

Chapter 3

Perception of Social Inequality and Social Exclusion. Caste Prejudices, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes of Rajasthan and Other Backward Classes, Struggle for Gender Equality, Protection of Religious Minorities, Care of Differently Abled Persons

In this chapter, we will discuss those sections of the society who have been left out from the mainstream of the society for various reasons. It will make us understand :

Study point :

- What is the meaning of social inequality and social exclusion?
- How are caste prejudices in Indian society explained?
- From sociological point of view, what are the various aspects of Inequality faced by Scheduled Castes?
- Main Scheduled Tribes of Rajasthan and their socio-economic condition.
- Which are the social aspects related to other backward class?
- Meaning of struggle for gender equality
- What are the various dimensions of the protection of Religious Minorities?
- What are the provisions for the care of Differently Abled Persons?

The issues listed above would be discussed subsequently. Let us first understand why there are differences among various groups, communities and classes in the society? The root cause of differences is the social inequality. It is also noteworthy that some groups get socially excluded due to the impact of persistent social inequality. Thus, it will be appropriate to understand the conceptual aspect of social inequality.

Social Inequality

It is a relative concept. Social inequality can be understood on the basis of similarity and equality. This means that we socially compare two or more units and find that attributes of these units are mutually different. This is called social difference.

Difference is always based on some social characteristics. Such differences which are ascertained on the basis of comparison between two or more units are called social inequality. If one of them is male and other is the female, from sociological point of view is gender inequality. Similarly on the basis of residence, if one is urban and other is rural then it is called residence based inequality. Thus, there are various bases of social inequality such as age, marital status, education, occupation, caste, religious beliefs, language, type of family, social status, social prestige, resources and cultural identities etc. Any unit is distinguished from the other only on these bases.

We should also understand that during such comparison, a unit being distinguished from the other on a social basis could be a person, group of persons, family, caste, class or an entire community. Hence there is a definitive social basis of any social inequality and only on such bases two or more units are compared and distinguished.

Social Exclusion

In the context of social inequality there is another concept of social exclusion. Social exclusion can be understood in terms of a social situation or a process. When social exclusion is termed as a social situation or state, it is understood that a group is not similar to mainstream of the society and not a part of it.

However, when we treat social exclusion as a process, then we mean that a group has been relegated to a marginalized status from the mainstream of the society. In another words, when a group was part of the mainstream of the society, it was not excluded. The moment it was separated or forced away from the mainstream, it fell under the purview of exclusion. Let us consider the caste

system of Indian society which hierarchises castes on the basis of superiority and inferiority. Due to the hierarchising tendency of the caste system, the scheduled castes and other backward castes got excluded. Similarly, same situation is found amongst the tribal community. Thus for some reasons, some groups get socially excluded from the mainstream of the society and such groups are identified as scheduled castes, tribes and other backward classes. Such social categorizations are termed as various forms of social exclusion. Now we shall discuss a few forms of social exclusion in detail.

Caste Prejudice

The caste system in India has caught attention of Indian as well as foreign sociologists due its uniqueness and unfound parallel in other societies.

Many authors have given misleading information regarding the origin of word '*Jati*' that '*Jati*' is the hindi form of English word 'caste' which has originated from Portuguese word 'casta' and which means race, breed or birth. On one hand it is declared that '*Jati*' is idiosyncratic institution of Indian social structure and this purely Indian characteristic has evolved from the system of '*varna*' over a period of time. On the other hand its etymology is attempted to be found in English and Portuguese. It is a big paradox. A detailed discussion on the origin of word '*Jati*' (caste) can be seen in *Chapter-I*.

In the beginning, the caste was attached to the basic disposition and qualities i.e. humanity is the attribute of Human being, barbarity is the nature of beasts, coolness is the nature of water, warmth is the attribute of fire etc. Qualities could be of higher or lower order. It could also be discernible or subtle. Thus, due to the qualitative differences among castes, hierarchy of castes got developed.

It is said in the *purush-sukta* (Xth *mandal*) of oldest scripture *Rigveda* that *Brahmins* originated from the mouth, *Kshatriyas* from the arms, *Vaishyas* from the thighs and *Shudras* from the foot of the Creator. The distinction in the origin of various *varnas* described above is meant to denote the difference in the nature and qualities of the human beings. Persons primarily using their mouth as the

principal means of their livelihood and service of the society were supposed to be *Brhamins*. Those protecting the society and their people with their might (*bahubal*) were called *Kshatriyas*; benefiting society through their physical labour, trade, agriculture and other such works involving human labour were called *Vaishayas*; and those helping all these people in enacting their roles as well as help maintain cleanliness and hygiene were called *Shudras*. These were known as *varnas*. In the long run, due to further occupational differentiation and their rigidification various castes came into existence. The associated nature and qualities slowly got stabilized with these castes which got converted into ascribed status or in other words began to be determined by birth.

In the book '*An Introduction to Social Anthropology*', D N Majmdar and T N Madan defines, "Caste is a closed class". Ketkar in '*Histroy of Caste in India*' writes, "Caste is a Social group which has two characteristics – 1) Membership is limited to those who are born out of members and thus only such persons are included in it. 2) Members are prohibited from marrying out of the group through a strict social rule." Thus caste strictly follows endogamy and every caste is associated to a definitive occupation.

Members of caste have some prejudices or opinions about other castes. Though these are not empirically verified, these prejudices only flare up into casteism later on.

In his book '*The Myth of Caste System*', Narmadeshwar Prasad has listed hundreds of sayings which denote visible prejudices against other castes. According to Prasad, the stereotypes of various castes are fixed in folk memory. These caste stereotypes are formed due to ongoing conceptualizations and prejudices among people about other castes.

Castes have been complementary and patronizing to each other in Indian social past. Efforts are made to pose them as oppositional and exploitative to each other to cater to the needs of vested interests. Since numbers are important in a democracy, political parties have given reservation benefits to various castes to make them their vote

banks. Consequently the competition of backwardness began among castes and it has fueled hatred, animosity and conflicts among reserved and non-reserved castes. It has further aggravated prejudices among castes.

Scheduled Castes

Scheduled castes have been defined in chapter 1. As per census 2011 of India, scheduled castes constitute 16.60 percent of total population of India. Generally, castes engaged in cleaning, scavenging and skinning are included in this category. About half of the scheduled caste population works as labourers. Work done by various scheduled castes include skinning, tanning of leather, shoe making, weaving, fishing, rope and basket making, washing, craftsmanship, green grocery, carpentry, smithery, drumming, liquor brewing etc. About two third of total bonded labourers are from this section of the society. They mostly live below the poverty line and are victims of economic and social exploitations.

Traditionally, scheduled castes have been facing inequality. They face severe social exclusion. They do not get ample and appropriate opportunities to prosper in life and develop their personality due to the differential treatment they get in the society. In the traditional social system, there have been various disabilities forced upon them which have subjected them to inequality and exclusion. Some of these social and cultural disabilities are being described below.

1. Religious disabilities of Scheduled castes

(i) Scheduled castes were regarded impure in the past. They were denied access to temples, river banks and sacred places.

(ii) They were denied the right to worship and prayer. Brahmins did not render them any religious services.

(iii) They were denied to undergo all the sixteen rights of passages (16 *sanskaras*) prescribed culturally.

2. Social Disabilities

(i) Prohibition on contact, cohabitation and commensality with upper castes.

(ii) Prohibition on taking water from upper

caste wells, putting on fine clothes and gold jewelry.

(iii) Deprivation from education.

(iv) Presence of the practice of untouchability and hierarchy among Scheduled Castes themselves.

3. Economic Disabilities

(i) They generally work as landless labour in villages. Their livelihood and occupation is mostly limited to scavenging, cleaning, taking away dead animals, skinning and leather related works.

