁸ More or less a similar situation to that of Madras presidency, existed in princely Mysore.

The non-Brahmins of princely Mysore felt that they have not been adequately represented in the public services. They demanded adequate representation for them in the government services. The non-Brahmin movement in the princely Mysore in the second half of 1910, was only a reflection of the developments that were taking place in Madras. But the movement was of lesser degree in the princely Mysore.

A non-Brahmin delegation met the Maharaja of Mysore in 1918, to press their demand for adequate representation in the government services. The Maharaja then assured them that he would appoint a Committee on backward classes to look into

37. Old Mysore is the other name for princely Mysore.

38. Kalvekar (K.K.), "Non-Brahmin Regeneration in South India and the D.M.K., 1873-1943", Ph.D. Thesis (unpublished) submitted to Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1975, p.82.

the problem of adequate representation in government services. A Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Leslie Miller, the Chief Justice of Mysore was appointed, it submitted its report in 1921. This was the first of its kind in India.

The Miller's Committee proceeded on definition that "Backward Classes" meant castes and communities which had less than 5 per cent of literates in English as enumerated in the Census Report of 1911. In this category all the non-Brahmin castes came (94 per cent). Although the Indian Christians, Mudaliar and Pillay communities had more than 5 per cent literates in English, these communities were treated as backward classes for the purpose of public services.

In 1921, the Maharaja of Mysore implemented the recommendations of Miller's Committee. Brahmins who were adversely affected by the government's policy of reservation, were opposed to this. K.T. Seshaiya's speech in the Representative Assembly in October 1921 brings out their attitude:

I do not ask for a living for the Brahmin. That is quite a different question. My only point is we must have efficiency in public services. Public service is not a representative institution to which recruitment should be made on a communal basis. '...according to the practice prevailing in all Western countries, whoever is qualified will be entitled to serve under government. Whether a candidate for office is a Jew, Christian, Protestant or Jacobite, his qualification alone counts.³⁹

39. Proceedings of Representative Assembly, (Mysore), October 1921, p.75.

Other Brahmin representatives like R. Gopala Swami Iyer and H. Krishna Shastry also expressed similar views.⁴⁰

M. Visweshwaraya, a Brahmin, had to relinquish his Diwanship (premiership) on this issue.

On the other hand, the beneficiaries from the implementation of Miller's Committee recommendations welcomed the reservation policy of the government. Linge Gowda (Vokkaliga) on behalf of the non-Brahmins remarked that:

The forward communities must not forget that they were also merged in ignorance once. And when some of them entered service the others thought that by getting educated they would also find employment. Similarly, now we have hopes just as the Brahmins, by virtue of their education got appointments, so also we can...⁴¹ (with the help of reservation).

The non-Brahmin leaders who expressed views are H.C. Dasappa and K.C. Reddy belonging to Vokkaliga caste, Murugesu Pillai of Depressed classes and Abdur Rehman from the Muslim community.

This is a clear illustration of 'sponsored mobility'. But the benefits of reservation did not percolate to all the non-Brahmin castes. While Veerashaivas to a large extent, Vokkaligas to some extent were successful in improving their

40. Ibid., pp.75-80.

41. Ibid., p.81.

status other castes had reasons to complain.⁴²

In the case of Veerashaivas, the 'sponsored mobility' was coupled with 'contest mobility'. They had fought the Brahminical supremacy in ritual and social field since twelfth century A.D. In the twentieth century a new dimension was added, they spread their activities to the educational and cultural field. The 'Veerashaiva Mahasabha' as an organisation, held its first session in 1904 at Dharwar. The Karnataka Liberal (Lingayat) Education Society was founded in 1916. They opened many schools, colleges, hostels, public halls, co-operative societies for the upliftment of their caste members. In many cases, their hostels were open to other caste members also. This lead given by Veerashaivas, was followed by other castes like Vokkaligas, Kurubas, Idigas, Banajigas and others. They also opened many schools, colleges and hostels for their caste members. This led for voluntary attempts at mobility apart from the government sponsorship particularly by the non-Brahmin upper castes of Karnataka.

A 'fission' among the non-Brahmins started taking place on the eve of independence. This was because of two reasons: firstly, only few upper caste non-Brahmins like

42. Hettne (Bjorn), Mobilisation and Political Change in Karnataka, (unpublished), The Mobilisation Project, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, University of Gothenberg.

Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas benefited by the government's policy which was resented by other non-Brahmin castes; secondly, the non-Brahmin movement was kept together as long as the Brahmin monopoly on higher appointments was intact, but gradually it began to disintegrate as Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas began to replace Brahmins in the dominant positions in the government.

Conclusion

In the late 19th and early 20th century we observe the spread of English education and widening job opportunities, and the subsequent Brahmin domination in these fields in the South India. This was responsible for the 'fusion' of non-Brahmin castes first in Tamil Nadu then in other places. But the non-Brahmin movement was militant only in Tamil Nadu and not others.

The Veerashaivas has had helped many backward castes to improve their status since twelfth century onwards. Their attempts at providing educational facilities and bringing pressure on the government to implement the reservation policy, is a classic example of the merger of 'contest mobility' with 'sponsored mobility'. Although Veerashaiva movement earlier discarded the notion of caste, in the later phase it accepted caste as a fact.

The pre-independence backward castes' movement was led by the non-Brahmin upper castes. But, they alienated the lower castes. There was a difference in their 'ideology' and 'practice'. As we see in the case of 'Justice Party' of Madras presidency, in Karnataka also the upper caste Hindus viz. Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas benefited from the government's policies. The 'Dravida Kazhagam' party rectified this mistake and successfully united all the backward castes, Harijans and low Christian converts.

The non-Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu resulted in the formation of political parties - first, Justice Party and then Dravida Kazhagam - to fight for the cause. This later developed into a secessionist movement. In Karnataka no such thing happened. The non-Brahmin movement operated with the help of existing national political party like Congress, and it was not anti-Hindi and anti-North India like the non-Brahmin movement of Tamil Nadu.

Thus, in the pre-independence backward castes' movement, we witness the operation of "contest mobility" and "sponsored mobility", and "fusion" and "fission" of non-Brahmin castes due to the difference in the "ideology" and "practice" by non-Brahmin upper castes. With this, first phase of backward castes movement comes to an end.

CHAPTER THREE

**BACKWARD CASTES' DYNAMICS IN
POST-INDEPENDENCE KARNATAKA**

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After independence, many social, economic and political developments took place, both at the national and state levels, which had an impact upon the backward castes' movement in Karnataka. Among them, the adoption of a new constitution for India in 1951, and large scale politicisation of castes in Karnataka.

The Constitutional Guarantees

The founding fathers of the Indian Constitution were led by Gandhian ideals of improving the status of the poor and Harijans.¹ Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Ambedkar and other backward caste leaders, many provisions for backward castes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were made.

The preamble of the Constitution of India reads;
India/^{is} a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic
and to secure to all its citizens:²

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1. For detailed presentation of constitutional history see, Gupta (D.C.), Indian National Movement and Constitutional Development, Vikas, Delhi, 1973.
 2. The terms 'Socialist, Democratic' were added later, in 1975.

Justice, social, economic and political;
Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith
and worship;
Equality of status and opportunity;
and promote among them all
Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual
and the Unity and integrity of the Nation.³

Apart from delineating the aim of the government, in the Part-III and Part-IV of the Constitution - the fundamental rights and the directive principles of state policy and also in many articles, provisions were made for the upliftment of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward castes like reserving seats in Parliament, Assemblies, government services, educational institutions and so on.

