

POLITICS OF SCHEDULED CASTES IN RESERVED CONSTITUENCIES

A Case Study of Washim Constituency in Maharashtra

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by

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the material presented in
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PREFACE

The provision for reserved constituencies for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes forms an important landmark in the political system of India. The express intention of the framers of the Indian Constitution in making such provision was to arouse political awareness among the deprived sections of the society. Constitutional reservation and an area of protected political activities were deemed necessary to enable them to overcome the ills of their age long segregation, oppression and continuing economic dependency on the upper castes of the society. Whether the politics of Scheduled Castes in the reserved constituencies has really stood this test presents a very relevant question. This question becomes all the more important keeping in view the fact that such constitutional provision has been made for a limited period of time subject to review in 1980. The present dissertation is an attempt to analyse the nature of politics in the reserved constituencies.

As far as Scheduled Caste politics is concerned, Maharashtra has been in the forefront, thanks to the pioneering struggle spearheaded by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Under the inspiration of Dr. Ambedkar, it is generally

felt, the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra have become organized and politically conscious of the constitutional rights and privileges. Washim constituency has been a centre of political activities since the rule of the Nizam of Hyderabad and it has a tradition of continuing political awareness. Washim constituency was declared as reserved constituency for the Scheduled Castes in 1962. This constituency is to the present study for the reason that it is a politically active constituency in Maharashtra - a state which is known for Scheduled Castes' organized political activities.

This study tries to analyse the problem in the Washim constituency during the period 1962 - 1978. This period has been selected keeping in view the change in the nature of reserved constituencies. From 1962 onwards, the double member constituency has been replaced by the Single member reserved constituencies. This change is significant in the sense that the Scheduled Caste politicians now have not only to consolidate their Scheduled Castes votes but also to depend on the non-scheduled caste population which forms the majority of voters. The period beginning with 1962 upto 1978 in Maharashtra shows crystallization and polarization of Scheduled Caste politics arousing

the Scheduled Castes' political awareness slowly but steadily. Therefore, this period is significant for the study.

A study, in order to be scientific, requires objectivity and application of scientific methods of investigation and analysis. In order to maintain objectivity and scientificity all the possible care has been taken. The Washim constituency was selected for a study with this point in view that the researcher knows that constituency well and is well acquainted with the conditions of life and the problems there. Moreover, the researcher being a member of Scheduled Castes is in a position to know better the problems that the people of Scheduled Castes have generally to face. So, it is the point of convenience which guided the selection of the problems relating to Scheduled Castes of a particular constituency for investigation and a study.

This study is based both on primary and secondary materials. The primary data include the various interviews, discussion - both formal and informal, government documentaries, official records and reports of various commissions on Scheduled Castes. The secondary sources include books, articles published in periodicals and newspaper reports.

I am extremely indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Kiran Saxena for her invaluable comments and guidance at every stage of the preparation of this dissertation. However, the blame for all the errors and lapses is entirely mine. Thanks are also due to the staff of Central Library, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Library, Delhi and Nagpur University Library for their help given to me in some way or the other. I also take this opportunity to thank the people of Washim constituency in general and the interviewees in particular who extended all co-operation to me. Thanks are also due to all my friends who helped me in the slightest way in the completion of this dissertation. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Nanduram, Centre for Social Studies, Mr. B. Chandra Mohan and Mr. Ash Narian^a Roy for their help in the completion of this study.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF RESERVED CONSTITUENCY

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The Scheduled Castes of India who had been relegated to the lowest position in society in history, were accorded in the Constitution equal political rights with the rest of the population. Clearly anticipating that the absence of previous orientation and socialization for participation in the main stream of political life of the country and to eradicate the traditional disabilities that were likely to handicap the exercise of Scheduled Castes' political rights, the fathers of the Constitution designed a system of reserved constituency as an interim measure to enable the Scheduled Castes to organize themselves into a political force of their own so that they could have an effective bargaining in political and economic matters.

Dushkin Lelah might be right in stating that Indian system of official discrimination in favour of the most backward sections of her population is unique in the world both in the range of benefits involved and in the magnitude of the groups eligible for them.¹ But, why is it that the Indian democracy, the world's largest democracy with its vast bureaucratic administration, however, can not be said to have seen the end of socio-economic and political disabilities or improvement of the conditions of a vast majority of Scheduled Castes?

1. Lelah, Dushkin, Scheduled Caste Politics, in Michael Mahar, ed., "The Untouchables in Contemporary India" (Tucson: University of Arizona, 1972) p. 165.

Before these, Scheduled Castes were to be given special protection, they were and still are socially and economically backward. Because of the Varna System and Caste System, created by the Brahmins, they could not improve their socio-economic standard. The Brahmin prescribed ritual purity and status which were associated with the social, political, economic, judiciary power. In the process of evolution of castes on the principles of graded Chaturvarna (four Varnas) and ceremonial purity, the vast body of people known as Panchamas or exterior castes or Antyajas fell outside the pale of the Chaturvarna system and, hence, were known as Avarnas (not belonging to Varnas). It seems probably that inter-Varna struggle and other religions in historical developments, were predominant in the evolution of the four varnas and the fifth group of the Avarnas.² Thus, the problems of the Scheduled castes have arisen from the peculiar justification of the Caste Hindu villages and the Scheduled caste ghetto all over India, perpetuating social disabilities. Thus, they were denied the social, economic and political rights enjoyed by the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and even Sudras. They were deprived of performing

2. B.R. Ambedkar, Who were the Shudras? (Bombay: Thacker & Company Ltd., 1966), p. 31.

ritual functions - Upanayana (wearing sacred thread), learning, bearing arms, trade and other 'clean' occupations.

These castes were systematically listed in the 1931 Census of India. They were officially defined as depressed classes in 1932.³ Gandhiji named them 'Harijans' i.e., 'Hari' means God, Jan means people and, thus, Harijan means people of God. "If anybody of people can be described as men of God, they are surely these helpless, friendless and despised".⁴ But this term has been resented by the community of Scheduled Castes themselves. People regarded it as term of abuse meaning a person whose father is unknown.⁵ Particularly, the term Harijan was not disliked but was also hated and opposed by the Ambedkar's group and the Scheduled Caste people in Western India. There was strong opposition and agitation to the bill using the word Harijan in the Bombay Legislative Assembly. In 1938, on the issue of using the word Harijan, Dr. Ambedkar's group challenged the Congress majority in the House and demanded the term Harijan used in a bill to be changed to Scheduled Castes. It was only

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3. H. Isaacs, India's Ex-Untouchables (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 36.
 4. Sachchidananda, The Harijan Elite (Delhi: Thomson Press (India) Ltd., 1977), pl 3.
 5. H. Isaacs, India's Ex-Untouchables, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 41.

replaced by the term Scheduled Castes in 1938.⁶ And it continues to be used as Scheduled Caste in governments records and circulars even today.

With the coming into force of the Constitution of the Republic of India, on January 26, 1950, the Scheduled Castes have assumed certain essential rights and benefits under the article 341(1) of the Constitution. The President of India after consultation with the Governor (art. 341(1) may specify the castes or tribes which shall be deemed to be Scheduled Castes or tribes for the purpose of Constitution. However, according to article 341(2), the Parliament by law can include or exclude the above mentioned groups from the list of the Scheduled Castes. Such Scheduled Castes can be notified as the Scheduled Castes separately for each state. Accordingly, the President has notified the Scheduled Castes in the order called Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, and the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) part C States Order 1951, and the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes list (modification Order, 1956).⁷

6. Ibid., p. 40.

7. P.T. Borale, Segregation and Desegregation in India (Bombay: P.C. Manktala and Sons, Pvt. Ltd., 1968), p. 21.

The Scheduled Castes in India suffered various social, economic and political disabilities till the dawn of nineteenth century. Since in the last century India started coming into contact with the outside world, a lot of changes had taken place due to both the internal and external forces. The British rule in India added to the acceleration of such changes and this obviously affected the lower echelon of the society in India. However, the British Raj in India had adopted a policy of 'divide and rule' and not to interfere in the internal matters of religion, caste, etc.; in a word, basic structure of the society in India. Its prime motto was not to think of the India's good but goods. Therefore, the advent of British rule in India also could not improve the lot of the Scheduled Castes.

However, the Christian Missionaries in India exploited the educational cause of lower classes particularly the Scheduled Castes for their vested interests. Therefore, the British started diffusing the education among these people with much kindness and helping nature so as to coax the oppressed people. The Britishers wanted these suppressed people to develop their strong feelings that foreigners were preferable to high castes. So, it was also one of the systematic attempts to make

the Indian people to fight within themselves on communal ground. Thus, the British rule in India supported indirectly the caste system vis-a-vis the degraded status of the Scheduled Castes.

The question of Scheduled Caste education~~ed~~ was brought before the Bombay government for consideration in 1856, by the untouchables as an untouchable boy was refused admission in the Government School of Dharwar. At last, in 1858, Government announced that all Schools maintained at the sole cost of the government shall be open to all classes of its subject, without distinction, and no grants would be aided to any educational institutions, which refuse admission to the children of Depressed Classes.⁸ Since the Depressed Classes were given the educational facilities, it was quite natural for them to develop certain amount of consciousness about their underlying human rights and manifold acute problems. Thus, the process of democratic awakening started among the Depressed Classes and was linked up with the general national awakening that had taken place among the Indian people during the British rule. Among all the organizations fighting for the national cause, there appeared for the first time in the political history of India,

8. G.S. Ghurye, Caste and Class in India (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1966), p. 66.

the representation of the untouchables in November/December, 1917.⁹ The representatives, who were claiming to be the Sheet-anchor of the Scheduled Caste community were B.R. Ambedkar and M.K. Gandhi and their alies who were the passionate fighters for human rights for the Scheduled caste and their political demands.

Despite their common concern, Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhiji were often odds in their programmes for the emancipation of Scheduled Caste people. Both, Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhiji got an opportunity for the justification of their militant leadership when the British Government called the Round Table Conferences in London in 1931-32. The Round Table Conferences were held to frame a constitution for India in accordance with the demands of people of India.¹⁰ These conferences were attended by the representatives of various Committees and parties from India, the British Government and the British Political parties. In all, eighty-six members were present in these conferences and Dr. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivisan (Madras Depressed Classes leader) represented the Oppressed Classes.¹¹

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9. D.J. Keer, Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission, (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1954), p. 33.
10. Bharill, Chandra. Social and Political Ideas of B.R. Ambedkar, (Jaipur: Aalekh Publishers, 1977), p. 26.
11. Ibid., p. 26.

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Since Dr. Ambedkar had been deputed by his community as its representative to the Round Table Conferences alongwith Rao Bahadur Srinivasan, he prepared a memorandum on a scheme of political safeguards for the protection of the Depressed Classes in the future constitution of governing India,¹² and submitted to the Minorities Sub-Committee. However, Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhiji started theoretically breaking with each other in the Round Table Conferences on the issue of political safeguards to be granted to the Depressed Classes. A clash between the two advocates of the Scheduled Castes came about because of the speech which Gandhiji made in the Minorities Committee in July, 1931. In this committee Gandhiji spoke that as a representative of the Indian National Congress, he was not prepared to give political recognition to any community other than the Muhammadans and Sikhs. He was not prepared to recognise the Anglo-Indian and the Christians in India as minority communities.

On the other hand, to substantiate the claim of political safeguards for the Scheduled Castes, Dr. Ambedkar outlined the special difficulties of the Depressed Classes in the deliberations of the Minorities Sub-Committee of the Conference.

12. Ibid., p. 28.

13. Gwyer, Appadorai, "Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution, Vol. I, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 230.

Putting forward the case of the Depressed Classes of India, Ambedkar stated that they were different from the other minorities inasmuch as they had to suffer civil disabilities on account of their untouchability. Therefore, they must be given political safeguards in the future constitution of India.¹⁴ But the claim which was advanced by Dr. Ambedkar on behalf of the Depressed Classes received extreme reaction from Gandhiji. The claim of political safeguards for the Scheduled Castes appeared to Gandhiji as 'the unkindest cut' of all.¹⁵ Thus, Gandhiji opposed the memorandum of special representation for the Depressed Classes.

Since the question of communal problem was left with the Indian delegation to settle within themselves, the British Government did not intervene in India's communal controversies. However, they systematically intensified the communal problem and exploited it for their own purposes. As a result, the failure of the minorities communities to agree among themselves had placed almost insurmountable obstacle in the way to frame the constitution of India. The then Prime Minister, J. Ramsay Macdonald announced the Communal Award

14. Gwyer & Appadorai, Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution, 1921-47, Vol.I (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 260-262.

15. Ibid., p. 261.

on 16th August 1932.¹⁶ Substantiating the British Government's decision Macdonald said that many years past the voting was group oriented and was viewed by the minority community as an essential protection of their rights.¹⁷ So, on the basis of past voting pattern, the British Government thought that the idea of separate electorate stood to reason and should be embodied in Indian constitutional frame-work.

As far as the Depressed Classes were concerned, the Prime Minister was of the opinion that Depressed Classes should be given their own choice to elect their representatives in the legislature and the provinces. He thought that, side by side, it was also cardinal to arrange the electoral system in such a way that the perpetuation of the Scheduled Castes segregation was done away with. So, in order to prevent the feelings of segregation from penetrating the Indian society he surmised that the Depressed Classes voters should be given the right to vote in general Hindu constituencies to seek certain amount of protection from elected non-Scheduled caste members who ought to be attentive to their electoral responsibility.

16. Ibid., p. 261.

17. Ibid., p. 261.

Thus, the Communal Award to minorities in India was announced by the British Government to avert their equal position in all respects. But, in fact, it was not the total liberation of the minority communities. It was another systematized attempt to perpetuate the British imperialism through the constant policy of Divide and Rule as stated earlier. It was not proper solution to the communal problem, that India needed, but to intensify the social evils in Indian society.

In those countries of the world, wherein the people have been ruled under the banner of imperialism, the very imperialism has played an obstractive role against the emerging national liberation movement and reform movements. In India, also, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the British imperialism played the same obstractive role in such a way to see that the Indian National Movement was fizzled out. While commenting on the British imperialistic attitudes towards India a foreign scholar remarks, "The means used by the British to hold India included a good deal of the Divide and Rule philosophy, whether by design as nationalists used to charge of because of the inner nature of imperialism."¹⁸

18. Kamallesh Kumar Wadhwa, Minority Safeguards in India (New Delhi: Thomson Press (India) Ltd., Publication Division, 1975), p. 26.