(ii) They used to get very low wages and they did not even have any say in the decision or fixation of wages.

4. Political Disabilities

They were denied of all rights and privileges in the traditional society and were penalized with severely even for minor offences.

These disabilities were part of the mediaeval social structure. In post independent India multifaceted efforts have been made to end these disabilities. Presently the major problem which they face is economic inequality/disability. Religious, political and social disabilities are on decline now. With the right to equality and legal provisions enshrined in the constitution of Independent India, the problem of inequality and exclusion has shown improvement to a large extent. Lately, there is another problem which has crept among scheduled castes. It is the inception of class differences within themselves. The families, which have attained better and respectable positions with the help of higher education or have improved economically by reaping benefits of government schemes, have started believing themselves higher from their rest their fellows.

Though the status of scheduled castes has improved a lot in 21st century Indian society, we still encounter, time and again, inhuman and disrespectful behaviour in different parts of the country towards these people who have been subjected to exploitation and atrocities for generations. There is growing consciousness among scheduled caste about their plight and it also can be attributed to as one of the main reasons for such events.

In article 341 of the Indian constitution, the Government of India has notified a list of scheduled castes for every state and union territory—

S.N.	State/ Union Territory	Number of Notified Scheduled Castes
1.	Jammu and Kashmir (Constitution, Jammu and Kashmir Scheduled caste order, 1956)	13
2.	Himachal Pradesh (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Order, Amendment Act, 1976)	56
3.	Punjab (Act 1976)	37
4.	Chandigarh (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Amendment) order 1956 and enlarged through the Act no. 31 of 1966)	36
5.	Uttaranchal (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Amendment) order Act 1976 and enlarged through the Act no. 29 of 2000)	65
6.	Delhi (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe list (Enlargement) order, 1956)	36
7.	Haryana (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	37
8.	Rajasthan (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	59—(i) Aadidharmi (ii) Aheri (iii) Baadi (iv) Bagri, Bagdi (v) Bairwa, Berwa (vi) bajgar (vii) Balai (viii) Bansfor, Bansfod (ix) Baori (x) Bargi, Vargi, Birgi (xi) Bawaria (xii) Bediya, Beriya (xiii) Bhand (xiv) Bhangi, Chuda, Mehtar, Aulgana, Rukhi, Malkan, Halalkhor, Lalbegi, Valmiki, Korar, Jhadmali (xv) Bidkiya (xvi) Bola (xvii) Chamar, Bhambi, Bambi, Jatiya, Jatav, Jatva, Mochi, Raidas, Rohidas, Ragad, Regar, Ramdasiya, Asadaru, Asodi, Chamadiya, Chambhar, Chamgar, Harlattha, Harali, Khalpa, Machigar, Mochigar, Madar, Madig, Telugu Mochi, KamtiMochi, Ranigar, RohitSamgar (xviii) Chandal (xix) Dabagar (xx) Dhanka, Dhanuka (xxi) Dhankiya (xxii) Dhobi (xxiii) Dholi (xxiv) Dome, Dom (xxv) Gandiya (xxvi) Garancha, Gancha (xxvii) Garo, Garura, Gurda, Garda, xxviii) Gawariaya, (xxix) Godhi (xxx) Jingar (xxxi) Kalbeliya, Sapera (xxxii) Kamad, Kamadiya (xxxiii) Kanjar, Kunjar (xxxiv) Kapadiya, Sansi (xxxv) Khangar, (xxxvi) Khateek (xxxvii) Koli, Kori (xxxviii) Koochband, Kuchband (xxxix) Koriya (xl) Madari, Bajigar (xli) Mahar, Taral Dhegumegu (xlii) Mahyavanshi, Dhed, Dheda, Vankar, MaruVankar (xliii) Majhabi (xliv) Mang, Matang, Minimadig, (xlv) Mang Garodi, Bhandu Garudi (xlvi) Megh, Meghwal, Meghwaal, Menghwar (xlvii) Mehar (xlviii) Nat, Nut, (xlix) Pasi (l) Rawal, (li) Salvi, (lii) Sansi, (liii) Santiya, Satiya (liv) Sarbhangi, (lv) Sargara (lvi) Singiwala, (lvii) Thori, Nayak, (xlviii) Teergar, Teerband, (lix) Turi

9. Uttar Pradesh (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	66
10. Bihar (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	23
11. Sikkim (Constitution, Sikkim Scheduled Caste Order 1978)	04
12. Aruanchal Pradesh (SC and ST List (Enlargement) Order 1956 and as embedded through Act no. 69 of 1986)	16
13. Manipur ((Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	07
14. Mizoram(Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976 and as inserted vide Act no. 81 of 1971)	16
15. Tripura (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	32
16. Meghalaya (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	16
17. Assam (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	16
18. West Bengal (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	59
19. Jharkhand (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976 and as inserted vide Act no. 30 of 2000)	22
20. Orissa (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	93
21. Chhattisgarh (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976 and as inserted vide Act no. 28 of 2000)	43
22. Madhya Pradesh (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	47
23. Gujarat (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	30
24. Daman & Diu (Constitution, (Goa, Daman and Diu) Scheduled Caste Order, 1968)	05
25. Dadar and Nagar Haveli (Constitution, (Dadar and Nagar Haveli) Scheduled Caste Order, 1962)	04
26. Maharashtra (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	59
27. Andhra Pradesh (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	59
28. Karnataka (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	101
29. Goa (Constitution, (Goa, Daman and Diu) Scheduled Caste Order, 1968)	05
30. Kerala (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	68
31. Tamilnadu (Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe order (Amendment) Act, 1976)	76
32. Pondicherry (Constitution, (Pondicherry) Scheduled Caste Order, 1964)	16

Source: Census of India, 2011

Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes of Rajasthan

According to **Imperial Gazetteer of India**, “A tribe is a collection of families, which has a name, speaks a dialect, has or claims to have a control over a common territory and which has been endogamous though it may not be endogamous at present.”

Govind Sadashiv Ghurye opined that ‘Indian tribes are backward Hindus’. Opposed to the ‘National Park Policy’ (policy of isolation) of Verrier Elvin and ‘Unification Policy’ (Reservation and Development) of Jawaharlal Nehru, he

emphasized on the policy of assimilation. He argued that lack of complete assimilation of tribes with Hindu society has been main reason of their backwardness.

As per Census of India 2011, tribal population constitutes 8.61 percent of India’s total population. The total population to tribes in Rajasthan is 92,38,534 which is 13.48 percent of states total population (6,85,48,437). According to the Census of India 1961, total population of tribes in Rajasthan was 23,09,447 which constituted 11.2 percent of the total population of the state.

Census Year	Percent of Tribal population in Rajasthan	Total Population in Rajasthan
1961	11.20	23,09,447
1971	12.13	31,35,392
1981	12.21	41,43,124
1991	12.44	54,74,881
2001	12.56	70,98,000
2011	13.48	92,38,524

Udaipur is the most tribal populated district in Rajasthan which is followed by Banswara, Dungarpur, Jaipur and SawaiMadhopur in terms of highest number of tribal population. Meena is the largest among all other tribes in the state with regard to their respective population size and is followed by Bheel, Garasiya, Sahariya, Bheel-Meena, Damor and Damariya respectively.

Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Order (Amendment) Act, 1976 lists following as scheduled tribe in the state of Rajasthan—

1. Bheel, BheelGarasiya, DholiBheel, DungriBheel, DungriGarasiya, MevasiBheel, RawalBheel, TadviBheel, Bhagaliya, Bhilala, Pawara, Vasawa, Vasawe
2. Bheel-Meena
3. Damor, Damariya
4. Dhanka, Tadvi, Tetariya, Valvi
5. Garasiya(Does not include Rajput Garasiya)
6. Kathodi, Katkari, DhorKathodi, DhorKatkari, Son Kathodi, Son Katkari
7. Kokna, Kokni, Kukna
8. KoliDhor, TokreKoli, Kolcha, Kolgha
9. Meena
10. Nathkada, Nayaka, Choliwal Nayaka, Kapadiya Nayaka, Mota Nayaka, Nana Nayaka.
11. Pateliya
12. Sehaariya, Sehariya, Sahariya

Source: Census of India, 2001

Thus there are 12 tribal groups residing in Rajasthan. In terms of tribal population, Rajasthan is the 5th largest state in India.

Following are the noteworthy facts about the geographical spread and habitation of tribes in Rajasthan—

1. During the existence of princely states, the tribal population used to live on the periphery of the state territory.
2. Tribal habitat has traditionally been cut off from the other areas in terms of means of transportation.
3. The impact of ongoing liberalization, privatization and globalization is only partial on these tribes.
4. There is also a negligible impact of urbanization in tribal areas.
5. Though the infrastructural development has begun due to the planned development efforts and tribal area special schemes of the centre and the state governments, the benefits of the scheme and fruits of development have remained far away from the desired targets and beneficiaries due to the unscrupulous roles played by the touts and middlemen.
6. Due to the adverse geographical habitation and isolation from outside people, the tribal population has not been able to reap the desired benefits of the development schemes of the government.
7. Subsistence economy and conservative social structure has kept the large tribal population from modern education and technology.

There are three broad geographical areas if we classify the tribes of Rajasthan by their place of residence:

(a) South Rajasthan—Seven subdivisions of Udaipur, Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh district and Abu Road subdivision of Sirohi district fall in this region. About 45 percent of the total tribal population of the state resides here. Main tribes residing in this area are Bheel, Meena, Garasiya and Damor.

(b) Western Rajasthan—This geographical region is spread over 12 districts which are Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Barmer, Jalore, Pali, Jaisalmer, Nagor, Churu, Sikar and Jhunjhunu. 7 percent of tribal population of Rajasthan is found in this region. Prominent tribes of this region are Bheel and Meena.

(c) North-east Rajasthan—Alwar, Bharatpur, Jaipur, SawaiMadhopur, Karauli, Ajmer, Tonk,

Bhilwara, Bundi, Kota, Baran, Dausa, Jhalawar, Dhaulpur, Chittorgarh and some areas of Udaipur and Sirohi districts constitute this region. About half of the tribal population of the state inhabits in this region. Mainly Bheel, Meena, Sahariya, and Bheel-meena tribes reside in this region.

Other Backward Classes

Other backward classes along with scheduled castes and scheduled tribe are considered to be backward which constitute one third of the population of India. We have already discussed previously about scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Here we will discuss about other backward classes which are considered to be the weaker section of the society.

Other Backward Classes : Meaning—

Backward class term is used for weaker section of the society particularly scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other backward groups. Part 16 of the Indian constitution and some other provisions mention the word 'backward classes' or 'other backward classes' along with scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Normally scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, small farmers, marginal farmers and agricultural workers etc. are included in the category of backward class. Indian constitution has made several provisions for social, educational, economic and political welfare of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Reservation was also provided to them but only some provisions for education and employment were done for other backward classes. Initially they were not given reservation but now it has been provided.

There is no clear definition of backward classes. Only its meaning has been elaborated. Still we shall discuss parameters and bases used by various commissions for determining backward classes.

First of all, the term backward class was used in the year 1917-18 and later in the year 1930-31. In Madras presidency in 1934 a state level backward class was established. It included more than hundred castes which were about 50 percent of the population of Madras presidency. The state of

Travancore used the word backward community to denote all those communities which were economically and educationally lagging behind. Backward Class Congress was established in 1947 in Bihar and some provisions for the post matriculation studies of other backward classes were declared.

While defining backward class, Political dictionary notes, "Backward classes denote those sections of society which are comparatively lower than other sections due to their social, economic and educational inabilities". The constitution of India, though, has used the phrase backward class many a times (Section 16(4) and 340), but the definition of the term was not given. In the beginning the reservation as provided to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was not even extended to backward classes. However, special provisions for education and employment were made.

Andre Beteille has stressed that peasantry is the crux of backward classes. With reference to the caste, backward classes are intermediary cultivating and trading castes that have lagged behind the upper castes in education and jobs.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh announced to give all educational facilities to the 26 castes of the state which constituted about 65 percent of the state's population in 1948. By 1954, 88 caste based organizations of backward classes were established in 15 states of India and were working at local and regional level. All India Backward Classes Congress was established first time at all India level in 1950. Many states created the list of backward classes. In Karnataka's list of backward classes Muslims, Christians, Jains and all other non-Brahmin castes were included. The list of Maharashtra and Tamilnadu did not include the name of non-Brahmin upper castes. University education commission advocated for the proportionate reservation for backward class students in colleges and universities.

Andre Beteille has included all cultivating castes into backward classes. Some think that only *Shudra* category castes should be treated as backward classes. When we label a particular class as

backward, we assume that there is another class which is higher than it. It gave birth to two mutually contradictory conceptions of backward and forward classes. Landlords and upper castes are understood as forward class and lower castes along with agricultural labourers form backward class. Most of the cultivating castes in India are of intermediate category, thus people of backward classes are of middle level from the point of view of caste and occupation and they are socially, culturally, educationally and economically backward.

Backward class includes all those groups who lag behind upper classes in terms of education, business and trade and government jobs. The mainstay of their livelihood is agriculture.

Socially and educationally backwards are treated as backward class in Indian constitution. Section 340 of the constitution empowers the President of India to establish a commission to take stock of the situation of backward classes in various parts of the country. Under section 15(4) and 16 of the constitution, the state governments also can establish a commission and make provisions for reservation in education and government jobs on the basis of their reports. However there is no standard measure to evaluate backwardness at all India level.

In short we can say that backward class is that section of the society which is socially, educationally and economically lagging behind and live primarily on agriculture. It broadly groups those intermediary castes which are lower than Brahmins and higher than untouchables. Backwardness is not an individual attribute rather it is the characteristic of the entire group. The Mandal Commission has given three criteria of backwardness—social, educational and economic.

Mandal Commission—Janta Party, in its election manifesto of 1977, had announced to give 25 to 30 percent reservations in government jobs and education to backward classes. When Janta Party came to power in the centre, it constituted a commission under the chairmanship of **V. P. Mandal** and it is known as Mandal Commission. The terms of reference provided by the government to the commission was to—

1. Suggest the criteria to define the socially and educationally backward classes.
2. Recommend the steps to be taken for the improvement of the situation of backward classes.
3. Find out the possibility of reservation benefits due to the inadequate representation of backward classes in centre, states and union territories.
4. Submit the report and recommendations on the basis of collected facts.

The commission submitted its report to the Government of India on 30th April, 1982. It recommended 27 percent reservation in government and non-government services for backward classes. The commission listed 3,743 castes into backward class category which constituted 52 percent population of the country. The commission recommended for 52 percent reservation but section 14(4) and 16(4) of the constitution restricts the upper limit of reservation to 50 percent. Since 22.5 percent reservation for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was already in existence, therefore due to the constitutional provisions 27 percent reservation for backward classes was recommended in government services and educational institutions. The 27 percent reservation in promotion on post of all level in government services was also recommended. The commission also suggested that quota of reservation should be extended up to a period of three years and if seats are still not filled, then only the quota of reservation should be waived. It also suggested to prepare a list of backward classes and advocated for exemption in upper age limit. It said that the system of reservation should be implemented across all public sector units, banks, government aided private institutions, colleges and universities and there should be legal provisions for the implementation of these recommendations. The commission pitched for similar financial aid for the welfare of backward castes as provided to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It also recommended for adult education programme and establishment of student hostels for backward classes.