Two Articles viz., Articles 15(4) and 16(4) are of great relevance to this study. Under Article 15(4),⁴ there is a provision which says that,

Nothing in this article⁵ or in clause (2)⁶ of

3. The Constitution of India, Delhi, 1977, p.1.

4. Ibid., pp.6-7.

5. The Article 15(1) says that "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them", Ibid., p.6.

6. Clause (2) of Article 29 reads, "No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them", Ibid., p.12.

article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and economically backward classes of citizens...⁷

Under Article 16(4), there is a provision, which reads as follows:

Nothing in this article⁸ shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.⁹

These two articles empower the State governments to appoint Commissions to identify castes and communities which are educationally backward and are ill-represented in the State government services. And reserve seats accordingly. This power on the part of State government has become an important means of 'sponsored mobility'. Like many State governments, the Karnataka government has so far appointed

7. Ibid., p.7.

8. Article 16 - "Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment". Ibid., p.7.

9. Ibid., p.7.

two such committees, one in 1964 and the other in 1975.¹⁰

The Government of India appointed a Backward Classes Commission in 1953, under the chairmanship of Kaka Kalekar,¹¹ to determine the criteria by which sections of the population, other than the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, could be treated as socially and educationally backward. It submitted its report in 1955, and a majority of its members were of the view that caste determined the extent of an individual's backwardness.

The Report listed 2399 castes as backward, and recommended that these be made eligible for benefits similar to those enjoyed by the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.¹² The Government of India expressed its disapproval of the recommendations of the Commission, and five years later, on the 14th of August, 1961, the Home Ministry wrote to the State Governments asking them to do away with the caste criterion and adopt instead income. Since then there has been lot of debate going on about the criteria to be adopted to determine the social and educational backwardness of a class of citizens. Apart from caste, various other criteria like income, occupation, place of residence, etc. have been

10. This point has been elaborately discussed in Chapter Four.

11. Report of the Backward Classes Commission, Vol. I, II and III, Government of India, Delhi, 1956, Chairman: K. Kalekar.

12. Smith (Donald E.), India as a Secular State, Princeton, 1963, pp. 300-320.

adopted by various commissions formed by state governments.

Caste lobbies and pressure groups are at work to include their own caste into the list of Backward Classes. More and more castes are coming forward to be considered as backward to reap the benefits (reservations) which go along with it. One reads in newspapers very often of the delegates meeting the concerned minister to press their demands. The minister/ politician on the other hand promises 'sympathetic consideration' from time to time to woo the voters of such castes.

Politicisation of Castes¹³ in Karnataka

The Western type of government, with a parliamentary system, universal suffrage and legal system are alien to us. Although initially introduced by the British, these things became popular only after independence, particularly after the adoption of new constitution and the first general elections in 1951 December and 1952 January. Since then politicisation of castes on a larger scale is going on all over India and Karnataka is no exception to this rule.

Politics is a competitive enterprise, its purpose is the acquisition of power for the realisation of certain goals like improving the social status of one's own self and

13. Kothari (Rajni), ed., Caste in Indian Politics, New Delhi, 1969, introductory essay.

extend it to the group. To acquire or/and retain political power, politicians make use of ideologies, linguistic issue, regionalism, etc. In this regard caste also has been extensively made use of for mobilising people,¹⁴ to get votes and to consolidate their positions.

Various castes became aware of the benefits of politics, governmental patronage and liberal education. This awareness and subsequent utilisation varied from caste to caste. The struggle for political power and benefits at first was limited to "entrenched caste"¹⁵ or the Brahmins. In the early stages of politics there was need for the people who were able to deal with Western and Westernised administration, well-versed in finer points of debate. Brahmins with their literary background, scholastic knowledge were able to provide the leadership. In Karnataka as pointed out in the previous chapter, the rule of Diwans in the pre-independence period, could be said to belong to this stage.

This Brahmin domination soon gave rise to a feeling of deprivation and antagonism of other castes, especially among those who had earlier enjoyed social and economic power. As a result there was an emergence of a group in politics

14. Ibid.

15. "Entrenched Caste" is a ritually superior caste, viz. Brahmins.

largely drawn from middle-ranking or non-Brahmin upper castes, which is also called as "dominant caste".¹⁶ The caste-structure thus was polarised between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. In other words there was a 'fusion' of all non-Brahmin castes.

The democratic politics made it necessary for the leadership to pay heed to local opinions. With the movement into a more diversified and 'mass' oriented politics, there was not only a need for a wider base of support but also new types of managerial and organisational skills.¹⁷ The Brahminic castes were outnumbered by men from commercial and peasant proprietor castes. In Karnataka, Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas provided this leadership. On the eve of independence, they had successfully ousted the Brahmins from the state politics.

In this stage a significant development took place which is considered to be an important feature of post-independence Indian polity. Once the "dominant castes" ousted the "entrenched castes", the former started fighting among themselves. A fission among the non-Brahmins started taking place. Factionalism and leadership cleavages became more pronounced. The mobilisation of further support by contending factions of dominant castes gave rise to a process of co-optation

16. Srinivas (M.N.), Social Change in Modern India, Bombay, 1977, pp.151-153.

17. Kothari (Rajni), op.cit.

of the members of lower (backward) castes, who were till then kept out of power politics.

Different entrenched or dominant castes in different regions came to confront each other at the district and state level politics,¹⁸ as for example, the Kammas versus Reddis in Andhra,¹⁹ Nair versus Eshava in Kerala, Kayastha versus Rajput in Bihar, Baniya-Brahmin versus Patidar in Gujarat, Rajput versus Jat in Rajasthan, Marathas versus Mahars in Maharashtra. Of late more complicated and fragmented constellations of power have emerged.²⁰

In Karnataka, the two dominant castes - Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas - came face to face in the state politics. The Veerashaiva-Vokkaliga conflict can be traced back to the post-independence and pre-state reorganisation Karnataka. The Kannadigas²¹ became aware of their social, cultural and literary heritage, particularly after 1947. There were pressures from Kannada speaking areas for the reunification of Karnataka, which was spread over Bombay, Madras presidencies and Hyderabad province. In 1953 the Fazl Ali Commission was appointed to

18. Kothari (Rajni), Politics in India, Orient Longman Ltd., New Delhi, 1972, p.236.

19. Elliot's (Carolyn) study of Kammas and Reddies in Andhra Pradesh, in Kothari, ed., Caste in Indian Politics.

20. This point with special reference to Karnataka will be taken up little later in this chapter.

21. Kannada speaking people are known as Kannadigas.

look into the matter of State reorganisation, it submitted its report on 10th October 1955. And on 1st November 1956 the Kannada speaking areas were reunited. The State came to be renamed as Karnataka on 1st November 1973.²²

Some Vokkaliga leaders opposed the reunification of Karnataka, because that would give Veerashaivas an edge over Vokkaligas in the numerical strength.²³ But the Report of the State Reorganisation Commission noted:

In the United Karnataka it has been estimated that a little more than 20 per cent of the population may be Veerashaivas, and between 13 and 14 per cent Vokkaligas. It is clear that no one community will, therefore, be dominant and anyone section can be reduced to the status of minority if other groups combine against it. It is not unnatural in these circumstances for those who expect to be reduced in their relative position to view the proposed change with disfavour.²⁴

Immediately after reunification in 1956, the then Vokkaliga chief minister K. Hanumanthaiah had to give way for S. Nijalingappa who belonged to the Veerashaiva community. The rivalry was not only for political power but also for deriving

22. Venkata Ramanappa (M.N.), Outlines of South Indian History, with Special Reference to Karnataka, Vikas, Delhi, 1975, pp.249-256.