So far as the emancipation of untouchables was concerned the imperialistic alien rule played a neutral role and that too was in effect a negative support to the caste Hindu oppressors as mentioned earlier.¹⁹ Once talking about the Depressed Classes and their separate electorate, Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the Scheduled Caste Federation (this organization was formed by Dr. Ambedkar and was confined to the Scheduled Caste Community) tried to show his suspicion about the British imperialistic rule in connection with untouchables. In his presidential address to the All India Depressed Classes Congress, held in 1930, he said, "I am afraid that the British choose to advertise unfortunate conditions, not with object of removing them, but only because such a course serves well as excuse for retarding the political progress of India."²⁰ He continued, "before the British you were in the loathsome condition due to your untouchability. Has the British Government done anything to remove your untouchability? Before the British you could not draw water from the village well. Has the British Government secured you the right to the well? Before the British you were not allowed to serve in the military.

19. D.J. Keer, Dr. Ambedkar: Life & Mission, (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1954), p. 4.

20. R.P. Dutt, India Today, (Delhi: 1955), p. 293.

Is that career open to you? Gentlemen, to none of these questions you can give an affirmative answer. Those who held so much power over the country for such a long time must have done some good. But there is certainly no fundamental improvement in your position. So far as you are concerned, the British Government has accepted the arrangements as it found them and has preserved them faithfully in the manner of the Chinese tailor who when given an old coat as a pattern produced with pride an exact replica rents pathles and all your wrongs have remained as open sores and they have not been righted. No body can remove your grievances as well as you can and you can not remove them unless you get political power in your own hands. No share of this political power can come to you so long as the British Government remains as it is."²¹

Dr. Ambedkar believed in the fact that it was possible only in an Indian constitution to have an opportunity to get the political power in to the hands of his own people. He firmly believed that without the possession of political power no salvation was to be brought about to the Depressed Classes.

21. D.J. Keer, Dr. Ambedkar: Life & Mission (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1954), pp. 144-145.

If one analyses the communal problem of India from the point of view of Marxist dichotomy of exploiters and the exploited, he will be able to narrate of communal problems which arise out of Indian feudatism and capitalism. Since every community, for instance, Hindus, Muslims, Scheduled Castes etc., is divided into two sections, i.e., the exploiters and exploited, there are no common political and economic interests of all Hindus as such, all Muslims as such and all Scheduled Castes as such. Each community is having its own specific and confined interests. Even if the attempt is made by the exploiters and the exploited of each community to fight for the common interests, the forces of imperialism and capitalism create infighting within themselves. Consequently, these communities would not be able to reach the common goal. Thus, ultimately the British imperialism was nursed by the Indian Capitalism because the Indian capitalists, for their own vested interests, had to answer the economic expectations of British people by exploiting the people of their own community.

Talking of the British attitude of imperialism, it is also widely believed that Gandhiji has opposed the idea of separate electorate for the Depressed Classes, only for the consolidation of Indian National Movement

and for the preservation of national integration. Thus, to save the Indian people from being flown into the stream of British imperialism, in Poona in 1932, Gandhiji went on fast unto death when the communal Award was granted to Depress^{ed} Classes by the British Government in 1932.²² So, in order to cool down the tight political atmosphere, there was an agreement (Poona Pact) between Dr. Ambedkar, undisputed leader of the Scheduled Castes and M.K. Gandhiji, the leader of Congress Party. According to Poona Pact which was signed on 20th September 1932, the Depressed Classes were to forget their separate electorate and have general Hindu electorates, subject to important safeguards. In the first place, they were to have a specific number of reserved seats (148) out of those assigned by the British Award to the general constituencies in the various legislatures. In the second place, they were to elect by themselves, four candidates for each reserved seats, the general electorates being confined in its subsequent election to all the Hindus.²³

22. Eleanor, Zelliot, Learning the Use of Political Means, 'The Mahars of Maharashtra', in Rajni Kothari ed., Caste in Indian Politics, (New Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd., 1970), p. 48.

23. D.J. Keer, Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1954), p. 215.

Thus, the policy was the replacement of separate electorate by joint electorates and the election of 148 seats was to be held accordingly. The outcome of 'Poona Pact' led to drop the separate electorate and to accept in its place a system of reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes under a system of joint electorates with the Depressed Classes under the effective controlling and influence of the dominant Congress Party. In brief, it was nothing but a virtual disfranchisement of the Scheduled Castes.²⁴ As far as the national integration of India was concerned, Gandhiji's stand of opposition to the demand of separate electorate for the Scheduled Castes might be justified. But keeping in view the past history of underdevelopment and centuries old oppression of the Scheduled Caste, the idea of separate electorate was desirable to be an ameliorative measure for developing the political consciousness among the Scheduled Castes. Therefore, Dr. Ambedkar's move to get Communal Award granted for the Scheduled Castes can be justified.

However, this was the beginning of the 'Representation Policy' and constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Castes heralded during the British regime. As a result of Poona Pact, which came into effect on

24. Ibid., p. 380.

September 25, 1932, the Depressed Classes gained the advantage of an increased number of reserved seats in the following legislative assemblies: Madras (30), Bombay (including Sindh)(15), Punjab (18), Bihar (2), Orissa (18), Assam (7), Bengal (30), and United Provinces (20) with a total number of 148 seats.²⁵

The Government of India Act 1935, gave full expression to the terms and conditions laid down in the Poona Pact. However, the Poona Pact, to some extent, gave beneficial position to the Depressed Classes. Side by side with these the demand for a Constitutional Assembly elected by the people of India was affirmed time and often by political leaders. After a series of deliberations the Constituent Assembly of India was formed to draft the constitution of the Republic of India and met, for the first time, on 9th December, 1940. Following the footsteps of the earlier act, the Constituent Assembly accepted the proposal to guarantee certain political safeguards to minorities. The Advisory Committee on Minorities (1947) recommended certain percentages of reservation to minorities in legislature.²⁶ After prolonged deliberations the resolution was passed on May 11,

25. B.R. Ambedkar, States and Minorities, Appendix II, 1947, pp. 54-55.

26. S.K. Chaube, Constituent Assembly of India (New Delhi: Peoples Publishing House, 1973), p. 270.

1949, which said that the system of reservation for minorities other than Scheduled Castes in legislature should be abolished.

The provision for representation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the legislature through the system of reservation has also been embodied in the Constitution of Independent India heralded on January 26, 1950. In the constitution the articles 330 and 332 are incorporated which provide for the reservation of seats for them in the Parliament and Legislative Assemblies.²⁷

Thus, reservation for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes has been provided only in the Parliament (Lok Sabha) and the Legislative Assemblies in various states. There is no reservation in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the Legislative Councils in the states where they exist.

Further, the constitution does not lay down the specific number of seats that are to be reserved but only enunciates a principle on the basis of which reservation in favour of the Scheduled Caste is to be made. Thus, during the first general election of 1952, a system of

27. C.P. Barthwal, "Representation of Scheduled Castes in Parliament and State Legislature", Economics and Political Weekly (Bombay), Vol. 4, No. 4, June 14, 1969, p. 1451.

two-members constituencies was followed. According to this system, non-Scheduled caste and a Scheduled Caste candidates were to be elected from a single constituency. But, according to an Act which was passed in February, 1961 the system of two members constituency was abolished.

But as far as the parliamentary constituencies are concerned, there is some increase in the reserved seats. The number of Parliamentary seats increased from 418 in 1957 to 524 in 1971, but the number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in Parliament increased from 76 in 1957 to 77 in 1967 only. Thus, increases in the number of reserved seats in proportion to that of general seats was negligible as can be seen from table 1.1 in the Appendix.

Further, the number of seats in Parliament increased in Karnataka, Rajasthan and West Bengal while the number seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes remained constant in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh. Nevertheless, the number of seats reserved for the Scheduled castes has gone down in Maharashtra, Orissa and Punjab. The number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra has gone down because a large number of Scheduled Castes people have refused to be called

untouchables and have embraced Buddhism. This is so happens because, according to an amendment (Scheduled Castes) Order, the moment a member of the Scheduled Caste is converted to Buddhism, he is automatically deprived of all political and economical privileges that he was enjoying before conversion.

Thus, to be very sincere to operate at the spirit of constitution the government is of the opinion that a Scheduled Caste person, who is Buddhist or Christian, converts to Hinduism, he will be given all the privileges and benefits, because any Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe existed under the pale of Hinduism which indirectly owes the legal sanction, is entitled to enjoy the reservation facilities. Moreover, the Supreme Court also in 1964 took the decision that if a Scheduled Caste candidate, converted to Buddhism contests the election on the reserved seat and elected, his victory would be treated as invalid.²⁸

Moreover, para 3 of the Scheduled Caste Order, 1950 provides that no person who professes a religion

28. P.T. Borale, Segregation and Desegregation in India, (Bombay: Manakitas, 1968), p. 264. The Supreme Court has taken the above decision when the contradiction came about the election of Punjabrao S. Meshram. This case was referred to the Supreme Court for the judgement because the candidate had deserted the Hinduism and embraced Buddhism.

different from Hinduism shall be deemed to be a member of Scheduled Caste.²⁹ So, it is quite obvious that those Scheduled Caste persons who have converted into Buddhism and eventhough their socio-economic condition remains same, they cease themselves from being the Scheduled Caste and hence their agitations and strikes for the reservation are not appreciated at the legal ground. Since the Scheduled Caste Order explicitly refers to only to the Hindu religion and the Caste which immuniciate untouchability³⁰ and the Buddhism does not believe or enjoin the caste system and untouchability, the Scheduled Caste converts to Buddhism have to remain out from the patronage system of reservation facilities.

As per the provisions in the Constitution of India, the number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the State Legislature and Parliament should be in proportion to the percentage of the Scheduled Castes population of the State/Union Territory. Therefore, more members of Parliament (M.P.s) from amongst the Scheduled Caste came from Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar and Tamil Nadu as compared to the rest of the states in India. This is because the Scheduled Caste population in these states is

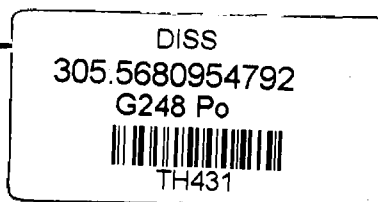
29. Ibid., p. 265.

30. Ibid., p. 265.

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is comparatively more than in the rest of the states in India.* Further, it is clear (from table 1.2 in the Appendix) that the Punjab,** Himachal Pradesh and Haryana Legislatures have sizable number of Scheduled Caste members. On the other hand, state legislatures of Maharashtra, Gujrat and Assam have very small number of Scheduled Castes members as out of a strength of 270 members in Maharashtra legislature there are only 15 members elected on reserved seats and out of 168 members in the Gujarat legislature only 11 are from reserved constituencies.

Although the constitution provides for the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes in the Parliament, and State legislative Assemblies, yet it puts a time limit on the period of ten years the system has

* The statewise position of the Scheduled Caste MPs in the Parliament is given below at the rate of their population: Uttar Pradesh 18, West Bengal 8, Bihar 7, Tamil Nadu 7. This number is more than the number of the Scheduled Caste MPs in States of Maharashtra, 3, Madhya Pradesh 5, Kerala 2, Haryana, 2, Gujrat 2, Assam 1, Andhra Pradesh 6, Karnataka 4, Orissa 3, Punjab 3, Rajasthan 4, Delhi 1, Himachal Pradesh 1. These figures are based on the general elections of 1971-72.

** In the case of Punjab an exception was made with respect to four of the 34 castes and it was provided that all Ramdins, Kabirpanthis, Mazehabis, Sikligars would be deemed to be member of the Scheduled castes whether they prefer the Hindu or Sikh religion.

already been extended several times at decennial intervals and it continues at present till 1980. A further extension for another ten years has already been recommended by the Central Government. Hence, with the several extended period, what is vital to the success of the system of political reservation of the Scheduled Castes, is the effective sincere functioning culminating in the organized politics of reserved constituency from which Scheduled Caste members of Parliament (MPs) and members of state Legislative Assemblies are to be elected. It is these MPs and MLAs who have to play an important role in socio-economic amelioration of Scheduled Caste people. Commenting on the representation of Scheduled Castes in the Parliament and State Legislature the Commissioner for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes states that if the Scheduled Caste people are elected to the Lok Sabha (Parliament) and Vidhan Sabhas (State Legislature) from general constituencies, there will be no need for continuing political reservation for them and in that case, the constitutional provisions can be allowed to lapse. To bring about this situation it is important to look into the functioning of the system of reserved constituency and the politics being played in the reserved constituency.

THE PROBLEM:

The Scheduled Castes community is not a homogeneous group. Different classes exist among the Scheduled Caste and they are fragmented into various castes and sub-castes on one hand, and on the other, there is a hierarchial order in these castes and sub-castes. Hence, hierarchial order among these scheduled castes alongwith other factors play an important role in the political process.

The emergence of democratic political process in India has provided structural institutions like reserved constituencies to the Scheduled Caste community, to abridge the inequalities which have existed in the social system for centuries. In reserved constituency the Scheduled Castes have no political competition with other communities but among themselves. In addition to this, it can be surmised that the level of political consciousness in Scheduled Castes community is comparatively higher in Maharashtra than any other part of the country. Because Maharashtra had been an area of political activities of some leaders like Jyotiba Phuley, a Maratha, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and other Scheduled Caste leaders who tried to awaken the Scheduled Castes to assert their rightful place in the society. This

awakening has also been reflected through some of the movements like Dalit Panthers, Neo-Buddhists movement launched by the Scheduled Caste Community.

Moreover, there is another feeling which is quite preceptable in the Scheduled Castes that reserved constituency is no more useful for them. Besides, this, the policy of compensatory discrimination has become a bone of contention for non-Scheduled Caste people in the country. The fighting for and against the reservation has been exhibited through the incidents, various atrocities on the Scheduled Castes and Buddhists in Bihar, Marathwada in Maharashtra and other states.

The study of political process and political interaction of various segments of society is a major part of political study. Therefore, the study of political process and interaction of Scheduled Castes in India is also important. Moreover, the political scientists and political sociologists have paid a little attention to the socio-political implication and relevance of the system of political representation bringing about the change in Scheduled Castes. Most specifically, a very few Social Scientists have done systematic analysis on the reserved constituency represented by

the Scheduled Castes.³¹

It is also found that the reserved constituencies are creating a new elite³² in the lower castes. The representatives of these constituencies have monopolized the political and economic benefits and utilized the "Caste consciousness" for manipulation of political power. The outcome of this phenomenon is an emergence of politico-ethnic association or although other parties also, though they may not be parochial, whip up the same sentiments to capture the power.

Taking all the above mentioned facts into account, the objectives of the present work is to study the effect of reserved constituency and to determine the extent of success of the system as an effective measure in the amelioration and political integration of the Scheduled Castes community into the wider Indian Society. It tries

31(1) Dushkin, Lelah, "Scheduled Caste Politics" in J.M. Mahar's, ed., Untouchables in Contemporary India, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1972), pp.165-235.

(2) Aggarwal and S. Ashraf, Equality through Privilege (New Delhi: Sri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, 1976), pp. 138-150.