After the submission of Mandal Commission

Report on 30th April, 1982, its implementation was being demanded from the ruling dispensations since then. In 9th parliamentary general election in 1989, the Janta Dal promised in its election manifesto to implement the recommendation of the commission. A national front government was formed at centrepiece election and V P Singh was elected as the Prime Minister. On 7th August 1990, the then prime minister, V P Singh announced 27 percent reservation for the backward classes as a gesture to social justice and a notification to the effect was issued.

The announcement was met with severe reactions and protests from various parts of the country. Schools and colleges witnessed student strikes and within a month 160 students sacrificed their lives in protest. Many organizations like 'Mandal Opposition Front', 'Anti Mandal Struggle Forum' and 'Samata Manch' came to life to protest the implementations. Many places also witnessed conflict between the supporters and opponents of the commission. The supreme court of India stayed the implementation of the commission's recommendation in October 1990.

On 16 November, 1992 the supreme court adjudicated that 27 percent reservation for backward classes was appropriate but barred the creamy layer i.e. well to do people from this section from getting the benefits. The central government and the state government of Uttar Pradesh started giving 27 percent reservation benefits to the other backward classes from 8th September, 1993 and December 1993 respectively. Madhya Pradesh gave 14 percent reservation and government of Rajasthan provisioned for 21 percent reservation to other backward classes since 1994. The central government constituted a national commission for backward classes on 14th August, 1993 which redresses to grievances regarding addition and deletion of names of castes in the list of other backward classes. Eligible persons from the other backward classes became entitled to age relaxation of 3 years in upper age limit for various government services from 13th October, 1994. They were also provided relaxation in written examinations and interviews. They get seven chances to appear for the civil services entrance examination. The central

government has also included *Jats* in the list of other backward classes.

The extent of OBC reservation in various states are—40 percent in Karnataka, 25 percent in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, 25 percent in Kerala, 26 percent in Bihar, 14 percent in Maharashtra, 15 percent in Uttar Pradesh for 58 backward castes, 40 percent in Jammu and Kashmir and 21 percent to 52 castes in Rajasthan. Rajasthan Government has fixed the income limit for creamy layer as Rupees 2.5 lakh per annum¹. The state government has provided for 21 percent reservation in local bodies and panchayati raj institutions also apart from similar reservation in government services for other backward classes which includes about 42.50 percent of state's population. Efforts are being made to include *Mev*, *Peetal*, *Sindhi*, *Bhomia* and some *Rajput* castes also in OBC list.

Struggle for Gender Equality

We all believe that men and women should be inalienable and equal parts of study of any society. Therefore the study of sociology accords equal primacy to the study of both. However in the study of family and kinship and particularly the entire structure and process of kinship men are given primary position. In sociological studies, wherever lives of people are observed through participant observation, the presence of women and their activities tend to be obliterated. Initial social anthropologists like Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown did not give due weightage to the role of women in their studies. Their studies were primarily focused on men. In their studies the information about community life and role of women in the community was elicited not from women themselves rather from male members of the society. Even in India this lacunae in eliciting information is observed more or less the same way. Many studies conducted by voluntary organizations, international organizations and even government agencies conclude that women are not a workforce or their presence is negligible. Such conclusions are suspicious because we observe through our open eyes that Indian women particularly residing in rural areas engage in agricultural and physical labour by even going to distant places

apart from shouldering their routine familial responsibilities. The cause of such misleading conclusion is that the respondents of these studies are male members of the family who believe that agricultural works ranging from plantation to harvesting the crops or other marginal economic activities such as sewing, weaving, embroidery etc. which earns monetary benefits to the family are not income generating activities. Labour is clearly defined as such activities which is not undertaken in household and directly contributes 'monetarily' to the economy of the nation. Through work we mean such activities which are economically paid in organized sector. Actually the social processes and policies which are used to analyze the society evidently differentiate between men and women.

Before discussing the struggle for gender equity, this discussion was necessary to point out that the role of women has not been the focus in the analysis of social structure and women have been struggling to liberate themselves from the subservient status. In such a scenario it is easier to assume why the role of half of the population is not so important in the views of general public.

Gender Equality and Social Resistance

For a long time it was believed that physical difference between men and women is closely related to emotional, intellectual and physical capabilities in them. The division of labour and roles assigned to men and women in our cultural traditions were also believed to be closely associated with their physical capabilities.

Social scientist George Peter Murdock believed that gendered division of labour in society was based on the biological difference between men and women. She argued that division of labour is not universal. She treats it as a plane myth that women are not fit biologically to perform difficult and strenuous work. Margaret Mead's study of tribes of pacific islanders is a testimony to this contention. The cross cultural data made available between late 1930s and 1960s dethrones the traditional belief that men are incapable to perform the role of women equally well and women too cannot do the work

assigned to men in the similar vein. In some societies, domestic works like weaving, spinning and cooking are performed by men even today and valiant and arduous works like diving for pearls, sailing and making the house are the responsibilities of women. This division of labour found in primitive societies was missing in settled agricultural societies or if found as an exception, the women did not get the same respect which men had been getting. It is said that has said when women perform the task in the male bastion they do not get the same respect as the men do. The main reason for this is the male dominance. The male dominance in society is also established and secured because life of men is more publically oriented and engaged while women's lives, due to being more centered around giving birth and taking care of children, gets more privatized and veiled.

Cognizance should be given to the fact whether it is appropriate to think that gender disparity is natural due to pronounced biological and physical differences. In fact the inequalities between men and women are not natural rather social because there is no conceivable biological factor which justifies to believe that lack of presence of women on powerful public posts is natural. Why do women do not even get a small fraction of familial resources? Irony is that nature does not provide any clue to this anomaly and it is still persistent in its present form. Wherever it is present in any society as an exception, they provide undeniable potent argument against this disparity. If women were biologically unfit to inherit the familial property and head the family, how could the matriarchal societies (like Khasis of Meghalaya and Nayars of Kerala, which are still matriarchal) have continued successfully for so long. How do women in many African tribal societies successfully perform their duties as peasants and traders? It makes it clear that there is no biological reason for difference between men and women.

Gender Equality Struggle and some Unresolved Questions : A global perspective—

In 2015, the world number one tennis player Djokovic said that male players' matches are seen more than female players' matches world over and therefore the male players should be remunerated

better. Raymond Moore, the chief executive officer of Indian women tennis tournament, also had given the statement of the similar sort. He had said that WTA tour is running due to male players. Both these statement depict the attitude towards women. The struggle to counter this patriarchal thinking and proving oneself had begun two centuries back. Mary Wollstonecraft in her book **A Vindication of the Rights of Woman** in 1792 demanded for the first time to implement the principle of 'equality, liberty and fraternity' for women. She proclaimed that any egalitarian social philosophy is not really egalitarian until it advocates for equal rights and opportunity for women. Since then the list has elongated by the thinkers who have voiced the question of gender equality differently. But all point to a key issue of 'decision making power'. This capability can only develop when women are treated equally in social, economic and political spheres. It is not that only Indian women are struggling for equality. In other developed countries too, the situation is more or less similar. Unequal remuneration, discrimination in promotion, domestic violence and tendency to treat maternity leave as unwanted burden circumspect the question of women emancipation. The Equality and Human Rights Commission of Britain conducted a research in association with the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills in 2015 and found that every fifth pregnant women in Britain is victimized at the workplace. Three fourth of the pregnant women faced discrimination at their workplaces. Three fourth of unsuccessful women interviewee accepted that their chances of getting job got minimized as the employers became aware of their pregnancy. The research clearly exposes the thinking that women are working machines. If we are thinking that it is only a problem of Great Britain, we are mistaken. In USA, the strongest nation in the world, women are still facing the problem of inequality. Sylvia Hewlett in her book '**Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest For Children**' unraveled the ruthless dilemma faced by the working women in America. Typically 42 percent of professional women reaching the age of 40 were issueless due to their own considered decision since

they feared that they might be forced to leave the job of the private companies some way or the other either during maternity or after. The conclusion of a study based on a scale of gender difference by a nonprofit organization named Community Business points out that similar situation is developing in Asia as well.