23. Harrison (Selig), India: The Most Dangerous Decades, Oxford, 1960, p.112.

24. Report of the State Reorganisation Commission, Manager, Government of India Press, Delhi, 1955, p.91.

the subsequent economic and other benefits accruing from political patronage, especially at a time when widening economic opportunity in India, coinciding with an increasing government role in economic development.²⁵ Veerashaivas are one of the numerically dominant group in Karnataka, are heavily concentrated in the Northern districts of the State. Since 1956, they have been a powerful factor in the State politics. Three chief ministers have come from this community - S. Nijalingappa, B.D. Jatti and Veerandra Patil, apart from the numerous M.L.A's, M.L.C's and other functionaries in political parties, B.D. Jatti was also the Vice-President of India for a full term. Vokkaligas were a close second to Veerashaivas in both numerical and economic position in the State.

The rival leaders who primarily came from the peasant proprietorship background appealed to the wider identities, to get the support of the lower castes. But soon enough these lower castes realised the difference in the ideology and practice of the dominant castes. These sections took the form of 'political class' and became self-assertive and indignant against exploitation from the upper castes and eager to taste the political power themselves.

25. Harrison (Selig), op.cit., p.113.

...With every passing year new claims are made as other communities (lower castes) begin to sense their potential. As progress goes deeper and deeper, more and more non-Brahmin communities that do not own land, labouring communities submerged until now will assert their new economic and political strength.²⁶

As a result of the politicisation of backward castes, they became aware of their low status, and they do not accept it as they used to earlier. Movements for equality for these castes were launched by them unlike the earlier movements, here the initiative and leadership came from the backward castes themselves. Srinivas calls this the "expressions of mobility".²⁷ In Karnataka during the 1970s this development took place.

Backward castes in Karnataka were able to oust the dominant castes - Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas - from the political power in state politics under the leadership of Devaraj Urs (1972-80). Urs figured out that all the minority castes - backward castes, Muslims, Christians and S.C. & S.T. - together outnumbered the dominant castes.²⁸ Although Urs belongs to one of smallest castes in Karnataka, ^{he} has shown how caste can be manipulated to the advantage of weaker sections.²⁹ Over the

26. Ibid., p.134.

27. Srinivas (M.N.), op.cit., p.89.

28. Srinivas (M.N.), Politics of Caste, in India Today, December 1-15, 1979, p.67.

29. Manor (James), Pragmatic Progressives in Regional Politics, The Case of Devaraj Urs, in Economic and Political Weekly, Annual Number, February, 1980, pp.201-213.

years, he implemented package programmes like the land reforms, the appointment of a 'Backward Classes Commission' and subsequent reservation for the backward castes and communities of Karnataka in the educational institutions and government services. He gave good representation to backward castes of Karnataka like Beda, Kuruba, Idiga and others in his cabinet and also appointed them as chairmen and presidents of government and semi-government bodies.

Urs was able to do this because the dominant castes were not a homogeneous entity. There were not only two dominant castes, but also there were many sub-castes and factions among these dominant castes; like for example, Vakkaligas are subdivided into, Gangadikar, Morasu, etc. and Veerashaivas into Banajiga, Sadar, etc. This disunity among the dominant castes and the support of minority caste - backward castes, scheduled castes, Muslims and Christians, helped Devaraj Urs to oust the Veerashaivas-Vokkaligas from the state politics.³⁰ Another factor which was responsible for Urs' success in state politics was that the traditional disparities between rich and poor comparatively less acute. Manor observes that "Perhaps Urs and Karnataka are as much cases apart from mainstream, India as are Kerala and West Bengal."³¹

30. Backward caste leaders like L.G. Haxanur (Beda), A.B. Mariappa (Kuruba), S. Hanumanthaiiah (Nayak), S. Siddappa (Yadava), T.V. Venkataswamy (Idiga) (For equivalent terms please see appendix) and scheduled caste leaders like K.H. Ranganath and Basavalingappa supported D. Urs.

31. Manor (James), op.cit., p.213.

The new government in Karnataka under the leadership of Gundu Rao, a Brahmin (1980), while undoing most of Urs' decisions like dismantling various government and semi-government bodies, has not done anything substantial with regard to the reservation of seats and government services to backward castes. This alone points to the sensitivity of the issue and the populist approach of Urs and the backward castes' movement in Karnataka.

First, Urs and now Gundu Rao, belong to numerically not so significant caste, they have been able to become chief ministers basically because of their connection with the Central leadership of their party. That coupled with their populist policy has helped them to retain the political power.

The first step in the backward castes' movement to improve its status is by aiming at capturing political power. This 'contest mobility' once realised, paves the way for 'sponsored mobility'. The operation of 'contest mobility' and 'sponsored mobility' and its consequences in the backward castes' movement in Karnataka since independence will be discussed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE TO BACKWARD CASTES' STRUGGLE IN KARNATAKA

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In pursuance of the provisions of Articles 15(4) and 16(4) of Indian Constitution, the Government of Karnataka (earlier Mysore), as also many other States of India, appointed many commissions to look into the matter of social and educational backwardness of different castes and communities and to make reservations in educational institutions and government services. Apart from the constitutional provision many other factors also operate in the appointment of Backward Classes Commissions. What are the non-constitutional reasons for the appointment of such Commissions? What are the role of caste-lobbies and why does the government consider the demands of such caste-lobbies? Who are the real beneficiaries? What are the reactions of the forward castes? and what are the further prospects for the improvement of status of backward castes? Some of these questions will be taken up for discussion while reviewing the backward classes committees, reports of Karnataka.

In the post-independence period, the Government of Karnataka appointed two backward classes commissions to look into the matter of social and economic dimensions of backwardness and to suggest measures to ameliorate their conditions. They are:

1. The Mysore Backward Classes Commission appointed by the Government of Mysore in 1960, under the Chairmanship of Dr. R. Nagan Gowda.
2. The Karnataka¹ Backward Classes Commission, appointed by the Government of Karnataka in 1972, under the Chairmanship of L.G. Havanur.

The Nagan Gowda Committee²

Certain events preceded the appointment of this Committee. In 1959, the Government of Mysore passed an order reserving 75 per cent of jobs in government service and seats in medical and engineering colleges, to the Backward Classes (67 per cent) and Scheduled Castes and Tribes (18 per cent). Only 25 per cent were open to general competition. This matter was taken to the court and a legal tussle followed. The Mysore High Court declared in 1960 that this policy violated article 15(4) and quashed the reservation policy of the government.³

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1. The name of Mysore was changed to Karnataka on 1st November 1973.
 2. Mysore Backward Classes Committee Final Report, Government of Mysore, Bangalore, 1961, Chairman: Dr. R. Nagan Gowda.
 3. S.H. Partha and others vs. State of Mysore and others, Mysore Law Journal, 1960, p.159 (quoted in Donald E. Smith, India as a Secular State, Princeton, 1963, p.318).

It was then that the Mysore government decided to appoint a committee in January 1960 under the chairmanship of Dr. R. Nagan Gowda. The other members of the committee were M.S. Patil, B. Karagappa, A. Bhemappa, Ramachandra Rao Jhunge, F.D. Ghodke, K. Puttaswamy and Mahamed Sheriff.