(3) S. Saberwal, "Reserved Constituency, Candidate and Consequences, Economic (Bombay), vol.VII, No. 2, January 8, 1942, pp. 71-80.

32. C. Parvathamma, "Ambedkar and After", Eastern Anthropologists, Vol. 28, 1947/48 - 1975 pp. 221-234.
Sachchidanand, Harijan Elite (Faridabad: Thomson Press (India) Limited, 1976), pp. 28-77; 104-127.

to probe into the nature of commitment of the Scheduled Caste contestants and the techniques which they employ to get elected to the reserved seats in the legislature.² Further, one of the major objectives of the present study is to assess their performance in both the legislative assembly and their constituency to which they³ represent. Though the Scheduled Caste political leaders do not have direct confrontation with the Scheduled Caste masses, yet their differences are heading towards the political segmentation among them. Therefore, this study also tries to investigate the reasons leading to the political fractions within the Scheduled Caste people in general and their political leaders in particular. The present study also deals with the socio-economic background of the Scheduled Caste candidates which serves as the basis for assessing the success of the system of reserved constituency.

It is evident that political participation at leadership level is a costly affairs. As a result, only those Scheduled Caste people who hail from a relatively better socio-economic background contest general election and get elected. Besides, the socio-economic background of political leaders also help them perform better in their constituency as well as in assembly. Moreover, the basic philosophy of compensatory discrimination is to

provide equal opportunities to all the deserving Scheduled Caste people. Hence, a very little has been done on the subject and published literature is scarce, the present work can be regarded as an exploratory study.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on data collected from Washim constituency which is one of the eighteen assembly reserved constituencies in Maharashtra. Like other constituencies, Washim reserved constituency represents a heterogeneous population. Like other constituencies, here also socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Caste people are not so satisfactory. Similarly, voters' turnout here is also neither very encouraging nor very discouraging. But what distinguishes Washim constituency from the rest of the constituencies is that it has consistently been a Congress stronghold and has been dominated by the Mahars. Moreover, this constituency has produced a number of prominent Scheduled Caste leaders who have been greatly responsible in creating political consciousness among the Scheduled Caste people. It is also because of this factor that the Scheduled Caste people have become more and more conscious of their rights. Its geographic location in being proximate to the Akola district has further made

The study of this constituency interesting because it has greater interaction with the urban societies where people are more conscious politically or otherwise.

The socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Caste voters of this constituency is generally backward. Quite a large number of people still continues its traditional occupations. The Mahars are largely landless labourers and suffer from social and economic disabilities particularly in the village. The Chambhars (another section of the Scheduled Castes) are engaged in their leather works and are comparatively much better off socially and economically.

Thus, the study is aimed at tracing out a dialectical inter-connections among the various facts of life - Social, economic and political. Since politics is interconnected with cultural and economic aspects, the study proposes to deal with the socio-economic aspects of the Scheduled Castes people so as to give a better understanding of their politics.

So, keeping in view the constraints of time and resources it is not possible to make an intensive study of several constituencies. Moreover, that kind of study is generally undertaken by a team of researchers. Therefore, only one constituency was taken up which was different in its characteristics from other constituencies.

This study covers a period from 1962 to 1972. Though during this period the constituency saw three General Elections, the present study will, however, focuses special attention on the 1978 General Elections.

SURVEY METHOD:

The main emphasis to take as wide spectrum as possible of the various cross sections of the Scheduled Caste population and analyses their political awarness and political participation. The sample covers sitting MLA, contestants, political leaders and common but politically and socially mobilized Scheduled Caste voters. The questionnaire is aimed at bringing out the politics of Scheduled Castes in the constituency.

CHAPTER - II

**THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND THE POLITICAL
MOVEMENTS OF SCHEDULED CASTES OF MAHARASHTRA**

In the political history of Scheduled Castes of India, the Scheduled Caste people of Maharashtra have used politics as an instrument most unitedly in a very constant manner, in their attempt to better their overall conditions. Despite the efforts, which the government has made to uplift the Scheduled Castes in general and the Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra in particular, still the Scheduled Castes are left with the worst socio-economic condition. Although the social structure, in course of time, has considerably undergone some changes, still the taboos of conservatism and superstition are getting manifested through the regionalism and caste and class conflicts.

Since the Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra are socio-economically backward, politically segmented, the change in their society has been the psychological impossibilities for them. Their progress seems to be retarded because of the impractical idealism of their leaders and the party manifestos. Moreover, the heterogeneous character of the Scheduled Castes community is hampering their organized efforts and preventing them from organizing themselves to fight for the common purposes. So, it is important to see their political movements in the light of their socio-economic background.

Among the major Scheduled Castes, the Mahars constitute 36.97 per cent of the present day Scheduled Castes population of Maharashtra. The two next largest segments are Mangs 28.93 per cent and Chambhars 33.53 per cent. The total Scheduled Castes population is 35.84 per cent. So out of the 77 sub-castes of the Scheduled Caste, the Mahars, Mangs and Chambhars are the only dominant and larger in number in Maharashtra. The Mahars being numerically a large sub-castes are to be found a composite residue of the aboriginal tribes dispossessed by the successive waves of Aryans and post-Aryan invaders. They are an important part of the Maharashtra village. "Whenever there is a village, there is a Maharwade", this is a popular saying, which is based on a Marathi proverb "gethe gao tethe Maharwada".¹

This Mahar group is not a homogeneous group, it comprises other sub-caste on the hierarchial status. It is enumerated that there are 33 sub-castes among the Mahars. The important ones are Somvanshis, Andhvans, Ladvans, Bavane, Bakharepan, Dam, Taral, Dehoga, Mega, Ahir, Silvaur and Surtis.² During the mediviel period,

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1. Zelliot Eleanor, Learning the use of Political Means, The Mahars of Maharashtra, in Rajni Kothari, (ed.), "Caste in Indian Politics" (New Delhi: Orient Longman Ltd., 1970), p. 30.
 2. S. Patwardhan, Change Among India's Harijans (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972), p. 30.

as far as the social condition of Mahar was concerned their quarters were and are to be found outside the village. And it was because of the stigma of untouchability and pollution put to them the ritual, religious and legal sanctions imposed by the Caste Hindu. The Mahar's duties were performed in the context of his untouchability, his touch was polluting and he did not come into direct contact with a caste Hindu or enter a caste Hindu residence. The temple, the school, the village well were closed to him. Some restrictions in clothings, ornaments, metal house-hold wares and the observance of ceremonies seem to have been enforced on him. Since he was thrown out from the mainstream of the village social life, consequently, his economic activities were operating in vacuum. At a very specific level he had some accesses to the economic system through the elaborate system of patronage.³ Because of the traditional place of Mahar in the village community was a balutedar or watandar, a village servant whose duty was to serve the village and whose recompense (baluta or gifts in kind, and watan or land) came from the village.

3. The Baluta and the watan system was to help the Mahar in return of his duty rendered to the village community in the forms of grain and the skin of dead cattle, etc.

Apart from baluta and watan he had to sweep the village roads, yards of the houses, escorting the government treasury, tracking thieves to the neighbouring villages, carrying death notice and messages to other villages, and removing the carcasses of dead cattle from the villages. So, in the last quarter of 19th century and the first quarter of 20th century, apart from their service rendered to the village, they were reduced to a sub-human level.⁴ Some of the Mahars were engaged in agricultural sector when they were not required for balutadar work, for their own watan land was insufficient to meet their necessities of life. And in some of the regions of Maharashtra like Konkan (coastal) in the west, Desh (plains) in the Central and Vidarbha in the east, where the social structure was less dominated by the superstructure, some Mahars were able to transcend their traditional occupational boundaries by taking up a job like weavers, tradesmen and malguzars (village revenue collectors).⁵ This is how the social and economic

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- 4. Specially in Peshwas period in Poona the Mahars were treated subhumanly manner, they had not only to carry death bodies of the cattle but they had also to carry pots round their necks and the broom tied to their waist left traiping on the ground so as to efface their polluting foot prints.
 - 5. Zelliott, Eleanor, Learning the use of Political Means, The Mahars of Maharashtra in Rajni Kothari ed., Caste in Indian Politics, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970), p. 31.

progress of the Mahars was held up by the traditional social structure and the other high caste forces.

The second largest group below the Mahar community is Mang which also has been the victims of social and economic disabilities imposed upon them by the Caste Hindu. Like the Mahars, the Mangs were also at the lower stratum of the traditional society. The Mangs' economic activities were confined to a very limited scope, i.e., to supply cards (ropes) which were needed by the agriculturists in the field and in the houses. They used to make all types of ropes. In olden days and even today they supply the ropes needed from reins for oxen, ropes for hanging pots. Broom making was still another occupation. They were also the executioners. As a result of this function the Cruellest person according to folk literature of Scheduled Castes, is supposed to be a Mang. Reference to intergroup relations between Mahars and Mangs indicate the existence of the proverbial funds. Both hate each other bitterly and are said to have poisoned each others' cattle. The Mangs live themselves in a quarter known as Mangwada, separate from the Mahars.

The Chambhars, though numerically not the most important section of the Scheduled Caste population in Maharashtra, are nevertheless a large community whose

traditional occupation is leather work. They work in leather, and dry skins, make shoes, sandals and water bags. They also do tinning where a Dhor (another sub-caste of Scheduled Castes) population is not to be found. They are relatively well off economically and are rated highest in the ritual hierarchy among the Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra.⁶ The Chambhar group is rarely to be found engaged in the agricultural activities. The other sub-castes of Scheduled Castes are also socio-economically backward.

Thus, the Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra were denied their fair share in economy and common social life under the operation of the traditional mechanism of social control and the economic domination of the village and the locality. Yet, when the British government in India presented a new economic and educational opportunities irrespective of the caste and creed to the Scheduled Caste, the Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra started calculating their interests in terms of socio-economic and political progress. And the caste oriented occupational units, signifying the ends of traditional economic and ritual inter-dependence ceased to be perpetuated.⁷ Since the new venue was opened to the Scheduled

6. S. Patwardhan, Change Among India's Harijans (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972), p. 34.

7. Moin, Shakir, "Caste and Indian Politics", Radical Humanist (New Delhi), Vol.42, No.5, p. 27 (1978).

Castes of Maharashtra undoubtedly it has encouraged their organizational attempts to claim their rightful position in the society. The political history of the Scheduled Castes indicates the earlier passion and the zeal of some of the Scheduled Caste leaders like Gopal Swami Yagavkar, Gopal Baba Walangkar, Fagoji Bansode and Shivram Janba Kamble.⁸

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the middle class non-Brahmin of Maharashtra learnt the liberal social values through the English education. Consequently one of the non-Brahmin intellectuals who came forward in this period was Jyotiba Phule, an upper caste Maratha. Jyotiba Phule, the great social reformer, secular democrat, never trailed from emancipating the depressed and oppressed castes from the age old social order. His passion for the untouchables was unheard and his sense of justice included very oppressed caste and he had absolutely no caste bias.

In 1873, he established the Satya Shodhak Samaj to encourage the non-Brahmin caste to revolt against the Brahmin dominated social economic and political order.

8. Gopal Swami Yagavkar was a British pay-master and Gopal Babu Walangkar, a soldier in the British Army wrote an essay showing that the Vedas did not support untouchability. Shivram Janba Kamble, a butler in a British club in India, and he directed an unsuccessful satyagraha at parvati Poona.

However, Jyotibha's movement was confined to a few urban centres and had little impact on the non-Brahmin caste in Maharashtra.

But, the vigorous and strenuous attempts were ventured by Dr. Ambedkar to organise the Scheduled Castes and carry out the Scheduled Castes movement. Ambedkar, the only sheet-anchore for the restoration of socio-economic and political rights of the Scheduled Castes, has carried out their movement till his death, by organising them under the Scheduled Castes Federation, which was crystallised later as the Republican Party of India. Ambedkar made his attempt for the first time through his first public statement on the political rights of the Depressed Classes to raise the socio-economic status of the Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra. Ambedkar started the fortnightly paper under the wan of Mook Nayak, leader of the Dumb on January 31, 1920 with the financial aid given by the Maharaja of Kolhapor.⁹ Mook Nayak paper was aimed at the equality in matter of social, economic and political to all classes. Dr. Ambedkar, a Scheduled Caste leader from Ratnagire District of Maharashtra, spontaneously devoted his time and life to the social

9. Dhanajaya, Keer, Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission. (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1954), p. 41.

reform movement and political struggle of the Scheduled Castes from 1930 onwards. The Three Round Table conferences were the most crucial and cardinal events for the justification of his leadership for the Scheduled Caste people. And he was able to a great extent to claim his unquestionable leadership by getting the communal Award sanctioned for the Scheduled Castes people.

Again, the unsuccessful but dramatic satyagraha to Chowdar Tank, and the burning of Manusmurti was a very radical event by which the Scheduled Caste political movement gathered a tremendous momentum. But, later on Dr. Ambedkar cancelled temple entry satyagraha only because he felt that, that was the best way of organising the Depressed Classes and making them conscious of their position. As he believed he has achieved that, therefore, he had no more use for temple entry. He wanted the Scheduled Castes to concentrate their energy and resources on politics and education.¹⁰ Therefore, from 1936 to 1956, the religious aspect in the emancipation struggle had a parallel existence along with the political one. Under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, the Scheduled Castes political movement became more militant

10. Zelliott, Eleanor, Buddhism and Politics in Maharashtra, in Donald Smith, ed., "Religion and Politics of South India", (Princeton, New-Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 197.

and as a result the Maratha and Scheduled Castes tried to come together and fight against the Brahmins and other upper castes. Secondly, Jyotibha Phule, who worked for the untouchables was the inspiring force for the unity of the Maratha upper castes and the Scheduled Castes to fight against the Brahmins. But because of the caste differences between the two groups and their social distinctions, Marathas could not make common cause with the untouchables.¹¹

As far as the national movement and the emancipation of Scheduled Castes was concerned even the political radicals had to compromise with the most reactionary and feudal elements for a variety of reasons. According to R.P. Dutt, "national leaders in practice were the champions of the social reaction and superstition of caste divisions and privileges as the allies of all the Black forces" seeking to hold down the antiquated pre-British social and bourgeoisie high flow mystical national appeal.¹² Consequently, because of the bourgeoisie leadership of the freedom movement which was based on social

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11. Zelliott, Eleanor, Learning the use of Political Means, The Mahars of Maharashtra, in Rajni Kothari, ed., "Caste in Indian Politics", (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970), p. 45.
 12. R.P. Dutt, India Today, (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1947), pp. 114-146.

conservatism the Scheduled Caste could seek only "lip sympathy" from this type of leadership. Even the thunderous speeches made by these leaders could not raise the level of the Scheduled Castes people except raising the panthoums dust. Therefore, the militant leader like Dr. Ambedkar was fighting apparently for the causes of his people even breaking with Mahatma Gandhi on theoretical grounds. And for this attitude of Dr. Ambedkar was accused of being traitor, anti-nationalist. Even there was an anti-Ambedkar feeling among the Mangs and Chambhars that the struggle of the lowest castes in Maharashtra was mainly centre around the Mahars under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar.