Struggle for Gender Equality and Indian Perspective—It is important to understand first that position of women in India has always been lower to men before knowing when the struggle for gender equality began here. Vedic descriptions inform that women and men were co-learners in *gurukuls* (seminaries) in that period. Some learned women had profound knowledge of *Vedas*. Women were allowed to choose their life partners. Women were equal partners in social and religious lives. They could freely move in public work spheres. But the onset of the medieval period pushed the women to a secondary status.

The question of position of women in modern India cropped up as a part of middle class reform movements in nineteenth century. Many reformers untiringly struggled for the rights of women. Raja Ram Mohan Roy steered anti sati reform movement in Bengal. In Bombay presidency, Ranade, the leading social reformer of his time, organized movement for widow remarriage and Jyoti Ba Phule strongly advocated against the gender atrocities. Women also made exemplary effort to ameliorate their condition. A Maharashtrian housewife Tara Bai Shinde, in her book entitled 'Women Men Comparison' written in 1882, opposed the double standards for women adopted by the male dominated society. It is worth mentioning that Begum Rokeya wrote a feminist utopian story called 'Sultanan's Dream'. The story of 'Sultana's Dream' is probably earliest example of science fiction in India and also perhaps the first in the world to be written by any woman in this genre. Apart from the early women rights perspective, the early 20th century also witnessed the formation and spread of various local and national women organizations in India. We also see that there were good number of women centred legislations in independent India.

Efforts for Women Upliftment

1. Constitutional guaranty of formal equality

(a) Indian constitution promises non-discrimination of sexes. Section 14 of the constitution provides legal equality to all. Section 15 prohibits all sorts of discriminations. Hindu Marriage Act empowers women to divorce and remarry. Similarly the Inheritance and succession act allows women to inherit or claim equal share in father's property.

(b) State sponsored Social Welfare—The Government of India established Social Welfare Board in 1953 for the welfare of women and other deprived sections of the society. The board was instrumental in development of many women organizations which groomed a large number of women social workers and leaders.

2. Women Welfare Policies—In view of growing concern and awareness about the condition of women at International level, the government of India adopted effective policies for the welfare of women and encouraged women related studies. The most important initiative in this direction was the establishment of a Committee on the condition of women in 1971. In its report 'Towards Equality', the committee observed that women despite being the largest minority have minimal influence over politics. It is remarkable that the concept of gender equality originates from the idea that empowerment and capability enhancement of women enables them to improve their living standard and puts them in a position to decide for themselves. In other words, it is a process which does not only help them understand the modus operandi of authority but also allows them to possess capabilities to control the sources of authority. Therefore the committee suggested that every political party should fix a quota for women candidature. Till this is not put in practice, it was recommended as an alternative that seats for women should be reserved in municipalities and panchayats through constitutional amendments. In 1993, the 73rd and 74th amendments did implement the suggestion of reserving seats for women in local bodies and panchayati raj institutions. The 33 percent reservation accordingly was a revolutionary step toward gender equality and participation of women in

decision making process. Slowly the condition of women started finding reflections in the context of development process. Now, the question of women has become very important parcel of development discourse instead of being seen as the target of welfare policies. This redefinition of women's problem got its reflection in the 6th five year plan. First time ever in the history of India, there was a separate chapter on women and development. In order to bring women into the mainstream from the margins of the society three pronged strategies were suggested in the sixth five year plan – a) economic independence, b) educational development, and c) health security.

Gender Equality and Current Scenario—"It was an oath taking ceremony of newly appointed judges. I was sitting with the chief justice in the court itself so that I might benefit from his experiences. He too was conservative. He was feeling awkward to sit with a woman. That means not only in the open court but also inside the chambers for judgments or discussions." Though this is a description of an event by Leela Seth- country's first women chief justice of high court- but has the situation changed since then? Actually we may see the glittering faces of few Indian women in the Forbes' list of most influential people and may like to give affirmative answer. But does the small numbers of these successful women is true representation of the real picture of half of the population of our country. Truth is that in a male dominated patriarchal society, women are seen in their traditional roles which are subordinate to and controlled by men. If a woman desires to be accepted as a woman then she is labeled as over ambitious and over smart.

India adopted three important strategies in its economic policies in 10th five year plan (2002-07) - a) Social empowerment of women through creating positive atmosphere for positive economic and social policies for women. b) Economic empowerment and c) Ensure gender justice and stifle all forms of discrimination against women so that the objectives of gender justice could be promoted.

Economic empowerment is seen as one of the bases of gender equality. In response to structural

adjustment programmes, women themselves are trying to undertake economic activities. Participation of women has increased in terms of social responsibilities, domestic upkeep and economically productive activities. This has led to tremendous pressure upon them too. 'Unequal wages' are a big question mark on gender equality. Still, 60 percent gender inequality persists in terms of economic participation and opportunities to women. If the same pace of reduction in gender inequality continues (the data pertaining to 2015 has only lessened by 4 percent as compared to 2006), it will take another 81 years to end gender inequality. This means that by 2095 only the gender discrimination would end at work places.

Surprising fact is that the condition of gender inequality is better even in those countries which are economically backward than India. For example, Rwanda—a country in Africa is positioned at fourth place in terms of gender equality because it has equal number of working men and women. That is why it is the country with least gender disparity among African countries. In Asian countries, Philippines is the most gender equal country with 7th place. The main reason behind it is that men and women get equal wages for the same work in this country. The performance of India in terms of gender equality is extremely poor. As per the Gender Global Gap Index, 2016 of World Economic Forum, India stands at 87th position among 144 countries in the world.

Political authority is another important basis of gender equality. In this respect too, Indian women have undergone a long struggle. The report of Inter Parliamentary Union (I.P.U.) points out that the negligible presence of women in Indian parliament and state assemblies characterizes the discriminatory political attitude towards women. It was reported by I.P.U. in 2015 that India occupies 105th place in this position. The first 10 positions in this list are occupied by Rwanda, Bolivia, Angola, Cuba, Ecuador and South Africa respectively. It suggests that accepting women leadership through gender equality and political representation requires even more liberal perspective than economic empowerment requires.

Gender Equality and Role of the World—

It is true that real social change is not possible until every society treats men and women equally, entrusts equal responsibility and adopts new values related to social relations base on mutual respect.

Maximum countries of the world have formally adopted the 1979 treaty regarding ending all forms of discrimination against women but the ground level translation of the same is still a far cry.

Women organizations have strongly raised the issue of gender equality in the agenda of women development in International women conferences held in Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing. United Nations constituted a commission for women in 1946. Two main functions of the commission were - to recommend measures for promotion of women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational areas and prepare the report of works undertaken by the Economic and Social council.

The United Nations has taken a major initiative for implementation of its development agenda after 2015 world over. The objective of the initiative is that world cannot achieve its hundred percent objectives unless half of its population i.e. women do not get equal participation and treatment in all respects. United Nation believes that gender equality and women empowerment are indispensable for sustainable development and gender inequality breeds all forms of inequalities which includes disparities within the country and without. United Nation also affirms that gender equality is increasingly being seen as a successful mission because dedicated and broader objective of bringing about change is not only about achieving gender equality but it is also about empowering women and girls so that no one is left behind.