The Committee's terms of reference were⁴ to suggest the criteria to be adopted in determining which sections of the people in the state should be treated as socially and educationally backward; also to suggest the exact manner in which the State Government should extend reservation in respect of admission to technical institutions and appointments to government services.

Findings and Recommendations
of Nagan Gowda Committee

The Committee was of the opinion that the social backwardness of a community should be judged by the status accorded to the community in society. Thus, "caste" became a unit for consideration of the backwardness or otherwise of a caste. Further backwardness was to be determined by castes' representation in government service and the number of high school students per thousand of its population. On the basis

4. Final Report, op.cit., pp.5-8.

of these two criteria, the Committee collected and analysed material for recommendations to the State Government regarding reservation.

A few tables dealing with population, educational standard and representation in government services of various castes, communities and tribes of Karnataka have been presented in this chapter. It may be noted that these tables are abstract and aggregate in nature. However, some of the concrete details of educational status and representation in government services of backward castes, communities and tribes are given in table 4, 5, 9 and 10.

Forty-one castes and communities were identified by the Committee as backward. Table-1 gives the distribution of castes and communities into different population groups.

Table-1: ESTIMATED POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF DIFFERENT CASTES AND COMMUNITIES IN KARNATAKA (1960)⁵

Population Size-Group	No. of Castes, Communities and Tribes
1. Below 50,000	10
2. 50,000 to 1 lakh	4
3. 1 lakh to 5 lakhs	17
4. 5 lakhs to 10 lakhs	4
5. 10 lakhs and above	6
Total	41

Note: A few religious groups (like Sikh, Muslims, Christians, Jains) have been included in the list.

Adapted from

5. Source: Mysore Backward Classes Committee Final Report, Bangalore, 1961, Statement-1, pp.41-42.

The total population of the State in 1960 was 2,11,47,300. There were six castes, communities and tribes, which had more than 10 lakhs population, they were: Veerashaivas, Scheduled Castes, Vokkaligas, Muslims, Kurubas and Bedas. Except Veerashaivas all the others were listed as 'backward'.

To find out the educational backwardness, the Nagan Gowda (Commission) estimated educational status of students in each caste, in order to compare it with the State average. A frequency distribution of different castes in terms of number of students per thousand population of their caste is presented in Table-2.

Table-2 : DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENT POPULATION IN THE LAST THREE YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL IN KARNATAKA (1959-60)⁶

No. of students in the last three-years of High School, per thousand population	:	No. of castes, communities and tribes
1. Below 3.50	:	13
2. 3.50 to 6.90	:	10
-----cut-off point		
3. 7.00 to 10.00	:	7
4. 10.00 and above	:	9
Total		39

Note: Data for two castes are not available.

6. Source: Adapted from Mysore Backward Classes Committee Final Report, Bangalore, 1961, Statement-3, pp.43-44.

The total number of students in the last three years of High School in Karnataka in 1959-60 was 1,46,752. There were 23 castes, communities and tribes, whose number of students in the last three years of High School per thousand of population was below the State average, i.e., 6.90. Out of these 23 castes, communities and tribes, nearly 13 were below the State average by 50 per cent.⁷

Of the two criteria adopted by the Commission for the purpose of identifying backwardness, the other one was to look into the adequacy or otherwise of representation of all the castes in government services, in proportion to their population in the State. Table-3 provides the frequency of different castes, communities and tribes' representation in the state government services in 1960.

Table-3 : DISTRIBUTION OF REPRESENTATION OF DIFFERENT CASTES IN STATE GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN KARNATAKA (1959)8

Adequate (+) or Inadequate (-) Representation in State Services		Mo. of Castes, Communi- ties and Tribes
1. Below -2.00		5
2. -2.00 to 0.00		19
----- cut off point.		
3. 0.00 to +2.00		9
4. +2.00 and above		3
Total		36

Note: Data for five minor communities not available.

7. For details see Table-4.

8. Source: Adapted from Mysore Backward Classes Committee Final Report, Bangalore, 1961, Statement-3, pp.45-46.

On 31st March, 1960, there were totally 1,48,686 state government employees in Karnataka (including Class-IV). Totally 24 castes, communities were not adequately represented in the state services. And five of them were very inadequately represented.

Table-4 gives the details of the educational standard and the representation in state government services of the backward castes, communities and tribes in Karnataka in 1960. Nagan Gowda Commission divided the backward castes, communities into 'backward' and 'more backward' and suggested reservations in educational institutions and government services accordingly.

Nagan Gowda Commission listed 9 castes, communities and tribes as 'backward' and 11 as 'more backward' for the purpose of reservation in the educational institutions (Art. 15(4)). It also listed 6 castes, communities and tribes as 'backward' and 11 as 'more backward' for the purpose of reservation in government services (Art.16(4)).

Muslims were considered 'backward' only for the reservation in educational institutions and not for government services. Vokkaligas were found to be educationally 'backward' and also inadequately represented in the government services, hence, listed as 'backward' for reservation in both education and government service. The other dominant caste Veerashaivas were considered 'forward' by the Commission.

Table-4 : CASTES AND COMMUNITIES IDENTIFIED AS BACKWARD
(BY NAGAN GOWDA COMMISSION)

Sl. No.	Castes & Communities	Percent- age to Total Popula- tion (1)	No. of students in the last three years of High School in 1959- 60	Adequacy of repre- sentation in Govt. services	Reservation (2)	
					Art.15 (4) Educa- tion	Art.16 (4) Govt. Service
1.	Agasa	1.18	2.2	-0.67	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
2.	Banajiga (Non- Lingayat)	1.57	6.0	+0.23	B.C.	-
3.	Beda	4.57	1.2	-3.95	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
4.	Devanga	1.05	5.2	-0.14	B.C.	B.C.
5.	Gangakula	2.18	3.2	-2.01	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
6.	Idiga	2.40	3.3	-1.89	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
7.	Kumbara	0.52	3.4	-0.35	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
8.	Kuruba	6.88	1.8	-4.58	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
9.	Maratha (Non-Brahmin)	4.08	5.5	-1.38	B.C.	B.C.
10.	Meda	0.13	4.1	-0.05	B.C.	B.C.
11.	Nayinda	0.57	4.1	-0.08	B.C.	B.C.
12.	Neygi	0.67	6.9	+0.08	B.C.	-
13.	Thigala	0.72	2.9	-0.52	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
14.	Uppara	1.04	2.0	-0.74	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
15.	Viswakarma	2.28	4.3	-0.77	B.C.	B.C.
16.	Vokkaliga (Non-Bhunts)	12.98	6.0	-5.03	B.C.	B.C.
17.	Yadava	1.47	2.7	-0.95	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
18.	Lamani	0.84	1.0	-0.70	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
19.	Veddar	1.70	1.0	-1.24	M.B.C.	M.B.C.
20.	Muslims	10.02	5.0	+3.54	B.C.	-

Source: Adapted from Mysore Backward Classes Committee Final Report, Govt. of Mysore, Bangalore, 1961, Statements 1 to 10, pp.41-54.

Note: (1) The total population of the State in 1960 was 2,11,47,300.

(2) Nagan Gowda Committee classifies backward classes into 'Backward' and 'More Backward'.