It was far from denying that the Scheduled Castes political movement of Maharashtra was not free from the factional political tradition of India. Their movement was not a united and concerted one. By the late sixties, schism had developed. The lack of Chambhars cooperation the wealthiest and ritually highest group among the Scheduled Caste of Maharashtra is striking. Only on May 7, at all-India Depressed Classes Congress at Kamtee, near Nagpur, it is allinged that even the General Secretary of the All India Scheduled Caste Federation led by Dr. Ambedkar was bought over by Rajah Moonje Pact of Swing

to the system joint electorates with reserved seats.¹³ And who later denounced the resolution of Dr. Ambedkar. But, Ambedkar's party was then well organized and it maintained rigid discipline and Rajbhoj was lacking in an organized backing.

The strongest factor in the lack of cooperation was probably the caste division and the resultant rivalry within the Scheduled Castes groups themselves. The Chambhars had already achieved some degree of economic advancement with their leather work. Mangs were the most educationally and economically backward of the three groups and neither Chambhars nor Mangs could see a Mahar leader as their salvation.

Dr. Ambedkar, once addressing a meeting organised in Mangwada at Poona in 1927, refuted all the charges levelled against him by a section of the Chambhar community who accused him of partiality. He averred that his movement aimed at the upliftment of the whole suppressed people.¹⁴ The Scheduled Caste people other than Mahars grew different with Dr. Ambedkar mainly over relative number of representatives from the Harijans to be sent

13. D.J. Keer, Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1954), p. 190.

14. S. Patwardhan, Change Among India's Harijans (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1972), p. 121.

to the legislative Council. Despite the appeal which was made by Ambedkar to the Chambhars that such candidates should be chosen irrespective of caste, the Chambhars and the Mangas shifted their loyalties from Mahar leadership to the most reactionary elements. He warned his people to keep themselves away from internal quarrels, otherwise conservative sort of leadership would weaken their unity and baffle their efforts to achieve their goal. Dr. Ambedkar tried to win over these two groups but they did not accept his undisputed leadership like the Mahars. Their discontent with Dr. Ambedkar and probably Mahar oriented political movement can be seen from the by-election in Bhandara, a district near Nagpur in 1954. Ambedkar lost even a reserved seat probably because of the defection of Mahanubhav (a sub-caste in Mahar community) Mahar votes as a result of the earlier leadership of G.M. Thaware, a Mahar leader who had broken with Ambedkar and joined Congress before his death in 1952. Since Dr. Ambedkar was very critical to the Indian National Congress and Gandhiji, either of these two elements were not polite enough to leave the solidarity of the Scheduled Castes movement undivided.

Although the reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes were substantially increased by the Poona Pact, Ambedkar was not able to get his candidates elected. On

the contrary, the Congress Party was able to get Scheduled Caste leaders from other communities like Chambhars and Dhor elected. Once delivering a speech to the Mangs Dr. Ambedkar advised them to be on their guard against the Congress which he said, comprised welfare of the poor under the grass of white dress and cap.¹⁵ Therefore, in 1956, Ambedkar made an attempt to transform the Scheduled Castes Federation into a Party (Republican Party of India) which would speak for all the dispossessed Scheduled Castes, Tribes and Backward Classes. The Republican Party aimed at the emancipation of the Scheduled Castes from the stigma of Untouchability. But after the death of Dr. Ambedkar, the Republican Party of India got segmented in several factions like RPI - B.C. Kamble group, RPI - R.S. Gawai group and RPI - Khobragade group. The next major movement among the Scheduled Castes was the Dalit Panthers campaign in the early 1970s. The Dalits mainly young urban intellectuals were more radical than Ambedkar's followers. Some among them had a decidedly political outlook, as evident from their call to boycott election in Bombay, in 1974.¹⁶

15. D.J. Keer, Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1954), p. 28.

16. Sumanta Banerjee, "Social and Economic Dimensions of the Harijan Problems", Perspective, (Calcutta), Vol. 2, No. 4, November, 1978, p. 45.

This is how the factionalism has now come to visible ruptures, and the current competition for leadership has cut into the Scheduled Caste political unity severly. In fact, the Scheduled Castes who are poor lie in attempts to evaluate themselves and join the upper strata of Hindu society, in shricking into a separatist movement. Even in urban surroundings the traditional face to face relationship do not exist and yet there is a sense of comparison and competition, bitterness and distrust among them. There is unspoken feeling among the Mangs that they are socially, economically and politically backward than the Mahars. There is thus a sense of helplessness and frustration. Both the Scheduled Castes have been apart till to-day on the basis of their political ideology. While the Mangs supported the Congress Party and its government, the Mahars by and large are Republicans and they have put up their own candidates to the general elections, although being forced electoral alliance with other parties. With regard to the different Scheduled Castes, there seems to be little contact with any other.

Even though there is an assumption among the Scheduled Castes and some political observers that the natural political direction of the Scheduled Castes is towards

the ideology of communism. Though they seem to be a rich source of recruits for the party, still the communist workers could not gain the support from these people. This so happens probably because Dr. Ambedkar visualised ~~that~~ the communist party in Bombay as 'a bunch of Brahmin boys.'¹⁷

Today the pattern of Scheduled Castes leadership is very busy in corrupting the Scheduled Caste emerging organized force. Moreover, it has exploited the principles of Republican Party for its own personal interests. Consequently, it has formed a new microscopic class which seems to be a big cut off from the common Scheduled Caste people.¹⁸ Most important problem of the Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra is that they are not literate enough to understand their political interests in terms of class interests. They are affected by infighting within themselves. Even the marshalling of the political support has reached to the sub-caste level. Therefore, the Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra are ideologically bifurcated and socio-economically backward. If these people

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17. Zelliott, Eleanor, Buddhism and Politics in Maharashtra, in, Donald Smith, ed., South Asian Politics and Religion (Princeton; New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 209.
18. C. Parvathamma, "Dr. Ambedkar and After, The Class and Masses", The Eastern Anthropologist (U.P.), Vol. 26, No. 3, 1973, pp. 221-234.

widen their theoretical understanding and if they come together to fight for the common goal, they will definitely ward off the controversy of super-structure and infrastructure, a dialectic of social structure and ultimately they will lead a happy life of fine tomorrow.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL RESOURCES, INFLUENCE AND POWER

The Washim reserved constituency is largely composed of rural population. The area of constituency covers 207 villages. Under the modern Indian political system the political complexion of this constituency is found to be dependent on politics prevalent in the local political institutions like Gram Panchayat, Municipal Committee and Zila Parishad. Whichever political party gets majority in these institutions controls not only the local administration but also the wider political power in the concerned area. In addition, in almost all the villages there are some prominent leaders, from both the communities Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Castes who wield considerable influence over the people. They participate in different types of activities including socio-political activities of the villages and towns. Their range of functioning includes working for the political parties whenever necessary and participate in elections. As a matter of fact, such leaders often serve as links between a political party and the masses.

The Washim constituency has been a traditional stronghold of the Congress Party. Of the five Assembly elections, i.e., 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967 and 1972, the Congress candidates have won the seats in every election,

with a substantial percentage of votes. A perusal of Table 3.1 would offer a clear picture with regard to the position of Congress candidates who were declared elected in all the five elections from the constituency. It would be observed from Table 3.1 that the Congress candidates secured a large number of votes in the elections.

In the 1952 election both the non-Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Caste candidates won the seats from the double member constituency securing respectively 23.39% and 21.33% of the total votes polled.¹ In 1957 election, again from the double member constituency, both the non-Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Caste candidates bagged the seats by a margin of 23.68% and 20.01% respectively of the 62.53% of the total votes polled. When the constituency was made a single member constituency for the 1962 and 1967 elections for the Scheduled Castes in these elections also the Congress candidates backed the seats in the elections by the margin of 23.66% and 32.52% respectively of the 62.53% total percentage of valid votes polled in 1962 and 36.52% to the total percentage, i.e. 40.52% of the valid votes polled in 1967.

1. The votes polled amounted to 56.50% of the total votes.

TABLE NO.-3 Showing Constituency, Voters, Polled Votes and Successful Candidates Partywise from 1952-1972

Year of General Election	Name of reserved constituency	No. of seats	Total No. of voters	Total No. of valid voters polled	Percentage of Col. 4 and 5	Total No. of candidates	Party affiliations of actual candidates	% of votes polled partywise	Successful candidates partywise
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1952	Washim*	2	1,97,962	1,11,858	56.50	15	C 2 JS 1 S 1 SCF 1 SKP 1 I 3	C1 23.39 C2 21.38 JS1 20.63 SCF1 9.36 SKP1 4.03 S1 5.16 I1 6.96 I2 1.76 I3 N.A.	Congress(2) (Double member constituency)
1957	Washim*	2	2,50,668	1,56,744	62.53	14	C 2 JS 1 SCF 1 I 4	C1 23.66 C2 20.01 JS1 6.61 SCF1 9.08 I 1 19.56 I 2 13.06 I 3 3.86 I 4 4.16	Congress (2) (Double member constituency)
1962	Govardhan**	1	68,975	27,950	40.52	6	C 1 JS 1 RPI 1 I 3	C1 36.52 JS1 5.94 RPI1 22.80 I 1 17.42 I 2 5.23 I 3 3.41	Congress (1) (Single member Constituency)

(contd....)

Table 3.1 (contd....)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1967	Washim***	1	78,639	44,088	50.98	7	C 1 JS 1 RPI 1 I 4	C1 59.19 JS1 13.02 RPI1 23.52 I 1 1.97 I 2 1.77 I 3 1.74 I 4 0.37	Congress (1) (Single member Constituency)
1972	Washim	1	47,818	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	C 1 79.65	Congress (1) (Single member Constituency)

- Note: * In 1952 and 1957 Washim reserved constituency was doubled member constituency (one candidate from non-Scheduled Caste and one from Scheduled Castes to be elected from the Madhya Pradesh State).
- ** Then in 1962 it was made single, i.e. Govardhan Constituency only for the Scheduled Castes (this constituency was under the jurisdiction of Bombay State).
- *** Again in 1967 the Govardhan constituency was merged with Washim constituency for Scheduled Castes.
- C = Congress (undivided); SCF = Scheduled Caste Federation; JS = Jan Sangh; SKP = Shetkari Kamgar Paksh; RPI = Republican Party of India; I = Independent.

Source: 1. (Madhya Pradesh) Report on the first 1951-52 General Assembly Election in India, Vol. II, Election Commission of India, pp. 349; 2. (Bombay State) Report on the second 1957 General Assembly Election in India, Vol. II, Election Commission of India, p. 723; 3. (Maharashtra) Report on the third General Assembly Election in India, 1962, Vol. II, Election Commission of India, pp. 286-287; 4. (Maharashtra) Report on the Fourth General Assembly Election in India, 1967, Vol. II, Election Commission of India, p. 363; 5. (Maharashtra) Report on the Fifth General Assembly Election to the Legislative Assemblies in India, 1972, Vol. II, Election Commission of India, p. 1137.

On the other hand, the candidates from the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) showed very poor performance in all the elections. The SCF candidates' poor position is clear from the Table 3.1. Same is the performance of Jan Sangh and Independent candidates in all these elections. It is clear from the Table 3.1 that the candidates from other parties and independent candidates have relatively secured less votes and lost the seats to the Congress candidates.

The influence of Congress Party in this constituency is believed to be dominant due to various factors, firstly, this party had a strong following among the Scheduled Castes leaders. Secondly, it has traditional following among the Mang community which is the major Scheduled Caste segment in the Washim constituency. This is in addition to the influence which the party had built up among the other sections of the society. Thirdly, the success of the candidate to a great extent, rests with the non-Scheduled Caste votes who largely support the Congress Party. Consequently, the non-Scheduled Castes voters play an important and most decisive role in determining the electoral success of the candidates.

In Washim constituency seventeen political activists (including ex-MLAs and defeated candidates) were thoroughly interviewed and the attempt was made to find out the various factors that generally help them to be successful. The respondents, i.e., the candidates both successful and defeated who had contested the election for the five elections and the political leaders were asked the following question: "what are the factors responsible for one's electoral success and defeat?" The attempt was made to collect the information regarding their election techniques, skill for political mobilization, bargaining power and the consequences of their being dependent on non-Scheduled Caste voters and larger political issues. On the basis of the information sought through the answers given by the respondents, one can infer why and how the Scheduled Castes politicians have not been able to gain political force to press their demands for the redressal of their manifold problems? From the response we can make an investigation as to what are the motivations and conditions behind the triangular political alignments built between the Scheduled Caste leaders who do not belong to any political party, the Scheduled Caste leaders from various political parties and non-Scheduled Caste leaders.

The opinions of the political activists, in the area, about the various factors that determine the electoral success are separately given below:

1. Mr. Salve, R.C. (62) is a Scheduled Caste (Mahar) Congress ex-MLA for the 1957 and 1962 assembly elections. He also contested the 1952 general assembly election and as an independent candidate but lost it. He happens to be an advocate in Taluka Court Washim and he is economically well off.

According to him, support of a powerful political party is the first and most important factor for the electoral success. To substantiate his opinion, he stated his own experience that is 1952 assembly election. Since he was ^{not} put up by a politically powerful party in the area he was defeated. Moreover, he contested the election from double member constituency and was a joint candidate of Jan Sangh - a general candidate. He could not muster the support of Scheduled Caste community as by and large, Scheduled Castes are apathetic to Jan Sangh. Whereas, in 1957 and 1962 elections, when he was put up by the Congress Party, he won the elections.

Mr. Salve claimed the second importance to the Party team work as an essential factor for the electoral

success. He said, when he was a Congress candidate, he was provided with necessary propaganda sources like vehicles, top party leaders for his election canvassing and so on. He believed that party team can carry out the election propaganda most effectively even in the villages.

He gave third importance to a good financial background for the electoral success. He said, since the elections are so expensive, no poor candidate can win the election if he does not have a huge amount of money with him.

2. Tayade, D.V. (70) is another Mahar candidate. He was an independent candidate for the 1962, 1967 and 1972 elections. He had carried the banner of Congress (Organization), but he was defeated in all the three elections. He writes a petition and bonds in Washim Taluka. He said, that he is economically very poor. He can read and write in Marathi but could not go beyond 7th Class.

In the order of importance, he puts financial factors in the first place as he feels that it plays an important role in determining the electoral success. He is of the opinion that if a candidate has enough money then he can successfully employ the canvassing sources for an effective propoganda.