When and to what extent the objectives of United Nation would be fulfilled is hidden in the future but it is clear that the progress in the direction of achieving gender equality in different parts of the world is smaller than expected.

Protection of Religious Minorities

Indian nation is protective of democratic and inclusive values. It is inclusive because it has

accepted diversity and multiplicity and democratic because it does not allow any form of discrimination or exclusion. Rather it believes in establishment of a just society.

The concept of minority groups has been broadly used in sociology. Its boundaries are not only limited of numerical attributes. In broader sense of the term it also subsumes the feeling of discomfort or deprivation. Minority word is a sociological term. The members of minority community have a sense of belongingness to a group. It means that they feel related, integrated and united to the group.

The concept of Minority—A special rapportier of United Nation, Francesco Capotorti has given a global definition of Minority, “a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members - being nationals of the State - possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language”.

Minority denotes lesser in number however the population or the ratio is not defined. In accordance with the international laws and conventions, a religious group should be determined as a minority if the population or proportion of the religious minority should be less or equal to 8 percent of total population. It means that religious groups which account for more than 8 percent of the population cannot be categorized as minorities. But this is as per international standards.

Indian constitution has described the word minority from section 29 to 30 and section 350a to 350b. But the term minority is not defined anywhere. Under section 29 the term minority is though mentioned in the border title mentioning it as that part of citizens who differ in language, script or culture. It could be an entire community or a group within the majority community.

Under section 30 of the constitution two types of minorities are mentioned: Religious and Linguistic. Remaining two sections 350a & 350b are only related to linguistic minorities.

The ministry of social welfare, Government of

India, vide its notification dated 23rd October, 1993 has declared five religious communities namely Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis as minorities. On the basis of powers conferred by the Article (C) under section 2 of National Minority Commission Law 1992, Jain community has also been notified as minority community on 27th January, 2014.

17.22 crore (14.2%) Muslims, 2.78 crore (2.3%) Christians, 2.08 crore (1.7%) Sikhs, 84 lakh (0.7 %) Buddhists, 45 lakh (0.4%) Jains and 78 lakh (0.7%) other communities are enumerated as minorities in India as per census 2011.

Protection of Religious Minorities

There are several measures adopted in the constitution of India for the protection of religious minorities. The purpose of these measures is to protect and promote the feeling of Indian democracy since essence of democracy actually opposes all forms of disparities and divisiveness.

1. Provisions for Minorities—There are special provisions for the minority communities in para 29 and 30 under section 111 of Indian constitution. The constitutional provisions for minorities are—

(a) Religious Freedom—Indian constitution guarantees religious freedom to all minorities. The constitution does not promote any particular religion.

(b) Linguistic and Cultural Rights—Every citizen of the country or residents of any part or section of any citizenry which has its own language, script or culture is entitled to maintain it as provisioned in para 29(1) of People’s Representation Act 1951.

(c) Establishment of Educational Institutions—According to para 30, all minorities have the right to establish educational institutions as per their will. They are also entitled to impart education to the children of their community in their own language.

(d) No State Discrimination among Educational Institutions—The state does not discriminate in any manner whatsoever in providing aid to the educational institutions on the basis of their affiliation to or control by any religious or linguistic community.

2. National Commission for Minorities—

The minority communities have played significant role in the socio-economic development of the country. The government has initiated several programs and schemes for their social and economic betterment. The government of India has enacted National commission for Minorities Act, 1992 for the empowerment of minority communities and to maintain their cultural, linguistic and religious distinctiveness. Under this act, minority community is identified on the basis of government notification. The main functions of the commission are following—

- (a) Evaluate the development activities implemented by the centre and state for the development of the minorities.
- (b) Ensure the implementation of protective measures devised by the centre and state for the protection of the interests of the minorities.
- (c) Study the problem of discrimination faced by the minorities and suggest measures for their prohibition.
- (d) Study and analyse issues pertaining to social, economic and educational development of the minorities.
- (e) Take action on instructions pertaining to the minorities given by the central government.
- (f) Submit special reports pertaining to minorities before the central government.
- (g) Give recommendation for effective implementation of protective measures for the advancement of the interests of the minorities.

3. National Minorities Commission, 1997—

- (a) Evaluation and monitoring of protective measures for the minorities.
- (b) Give advice to other departments of the government.
- (c) Give serious consideration to the grievances against deprivation of minorities from their entitlements and protective measures.
- (d) Give opinion on the issues addressed to the commission.

4. Prime Minister's 15 point programme for the welfare of minorities—Prime Minister's 15 point programme for equal participation in education, employment and economic activities of minorities to

ensuring their welfare was declared in June, 2006. Main objectives of this programme are—

- (a) Increase in the opportunities in the area of education.
- (b) Ensure equal participation of minorities in new and existing schemes for employment and economic activities.
- (c) Improvement in their living standard through ensuring their participation in schemes related to the development of basic facilities.
- (d) Control of communal violence and animosity.

5. Sachchar Committee—A seven member committee presided by retired Delhi High Court justice, Rajendra Sachchar was constituted on 9th March, 2005. The committee was entrusted to study the educational and economic conditions of Muslim minorities. The committee submitted its report on 8th June, 2006 to the government. The major recommendations by the committee are—

- Necessary measures should be taken to improve the employment among Muslims.
- Equal Opportunities Commission should be constituted for informed representation of interests of deprived minorities.
- A national data bank should be created for different socio-religious sections.
- *Madarsas* should be linked to senior secondary schools and their degrees should be accepted for qualification for defense and other exams.
- Appropriate social values should be promoted in textbooks to promote religious tolerance.

The central government has taken some steps on the basis of the report of Sachchar Committee, which are—

- Quality education outreach till secondary level education and National Secondary Education Campaign.
- Special area and Madarsa modernization programme has been modified and it has been divided into two parts.
- A model college would be established in 374 backward districts of the country and 61 of these backward districts are identified as Muslim dominated districts.
- University Grants Commission to prioritize the

establishment of women hostels in the colleges and universities of areas which has dominant minority population particularly Muslims.

6. Minorities' Education—Special emphasis has been given to the educationally backward minorities in the interest of equality and social justice in National Education Policy 1986. Two new schemes were added in it in 1992.

- (a) Area intensive programme for educationally backward minorities.
- (b) Initiation of Madarsa education modernization aid scheme during 1993-94.
- (c) Establishment of National Minorities Educational Institution Commission in 2004 under which minorities' institutions could be linked to the listed schools.

7. Financial Aid Scheme for Modernization of Madarsa Education

- (a) The scheme is completely voluntary. The financial aid is provided by the central government.
- (b) Acceptance of the scheme solely depends on will of Madarsas.
- (c) The main aim of the scheme is to provide financial assistance for the promotion of modern education in traditional and age old institutions like maqtabas and Madarsas.

8. Schemes related to Minorities Education

- (a) Area intensive programme for educationally backward minorities.
- (b) The main objective of this programme is to provide educational facilities and resources in the areas where minorities are in dominant number.
- (c) Financial assistance for modernization of Madarsa education.
- (d) Financial assistance by University Grants Commission for providing coaching to the students of Minorities for competitive examination preparation.
- (e) Financial assistance to the institutions working in the area of Farsi and Arabic languages.

For the protection and improvement of lives of minorities, the central government has initiated a multi-dimensional development programme in 2008-

09. The main objectives of the programme are to improve the quality of lives, reduce different kinds of imbalances and improve the socio-economic conditions of people in minorities dominated districts.

The districts which are deprived of basic facilities from the point of view of development, have got prioritized schemes such as creation of pucca houses, availability of potable water and electricity, improved system of primary and secondary education and income generating beneficiary schemes.