Table-5 : RESERVATION RECOMMENDED BY NAGAN GOWDA COMMITTEE

	Art.15(4)	Art.16(4)
1. Group A (Backward)	28%	21%
2. Group B (More Backward)	22%	24%
Total Non-Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Reservation	50%	45%
3. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe	18%	18%
Total Reservations in the State	68%	63%

Source: Adapted from Mysore Backward Classes Committee Final Report, Govt. of Mysore, Bangalore, 1961, Statements 1 to 10, pp.24-25.

The Veerashaivas constituted 15.57 per cent of State population in 1960. The number of students per thousand population of Veerashaivas was 7.1, which was 0.2 above the state average (6.9). In the government service they were inadequately represented. The Nagan Gowda Commission which had listed them as 'backward' earlier changed its opinion later. One of the Committee members M.S. Patil did not agree with the Committee's opinion. He submitted a note of dissent⁹ "to do requisite justice" to the Veerashaiva community. Patil held that Veerashaiva community, except few sub-sects like Jangama, Banajiga and Sheitaru are backward and should have been included in the list of 'other Backward Classes of citizens'.

Eventually, however, the Mysore Government yielded to pressure and restored to Veerashaivas the 'Backward status'.¹⁰ The two dominant castes of Karnataka viz., Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas had developed vested interest in backwardness. As they were in a strong position in state politics, their demands were conceded by the Mysore Government, in spite of the judicial disapproval.

The Government order, 1961, based on the recommendations of the Nagan Gowda Committee was struck down by the Supreme

9. Mysore Backward Classes Committee Final Report, Bangalore, 1961, Note of Dissent Given by M.S. Patil, pp.30-38.

10. Srinivas (M.N.), Social Change in Modern India, Bombay, 1977, p.110.

Court, in what is known as The Balaji Case. The Supreme Court declared that it was "a fraud on the constitution."¹¹ The judgement held that 68 per cent reservation (50 per cent for backward castes and 18 per cent for S.C. and S.T.) had so weakened the Fundamental Rule - the equality of opportunity - as to rob it of most of its significance.

In accordance with the Supreme Court judgement on the Balaji Case the Mysore Government as a temporary measure, classified individuals as backward. The then Chief Minister Mr. S. Hifalingappa himself a Veerashaiva said¹² that, caste and community should not be the criteria for classifying backward classes.

At this juncture Karnataka witnessed the awakening of leaders of different backward castes. The backward caste leaders felt that the Mysore Government's policy regarding the reservation, did not help them much as it was manipulated by the dominant castes, viz., Veerashaiva and Vokkaligas. The legal battle which was started before the appointment of the Nagan Gowda Committee, continued, even after the recommendations were implemented, this time it was spearheaded by Laxman G. Havanur belonging to Beda community (backward). He challenged

11. The Hindu, Madras, 30 September, 1962.

12. Deccan-Herald, Bangalore, 8 November 1963.

the Government order in what is known as the Viswanatha Case.¹³ The High Court observed that 'caste' was relevant, in the determination of backwardness of a group.

Although the backward castes fought a successful legal battle, they did not succeed in pressurising the Veerashaiva and Vokkaliga dominated State Government, to implement the court ruling on the matter of reservation. Nevertheless, the legal battles, awakened the consciousness of many backward castes. Until the appointment of Nagan Gowda Committee, the State witnessed the domination of Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas. After 1960, gradually, there started a 'fission' between them on the one hand and the backward castes on the other. There was a 'fusion' of the backward castes with Scheduled Castes and other minorities, in the State like Muslims and Christians.

The newly elected President Mr. V.V. Giri visited Bangalore on 13th September 1970. During his visit, a few backward caste leaders of Karnataka submitted a memorandum to him. These leaders included Messrs. L.G. Havanur (Beda), S. Siddappa (Yadava), A.M. Mariappa (Kuruba), S. Hanumanthaiah (Valmiki-Nayak), T.V. Venkataswamy (Idiga) and also N. Rachalah and K.H. Ranganath, the scheduled caste leaders of Karnataka.

13. Mysore Law Journal, 'Viswanatha Case', Bangalore, 1963, p.302.

They requested the President to direct the State Government ^{to} /appoint a new commission on backward classes. The memorandum stated that if the State Government failed to appoint a new Commission "a situation may arise when you may be called upon to impose your rule in the State."¹⁴ This shows the degree of political awareness among backward castes and their effort at 'contest mobility'.

During the second half of 1960s, a series of political changes appeared on the national scene, which had an impact on the politics and backward castes movement in Karnataka. In 1969, a split in the Congress party took place. After the mid-term poll to parliament in 1971 when Mrs. Gandhi's faction won, Mr. Veerendra Patil then Chief Minister of Karnataka, had to resign, as he was in the other faction of Congress. The President's rule was imposed. With the fall of Veerendra Patil's ministry, the dominance of Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas in State politics started declining.

The post-Veerendra Pail period, is one of gradual ascendance of backward castes to a dominant position in Karnataka politics. Just as 1940s, 50s and 60s witnessed the Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas dominance, the 70s witnessed the backward castes dominance in State politics.

14. Deccan Herald, Bangalore, 14, September, 1970.

The Havanur Committee

The capturing of political power is considered to be an important stage in the backward castes' movement. In Karnataka, a new ministry under the leadership of Devaraj Urs though belongs to a minority Kshatriya community (now peasant proprietors) tactfully mobilised the support of backward castes, scheduled castes and religious minorities like Muslims and Christians.¹⁵ He was largely successful in ousting the Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas from the dominant position in State politics in the 70s.

In April, 1972, the Backward Classes cell of Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (Ruling), passed a resolution requesting the State Government to appoint a new Backward Classes Commission. L.G. Havanur and V.C. Thimmarayappa played a key role in this. Many letters to the editors of prominent local newspapers were written pressing the demand for a new Backward Classes Commission.¹⁶ Some upper caste members like P. Kodanda Rao and M.O. Nanjundaswamy were also in favour of this. On 18th July 1972, Chief Minister Urs made an announcement in the State Legislative Assembly about the appointment and composition of the Backward Classes Commission which is popularly known as Havanur's Commission, as he was the Chairman.

15. For a detailed discussion, see Chapter Three.

16. Deccan-Herald, Bangalore, from 15th May to 1st July, 1972.

The Havanur's Committee was asked to suggest the criteria to be adopted for determining the social and educational backwardness (of non-Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Tribes) and to investigate into the living and working conditions of all such castes.¹⁷ It was asked to make a list of all backward classes and suggest what reservation must be made in the educational institutions. And also to determine to what extent different classes are represented in the State services. In short, to generally advise the government about the steps to be taken to ensure adequate safeguards for the backward classes, in the State.

L.G. Havanur was the Chairman of the Commission and other members of the Commission were messrs Y. Ramachandra, K.R. Srinivasa Naidu, K.M. Naganna, A. Masana Chetty, Dharma Singh and P.T. Habib. The Commission made a study of the many earlier reports on backward classes of various states and conducted socio-economic survey of 378 villages, towns and cities, covering more than 3 lakh individuals of about 171 castes and communities in Karnataka.¹⁸ Havanur Commission made more exhaustive study than the Nagan Gowda Commission.

17. The Karnataka Backward Classes Commission Report, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore, 1975, in 4 volumes, Vol.I, p.14.