Mr. Tayade mentioned that the party team work is also important but secondary to the financial support. He said in all the election he contested, neither his own party (Congress Organization) nor any political group extended its support to him. He said, sometimes he had to campaign on his own from village to village on foot. Therefore, he felt it necessary to have a strong support of political party to carry on an effective propoganda for the electoral success.

Finally, he gave third importance to caste support. Because, he believes, this support helps the candidate in mobilizing the voters for one's electoral victory. In substantiating this point he mentioned that when he contested the assembly election in 1962 and 1978 he observed that the Scheduled Caste leaders and voters were being bribed and divided by the upper caste people on the basis of social hierarchy even in the Scheduled Castes. He said that the intention of these upper castes in splitting the votes of the Scheduled Castes was to defeat other candidates and elect the candidate of their party.²

2. In his opinion, the Jan Sangh Party represents non-Scheduled Castes interests.

3. Avachar, S.H. (58) is a Mahar candidate and is working as an advocate in Washim taluka court. He is B.A., LL.B. and he has retired as a nominated member of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation Board of Control in 1978. In 1952 General Assembly Election, he was put up by the Scheduled Caste Federation and in 1957 election he was an independent candidate but in both the elections he was defeated.

He said that the first and foremost essential factor for the electoral success is to have support of a political party which should be dominant not only in the centre and states, but in the constituency also. Inferring from his defeat as an independent candidate in 1957, he felt that if the candidate is put up by the politically dominant party in the area, then a candidate does not have to worry about his being non-local and inefficient in mobilizing the people. Then it becomes very easy for the candidate to get elected.

According to Mr. Avachar, second importance should be given to the party team work. He felt that party team was an essential factor for the electoral success. Because, as he said, party cadre plays an important role in marshelling the political support from the people by operating from village to village.

He cited the sincere party team work of Congress Party as an example. Elaborating his views he said that in 1957 election, he was lacking in party team work from Scheduled Caste Federation, which did not work cohesively and was lacking team spirit. So, he felt, he lost the election to his rival Mr. M.K. Khirade of Congress.

He also felt that good financial condition can help the candidate to some extent for the electoral success. He said that it is not as important as the party support and party team work.

4. Jadhav, S.P. (55) contested the 1962 General Assembly Election on the platform of Jan Sangh and in the 1978 general election, he was an independent candidate. In both the elections he was not only defeated but also lost his security deposit. He belongs to a Kaikadi (basket maker) a sub-caste and continues his work as basket maker. He has studied upto 4th Class.

The reason of his defeat, he attributed was, the lack of backing from the non-Scheduled Caste voters. Therefore, he felt, the support of non-Scheduled Caste is the most important factor to be put at the first position in the order of importance. He said that the Congress Party wins the elections because it has its following in the non-Scheduled Castes, and since these

upper castes have more votes, therefore, it is largely dependent upon the upper caste voters to elect the candidate of their own choice and not the choice of Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

He gave second importance to financial factor because for the effective election propoganda, he said, one has to have certain monetary sources to mobilize the people. He believed that the requirements of these sources can not be possible if a candidate is not affluent enough. He gave third importance to sincere party team work so that village to village propoganda will be possible. He quoted his own experience, when he as a Jan Sangh candidate had held meetings he could not except more than twenty five people to be addressed. The reason, as he believed, was that the Jan Sangh Party in Washim was lacking effective and sincere party team work. Further, in his opinion, the Jan Sangh Party was not linked by and large by the lower castes.

5. Mehkar, K.M. (52) is a Congress (I) local leader and holds the membership of Washim Muncipal Council under the congress party (now in Congress (I)). By Caste he is Lingayat (a Hindu upper caste) and working as an advocate in Washim Taluka Court. He is economically better off.

According to him, party support comes first for the success in the election. To substantiate his views he gives his own example as ^{although} to how he was a non-Scheduled Caste candidate yet, he won the election from the Municipal ward which includes a large number of Scheduled Caste voters because they favour his party. Therefore, he feels that the party support is very important for the electoral success.

According to the order of importance he puts non-Scheduled Caste support next to the party support. He observes, that it is impossible for a candidate to win the election if he is not supported by the non-Scheduled Caste people who form majority of the votes in the constituency. Since, as he believed, the Scheduled Caste community is heterogeneous and is not atleast politically organized, it has become necessary for a candidate to seek the support of from the non-Scheduled Caste voters for one's electoral success.

He puts party team work in the third rank in the order of importance. He feels that an efficient party team operation also decides the chances of success for a candidate. He is also of the opinion that there should be unity in the Scheduled Caste people. In the present circumstances, they have reduced their bargaining power by the political segmentation and political infighting at the sub-caste level.

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6. Risodkar, B.G. (46) he is a Chambhar (a sub-caste of the Scheduled Castes). He has been a Jan Sangh candidate for the 1972 General Assembly Elections but was defeated. He had been contesting the Municipal Council election but there also he could not win even a single time.

Mr. Risodkar said that the non-Scheduled Caste voters have the ultimate power to decide the electoral success. He further stated that these voters have balancing power because of their being numerically large in the constituency. So, they can elect the candidate of their own choice. Mr. Risodkar had a feeling that upper castes in the reserved constituency have an edge over the Scheduled Caste candidates. He says that because of the penetration of sub-caste-oriented politisization in to the local political groups of Scheduled Castes, it has become necessary to rely on the votes of upper castes for the electoral success.

Secondly, he observed, it has also become necessary for a candidate to seek the support of political party which has a hold in the area. Therefore, he said, party support is also important for the electoral success.

He puts caste support in the third order of importance. He wants the Scheduled Castes people who

are hopelessly divided into several groups, to come together atleast to elect the responsible candidates and should involve themselves into the process of political articulation and participation. Mr. Risodkar said that if the Scheduled Castes are united then upper castes would not be able to influence the former.

7. Deokate, B.H. (56) was an independent candidate for the 1967 General Assembly Election, but he lost it. He is educated upto 5th class. He is a Mang candidate. He said that he has given up his traditional occupation of removing dead cattles, sweeping the house yards and brooms etc. Now he is a carpenter and earns Rs. 150 per month.

For him, the first and most important factor for the electoral success is the support of upper caste voters in the constituency. In trying to substantiate his views he said that though a candidate doe_s not possess qualities necessary for his success it does not matter much. In order to seek the support for his argu- ment he states an example of Mrs. Manabai Khirade, his rival and a successful Congress candidate for the 1967 general assembly elections. He said, though Mrs. Manabai Khirade was neither a local candidate, nor did she have sufficient political hold in the constituency yet, she won the

election as she was supported by the non-Scheduled Caste voters in the constituency.

Mr. Deokate then stresses the need for party support and the team work of the party workers. Finally, he gave third importance to sound financial status for the electoral success. He also feels that there should be unity among the Scheduled Castes.

8. Gaisamudre, J.B. (26) is a young and unmarried Scheduled Caste Congress (I) local leader. He belongs to the Bhangi section. He is elected from the reserved ward for the Washim Municipal Council.

He gives the first importance to party support for the electoral success. He states his own example: He said, since he is a Congress (I) worker, the Congress (I) party (local unit) supported him. Consequently, it brought him victory in the Municipal poll. He was of the opinion that the same party support can be useful for the candidate contesting for the legislative assembly. Moreover, he said, since Washim Municipal Committee is dominated by the Congress (I) its support was useful for his victory.

Mr. Gaisamudre is putting the party team work in the second order of importance. He mentioned that the party team ^{helped} ~~work~~ him considerably to win the Municipal

Council election. Moreover, he said, since Washim constituency is dominated by the Congress (I), Mr. Wankhade (a successful candidate for the 1978 assembly election) in spite of starting his election propoganda only four days before the polling day, was able to win the election. The reason as Mr. Gaisamudra stated, was the party team work, which had already started in the constituency for Mr. Wankhade's propoganda even in his absence.

He is giving third importance to the caste support. Further he feels that the Scheduled Castes of Washim have developed political apathy because the powerful parties have been fielding candidates, who are not locals.

9. Raut, P.R. (28) is another young unmarried Scheduled Castes (Mahar) reserved member for the Muncipal Council. He is a local leader of Janata Party. He is a owner of grain shop.

He is of the opinion that the first importance should be given to the financial factor for the election success. He feels that since his people and the candidates are socio-economically backward and politically segmented, it has become almost impossible for them to win the election. The reason he explained was that,

since the elections have become quite expensive, the candidates involved in the election can not afford to invest a huge amount in the election. Consequently, they loose the election to a candidate who is financed by source, strong forces from inside or outside.

In the order of importance he put party support at the second place. He felt that if the candidate gains the support from the politically powerful party in the area, he stands better chances of getting elected.

Mr. Rant has given third importance to caste support. In trying to substantiate his point he said that the Scheduled Caste people are so hopelessly divided by the political leaders from all the sections (including Scheduled Castes) that these people do not want to come together at the election time and elect the responsible candidate. However, Mr. Rant wanted to say that even in reserved constituency the caste support has become the powerful element for the political mobilization.

10. Khare, H.P. (50) is a Scheduled Caste (Mang) and a staunch Congress (I) local leader. He is also the organisor of the National Dalit Congress District Branch. He said that his activities are largely confined to the Mang community only. This organization is pro

pro-Congress (I) and works for it during the election. Mr. Khare is educated upto 7th class. He said that his sons pull the rikshwas and get the money for this work and all of them manage with this money.

He gave first importance to party support. He feels that the chances of electoral success are entirely dependent on the party support. He said that the candidates contesting for the reserved seats need not take extra support for their election success because he said that the people of this constituency vote for a candidate on the basis of political party. Mr. Khare further states that in 1978 assembly election even though the voters did not see Mr. Wankhade (a successful candidate) still he could win the election as majority of the people in the constituency favour the Congress (I). Thus, a candidate supported by the politically powerful party in the area always stands good chances of getting elected.

Mr. Khare gave second importance to party team work. He was of the opinion that if the party team work is operated sincerely in the area, then the candidates can win the election even with less efforts. He said, since party team work which was employed for Mr. Wankhade in 1978 election is a case in point. Eventually he believed that financial status should be placed in the

third position in the order of importance. He said, nowadays the elections have become more expensive, therefore, if a candidate wants to be a successful, he should be prepared to spend a large amount of money.

11. Wankhade, B.N. (52) is a Mahar successful Congress (I) candidate for the 1978 General Assembly election from the constituency. He is a owner of small grain shop. He mentioned his financial status of not so good.

According to him, party support is the most important factor for the electoral success. He said, for his electoral success party support was largely responsible. He stated that without party support it would not have been possible for a person like him to win the election because, he said, he did not hail from the constituency and most of the people did not know him but since he was a candidate of Congress (I) and people of the constituency favour Congress (I), he could win the election.

Mr. Wankhade said that they party team work is also important. Even though he was staying at Akola (85 kms. away from the constituency), election propoganda for him was carried on by the party teams. He believes this work helped him to win the election. He

is putting non-Scheduled Castes support in the third position in the order of importance. He said that as he has experienced personally, it was impossible for him to win the election without the support of the non-Scheduled Caste voters. Therefore, he feels that the support of non-Scheduled Caste voters is also an important factor in deciding the electoral success.

12. Pattebahadur S.D. (50) contested the 1978 General Assembly elections but he was defeated. He comes from the Mahar community. He is a local political leader.

According to him, the non-Scheduled Caste voters are the most important and decisive factor in deciding the election success. He stated that since the constituency has considerable number of non-Scheduled Caste voters, it is entirely upto them to elect the candidate. Therefore, he feels that a candidate has to rely on the non-Scheduled Caste voters in the constituency.

He gave secondary importance to the support by the political parties. He believes that it becomes easy for the candidate to win the polls if supported by a powerful party in the area. The next importance, according to him, is the party team work.

Thus, in order to find out the variation in the opinions of the political activists, the Table 3.2 is framed in the six categories and divided into three ranks in the order of importance.

TABLE - 3.2

RANKING OF THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ELECTORAL
SUCCESS IN THE ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

Factors	First rank	Second rank	Third rank
Party support	6	4	-
Non-Scheduled Caste support	4	1	1
Party team work	-	6	3
Caste support	-	-	5
Economic support	2	1	3
Not given Rank	-	2	5

Out of the seventeen political activists, five did not give the rank.

So, it is evident from the Table 3.2 that party support is the most important factor (in the order of importance for the electoral success. Importance of party support is further evident in the analysis of candidate's performance in all the four elections. Besides the party support, as Table 3.2 points out, support from the non-Scheduled Caste is also more or

less is as important as the party support in deciding the electoral success. Since majority of the respondents has given the second rank to the party team work, party team work is also important for the electoral success.

Some of the candidates in consecutive elections, despite their poor economic condition and many other odds, their simple living and hard work in contesting the election, irrespective of their caste, gave them an edge over other contestants in the elections. Out of 17 politicians, 5 did not give the rank.

EDUCATION:

The education level of the respondents who were thoroughly interviewed, varies in the three groups. Out of the total sample, 50% of the urban respondents are educated above middle class and about 33.3% of the urban respondents educated upto middle class.

Coming to the rural respondents, it is noted that the percentage of illiterates is 36% as compared with the 16.67% of the urban respondents, and the respondents who are educated upto middle class are 40%.

The political activists who are educated upto middle class are 46.2%. Similarly, the relative strength of political activists who had received education beyond

middle class is 29.2%. The political activists who are illiterates are 11.8%. The perusal of the figure is shown in Table 3.3.

TABLE - 3.3

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE BY EDUCATIONAL STATUS

<u>Educational Status</u>	<u>Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Total sample</u>	<u>Pol. Activists</u>
Illiterates	9(36)	4(16.67)	13(21.52)	2(11.8)
Upto Middle	10(40)	8(33.3)	18(36.73)	8(46.2)
Above Middle	3(12)	12(50.0)	15(30.60)	5(29.2)
Not known	3(12)	-	2(6.12)	2(2.16)
TOTAL	25(100)	24(100)	49(100)	17(100)

INCOME:

The figure pertaining to the monthly income of the respondents are given in Table 3.4. It shows that 18.6% of rural respondents were not earning anything at the time of investigation. The highest percentage (48.8%) is of those respondents who are earning Rs. 149 and less per month. The respondents having an income of above Rs. 150 per month are 25.9%.

In contrast to these figures. There are 13.6% unemployed respondents and 36.4% who are earning less than 149 per month. A fairly good number of respondents (36.4%) had an income of Rs. 150 or above per month.

13.6% of them did not reveal their income. Thus, we see that the two samples belonging to the urban and the rural population have distinct income patterns. The number of respondents in the higher income group, that is Rs. 150 and above per month is 36.4% in urban sample of the total sample, nearly 16.3% of the respondents are found to be non-earners. A majority of the respondents (42.9%) were earning Rs. 150 or below per month. Those earning Rs. 150 or more are 30.6% in this group. On the other hand, of the 17 political activists, interviewed a majority of them (34.8%) were earning Rs. 150 or above per month and 29.2% were non-earners. One respondent did not reveal his income.

