

# PERFORMANCE OF SCHEDULED CASTE MLAs IN MAHARASHTRA VIDHAN SABHA

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## ABSTRACT

*The present study especially pays attention to the case of Scheduled Caste reserved constituencies of Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha. During 1962 to 2009, various elections of Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha were held. No research has been done on the continuous performance of Scheduled Caste MLAs elected during this period. The present study yields the research on continuous performance of a Scheduled Caste MLAs of Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha.*

**Keywords:** Caste, Class, Gender, Power, Reservation, Political Process.

## I - Introduction

In the project 'Performance of Scheduled Caste Members of Different Political Parties in Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha Elected from Reserved Constituencies [ 1962 - 2009 ] : An Analytical Study', the research is done on the following sub topics:

- 1) Politics of Scheduled Castes
- 2) Reserved Constituencies
- 3) Policy of Reserving Constituencies and its implementation
- 4) Participation of Scheduled Castes in the politics
- 5) Development Schemes
- 6) Role of Scheduled Caste members in the Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha and outside the Vidhan Sabha.

In Maharashtra Suhas Palshikar, Rajeshwari Deshpande, Harsh Jagzap, Prakash Pawar, Sopan Gholve, Somnath Gholve, Nitin Birmal have done study on caste politics. However, the study of Scheduled Caste members of Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha from 1962 - 2009 is not continuously carried out. For this purpose, the political process is studied at micro level. This study focuses on relation between backward castes in Maharashtra. Caste wise study of Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha members from 1962 - 2009 is a big extensive work. In this reference, the study of Scheduled Caste Vidhan Sabha members in various regions of Maharashtra is done in this project.

The Caste is an important factor in Indian political process. The role of caste is an seminal element in the political process and power relations. Caste System is the feature of Indian society. In Indian Society, division between upper castes and lower castes is found. Due to the inequality in the caste system, distribution of power happens in the same manner, lower castes are far away from their share in power, even after independence. Upper castes tried to get more chunk of power, on the basis of the social status. However, elections and democratic politics made impact on the castes. Now caste has become instrument of political organizations.

In the pre-independence era, collective thinking on backward castes and politics is done by Mahatma Phule, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. In Indian Society, there is contradiction between interests of upper castes and lower castes. It has mentioned by Mahatma Phule. According to him, there are two social groups, i.e. Shetji - Bhatji against Shudras. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj given importance to the lower caste's fight for political power. Dr. Ambedkar mainly presented the issue of political rights of backward classes and organized the Dalits. Lower castes would get less share in the distribution of political power, hence lower castes resolved to fight to gain their share in the political rights and power. Phule - Shahu - Ambedkar instigated the organization of lower castes for political purpose which resulted in the emergence of lower caste politics.

In the post Independence period politics upper castes played major role. In the democratic setup, upper castes continued their hold for long tenure. Relation between caste and politics were never uniform in all states, because different caste's place in population is found different in various states of India. Along with this, education, political awareness and traditions of participation are different. In Maharashtra, 19<sup>th</sup> century was the starting point of creating awareness of issues related to castes.

## Research Methodology

The observation questionnaire and interview method of research is used for collection of data and for the study of “Performance of Scheduled Caste Members of Different Political Parties in Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha Elected from Reserved Constituencies [1962-2002]: And Analytical Study”.

For this study, selected members of Scheduled Caste from Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha were interviewed. The delimitation committee report, election results declared by election commission are used as primary sources. Besides biographies of S.C. members of assemblies, books written by them about politics are also used for the study. As secondary sources English, Marathi books, periodicals, articles on internet are used. Some information is also collected from website <http://www.eci.gov.in> . The nature of this study is performance analysis of leadership so qualitative and quantitative method of research is used for collection of data.