In addition to this, the Ministry for Minorities is also promoting the socio-economic empowerment of students from minority communities. Various scholarships such as Pre-Matriculation scholarship, Merit cum Means scholarship, Maulana Azad National Fellowship and leadership development programme for the women of minorities etc. are being given to fructify the objective.

Government institutions are dedicated to implement these schemes as the largest democracy of the world is committed to fulfill the foremost responsibility of maintaining social equality and harmony.

Care of the Differently Abled Persons

'Differently abled person' is the term used for physically or mentally challenged persons. Since differently abled persons are not simply disabled due to their physical or mental disabilities, they are also made disabled since society is structured in a way which does not cater to their needs.

The meaning of handicap or disability understood world over are—

- Handicap or disability is considered a biological weakness.
- Disabled persons are always seen as afflicted persons.
- It is believed that the disability is due to direct knowledge of the disabled person.

It is generally found that all cultures value physical 'completeness' and lack of it is treated as abnormal and looked down upon. The main cause of this thinking is rooted in the cultural conception which believes that disabled or imperfect body is the

consequence of a misfortune. The saddening aspect is that disability is attributed to the consequences of the *karmas* of the previous birth as per the dominant cultural ideology in India. However the term ‘differently abled’ does not accept any of these conceptions.

Section 2 of Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 defines those persons as disabled who are certified by a medical authority to be suffering from any prescribed disabilities by 40 percent at least.

(a) Blindness, (b) Low vision, (c) Leprosy-cured, (d) Hearing impairment, (e) Locomotor disability, (f) Mental illness, (g) Mental retardation, (h) Autism and (i) Cerebral Palsy or combination of two or more of f), g) and i) are known as disabilities.

There are 2.68 crore differently abled persons which is 2.21 percent to India’s population as per census 2011. 1.50 crore are male and 1.18 crore are female in the total population of the differently abled persons in the country.

Constitutional Provisions for the Differently Abled Persons—

1. Article 41 states, “The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want.” Apart from this the schedule XI of article 243G and schedule XII of 243B which are respectively related to the powers of Panchayats and municipalities for implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice, provide for the protection and welfare of differently abled persons amongst the weaker section of the society.

2. Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992—In view of the empowerment and welfare of the differently abled persons, the rehabilitation council of India act was promulgated. The council regulates training of rehabilitation professionals and workers and promotes researches in the area of disability and special education.

3. Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995—Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific held a meeting between 1-5 December, 1992 in Beijing to initiate Asian and Pacific decade 1993-2002 for the differently abled persons and issued a declaration for their equality and participation. India is a signatory to the declaration. In accordance with the declaration, the government of India promulgated Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

With twin objectives of better coordination with and implementation of the provisions of Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995; the government introduced **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill** in the upper house on February 7, 2014. It was passed by lower house of the parliament on December 16, 2016 as “**The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill - 2016**”.

4. National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple disabilities—National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple disabilities is a constitutional body constituted by the parliament in 1999 through an Act. The objectives of the Trust are—

- (1) to enable and empower persons with disability to live as independently and as fully as possible within and as close to their community as possible;
- (2) to facilitate the realization of equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation of persons with disability;
- (3) to extend support to its registered organizations to provide need based services; and
- (4) to evolve procedures for appointments of guardians and trustees for persons with disabilities.

5. National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006; UN Convention for Persons with Disabilities, 2006; and Strategy for Realizing the rights of Disabled Persons in Asia and Pacific Region—It is understood that the disabled persons

are valuable resources of the country. If they are provided with equal opportunities and effective rehabilitation, majority of them would be able to lead a quality life. The government has prepared a national policy, therefore, to create such atmosphere which provides them with equal opportunity and participation.

Based on prevention of disability and provisions for rehabilitation, the national policy provides for—

- (a) Disability Prevention
- (b) Provisions for Rehabilitation
 - (i) Physical rehabilitation Strategy
 - Early identification of physical problems
 - Counseling and Medical Rehabilitation
 - Supplementary Aids
 - (ii) Education of the Disabled
 - (iii) Economic Rehabilitation of the Disabled
 - Employment in Government organizations
 - Remuneration based employment in private sector
 - Self employment
 - Non-inhibiting surroundings
 - Social Security
 - Provisions for disabled children.

6. United Nation Convention, 2006 for the Rights of the Disabled—This treaty was adopted by general assembly of the United Nations on December 13, 2006 and was put for signature by member nations on March 30, 2007. The adoption of the treaty empowered the differently abled persons to get their rights and make government, private and civil society organizations accountable to their entitlements.

India is one of those few countries which have ratified the treaty. After signing the treaty on March 30, 2007 and its ratification, this law became effective from May 3, 2008.

7. Pre-Matriculation and Post-Matriculation Scholarship for Disabled—

Objectives of the Scheme—

- Main objective of the scheme is to provide the financial assistance to disabled students of pre-matriculation and post-matriculation.

- Financial assistance includes scholarship, Book grant, and allowance for attendant/reader.
- Beneficiaries under these two scholarship schemes are selected on the basis of recommendations of state governments/ union territories.

8. National Foreign Scholarship Disabled Students—This scholarship was initiated to provide financial assistance to disabled students pursuing post graduate and Ph. D. level studies in foreign countries. Every year 20 scholarships are given and 6 of these are reserved for women applicants.

9. National Strategy for Skill Development of Differently Abled Persons—Disabled Persons Empowerment Department and Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry initiated national strategy for development of skills and entrepreneurial stipend for disabled persons. The main aim of the scheme is to provide professional training and improve the employment opportunities for the disabled persons. It is an important contribution towards improving the living standard of their families which is also beneficial to the broader economy.

10. Scheme for Awareness Generation and Publicity—The scheme started in September, 2014 and was continued even after the financial year 2014-15. For effective and better results and to simplify the broader bases of implementation, the target area, objectives and eligibility criteria were modified during financial year 2015-16.

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities—On May 12, 2012, Disability Division was separated from Social Justice and Empowerment ministry to give focus on policy issues related to the welfare and empowerment of the persons with disabilities and give needed emphasis on the related activities. On December 8, 2014 the name of the department was changed to Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. The department works a central nodal agency for the issues related to disabilities and disabled persons and also closely coordinates among various incumbents, related central ministries, nongovernmental organizations and state/ union territory governments.

Objectives of Department of Empowerment

of Persons with Disabilities—The department aims for an inclusive society which provides equal opportunities to disabled persons for their development and prosperity so that they are able to lead an useful, safe and respectable life.

In order to achieve its aim and realize its mission, the department prioritizes its objectives as –

(a) Physical rehabilitation, Consultation and Medical Rehabilitation as well as assistance through development of auxiliary systems and purchase of equipments to minimize the effect of disability through—

(i) Vocational training along with educational rehabilitation.

(ii) Economic Rehabilitation

(iii) Social Empowerment

(b) Develop Rehabilitation professionals/workers

(c) Improvement in internal work efficiency/Response/ Service Delivery

(d) Support the empowerment of disabled persons through awareness generation in various sections of the society.

In order to understand the agonies and problems of differently abled persons and bring them into the mainstream of the society, a broader perspective is necessary. Every year, on 3rd of December Persons with disability day is celebrated internationally to sensitize the general public towards differently abled persons. The objective of International day for persons with disabilities is really profound in order to generate public awareness and to gather support for self-respect, health and rights for disabled persons.

Though there are several efforts being made at the level of the governmental for the care of the differently abled persons; there is still a need for greater respect, sensitivity and cooperation with the disabled.

Important Point :

- Narmadeshwar Prasad has mentioned several sayings related to caste prejudices.
- Castes, in Indian social history, have been complementary and patronizing to each other.