TABLE - 3.4

INCOME PATTERN OF SAMPLES

<u>Income group</u>	<u>Rural</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Total sample</u>	<u>Pol. Activists</u>
Non-earner	5(18.6)	3(16.3)	8(16.3)	5(29.2)
Upto 149	13(48.8)	8(36.0)	21(42.9)	5(29.2)
Rs.150 and above	7(25.9)	8(36.0)	15(30.61)	6(34.8)
No answer	2(7.4)	3(13.6)	5(10.2)	1(5.8)
T O T A L	27(100)	22(100)	49(100)	17(100)

SUMMARY

Thus, it can be concluded that the politics of Washim reserved constituency is completely dominated by Congress Party. As it is clear from the Table 3.1, the Congress was victorious over the candidates in the electoral fight. Right from the first General Assembly Election upto the 1972 General Assembly Election, it is the Congress Party which has won the election with the substantial margin of votes.

It is clear that the party support has been the most important factor for the electoral success. As it is clear from the Table 3-2 that a majority of the respondents have given the first rank to the party support. Therefore, the relative degree of resources which are available at the command of political party, can be employed in advertisement, conveyance and canvassing for the candidates who contested on its ticket.

Moreover, it is also clear from the Table 3.2 that the non-Scheduled caste voters in the area have an edge over the Scheduled Caste voters because they are numerically larger. So, no candidate can afford to neglect the non-Scheduled Caste voters in order to win the election.

A majority of the respondents also felt that party team work helps the candidate in winning the election. But, they gave secondary importance to party team work. Moreover, it is further evident from the victory^{of} Congress Party in elections till now that the party has a sincere team covering every town and every village in the constituency. Consequently, those candidates who stood on the Congress ticket had their election-ering done for them by the party team work. Those candidates who stood independently had no such party team work.

As Table 3.3 shows, the respondents who contested the elections from the constituency do not have satisfactory educational qualifications except a few of them. Finally, it is obvious from the Table 3.4 that a politician can not win the election or acquire the stature in Washim constituency if he contests without party support. Hence, most of the candidates who contested without party support or without sound financial backing, failed miserably.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL FACTIONS AMONG THE SCHEDULED CASTES

"If every one were perfectly agreed on ends and means, no one would ever need to change the way of another. Hence no relations of influence or power would arise. Hence no political system would exist. Let one person frustrate another in the pursuit of his goals and you already have the germ of a political system. For the one may then try to change the behaviour of the other. If he does so by creating the expectation of sizeable rewards or deprivations, then relations of power come into existence."¹

Robert A. Dahl rightly finds the justification for his above quotation as far as the manifestation of the Scheduled Castes political faction in Indian politics is concerned.

In contemporary politics of India, the political faction among the Scheduled Castes is not only reflected in the ruling elite but it has also come up to the visible rupture in the reserved constituencies. In Washin reserved constituency, for instance, the Scheduled Caste political faction and interaction is more conspicuous during the election time. Otherwise, there are the undertones of hatred and hostility against each other in Scheduled Castes.

1. Robert A. Dahl, Modern Political Analysis (Second Edition), (New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., 1972), p. 59.

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The Mangs and the Mahars, both the sub-castes of the Scheduled Castes of Maharashtra, are said to have been historically often at the odds. Their differences were social rather than economic and political. But in course of time the political and economic motivation bred the political faction through the process of interaction between the rural and urban people when they came in contact with each other at the time of the elections. The Mangs feel that in this constituency the elections are completely based on casteism. They further believe that the air of favouritism which is politically activated in the area, is being maintained by the Mahars who are numerically less than the Mangs. Therefore, the Mangs have a feeling that they have been neglected and have been denied fair chances in the social, economic and political fields.

They further complain that right from the first General Assembly Election, no candidate from their caste has won the election so far because generally their candidates are not put up by the politically powerful party in the area. Moreover, they do not have their leaders in the decision making body of the party to substantiate their claim for the ticket. On

the contrary, the tickets are given to the Mahars and Chambhars as they have their own leaders in the party to mould the decisions according to their own designs.

One of the leading Congress (I) local leaders from the Mang section, Mr. Haribhan Khare whom I met, seemed to be rather carelessly offensive and antagonistic towards the dominant castes when he talked of political factions within the Scheduled Castes. Mr. Haribhan Khare, District Secretary of National Dalit Congress, which is a pro-Congress (I) Mangs organization, admitted that in reserved constituencies casteism plays an important role in deciding the candidature even for a reserved constituency. While quoting an instance, he told that for the 1978 General Assembly Election, his caste fellow Mr. Madhukar Kamble was given the ticket of Congress (I) and accordingly his caste people carried the election propoganda for him. But two days before the date of withdrawal of nomination, he was telegraphically informed that his ticket had been given to Mr. N.B. Wankhade, a Mahar candidate. Mr. Khare continued that though Mr. Wankhade had joined the Congress (I) a few days before the elction (Wankhade was the R.P.I. (Gawai group, President of Akola District), and was not a local candidate. Still he was given the ticket

as he happened to be the caste fellow of Mr. Nasikrao Tirpude, the then President of State Congress (I) party.

Mr. Khare seems to be right in accusing the Mahar leaders of ditching the fair chances of the Mangs in terms of social, economic and political patronages. Nevertheless, it becomes necessary to view the justifications for his argument in the historical context.

The traditional occupation as a source of mitigation for economic backwardness, helped the Mangs to develop a certain amount of skill labour in making ropes, brooms, baskets, musical instruments required for the village ritual ceremonies, like that of Chambhar employing skill labour in leather work.

Since skilled occupation was the only source of their income, the Mangs did not have to search for a job. They remained entangled within the fold of traditional occupation and did not come into contact with other societies. Consequently, their occupational mobility remained stagnant. On the other hand, the Mahars did not have the skilled occupation. They were only a balutedars and petty government servants and the messengers in the villages. In the absence of any skilled traditional occupation, the Mahars being the largest numerical group within the Scheduled Castes,

were ready to go in search of employment wherever it was available. Many of them were recruited in the armies of the Peshwas and later in those of the East India Company. The Company in its efforts to build a modern army made education compulsory for its recruits. Moreover, the Britishers wanted to consolidate their military power by recruiting the Mahars for their own purpose. So, the educational facilities given to them by the company helped the Mahars to enter into a new era of socio-economic ^{and} political mobility.

On the contrary, the traditional occupation of the Mangs prevented them from receiving education which was the only solution to all the problems. Thus, the lack of education among the Mangs not only threw them out of the mainstream of all sorts of mobility, but also led to the continuation of the traditional occupations.

Another reason of the Mang's' political subordination to the Mahars is their dissociation from the Scheduled Caste political movement. The feeling of dissociation among the Mangs was created by the rival and conservative forces for its vested interests. These forces involved in the National freedom movement modified the Manga's mentality through the process of

communal and political indoctrination. Thanks to the militant leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, a Mahar, that the Scheduled Caste political movement gathered considerable amount of momentum. The growing unity among the Scheduled Castes was a constant threat to the selfish leaders of various political parties, particularly the congress in Maharashtra. So, these leaders in their attempt to weaken the Scheduled Caste movement and to preserve their vested interests, made the Mangs the victims of their "divide and rule" policy.

These leaders successfully created a feeling among the Mangs that the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar was biased towards the Mangs and favourable to the Mahars. Thus, the anti-Scheduled Caste movement waves regulated by the leaders of the higher castes finally resulted in the complete isolation of the Mangs from the Scheduled Castes political movement. Since the Mahars remained loyal to the political movement under the militant leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, they could become more assertive, politically conscious and could consolidate their position in the political system. Therefore, one can infer that the feeling of backwardness and forwardness among the Mahars and Mangs gave rise to serious grievances against each other.

Like the Mangs, the Chambhars and Bhangis, two other sub-castes of Scheduled Castes are also being kept aloof from the Mahar dominated Scheduled Caste movement by the third force, i.e. all the political parties including Mahar-dominated Republican Party of India, and with the connivance of some members of the Scheduled Castes. Sometimes these so-called leaders of the Scheduled Castes do not hesitate to play into the hands of hallow liberal democratic parties even at the cost of their own political integration.

The Republican Party of India, which is the new formation of the erstwhile Scheduled Caste Federation of India, was designed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in 1956. The party was second to Congress in the 1962 elections in Maharashtra. But the factionalism in the party, which was kept dormant during Ambedkar's life-time has now become more visible and the ensuing competition for leadership has been detrimental to the political unity of the Scheduled Castes in general and the Mahars of Maharashtra in particular. Consequently, the party has split into several splinter groups, like, B.C. Kamble R.P.I. Group, R.S. Gawai R.P.I. Group, and Khobragade R.P.I. Group, etc.

Since these various segments of Republican Party of India entered into electoral alliances with other political parties, by and large dominated by the upper castes, they have been demoralised and weakened by becoming an easy prey to their illusory and inconsistent policies and programmes. Moreover, there is a feeling among the Scheduled Castes that these R.P.I. groups have misused the fund which was raised by Dr. Ambedkar and have misutilized the principles of the party originally laid down by Dr. Ambedkar for their vested interests.

This apart, this party does not command the support among the Scheduled Castes because this party has failed to mobilise the Scheduled Caste people other than the Mahars in its favour. It should be noted here that since other sections of the Scheduled Castes do not have faith in the policies and programmes of the Republican Party of India, they feel isolated and ignored and thus, fail to make common causes with the Mahars.

The strength of the party has also been weakened as a result of mass exodus from the party into the other national parties, Particularly, the Congress. These defectors have been lured by the important posts. Hence, the formation of a new united front consisting of all the groups of the Scheduled Caste people becomes imperative.

Thus, in the constituency the political faction has been reduced to the level of sub-caste by the Scheduled Caste leaders for their own interests and the interests of others.

The Scheduled Caste people have been subjected to the political victimization in the sense that the upper caste ^{and} class political forces have used the Scheduled Caste leaders as a means to their end. The effective leadership that should have come up as a result of political reservation for the Scheduled Caste community has proved ineffective. Moreover, the clearer and powerful elements of the other political parties have manipulated the Scheduled Caste leadership to the disadvantages of their own community.

While the provisions of reserved constituency and adult suffrage have brought some gains to the Scheduled Caste community, it has also resulted in various forms of victimization within themselves. The Scheduled Caste leaders at all the levels, have cooperated with the other political forces in their attempt to protect their interests. The ceaseless fighting for the leadership has endangered the unity of the Scheduled Castes in such a way that these leaders have ignored the welfare of the Scheduled

Castes for personal gains. They have not done something concrete to the Scheduled Caste people, nor have they been able to free them from their social and economic exploitation.

To conclude, it is not easy to say with an amount of certainty as to how long the Scheduled Caste people will continue to depend on the hollow and bankrupt leadership which itself is dependent on the other political parties. Will they be able to organize themselves in such a way so as to give a coherent and effective leadership to the people? As the survey reveals, it appears that the mechanism of political reservation has not benefitted them as it should have been. Instead, it has led to their fragmentation into various political groups. Consequently, they have not yet emerged as an effective force to be reckoned with so far.

CHAPTER - V

RESERVED CONSTITUENCY:

Performance and Assessment

The history of the constitutional provision for Reserved Constituency dates back to Poona Pact of 1930 concluded between Gandhiji and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Under the presence of fast undertaken by Gandhiji, the demand for seperate Electorate was dropped and a provision for Joint Electorate for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was accepted as the solution. Later, when the new Constitution was framed for independent India, the provision of Joint Electorate was incorporated into it. In 1961 the Joint Electorate system was replaced by Reserved Constituency under this change 20-30% of the total seats¹ in political bodies like Gram Panchayat, District Board, Legislative Assemblies and Parliament are reserved for the Scheduled Castes to compete. These constituencies are demarcated basing on the twin principle concentration of Scheduled Caste population and distribution.²

For the purposes of election, the states are divided into geographically compact areas, known as constituencies. There are two types of constituencies -

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1. The number of seats is generally proportionate to the percentage of Scheduled Castes in the total population.
 2. Government of India, Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies Order, 1976 (New Delhi: Government of India Press, 1976).

Parliamentary constituencies and Assembly constituencies. Each Parliamentary constituency consists of a number of Assembly constituencies. The number of assembly constituencies in a Parliamentary constituency varies from state to state. After the completion of each census the allocation of Lok Sabha (Lower House) seats to the states and the division of each state into territorial constituencies are readjusted.³ For this purpose, Parliament has enacted the Delimitation Commission Act of 1962. A Commission, under this Act, known as the Delimitation Commission has been constituted.

The functions of the Delimitation Commission include allocation of seats to the States and the Union Territories in the Lok Sabha and the assignment of the seats to each State Legislative Assembly, including reserved seats (in both cases) for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The method of calculation adopted by the Delimitation Commission in reserving constituencies for the Scheduled Castes in the State Legislative Assemblies is explained by the following illustrations (This illustration

3. Mani, Quoted by Aggrawal and Ashraf, S. in : Equality through Privilege (New Delhi: Sri Ram Center for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, 1976), pp. 138-139.

is based on the illustration explained in Mani⁴, 1967, pp. 12-13 and 83-84):

The population of Maharashtra according to 1971 census is 50,412,235. The Scheduled Castes population in Maharashtra is 30,25,761. Thus, the proportion of the Scheduled Castes population to the total population of Maharashtra is:

$$\frac{30,25,761}{50,412,235} = 0.06$$

Total number of seats allotted to Maharashtra in the State Legislative Assembly is 288. The proportion of the Scheduled Castes population to the total population of Maharashtra is 0.06. The number of seats for Scheduled Castes in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly is, therefore, $0.06 \times 288 = 18$.

So, according to the above mechanism for determining reserved constituency, the Scheduled Castes have got eighteen (18) Legislative Assembly seats out of the total seats, i.e., 288 of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly for the 1978 General Assembly Election.

Advantages vs. Disadvantages of Reserved Constituency:

The provision of reserved constituency is supposed to be temporary or to be reviewed in 1980. Therefore, it becomes necessary to assess its prospects.

4. Ibid., pp. 138-140.

The provision of reserved constituency^{is} for the Scheduled Castes in developing the political skill and bringing forth a cadre of political leaders from among these people. Moreover, the visible presence of these Scheduled Castes politicians in top position, produced by the reserved constituencies, may have some ~~have~~ mobilization effects even outside the reserved constituencies.

It is generally believed that the presence of the Scheduled Castes in legislative bodies is largely because of the provision of reserved constituencies. Except a few members, a majority of these people generally is seen to be unsuccessful in open competition. This is because of the social discrimination observed by the non-scheduled caste voters in general constituency. Even, this provision of reserved constituencies helps the Scheduled Caste politicians in getting into the legislative bodies where there is no reservation. Thus, the reserved constitueinces do provide for a substantial qualitative presence that would otherwise be lacking.