## Objectives of Study

The following objectives have been decided :

1. To Understand caste differentiation in Scheduled Caste MLAs
2. To know gender differentiation
3. To understand the party affiliation of Scheduled Caste MLAs
4. To know performance of Scheduled Caste MLAs as per their gender , caste and parties
5. To measure the performance of Scheduled Caste MLAs in terms their effectiveness in implementation of govt. policies for upliftment of scheduled castes in their constituencies
6. To understand the performance of Scheduled Caste MLAs in general development of their constituencies
7. To know the performance of Scheduled Caste MLAs in terms of participation in assembly proceeding and discussion and also their on govt. making policy

## The following hypothesis were framed for this study.

1. The number of Navbuddha (Mahar) MLAs is greater than any other caste MLAs among Scheduled Caste.
2. The number of woman MLAs of Scheduled Caste are negligible.
3. Number of MLAs elected from non Dalit parties are greater than those of MLAs elected from Dalit parties.
4. Performance of Scheduled Caste MLAs is unsatisfactory irerespective to their party attachment.
5. Scheduled Caste MLAs are inefficient in terms of taking government policies for upliftment of Scheduled Caste to their people.
6. Scheduled Caste MLAs have failed in developing their constituencies in general.
7. Scheduled Caste MLAs do not participate in assembly proceeding and do not have any impact on formulating government policy making.

## The following important Conclusions have come out from this study

- 1) SC MLAs have chosen the established parties instead of Dalit parties to develop themselves politically. Getting elected through established parties like Congress, BJP, Shivsena, NCP is easier because the Savarna votes are ready to vote for those parties.
- 2) The proportion of women MLAs is very less among SC MLAs. The reasons behind it are rooted into our culture which is not ready to accept a SC woman as a leader. Despite of this, some women have succeeded in getting leadership on the basis of their political skills.
- 3) The proportion of Hindu SC MLAs is more among SC MLAs. When observed castewise, the proportion of Matang, Charmakar and Navabuddha is more. The other small castes among SC community have not got any opportunity of leadership. From this we can conclude that the community having more population can alone can be elected.
- 4) When we observe SC MLAs on educational level, we come to know that the proportion of graduate and post-graduate SC MLAs is more. The candidate with better educational qualifications have got more chances of candidature. The candidates from the Navboddha and Charmakar castes have better educational qualifications. It is observed that the society and political party considers the educational background of a SC MLA.
- 5) When we look at the professional background of SC MLAs , we come to know that they have agriculture, trade and service as their professions. Most of the Navbuddha MLAs have trade and

business as their profession and most of the Charmakar MLAs have agriculture and service-sector as their profession.