- *Shudrak* has also referred to caste prejudices in his book *Mrichchhakatikam*.
- Some political parties are also found to be fueling caste prejudices in the democracy.
- The Scheduled Castes in India account for 16.6 percent of its total population as per census 2011.
- All traditional inabilities of scheduled castes have been redressed in post independent India.
- There are 59 listed Scheduled tribes in Rajasthan.
- As per census 2011, scheduled tribes in Rajasthan account for 13.48 percent of the total population of the state.
- Meena is the most populous tribe in Rajasthan.
- There are 12 tribal groups inhabiting in Rajasthan.
- Rajasthan is the fifth largest state in India in terms of tribal population.
- Subsistence economy and conservative social structure of tribal communities have kept them aloof from education and technology.
- Highest number of tribal population (about 45 percent) is found in north-eastern part of Rajasthan.
- Backward classes denote those sections of the society which are lagging behind as compared to others due to social, economic and educational deprivations.
- There is no definitive definition of backward classes. Only meaning of the term is described.
- Article 15(4), 16(4) and 340 of the constitution have special provisions for education and employment of the backward classes.
- Section 340 of the constitution empowers the President of India to establish a commission to take stock of the situation of backward classes in various parts of the country.
- Mandal Commission was constituted under the chairmanship of V P Mandal in 1977 which submitted its report to the Government of India on 30th April, 1982.
- The Mandal commission listed 3,743 castes into backward class category which constituted 52 percent population of the country.
- 27 percent reservation for backward classes was

recommended in government services and educational institutions.

- On 7th August 1990, the then prime minister, V P Singh announced 27 percent reservation for the backward classes as a gesture to social justice and a notification to the effect was issued.
- Rajasthan government has implemented 21 percent reservation in government services, local bodies and panchayati raj institutions for other backward classes.
- Mary Wollstonecraft in her book **A Vindication of the Rights of Woman** in 1792 demanded for the first time to implement the principle of 'equality, liberty and fraternity' for women.
- Maximum countries of the world have formally adopted the 1979 treaty regarding ending all forms of discrimination against women.
- In 1993, the 73rd and 74th amendments reserve 33 percent seats for women in local bodies and panchayati raj institutions.
- The sociological meaning of term minority is that the members of a community have a sense of belongingness to their group.
- Under section 30 of the constitution two types of minorities are mentioned: Religious and Linguistic.
- On the basis of powers conferred by the article C under section 2 of National Minority Commission Law 1992, Jain community was also been notified as minority community on 27th January, 2014.
- **Persons with Disabilities** (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) **Act**, 1995 defines those persons as disabled who are certified by a medical authority to be suffering from any prescribed disabilities at least by 40 percent.
- There are 2.68 crore differently abled persons which is 2.21 percent to India's population as per census 2011.
- For the rights of disabled person a treaty was adopted by general assembly of the United Nations on December 13, 2006 and was put for signature by member nations on March 30, 2007.

Questions for Practice

Objective Type Question

1. What is the name of the author of 'History of Caste in India'?
(a) Ketkar (b) Dube
(c) Majumdar (d) Madan
2. Who has mentioned several sayings related to caste prejudices?
(a) Ketkar
(b) Narmadeshwar Prasad
(c) Srinivas
(d) Madjumdar
3. What is the proportion of scheduled castes to the total population of India?
(a) 14.6% (b) 15.6%
(c) 16.6% (d) 17.6%
4. Under which section of constitution, the scheduled castes are listed?
(a) article 332 (b) article 340
(c) article 342 (d) article 341
5. Under which section of constitution, the scheduled tribes are listed?
(a) article 332 (b) article 342
(c) article 352 (d) article 362
6. How many tribal communities reside in Rajasthan?
(a) 9 (b) 101
(c) 12 (d) 14
7. Which section of constitution empowers the president of India to take stock of the situation of backward classes?
(a) article 370 (b) article 340
(c) article 15(4) (d) None of these
8. Who was the chairman of Mandal Commission?
(a) V P Singh (b) V P Mandal
(c) Prof. Gadgil (d) None of these
9. When was Mandal Commission constituted?
(a) After 1977 Election
(b) During 1975 emergency
(c) After 1984 General Election
(d) None of the above
10. When did Mandal Commission submit its report to the government?
(a) 1980 (b) 1981
(c) 1982 (d) None of these

11. As per the article 15(4) and 16(4), reservation cannot exceed from—
(a) 50% (b) 60%
(c) 40% (d) None of these
12. Article 30 of the Indian Constitution describes how many categories of minorities?
(a) one (b) two
(c) three (d) four
13. When was the Jain community included in the category of minorities?
(a) 2014 (b) 2010
(c) 2011 (d) 2015
14. When was the National Minority Commission Act passed?
(a) 1992 (b) 1986
(c) 1984 (d) 1989
15. Which sociologist believes that the biological differences between men and women are based on the gendered division of labour in society?
(a) M. N. Srinivas
(b) Iravati Karve
(c) George Peter Murdock
(d) Ann Oakley
16. What is the position of India at world stage with respect to women representatives in IPU report, 2015?
(a) 108th (b) 103rd
(c) 110th (d) 105th
17. What is the population of differently abled persons in India as per census 2011?
(a) 3 Crore (b) 2.05 Crore
(c) 2.68 Crore (d) 5 Crore
7. Why does Andre Beteille believe that agricultural class is the crux of backward classes?
8. Why does India believed to be the protector of democratic values?
9. Which articles of Indian Constitution describe minorities?
10. Which two schemes were added in 1992 in National Education Policy, 1986.
11. What has economist Silvia said about gender inequality?
12. Which Indian woman has written a book on women inequality in 1882 and what does it contain?
13. What is the definition of disabled persons as per section 2 of Person with disability Act, 1995?

Short Answer type Questions

1. Write a note on caste prejudices.
2. Throw light on the inabilities of scheduled castes in medieval period.
3. Write a note on the population of scheduled tribes in Rajasthan.
4. Analyse the residence of tribes in Rajasthan geographically.
5. How would you explain that determination of backward classes is not based on birth or caste rather on something else?
6. The class between lower and upper classes is backward class. Explain.
7. What were the tasks assigned to Mandal Commission?
8. What is the definition of minority in Sociology?
9. Which communities are considered minority in India?
10. What is the definition minority given by rapporteur Francesco Capotorti ?
11. What is National Minority Commission?
12. What are constitutional guaranty for the formal equality for the development of women?
13. Discuss the main functions of the commission constituted by United Nations in 1946.
14. Write about Indian Rehabilitation Council Act, 1992.

Very Short Answer type Questions

1. What is the name of book written by Narmadeshwar Prasad?
2. The inabilities of scheduled castes are associated with which age of social system?
3. How many scheduled caste groups reside in Rajasthan?
4. What is the percentage of tribal population in Rajasthan as per census 2011?
5. How many scheduled tribe groups reside in Rajasthan?
6. Clarify the meaning of Backward Class.

Essay type Questions

1. Explain the current situation of scheduled castes in India.
2. Write an essay on scheduled tribes in India.
3. Explain the impact of Mandal commission's report.
4. Describe the recommendations of Mandal Commission Report with respect to Rajasthan.
5. What do you mean by religious minorities? What are the provisions for their protection?
6. Discuss the Indian perspective on struggle for gender equality.
7. What are the policies of the government for the care of differently abled persons?

Answers

- | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (b) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) |
| 6. (c) | 7. (b) | 8. (b) | 9. (a) | 10. (c) |
| 11. (a) | 12. (b) | 13. (a) | 14. (a) | 15. (c) |
| 16. (b) | 17. (c) | | | |