The provision of reserved constituencies provides an opportunity for the Scheduled Castes to liberate themselves from the age-old clutches of the socio-economic and political subjugation of upper castes. This argument should be viewed in the historical context. Specially,

due to the background of severe deprivation, social segregation and economic exploitation of the Scheduled Castes on the whole have fewer resources (political skill, bargaining power standing, wealth, etc.). Hence, the provision of reserved constituencies would enable them to have their presence in legislative bodies.

The institution of reserved constituency, despite the above advantages that are deemed to be enjoyed by the Scheduled Castes, has been resulted in the following various defects.

The Scheduled Caste political leadership cadre which has come up largely because of the provision of reserved constituencies, instead of serving the interests of their own people they have better served the purposes of political parties to which they are attached. Moreover, it is widely believed that the MLAs coming from the reserved constituencies are less articulate, less assertive and less independent than non-Scheduled Caste MLAs. This is precisely because the candidates dependent on parties for funds or organization may be selected on grounds of their acceptability to others than by virtue of the Scheduled Castes political groups. This dependence is compounded in Scheduled Castes constituencies with their overwhelming non-Scheduled Castes population.

The founding fathers of the Indian Constitution incorporated the provision of reserved constituency for the Scheduled Castes. Clearly anticipating that this provision would provide the Scheduled Castes an adequate political representation to ameliorate the socio-economic and political disabilities of these people. But the calculations of the Constitution have gone wrong, because the successful candidates are lacking in corresponding obligation to work for the betterment of Scheduled Castes. This is perhaps because these MLAs are more dependent on the non-Scheduled Caste voters who outnumber the Scheduled Caste population in the reserved constituencies. Thus, hypothetically speaking even if a particular Scheduled Caste candidate is boycotted by all the Scheduled Caste people, he can still get elected on the strength of non-Scheduled Caste voters.

There is another view held by the foreign scholars that the provision of reserved constituencies breeds a feeling of psychological humiliation among the Scheduled Castes by perpetuating a sense of untouchability among them. ⁵

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- 5.(a) Dushkin, Lelah, "Scheduled Caste Politics", in, J.M. Mahar, ed., Untouchables in Contemporary India (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1972), pp. 165-235.
- (b) Parvathamma, C., "Ambedkar and After", Eastern Anthropologist (U.P.), Vol.28 (1947/48-1975), pp. 221-234.
- (c) Sachchidanand, Harijan Elite (Faridabad: Thomson (India) Ltd., 1976), pp. 28-77, 104-127.

Another common way of expressing this view is that this provision is a 'crutch' and in the long run no substitute for this policy. Once the beneficiary gets his seat he may there after fear the withdrawal of reserved constituencies believing himself unable to compete without them. Moreover, the process of vertical mobilization pattern in which the Scheduled Caste politicians are the junior pattern and become nearly the puppet of the non-Scheduled Caste leaders who dominate political parties and local power structure.

So, to assess the importance of reserved constituency an attempt was made to find out the link between the performance of the MLAs to be judged on the basis of the resolution of the problems of the people on the one hand and the respondents opinion on the other. Therefore, to collect the information about the performance of the MLAs the respondents were asked that "How many times does the MLA come to your constituencies to resolve your socio-economic and educational problems?"

Table 1.5 clearly shows that out of the total percentage 34.3% of the respondents have given their opinions that the frequency of contacts of the MLA with the people from his constituency is not often but rare. At the same time, the percentage of the respondents who said that the

Table 5.1: Frequency of Contacts with the people from the Constituency for Resolution of the following Problems:

Nature of Problems	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never	N.A.	Total
Social Problems (discrimination in terms of untouchability, disputes with others in the case of traditional occupation or status)	-	2 (14.2)	6 (26)	9 (39)	-	17 (25)
Economic Problems (landownership, loan, credit, financial assistance etc.)	2 (33.33)	4 (28.4)	7 (30.4)	5 (21.7)	1	19 (29)
Employment Problems (Job in public and private sectors and promotion etc.)	4 (66.66)	6 (49.9)	7 (36.4)	3 (13)	-	20 (30)
Educational Problems (admission, Scholarships etc.)	-	2 (14.2)	3 (14.04)	6 (26)	-	11 (15)
T O T A L	6 (9)	14 (21)	23 (34.3)	23 (34.3)	1 (1.5)	67 (100)

Note: Mr. M.K. Khirade, Mrs. M.M. Khirade, Mr. Bhimrao Katke and Mr. Nagorao Wankhade, all these MLAs have won the General Assembly Election from the Washim constituency respectively in 1952, 1967, 1972 and 1978. But none of these four MLAs was a local candidate. Thus, out of six General Assembly Elections, for four elections the candidates were outside the constituency.

frequency of contacts of the MLA with the people is never quite equal to the figure of the respondents who said that the frequency is rare.

The following could be the reasons that are generally responsible for the MLA's poor performance in his constituency. First, most of the MLAs who won the election from this constituency were outsiders. Moreover, it has been the tradition of this constituency that the MLA does not stay in the constituency. Since the MLAs are non-local they can not understand the problems of the people of their respective areas. Thus, these outsiders are careless and irresponsible to their constituency.

Secondly, it has been the political tradition for the MLAs in general to be careless about the respective electorates. The Scheduled Caste MLAs are no exception. The promises fulfilled by these MLAs, given at the election time are rare. This is perhaps because under the present political framework, there is no method by which the voters can dislodge the MLAs from their seats. Once they got elected, they are secure for one term of 5 years.

Thirdly, the political awareness is largely absent in Scheduled Caste people and their politicians.

Since most of the people in this area are illiterate, and socio-economically backward, their political consciousness is also low. Consequently, these people do not represent the wishes and aspirations of the vast body of Scheduled Castes people in a real sense. Though sometimes these MLAs try to be politically conscious, yet, these MLAs are kept silent by their party bosses, in order to achieve their personal gains.

Finally, during the period of investigation, it had come to light that even when MLA goes to this constituency, he does not try to meet his people. But meets the non-Scheduled Castes local leaders of his political party because he is more dependent on their votes for his future political survival.

In view of the fact that the MLA - People interaction is at very low level in Washim constituency, a relevant question that comes up is whether the reserved constituencies are useful or not? An attempt has been made during the study, to collect the views of the Scheduled Castes, the supposed beneficiaries of the reservation policy. Keeping in view the sub-caste division within the Scheduled Castes, the study has been done at the sub-caste level and the findings are tabulated in Table 5.2 given below:

Table 5.2: Utility of the Provisions of
Reserved Constituency: Castwise

Castes	Utility of the reserved Constituency					Total
	More	Less	Somewhat	Not at all	N.A.	
Mahar	15 (46.8)	3 (18.7)	2 (28.5)	2 (28.5)	1 (20)	23 (34.3)
Mang	10 (32.2)	8 (50)	3 (42.8)	3 (42.8)	2 (40)	26 (39)
Chambhar	7 (28.7)	5 (31.25)	2 (28.5)	2 (28.5)	2 (40)	18 (29)
T O T A L	32 (47)	16 (23)	7 (10.4)	7 (10.4)	5 (7.4)	67 (100)

The above table shows that the majority 46.8% of the Mahars respondents interviewed in Constituency felt it more useful when as only 31.8% of Mangs and 28.7% of Chambhars felt it to be useful. This shows that the Mahars, as already pointed out in the previous Chapter, have been more politically active.

Table 5.2 shows that over 47% of respondents have said that the provision of reserved constituency should be continued till the Scheduled Castes achieve the respectful position in the society. Thus, the respondents from all the three major castes of the Scheduled Castes are in favour of the continuation of the reserved constituencies. Majority of the respondents share more or less common views.

Apart from the majority of the respondents which favours the present system of reserved constituency, there are different views particularly between the Mangs and the others. The reasons of the Mangs' being different to the others is that they have developed a feeling in them that they are not being properly represented particularly by the Mahars MLAs. The Mangs argue that they are neglected just because they do not stand a chance of getting their caste candidate elected in the legislature. Moreover, they feel that since the Mahars are largely involved in the politics and secured certain position in the power structure the Mangs have developed a certain amount of jealousy towards the Mahars.

The third category of the Scheduled Castes, i.e., Chambhar seems to be least bothered about the problems of reserved constituency as seriously as Mahars and Mangs who have been the rivals of each others, on the use of the utilization of reserved constituency.

The interviewees who wanted the privilege to continue were asked to specify the reasons. Their arguments were as follows:

Harijans can not get elected to the Parliament and legislative Assemblies without reserved constituency. Because due to their weak social and economic positions

they can not compete with high caste people in election. Without reserved constituencies, Scheduled Castes will not get support of the political parties in elections.

The above statements in support of continuation of reserved constituency signify the importance of the programme in the mind of the Scheduled Castes. They believe that it will benefit them in a variety of ways. Their expectations and hopes are elaborated in the statements recorded in the field.

Scheduled Castes are in minority. They can not win the election from the general constituencies. Because high castes people do not like to caste their voters to Scheduled Castes candidate.

If reserved constituencies are abolished, Scheduled Castes will loose influence over the other Castes. Today, if they have any serious problems, they can go to a Scheduled Caste MLA or M.P. Officers listen to their problems only when these people know that their MLA or M.P. is Scheduled Caste.

Due to poor economic conditions, Scheduled Castes cannot spend huge amount of money on election campaign. They said since the elections have become quite expensive, the Scheduled Castes can not win the elections without reserved constituency. Moreover, the respondents

were of the opinion that although the Scheduled Caste MLAs overlook the problems of their people, yet because of the provision of reserved constituency, it has been possible for these MLAs atleast to look after their own problems and benefits. It means that the respondents were hopeful about the utilization of reserved constituency though it seems to be a long term for their upliftment.

It may be concluded that almost the majority of the sample held the view that the performance of the MLAs from reserved constituency was not satisfactory. This is because of the negligent attitudes which has been developed by these MLAs towards their respective constituencies. Since the centres for the activities of these MLAs are largely towns and metropolitan cities they have nearly no contacts with the people of that area. As a result, these MLAs do not wish to visit their constituencies and are therefore, little concerned about the problems of their people. These MLAs have nearly ceased to identify themselves with the causes of their people like the Caste Hindu bretheren in politics.

Despite the fact that the MLAs from the reserved constituencies have proved themselves to be absolutely

useless for their people still the Scheduled Castes have generated a feeling that a reserved constituency is a political institution which gives them protection against the manifold exploitation. Therefore, a vast majority of the respondents from all the three major castes interviewed believed that the provision of reserved constituency was beneficial for the Scheduled Castes and hence they wanted it to be continued. They fear that if the reserved constituencies are abolished, they will not be in a position to secure any place in the legislatures or the other elective bodies, through the general constituencies. They have a feeling that since the upper castes still observe the social discrimination these castes will eliminate a Scheduled Caste candidate on the basis of caste distinction by not voting for him in the general constituencies. In support of their argument, they said that over a period of thirty years, no candidates from the Scheduled Castes have won the election from the general constituencies except a very few. Thus, the respondents considered the provision of reserved constituency as a safeguard against injustice being done to them by the upper caste.

Apart from the identical view that has been held by all the three castes, there are some variations in their attitudes towards the utilization of this provision. The Mang community does not favour the provision of reserved constituency as much as the Mahars. The Mangs believe that this provision is exclusively being enjoyed by the Mahars and the former do not have any chance to enjoy it in a practical sense. Even from the Mahar sections, some of the respondents have shown their contempt by saying that the system of reserved constituency has produced the MLAs and MPs who seem to be little aware about the problems of their own people. Thus, it has been indicated that the utility of this provision has been viewed by these castes from different perspectives.

CHAPTER - VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The provision of reserved constituency for the Scheduled Castes has been incorporated in the constitution to give protection to the Scheduled Castes and enable them to participate in the legislative organs, like Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas. It was anticipated that this provision would help these people in bringing forth their effective and sincere leadership cadre, which will generate organized politics from among the Scheduled Castes. It was also anticipated that the introduction of this provision would provide the Scheduled Castes an adequate political representation in order to represent the Scheduled Castes in the legislatures. But, what was envisaged as a stop-gap arrangement finally culminating in the general election through general seats, has become the major channel of representation for them.

The institution of reserved constituency suffers from a qualitative defect in the sense that the politics which is being played in the reserved constituencies, has created a new political dimension. This political dimension has resulted in outnumbering the Scheduled Caste voters by the non-Scheduled Caste voters in the constituency. Since these constituencies are overwhelmed by the non-Scheduled Castes the electoral success of a

candidate is completely rested on the political charity of the non-Scheduled Caste voters. Thus, the Scheduled Caste politicians who are power hungry are bound to be the showpieces or rubber stamps in the hands of the upper castes in order to satisfy the latter.

As the present study indicates, the provision of reserved constituency for the Scheduled Castes has created the gap between the Scheduled Caste politicians and Scheduled Caste people. There is no corresponding obligation on the part of these politicians and successful candidates to work for the betterment of Scheduled Castes. The present study also indicates the second dimension that has been created by the politics of Scheduled Castes in the reserved constituencies. This political dimension follows the direction given by the political ^{forces} operating in the centre and the states. These political forces at both the levels, have got an upper hand in deciding the candidature in reserved constituencies of those Scheduled Castes who are acceptable to the upper castes rather than to the Scheduled Castes. Thus, the Scheduled Caste legislators created by the system of reserved constituency belong to the ruling or dominant parties than to the Scheduled Castes themselves.

As the present study indicates, that the MLAs once elected from the constituency do not bother about the problems of the constituency till the next election and thus they do not carry corresponding obligation. As B.P. Mourya (a Buddhist MP to Rajya Sabha) once said: "the Scheduled Castes legislators have done a great disservice to the Scheduled Castes by not representing the latter to the party and the government and hence are political beggars".¹ Therefore, it is perhaps because of this reason the ruling party is interested in perpetuating the continuation of reserved constituencies.

The present analysis of socio-economic background of the Scheduled Castes contestants indicates that these contestants are always found to be wanting of political resources necessary for the electoral success. The majority of the Scheduled Castes contestants from the reserved constituencies comes from the semiliterate, economically backward and politically less experienced. This study also shows, that by and large, Scheduled Caste population lacks all these resources. Therefore, the dominant political party support

1. Arul B. Louis with Prabhu Chawala, in New Delhi, Farzand Ahmed in Patna, Ivan Fera in Bombay, Sumit Mitra in Calcutta, with Bureau Reports in India Today (Delhi), October 1-15, 1978.

is most important for the electoral success. The majority of the respondents when asked that what factor is most important for the electoral success have given the first rank to the party support. Therefore, the relative degree of political resources which are available at the command of political party can be employed in advertisement, in conveyance, and canvassing for the candidate who stood on its tickets. Consequently, a politician can not win the election or acquire the status in Washim constituency, if he is a man of independent means.