18. The Report, op.cit., Vol.I, covering letter by Havanur.

Although it is said that vested interests tried to sabotage the working of the Karnataka Backward Classes Commission,¹⁹ this, however, was not at all severe. In the Jurists' Seminar on "Backward Classes", held in Bangalore in September 1973, many upper castes supported the need for backward class commission. The participants in the Seminar included Professor M.D. Nanjundaswamy, Justice K. Subha Rao, Professor N. Basheer Hussain, Professor H.G. Balakrishna, Professor A.M. Dharma Lingam, Sri B.P. Kadam, Justice K.R. Gopivallabha Iyengar and L.G. Havanur. Justice K.S. Hegde presided over the seminar.

They all expressed the need for reservation to backward classes, apart from discussing the legal aspects of it. Justice K.S. Hegde in his presidential speech said that "the state should provide special coaching for those who are selected through reserve pool so that they may not lag behind others."²⁰ At the same time most of them cautioned that the reservation made must be reasonable but not excessive.

The Havanur Committee submitted its report on 19th November 1975. "As he read out the ~~last~~ few paragraphs of his welcome speech, overcome by emotion Mr. Havanur broke down in tears, fumbling for words."²¹ The chief minister said that it

20. The Report, op.cit., Vol.I Part-B, Appendices, Jurist Seminar speeches, pp.51-108.

21. Indian Express, Bangalore, 20 November, 1975.

was but natural that people who had been enjoying all privileges and properties would feel worried that they stood to lose by this principle of equality. He argued that unless the advanced castes and classes are ready to forego certain of their privileges and properties, social change could not be brought about. Further Urs said that if the advanced sections think that they can prevent this social change and that they know the political tactics better than the uneducated backward classes, they are thoroughly mistaken. The haves must give up for have-nots.²² The statement of Devaraj Urs was a clear warning on behalf of the backward castes to the upper castes, not to create any problems for the 'sponsored mobility' of backward castes. As it turned out the upper castes hardly hampered the Government's efforts to improve the status of backward castes.

In the Karnataka state politics and 'sponsored mobility' we see a 'fusion' of backward castes with scheduled castes and other minorities. "If Basavalingappa (S.C. leader) put steel into the backbone of Dalits, it was Laxman G. Havanur (Beda - a backward caste) (who) provided intellectual leadership to the Dalit movement in Karnataka.²³ He also made it broad-based and

22. Ibid. Devaraj Urs' speech at the time of receiving Havanur Committee Report.

23. Shetty (Rajashekar V.T.), Dalit Movement in Karnataka, Madras, 1978, pp.81-97.

added numerical strength to the movement by bringing backward castes with scheduled castes. "Havanur united under one single umbrella, all the suppressed and oppressed communities, which together formed a 60 per cent of Karnataka's 3 crores' population."²⁴

The Havanur Commission's finds and recommendations are as follows:

The Commission identified 205 castes, communities and tribes. 197 of them were declared 'backward', and were entitled for reservations in both government services and admissions to educational institutions. It adopted five tests to determine the backwardness of different castes in Karnataka, they are viz., economic, residential, occupational, educational and the 'caste' meaning the status in hierarchy.

While Nagan Gowda Commission listed only 41 castes, communities and tribes, Havanur listed 205 of them. This is because: (i) the latter took into consideration many regional variations of caste names and some times listed them separately. (ii) Havanur Commission listed many minority communities which were not listed separately by Nagan Gowda Commission. This difference in approach may be explained in terms of the ideological and social pressures exercised by the backward castes on the State Government.

24. Ibid., p.81.

Havanur Commission listed hundred castes, communities and tribes in Karnataka whose population was 0.01 per cent of the State population in 1972. Table-6 gives the distribution of population of different castes, communities and tribes in Karnataka in 1972.

Table-6 : ESTIMATED POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF DIFFERENT CASTES, COMMUNITIES AND TRIBES IN KARNATAKA (1972)²⁵

Population Size-Group	No. of Castes, Communities and Tribes
1. Below 50,000	63
2. 50,000 to 1 lakh	6
3. 1 lakh to 5 lakhs	18
4. 5 lakhs to 10 lakhs	5
5. 10 lakhs and above	8
Total	100

In 1960 (Nagan Gowda Commission) there were only 6 castes, viz., Veerashaivas, Scheduled Castes, Vokkaligas, Muslims, Kurubas and Bedas which had more than 10 lakh population. In 1972 as listed by Havanur Commission, there

25. Source: Adapted from Karnataka Backward Classes Commission Report, Bangalore, 1975, Vol.II, Statement-2, pp.197-200.

were 8 castes, communities and tribes having more than 10 lakh population. The two new communities are the Brahmins and Mahratas.

To determine the educational status of different castes, communities and tribes, Havanur Commission adopted, a pass in S.S.L.C. in 1972 (Karnataka) as the criteria, whereas Nagan Gowda Commission's criteria was the total number of students in the last three years of High School. Table-7 presents the distribution average number of pass in S.S.L.C. per thousand in 1972.

Table-7 : DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE PASS PER THOUSAND IN S.S.L.C. IN 1972 OF DIFFERENT CASTES, COMMUNITIES AND TRIBES IN KARNATAKA.26

Average Pass in S.S.L.C. per thousand in 1972	No. of castes, communities and tribes
1. Below 0.85	19
2. 0.85 to 1.69	18
----- cut-off point	
3. 1.70 to 3.00	5
4. 3.00 and above	13
Total	55

Note: Data are not available for many minority castes, communities and tribes.

26. Source: Adapted from Karnataka Backward Classes Commission Report, Bangalore, 1975, Vol.II, Statement-6, pp.216-219.

Total pass (first, second and third division) in the 1972 S.S.L.C. examination in Karnataka was 50,779 and the State average pass per thousand population was 1.69. There were 37 castes, communities and tribes which were below the State average, and 19 of them were below 50 per cent of the State average.

As far as the representation in government services is concerned, both Nagan Gowda and Havanur Commissions adopted the same criteria to find out the adequacy or otherwise of different castes, communities and tribes. Table-8 gives the distribution of adequacy or otherwise of representation in the government services of different castes, communities and tribes in Karnataka in 1972.

Table-8 : DISTRIBUTION OF REPRESENTATION OF DIFFERENT CASTES, COMMUNITIES AND TRIBES IN THE STATE SERVICES IN KARNATAKA (1959)27

Adequate (+) or Inadequate (-) representation in State Service	No. of Castes, Communities and Tribes
1. Below -2.00	4
2. -2.00 to 0.00	46
----- cut-off point	
3. 0.00 to +2.00	20
4. +2.00 and above	2
Total	72

Note: Data are not available for some minority castes, communities and tribes.

27. Source: Adapted from Karnataka Backward Classes Commission Report, Bangalore, 1975, Vol.III, Statement-IV, pp.265-268.

While there were only 37 castes, communities and tribes which were educationally backward, there being 49 of them who were considered as backward for the reservation in government services. As both Nagan Gowda and Havanur Commissions adopted same criteria to determine the adequacy or otherwise of representation of different castes, communities and tribes, it is possible for us to compare the two commissions' findings in this respect as far as the backward castes are concerned.

Table-9 gives the data regarding the educational backwardness and inadequacy of representation in government representation of the some of the backward castes, communities and tribes in Karnataka in 1972. The table also helps us to know the degree of improvement which some of the 'backward' castes listed by Nagan Gowda Commission (1960) have attained as far as the representation in government service is concerned.

While comparing the findings of Nagan Gowda Commission with Havanur Commission, one has to keep in mind the assumptions made and their limitations.