- 6) When we look at the period of activeness of the candidates before being an MLA, we come to know that the candidates who were party-workers for 11to15 years became MLAs later. They are followed by the party workers for 10 years. The reason behind it is the delimitation of constituencies. Because of the restructuring of the constituencies, the established parties have preferred to give candidature to social workers and service-sector party workers since 20 years. 9.5% MLAs have been party-worked since 30 years or more. The elite-class of established leaders has been formed in the SC society. But it is not approved by the Savarna society.
- 7) Having agriculture, trade and employment as the income source and being active in politics for more than 20 years has become an equation. There is no MLA from the SC community, who hasn't any income source. The Candidature is given to a reputed employee. The third factor is that the candidate gets elected only if he/she has a strong income source. Therefore, a class of elites having good incomes source has been formed among s.c. community. They seem to work for the vested interests of this class.
- 8) When we observe at the experience factor of SC MLAs before being an MLA, it is considered that the Zilla Parishads and some other institutions are considered as the ways to come in contact with masses. Most of the SC MLAs have entered the Vidhan Sabha. Therefore, the SC MLAs fall short in case of experience.
- 9) The Congress Party has given more opportunity to SC MLAs than the other parties on all levels. The Congress Party gives the place to SC leaders at their executive council if giving the opportunity is not possible. BJP, Shivsena and NCP seem to follow the same technique.
- 10) The SC MLAs have taken the support of economical, social and cultural sectors to enter the politics. They have worked on various posts of banks, societies, co-operative institutions and credit societies in economical sectors. In social sector, they have participated in Navaratotsava, Ganeshotsavas, and forming of social organizations. The role of such institutions and organizations have been important in making of their leadership. The MLAs of Matang and Charmakar communities have come forward by awakening pride through their organizations and the Navbonddha MLAs have developed their leadership by working on Navbonddha pride politics.
- 11) The proportion of SC MLAs working in a ministry is less. But the proportion of working on various posts of the party is more. The experience of working on local level, district level and state level at the party is more in case of SC MLAs. SC leaders are not appointed at the decision making posts. It is observed that the SC leaders are given the chances of working on SC Fronts and SC Cells by the established parties.
- 12) The proportion of SC MLAs implementing the schemes for development of SC community is less. Some of them have implemented the schemes like distribution of books, improvement of slum areas, etc. But they do not frame any new schemes for them.
- 13) No difference is seen in the works done by SC MLAs and the schemes. They implemented the schemes of government for sc community. for example, Scholarship schemes, Gharkul schemes and the schemes of Social Welfare. But the SC MLAs aren't seen to implement any scheme by their own expenditure.
- 14) When we seek the answer of the question that why the SC MLAs cannot influence the policy making process, we come to know that the MLAs are not united , they don't have any inclusive stance, they have limited population and caste. Because of such reason, the SC MLAs cannot influence on policy making
- 15) When we take into account the opinion of SC MLAs about their participation in the decision making process of the Government and the party, we are told that they are asked only for the sake of votes. SC MLAs tell they are neglected in all other aspects.
- 16) when we consider that whether the MLAs know anything about schemes of enlightening of SC society, they say that they know about economical schemes, educational schemes, scholarship schemes, etc. But they also add that the schemes are not sufficient.
- 17) when the person from sc community becomes an MLA, the fund cannot be divided into ordinary/ and special category. It is told that the fund brought for special schemes is also used for ordinary tasks. Therefore, there are limitations for SC MLAs for the development of sc community.
- 18) The Navbouddha community or the former Mahar community is more in population. That community can show its existence in reserved constituencies. The second thing is that the Charmakar and Matang Community exists in few constituencies. Therefore , the Matang and

Charmakar community has limitations in developing leadership and putting their issues, problems in the Vidhan Sabha.

- 19) No SC leader from sc community can ever be elected in any constituency only on SC votes. They have to take support of Savarna communities. The SC leaders have done good job in some constituencies but they have take support of Savarnas. Even, if the population of sc community is less than Savarnas, their population is divided into many parties and organizations. Therefore, there are limitations in leadership development and performance.
- 20) The SC MLAs cannot make influence personally. They have do politics by taking support of the Savarna leaders and the stance of political parties. This was evident from many interviews.
- 21) The SC MLA's have played major role in construction of roads, water supply, slum area development, Gharkul, Samaj Mandir development and the Schemes of Social Welfare, but not in employment raising.
- 22) When we have a look at the performance of the SC MLAs , we come to know that some of them don't know that the procedure of proceedings exists in Vidhan Sabha. Only half of them are seen asking questions regarding agriculture, drought, water supply problems, roads while the urban MLAs ask questions regarding slum areas, toilets, roads, water problems only.
- 23) The SC community is changed now. But their economical condition is certainly wares than Savarna communities. In result, the SC Community has to remain dependent on the people having economical sources. The MLAs of SC community have attempted very less for generating resources for SC people for their employment as well as economic development. Their stress have been on generating the service sector
- 24) When we study the performance and background of SC MLAs we come to know that they focus more on cultural development and the issues of pride. There are very few examples who have paid enough attention towards economical institution organization of SC community.

