



INDIAN SOCIETY AND THE POLICY OF PROTECTIVE DISCRIMINATION: ISSUES OF IDENTIFICATION AND WELFARE

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ABSTRACT

India is a highly stratified and hierarchical amalgam of castes, tribes, classes, regions and religious groups. This gradation, based on the notions of purity and pollution, holy and unholy, haves and have-nots is expressed in innumerable facets of discrimination, which are at times very severe. After independence, one of the broad objectives of the constitutions was to remove these forms of discriminations through the policy of protective discrimination. And, thus many efforts were undertaken to provide opportunities to enable the people to reach at least minimum standard of health, economic security and civilized living. However, many arms are raised to question the effectiveness of the identification process of the beneficiaries under the policy. That has it met the aims and objectives set in and that how far have the benefits percolated to the deserving ones? Close to seven decades after independence, if people still protest for reservation, then there are some serious dents which if left unattended for now will pose a serious threat to the peace and the actualization of social justice. The present paper is an attempt in this regard to assess the identification issues particularly with respect to castes. Employing the secondary sources, the paper finds that even after years of independence, the policy witnesses more inclusions than exclusions in the list of reserved castes and classes, thereby suggesting that either the welfare through the policy is ineffective or it be restructured to level the gradations in the society.

Keywords: *Discrimination, Gradations, Identification, Purity and pollution, Stratification, Welfare.*

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