The variations in government services should under controlled circumstances give us an understanding of how far the recommendations and its subsequent implementation of Nagan Gowda Committee recommendations helped those identified as 'backward' and 'more backward' castes, in securing adequate

representation in 1972. However, the variation in absolute population of each caste group, the age-composition (working age) of each caste population has implications in the variations in the adequacy or otherwise in government services over the two periods of comparison.

Table-9 : CASTES AND COMMUNITIES IDENTIFIED AS BACKWARD
(BY HAVANUR COMMISSION)

Sl. No.	Caste Name	% to Total Population(1)	Average passes per thousand in SSLC	Adequacy of representation in Govt. services	Reservation(3) Art.15(4) Educa- tion	Art.16(4) Govt. Service	Variation over N.G.C. (for column 5)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Agasa	1.18	0.43	-0.48	B.C.	B.C.	+0.19
2.	Banajiga (Baliga)	1.57	1.28	+0.36	B.C.M.	-	+0.13
3.	Beda	5.06	0.47	-3.38	B.T.	B.T.	+0.57
4.	Devanga	0.93	1.46	-0.02	B.C.M.	B.C.M.	+0.12
5.	Gangakula	2.38	0.71	-1.18	B.C.	B.C.	+0.83
6.	Idiga	2.25	1.20	-1.00	B.C.M.	B.C.M.	+0.89
7.	Kumbara	0.73	0.60	-0.12	B.C.	B.C.	+0.23
8.	Kuruba	6.77	0.46	-4.15	B.C.	B.C.	+0.43
9.	Maratha	3.45	2.17	-0.30	B.C.	B.C.	+1.08
10.	Meda	0.11	1.62	-0.02	B.C.	-	+0.03
11.	Nayinda	0.64	1.17	-0.07	B.C.M.	B.C.M.	+0.01
12.	Neygi	0.74	1.18	-0.07	B.C.M.	B.C.M.	-0.15

Continued.....

Table-9 (Continued)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13.	Thigala	0.74	0.53	-0.48	B.C.	B.C.	+0.04
14.	Uppara	1.29	0.37	-0.90	B.C.	B.C.	-0.16
15.	Viswakarma	2.30	1.21	-0.37	B.C.M.	B.C.M.	+0.40
16.	Vokkaliga	11.82	1.06	-2.13	B.C.M.	B.C.M.	+2.90
17.	Yadava	1.52	0.39	-1.04	B.C.M.	B.C.M.	-0.09
18.	Lamani (Banjara)	0.55	0.59	-0.27	B.T.	B.T.	+0.43
19.	Voddar*	0.38	0.97	-0.09	B.T.	B.T.	+1.15
20.	Muslims	10.63	1.10	-0.16	B.C.M.	B.C.M.	-3.70

Source: Adopted from Karnataka Backward Classes Commission Report, Govt. of Karnataka, 1975, Vol.I, II, III and IV.

- Note: (1) The total population of the State in 1972 was 3,00,08,500.
- (2) Only few major backward castes, communities and tribes have been listed here.
- (3) Havanur's Committee classified the backward groups into three groups - Backward Castes, Backward Communities and Backward Tribes.

Table-10 : RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED BY HAVANUR COMMITTEE
(Later modified by Karnataka Government)

Backward Classes	: Under Art.15(4)	: Under Art.16(4)
1. Backward communities	20%	18%
2. Backward Castes	10%	10%
3. Backward Tribes	5%	5%
Total non-S.C. and S.T. reservations	35%	33%

Assuming that there has been a relatively proportionate growth of population in each caste, community and tribe, we may hypothesise that most of the backward castes which were identified by the Nagan Gowda Committee have registered improvement as far as their representation in government service is concerned (Table-9, column 8). Gangakula, Idiga, Maratha, Vokkaliga and Voddar witnessed better performance than the other backward castes. But nevertheless, all the castes which were considered backward by Nagan Gowda Commission were listed as backward in Havanur Commission also.

Elaborate survey conducted by Havanur Commission, has enabled it to make some important observations on the socio-economic conditions of backward castes; it says that majority of backward castes are incapable of owning land, house or other property. Their occupations are unclean, inferior and unremunerative. Social taboos against inter-dining and inter-marriage are still strong. The occupational, environmental and economic conditions have resulted in many drop-outs from backward castes.²⁸ In short, Havanur Committee points a gloomy picture of backward castes.

Yet another important finding of Havanur Committee is that it found backward and advanced, rich and poor in every

28. Ibid., Vol.I, pp.312-314.

Hindu-caste including Brahmins and Veerashaivas, who have been traditionally considered as advanced. However, the only exception to this rule found by the Commission was the 'Bhunts' of South Kanara who have been therefore advanced. Nor was there any representation from this caste to be declared as backward.

Havanur Commission classified the backward classes into three groups:²⁹ (i) 'Backward Communities' are those communities whose student average per thousand of population is below State average, but above 50 per cent of State average.

(ii) 'Backward' castes are those castes whose student average per thousand population is below 50 per cent of the State average.

(iii) 'Backward Tribes' are those, whose student average is below 50 per cent of State average.

Karnataka High Court ordered revision, regarding the reservation policy of Government based on Havanur Committee. It asked the Government to delete 'Arasu' community from the list of backward communities.³⁰ It also made few other minor modifications and the revised reservation for different castes, communities and tribes is given in Table-9.

29. See Table-10.

30. Karnataka Gazette, Govt. of Karnataka, Bangalore, 29 May, 1979, pp.305-320.

Apart from suggesting reservation for education and government services, Havanur's Committee also made few other suggestions for the welfare of backward castes, communities and tribes in Karnataka.³¹ They are: that the selection committee should necessarily consist representatives from the three categories of B.C. similar to S.C's and S.T's. The members of B.C. should be provided free boarding and lodging hostels in every town having a college. Scholarships to 100 students per year should be given to three categories of B.C's to go abroad for higher education. The Commission was of the opinion that Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, should develop a spirit of self-help.

In this manner the Havanur Commission made a wide ranging suggestions for the upliftment of the backward castes in a big way. Since 1975, Government of Karnataka under the leadership of Devaraj Urs tried to implement the recommendations of Havanur Commission. The Chairman of the Committee for Backward Classes Mr. B.P. Mandal, after visiting 15 states stated that, "with 46 per cent reservation in employment and educational institutions Karnataka led the rest of the States in implementing welfare programmes for Backward Classes."³² He further said that

31. The Report, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.317-319.

32. Times of India, New Delhi, July 31, 1980, p.2.

the Committee would submit its report in this regard to the Centre by the end of September. How far Havanur Commission recommendation has helped different backward castes, communities and tribes (each one separately) can be an important area of research.

Public Reaction to Havanur Commission Recommendations:

Those castes, communities and tribes who were listed in the 'Backward Classes of Citizens', welcomed the Havanur Commission recommendations. The Chief Minister Devaraj Urs called the Havanur Commission report as the 'Bible of the Backward Classes' and vowed to implement the suggestions.

On the other hand Brahmin, Veerashaivas and large number of Vokkaligas had reasons to worry, as they were not included in the list of backward classes. At the time of Hagan Gowda Commission, Veerashaivas were powerful in state politics and could pressurise the government to extend them reservation. But they had lost their hold and could not influence the government. Devaraj Urs realised the numerical strength of Veerashaivas, and at the time of Chickmagalur bye-election to Parliament in 1978, to woo the Veerashaiva votes, he promised them to include some of them in the list of backward classes. The Brahmins, Veerashaivas and other castes who do not have the benefits of reservation are trying to pressurise the State

Government to extend the benefit of reservation to them. This can be seen in the resolutions these castes pass in their conferences. Politicians because of vested interests do not categorically say ^{no} to their demand.