As the present study shows, that the Scheduled Caste politicians, are largely aligned with the politically dominant party, i.e., Congress before the 1978 split and now with Congress (I) in the constituency. After the independence right from the 1952, general Assembly elections upto 1978 elections the Congress Party has dominated the politics of the Washim Constituency. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the leader of the down-trodden people, perhaps had rightly propounded the idea of separate electorate where in the choice of electing a worthy and sincere candidate was possible. Consequently, the present provision of reserved constituency to which the Scheduled Castes are tied, is like

the "Rotten Borough" which existed in England, before the reforme Act of 1932.² Under the Rotten Borough, the candidate elected was infact nominated by the boss who controlled the Borough. Similarly under the provision of reserved constituency the Scheduled Caste candidates who are elected to the legislatures are virtually nominated by the upper castes dominated political parties. Eventhough, a few exceptions try to be bit assertive in the functioning of the party, are likely to be sacked for having acted against the party discipline. Thus, it gives us an opportunity to design the predictions that unless and untill the system is revised alongwith the voting pattern of reserved constituency, the Scheduled Caste people in general and their politicians in particular would continue to be subjected to the political subjugation of a politically dominant party.

The crux of the Scheduled Castes' problems of emancipation through the institution of reserved constituency lies in the well calculated and well organized politics of the Scheduled Castes and the role of their leaders in the parliamentary form of Government. Therefore, the rationale behind the introduction of the system

2. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables, (Bombay: Thacker & Co., Ltd., 1945), p. 159.

of reserved constituency ought to be fully justified by the role of MLAs which they are playing in the politics of reserved constituencies, In order to promote the goal of tackling their problems in the correct perspectives. Though the Scheduled Castes MLAs by becoming the part of the government fabric, constitute an important instrument in the process of amelioration of the Scheduled Castes, yet these MLAs may be found in this regard to be not free from the clutches of the politics of the dominant political forces operating in the constituency.³

As the present study indicates that the politics of Washim reserved constituency is relatively dominated by the Congress Party and the regional parties including Republican Party of India, have a very little say in the politics of this constituency. This might be, perhaps, because these parties are not free from the problem of

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3. Thus, the politics of Washim constituency should be viewed in a wider context. They can not be delinked with the state or central level politics, because of the centralized decision of the political parties. Sometimes the wishes of the Scheduled Caste local groups are overlooked. For example, Mr. B.N. Wankhade was fielded as a candidate by the successful (Congress-I) though Mr. Wankhade was neither a local nor belonging to Mang community which is numerically large in the constituency. See page No. 66 of this dissertation.

incohesion and disintegration. Consequently, the politics which has been generated by the system of reserved constituency has been failed to enable the Scheduled Caste politicians who have not been able to form the significant blocs or lobbies within the dominant political parties or legislatures.

A significant trend which has emerged from the analysis of the politics of the Scheduled Castes in reserved constituency is with regard to the increasing factional politics. This increased politics is continuously breeding heterogeneity among the Scheduled Castes in general and their politicians in particular. The present work shows that the absolute absence of common political understanding and complete political harmony among the Scheduled Caste politicians and their people. As a result, we have several contestants involved in the cutthroat election competition among themselves from the different political platforms in the constituency. This insurgence of political fragmentation among the Scheduled Castes is severely cutting through the political integration and ultimately is responsible for the total political apathy and frustration of the Scheduled Caste people.

This study also explores a new political dimension that has been brought up by the politics of Scheduled Castes in reserved constituency is that the complete political polarization of the Scheduled Caste people. The politics of reserved constituency is dominated by only a few castes from among the Scheduled Castes, for instance the Mahars of Maharashtra.

Thus, this work gives an opportunity to draw the three most outstanding conclusions on the consideration of the politics of Scheduled Castes in reserved constituency and its effects and success.

First, the politics of Scheduled Castes in reserved constituency has brought about a complete political dependency of Scheduled Caste politicians because of the lack of political resources. These politicians are dependent on politically dominant forces at all the levels and are therefore, rather less responsive to the Scheduled Caste people. This is, perhaps, because of political ambitions that these Scheduled Caste politicians nurture in order to retain the glory of electoral success. If they fail to comply their upper caste party bosses, their obtaining tickets for the next election is ruled out and hence their chances of getting elected are bleak. Therefore, these

Scheduled Caste politicians operating in the politics of reserved constituency have to play a second fiddle to the political activities usually controlled by the upper caste political apparatus in the area and even outside. Thus, it has become inevitable for them to affiliate themselves politically with the dominant political forces in the constituency. Thus, the politics of Scheduled Castes in the reserved constituencies, controlled by the dominant political elements, is in fact, helping these politicians to pull themselves around the existing established system of political reservations.

Secondly, the Scheduled Caste politicians from the reserved constituencies have created such an unorganized and factional politics because of which, splitting has become a regular feature of all Scheduled Caste leaders and their respective parties. These Scheduled Caste leaders are actuated by the motive of self interests.

Thus, the politics of reserved constituency passing through a phase in which all Scheduled Caste political groups and individuals do not feel the need to whitewash and polish up their respective tarnished images. Opportunism has so tarnished every face that no one feels confident of the response of the electorate

which has to be faced sooner or later. As a result, the purpose of the politics of the Scheduled Castes in reserved constituency is far from being fulfilled certain political, social and economic goals as the Scheduled Caste politicians have been involved in such a competition in such a competition in which the politics has become acquisition of power for personal benefits and personal requirements.

Third, the present study indicates that the existing system of reserved constituency has not yielded any significant result. The expectations of the framers of the Indian Constitution that the introduction of this system would be able to bring the Scheduled Caste people up to the level of advanced castes has been belied. Moreover, the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shows that in various states no candidate from the Scheduled Caste community has won the Assembly election from the general constituencies except a few.⁴

4. In 1952 General Assembly Elections, out of 2571 total non-reserved seats only 5 Scheduled Castes candidates could win the elections from the general constituencies. In 1957 elections, out of 2411 non-reserved seats only 7 Scheduled Castes, in 1962, out of 2553 general seats only 4, in 1969-70 elections out of 2798 general seats none could win the elections and in 1970-71 elections out of 2853 general seats only 3 could win the elections. These above figures are based on the Report of the Commissioner for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1953 - 1970-71.

Although this work has highlighted various shortcomings and weaknesses in the system, nevertheless, it is in my opinion, seeing the backwardness of the Scheduled Castes some form of political protection is still needed to ameliorate the conditions of deprived sections of the society. Thus, it can be suggested that the present form of the reserved constituencies should be modified with the following suggestions:

I. All Scheduled Caste political parties and groups should put up a joint candidate. It will help the Scheduled Castes in achieving the political integration. Consequently, the politics of the Scheduled Castes will gather a considerable amount of momentum in the various organs of the legislature.

II. At present the Scheduled Castes candidates contesting the election from the reserved constituencies are elected by the non-scheduled castes and the Scheduled Castes, instead of this arrangement what needs to be done is that reserved constituencies should be so demarcated that it should have a majority of Scheduled Caste population. This will give the Scheduled Caste people an effective representation. They will have a feeling that the representative who they have elected to the legislature will do good to them. They could also probably

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exert influence on their representatives. As a consequence, this system will prevent the upper caste political domination from penetrating in the constituency and a candidate from among many who is acceptable to the Scheduled Castes and who according to them might represent their problems in the respective legislature will be elected.

III. The reservation must be made politically for the Scheduled Castes. This can be done in number of ways. Political parties, through a multi-party consensus, should encourage, in a greater measure, the Scheduled Caste people to contest elections in unreserved constituencies.

IV. The case for continuing the provision of reserved constituency for the Scheduled Castes, can be seriously questioned in the light of the present analysis to the problem. The Neo-Buddhists in India are deprived of the chances for contesting the elections from the reserved constituencies. This is, because according to the Scheduled Caste (modification) Order, 1956, if a Scheduled Caste person got himself converted to other than Hindu and Sikh religious he will cease to get the facilities which he was getting as Scheduled Caste. In this situation, will it be appropriate to replace the present

provision of reserved constituency by a better and possible substitute? If it is done the convert Scheduled Castes who infact continue to suffer the same socio-economic disabilities will also be benefited.

V. It is evident from the study that the practice of a outsider contesting election from a reserved constituency greatly helps in the process of domination of non-Scheduled Castes over the Scheduled Castes and weaknes the local Scheduled Castes politicians politically. In order to strengthen the position of Scheduled Caste politicians it may be suggested that a provision be made that a Scheduled Castes candidate contesting election from a reserved constituency must be from the same area. It may bring certain concrete political benefits in the form of the availability of the services of the local Scheduled Caste politicians whenever they are needed.

VI. Continued system of reserved constituency after-all may not be a solution to the problems of Scheduled Castes. As there is a need of social economic transformation of the society where the present disabilities of the Scheduled Castes would be removed. If it is scrapped it may take away perhaps the little initiative and servicemindness to be found in a few Scheduled Caste polititicians. In the event of removal of the system of reserved constituency how many Scheduled Caste veterans who are

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there in politics for decades could really fight and win the general elections? It remains extremely doubtful unless of course, it is based on the earlier idea of separate electorate. Should we retrace our steps and have recourse to a measure over which a battle royal was fought and Dr. Ambedkar was the vanquished? As a choice something on the basis of communal award as championed earlier by Dr. Ambedkar may be given a trial when there will be increasing competition among different Scheduled Castes and the masses will be able to have a say and sort out the leaders than being led by an upper class. It should be time-bound. Quick succession of events and actions would help to minimize the existing problems and would not add the class mass problems that has just set in but are likely to crystalize over a period of time.

If we do not alter the existing contradiction in the present system, the mass of poor and politically frustrated Scheduled Castes might disrupt or confront the existing socio-economic and political order. The contradiction of political equality, equality before law and socio-economic inequalities and injustice in day to day life will force the hungry mass and oppressed Scheduled Castes to blow up the political super structure so labourously built so far.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 1.1 COMPOSITION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN INDIA

Sr. No.	States/Union Territories	1967			1962			1957		
		Total	SC	Percentage of Total	Total	SC	Percentage of Total	Total	SC	Percentage of Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Andhra Pradesh	41	6	14.63	43	6	13.95	37	6	16.22
2.	Assam	14	1	7.14	12	1	8.33	11	1	9.09
3.	Bihar	53	7	13.20	53	7	13.21	46	7	15.22
4.	Gujrat	24	2	8.73	22	1	4.54	21	1	4.76
5.	Haryana	9	2	22.22	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Jammu & Kashmir	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Kerala	19	2	10.52	18	2	11.11	16	2	12.50
8.	Madhya Pradesh	37	5	13.51	36	5	13.89	31	5	16.30
9.	Tamil Nadu	39	7	17.94	41	7	17.07	34	7	20.59
10.	Maharashtra	45	3	6.67	44	6	13.64	38	6	15.79
11.	Karnataka	27	4	14.81	26	3	11.54	23	3	13.04
12.	Nagaland	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

contd...

Table 1.1 (Contd....)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
13. Orissa		20	3	15.00	20	4	20.00	16	4	25.00
14. Punjab		13	3	23.08	22	5	22.73	17	5	29.41
15. Rajasthan		23	4	17.39	22	3	13.64	19.	3	15.79
16. Uttar Pradesh		85	18	21.18	86	18	20.93	68	18	26.47
17. West Bengal		40	8	20.00	36	6	16.67	30	6	20.00
18. Delhi		7	1	14.28	5	1	20.00	4	1	25.00
19. Himachal Pradesh		6	1	16.67	4	1	25.00	3	1	33.33
20. Goa, Daman & Diu		2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21. Manipur		2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22. Pondicherry		2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23. Tripura		2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24. Islands		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25. Chandigarh		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
26. Dadra & Nagarhaveli		1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
27. M.&A Islands		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
28. Meghalaya		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
29. Mizoram		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30. Arunachal Pradesh		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31. Anglo Indians & nominees of the President.		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
T O T A L		520	77	14.80	494	76	15.38	418	76	18.18

Source: (1) Figures for 1967 are extracted from Report on the Fourth General Election in India, 1967, vol.I, general, Election Commission of India, 1968.

(2) Figures for 1962 and 1957 are extracted from Report on the Third General Election in India, vol.I, General Election Commission of India, 1966, p.13.

APPENDIX B

TABLE 1.2: COMPOSITION OF STATE ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES IN INDIA

Sr. No.	States	1971-72			1967			1962			1957			
		Total	SC	% of SC	Total	SC	% of SC	Total	SC	% of SC	Total	SC	% of SC	
1	6	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1.	Andhra Pradesh		287	40	16.2	285	40	14.0	308	43	14.3	301	43	14.3
2.	Assam		114	8	7.0	126	8	6.3	105	5	4.4	108	5	4.6
3.	Bihar		318	45	14.1	318	45	14.1	318	40	12.6	318	40	12.6
4.	Gujarat		168	11	6.5	168	11	6.5	154	11	7.1	132	10	7.6
5.	Haryana		31	15	18.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	J & K		75	6	8.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	M.P.		296	29	13.2	296	29	13.2	268	43	14.3	288	43	14.9
8.	Maharashtra		270	15	5.6	270	15	5.5	264	33	12.5	264	33	12.5
9.	Kerala		-	-	-	133	11	8.3	126	11	8.7	126	11	8.7
10.	Karnataka		216	29	13.4	216	29	13.4	208	28	13.5	208	28	19.9
11.	Punjab		104	23	22.1	161	33	25.2	154	33	21.4	154	33	21.4

(Contd....)

Table 1.2 (Contd.....)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
12.	Rajasthan	184	31	16.8	184	31	16.8	176	28	15.9	176	28	15.9
13.	W. Bengal	280	55	19.6	280	55	19.6	252	45	17.8	252	45	17.8
14.	Himachal Pradesh	68	16	23.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Manipur	60	1	1.7	-	-	-	-	v-	-	-	-	-
16.	Meghalaya	60	--	-	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	-	-
17.	Tripura	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18.	Goa, Daman and Diu	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19.	Delhi	36	1	20.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20.	Tamilnadu	-	-	-	234	42	17.8	206	31	15.0	205	31	15.1
21.	Orissa	-	-	-	140	22	15.7	140	25	17.6	140	25	17.6
22.	U.P.	-	-	-	425	89	20.9	430	89	20.7	430	89	20.7
T O T A L		2727	347	12.7	3236	470	14.5	3121	471	15.0	3102	410	13.2

Source: (1) Figures for 1971-72 are extracted from Report of the Fifth General Election in India (1971-72), Narrative and Reflective Report, Election Commission of India, vol.I, 1973, p. 128.

(2) Figures for 1967, 1962 and 1957 are extracted from Report on Fourth General Election in India, Vol.I, Election Commission of India, 1968, p. 3; and Report on Third General Election in India, Vol.I, 1966, p.14 respectively.

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