In conclusion, though in hypothesis it has been stated that the proportion of Navbouddha MLAs is more, after 1990. All the parties have preferred to offer candidature to Hindu SC person because of the negativity about Navbouddha candidates. In result, the number of Charmakar MLAs is increasing. Secondly, all the parties have a negative attitude regarding offering the candidature to women. Despite of it, some parties have offered the candidature to women. Thirdly, it can be observed that the SC candidates are not elected from the Dalit parties because the established castes members do not vote them. SC candidates are being elected from the established parties. Fourthly, the SC MLAs have focused on keeping good relations to their seniors and totally neglected their performance. Along with it they also have to think that only working for Dalits shouldn't let other castes go away from them because they have to face the elections again. This is also limitation for their performance. SC MLAs have to perform according to the commands of established leaders. Fifthly, the SC MLAs do not contribute noticable performance for SC community. Some of them perform at some extent with the influence of the established leaders. Their graph of personal development has raised but the graph of Dalit development is not praisable. SC MLAs provide the works of basic facilities like electricity, roads, water supply, toilets, improvement of Dalit vasti for SC community. Apart from these, not much work has been done. Sixthly, the SC MLAs have failed in developing their leadership and their constituencies. The leaders attempting for this at some extend have failed when their constituencies become unreserved. Seventhly, the SC MLAs are not interested in the discussions in Vidhan Sabha and the documents about it. Because, many times they are not provided with the opportunities to participate by the established leaders or if participated the established leaders are not interested in such discussions. In result, the SC MLAs are seen alienated from all such procedure. They have not influenced beyond the vote politics and participation. The problems of urban Savarna citizen are discussed in Vidhan Sabha by the urban MLAs. The rural MLAs discuss the issue of rural Savarnas in the Vidhan Sabha. The issues regarding SC community are raised rarely. In this way, the concept of reserved constituencies in the constitution is not implemented in society influentially.

### **Contribution to the Society :**

1. Study of performance of Scheduled Caste members of Vidhan Sabha is firstly useful for the Indian Society as a whole. As Scheduled Caste is the weaker section of the society, it is necessary to study the issue of Scheduled Caste. Present study is a very important contribution to Indian Society as firstly it is related directly to Indian Society, especially to the weaker section of the society. So that this study helps to understand the nature of the Indian society. Especially the Chaturvarna system

was the part of the Indian social system. This study is the big contribution to Indian society to understand the nature of the Indian society, the caste system and its consequences.

2. Any society cannot be developed without the overall development of the all the sections of the society. Scheduled Caste is the very weaker part of the society. No one can understand the Indian society without the understanding of the all the sections of the society. Present study is useful to understand the problems of the major part of the Indian society i.e. Scheduled Caste. This is the contribution of this study in the context of the society.
3. The present study focuses on the political aspect of the Scheduled Caste and this is the contribution to the society. As till today the political scientists has concentrated on the elites or middle class or issues of leaders. Very few researchers showed interest in the study of the political aspects of scheduled caste.
4. Indian political system is the parliamentary system. For the success of the parliamentary system it is necessary that parliament and legislative members should work up to the mark. For this, it is necessary to study the performance of the members of Vidhan Sabha. Through the present study the effort is made to analyze the performance of the Scheduled Caste Vidhan Sabha members of Maharashtra which is the important contribution to the society.
5. The present study is useful for the defining the public policy of the government. In this study effort has been made to study the contribution of the Scheduled Caste members.  
In this process the issue of social welfare schemes is also handled. This study is the important contribution to the society because it will be useful for the formation of the public policy related to welfare schemes of the Scheduled Caste. Through the observation and interview, the facts have come to known about the implementation of the schemes. So this information is useful to make necessary changes in the government policies specially related to Scheduled Caste.
6. Continuous assessment of the representative of the people is very necessary. However for the common man it is difficult to assess and evaluate the performance of the legislative members. However, this study is a big contribution to the society as it assess and evaluates the performance of the Vidhan Sabha members.

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