The net effect of these two Commissions has been the increasing 'caste and mobility consciousness' among various groups in society. Not only backward castes, communities, tribes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, but also advanced castes become very 'caste-conscious', and try to fight for their further upliftment. But in Karnataka, the upper caste opposition to the government's policy of reservation is very limited. We do not find any large-scale and militant anti-reservation movement like that of Bihar, in Karnataka. This is probably due to low-density of population compared to Bihar, and not so severe economic disparities between the rich and poor in Karnataka. Another reason may be the accommodative nature of the upper-castes of Karnataka.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

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Caste system, Brahmin and other 'twice-born' caste domination have been the target of many social reform movements, starting from Buddha in the 5th Century B.C. But such efforts did not register much success and the evils of caste-inequality continued unabated. 'Politicisation of caste' in the twentieth century has given a new twist to social movements which aim at the upliftment of backward castes.

In the beginning, the backward castes, to improve their social status, resorted to the imitation of Brahmin and upper caste way of life which Srinivas calls 'Sanskritisation'. This effort at mobility by the backward castes did not result in any change of the social system, but it was a change in the social system. It did not result in any displacement of earlier caste order.

The earlier social movements aimed at fighting the ritual superiority of Brahmins, like that of Phule's movement in Maharashtra. As pointed out in Chapter Two, Phule's movement did not result in any significant 'upward mobility' of the mali caste which he aimed at. The non-Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu although started as a social movement by Ramaswamy Naicker (in its second phase) resulted in the formation of regional political party, with the main aim of fighting Brahmin domination. In

Tamil Nadu, the attack on ritual supremacy of Brahmins preceded the attack on Brahmin domination in regional politics and government services.¹ The non-Brahmin movement was successful to a great extent in Tamil Nadu because of the political dimension it assumed.

In the case of Karnataka, there was no militant non-Brahmin movement in the recent period, because it already had its version of it in the form of Veerashaiva movement in the 12th Century A.D. and the degree of rural impoverishment in Karnataka was not as high as that of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

After independence, a new phase in the backward castes' movement begins:

Parliamentary form of government and party system drew many backward castes into politics which earlier did not have much say in the decision-making. The 'politicisation of castes' is an all-India phenomenon, which has been responsible for awakening the backward castes of their strength, which could be used to improve its low social status.

The new constitution adopted in 1951 made provisions for the upliftment of non-S.C. and S.T., backward castes. Articles 15(4) and 16(4) empower the State governments to reserve seats

1. This is discussed elaborately in Chapter Two.

in educational institutions and government services for backward castes. This has been a great source of government sponsored upward mobility to many castes. Caste-lobbies often bring pressure on the state government to get the benefits of reservation.

In the post-independence period the backward castes' main aim is to capture political power in the State. In the pre-independence India, the middle-ranking castes fought the Brahmin domination in regional politics and were successful in doing so on the eve of independence. After independence, the backward castes slowly started challenging the middle-ranking castes in State politics. In Karnataka this happened in the second half of 1960s, when backward castes challenged the Nagan Gowda Commission recommendation government policy. In the 70s the backward castes of Karnataka were successful in ousting the two dominant castes of the state Veerashaiva and Vokkaligas.

Once the first aim is achieved, i.e., capturing the political power from the hands of dominant castes, the backward castes start working ^{for} the upward mobility of their caste members. Backward castes where they are in majority can do this on their own. But backward castes in Karnataka ^{and} in many other states are not all that numerically powerful to capture political power in the State, hence, they 'co-opt' the members of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and religious minorities like Muslims and

Christians. In Karnataka Devaraj Urs resorted to this tactic in ousting the Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas from the dominant position in state politics.

It is interesting to note the reaction of the advanced to the backward castes' castes' movement. In Tamil-Nadu the Brahmins emigrated to metropolitan cities like Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta in search of jobs. Whereas in Bihar there was anti-reservation movement by advanced castes in 1979 to oppose the government's policy of reservation for backward castes. But in Karnataka, we do not witness any anti-reservation movement. The upper castes have been generally accommodative to the backward castes' movement. This may speed up the 'upward mobility' of the backward castes in Karnataka.

Many backward classes Commissions have been appointed by various states to look into the matter of reservation in educational institutions and government services. How far these committee recommendations and subsequent implementation by the state government have helped different backward castes in Karnataka and other states can be important topics for research.

The reservation and government policies in Karnataka first helped the dominant castes to a large extent, later in 70s Devaraj Urs implemented many policies for the upliftment of backward castes like land reforms. He also vowed to implement

the recommendation of the Havanur Commission. It is five years since the State government started implementing Havanur Commission recommendations, and the backward castes have been at the helm of political affairs of the State in the last 8 years. How far these factors have resulted in the 'upward mobility' of backward caste, the author intends to take up for further research.

In course of the present study, the author finds the following areas equally important for future academic research as far as Karnataka State is concerned:

- (a) Social mobility in post-independence Karnataka: A study of 'upward mobility' of various backward castes, communities and tribes, and its impact on advanced castes and communities.
 - (b) The impact of changing political factions and alliances on the backward castes' movement in Karnataka: 1970s.
 - (c) The inter-relationship of caste and class factors in the context of backward castes' movement in Karnataka.
 - (d) A study of changes in agrarian and occupational status of backward castes, communities and tribes in Karnataka.
 - (e) A comparative study of backward castes' movement in various parts of India.
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APPENDIX

Appendix

THE LIST OF SOME MAJOR BACKWARD CASTES,
COMMUNITIES AND TRIBES IN KARNATAKA (1972)

Sl. No. :	Name of Caste/Community/Tribe :	Estimated population in 1972 :	Percentage to the State Population :
1.	Agasa (Washerman)	3,55,246	1.18
2.	Baliya (Traders)	4,72,409	1.57
3.	Lamani* (Gypsy)	3,53,882	1.18
4.	Beda (Hunter)	15,19,621	5.06
5.	Gangakula (Boatman)	7,12,922	2.38
6.	Idiga (Toddy-Tappers)	6,75,654	2.25
7.	Kuruba (Shepherd)	20,32,032	6.77
8.	Mahratha (Farmer/Peasant)	10,36,337	3.45
9.	Uppara (Agricultural Labourers)	3,86,573	1.29
10.	Viswakarma (Smith)	6,96,689	2.30
11.	Vodda* (Stone Mason)	4,58,560	1.53
12.	Vokkaliga (Farmer/Peasant)	35,46,171	11.82
13.	Yadav (Cowherd)	4,46,893	1.49
14.	Total, non-S.C. Hindus	2,17,65,362	72.53
15.	Scheduled Caste	39,43,205	13.14
16.	Scheduled Tribe	2,36,865	0.79
	Total Hindus	2,59,45,432	86.46
17.	Muslims	31,88,640	10.63
18.	Christians	6,27,861	2.09
19.	Others (Jains, Buddhists, etc.)	2,46,517	0.87
20.	State population	3,00,08,050	100.00

continued...

Appendix (continued)

* Some of the members of these castes were included in the S.C. category.

Source: Adapted from the Karnataka Backward Classes Commission Report, Bangalore, 1975, Volume-II, Statement-2, pp.197-200.

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