

INTRODUCTION

This study is based on students belongs to 'scheduled caste' and 'scheduled tribe' categories generally called SCs/STs and role of reservation policy to see the impact of its implementation in higher education in India, about caste action and the very survival of caste as an institution to participate in higher education for bright career of SCs/STs students – even as it takes on, in a specific socio-temporal context, the dynamics of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) individuality in contemporary Uttar Pradesh particularly in the major district like *Agra*.

In many ways, this is not surprising because studies of SCs/STs about in sociology and political science, it has held a central axis for sociology and political science in India. Caste studies have been a ground that political science has claimed to be its own, and the other disciplines have not greatly contested the claim. This has led to the people of various perspectives on scheduled caste/tribes, even as efforts to undermine the centrality of SCs/STs for a political issue of India have proceeded briskly.

Education is recognized as one of the critical elements of the national development effort and higher education in particular, is of vital importance for the nation, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge-based society of the 21st century. The conflict over reservations in India is not simply a conflict about the reservation policy meant for higher education itself. There are of course, angry debates over whether such a policy should exist, what the criteria should be, and how exactly it should be implemented, but the strictness of the violence is bound up with longer-term caste conflict, exacerbated by a recent rise in 'identity politics' and general social changes.

Upper caste Indians feel disadvantaged and discriminated against by the policy, outlined in the Indian constitution, of assign places in government and higher education to those from SCs and STs. This disapproval is intensified when those from OBCs push for reservations policies in their favour as well. This is also called for in the constitution equivalent, but in such a vague way as to allow different governments to define their constitutional responsibility in markedly different ways in the context of Indian higher education system. However, India has been a major seat of learning for thousands of years. The present format of higher education in India was started in way back 1857 with the inception of universities in the three presidency towns.

Now, India possesses a highly developed higher education system which offers facility of education and training in almost all aspects of human's creative and intellectual endeavors such as arts and humanities, natural, mathematical and social sciences, engineering; medicine, dentistry, agriculture, education, law, commerce and management , music and performing arts, national and foreign languages, communications, culture etc.

Provision of reservation was implemented for the SC/ST and OBC (Other Backward Caste) after the enforcement of Constitution of India. In the beginning, it was 15% and 7.5% for the SC and ST respectively. But in 1991 after the Mandal Commission, 27% reservation was provided to the OBCs. In 1995, 3% of reservation was allocated to the other weaker section i.e. physically disabled in jobs and the same scenario also exists in higher education framework.

Concept of Education and Higher Education

Education is difficult to define because the concept entails varied aspects of knowledge, which can be passed on in various forms, including oral, written or behavioural. It also includes various forms of passing on information. However, education has been defined as, "training and instruction designed to give knowledge and develop skills."

United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) have given a comprehensive definition of the term 'higher education'. UNESCO notes that higher education includes, "all types of studies, training, and training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent State Authorities."

Higher education is considered throughout the world to be the key to both individual and societal development. For individuals, education beyond the secondary level is assumed to be the way to social esteem, better paying jobs, expanded life options, intellectual stimulation and frequently a good time in the pursuit of any or all of the above. For societies, higher education is assumed to be the key of technology, productivity and other ingredients of international competitiveness and economic growth. It is believed to be a major engine of social justice, equal opportunity and democracy.

Historical Background of Reservation in India

“Reservation”, also sometimes denoted as “affirmative action” or “positive discrimination”, it refers to a policy or program, or giving certain preferences to certain groups (usually under-represented groups) over the others. The policy of reservation, it must be kept in mind, was not a post-constitutional phenomenon but had its antecedents in the colonial times. Caste or communal quotas were in vogue well before the Constitution came into force. “Reservations in favour of the backward classed (BCs) were introduced long before independence in a large area, comprising the presidency areas and the princely states in the south of the Vindhyas. Chatrapati Sahuji Maharaj, Maharaja of Kohlapur in Maharashtra, introduced reservation in favour of backward classes in as early as 1902 to eradicate poverty from amongst them and to give them their due share in the state administration. The notification of 1902 created 50% reservation in services for different communities in the State. This notification was the first government order providing for reservation for the welfare of depressed classes in India (Resham, 2012)”.

In the year 1942, Dr. B.R Ambedkar established the all India depressed classes’ federation to support the advancement of the scheduled castes. He demanded reservations for the Scheduled castes in government services as well as other sectors. However, in the year 1947, India obtained independence and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was appointed chairman of the drafting committee for Indian Constitution. The India Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth. While providing equality of opportunity for all citizens, the Constitution contains special clauses “for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes”.

Separate constituencies allocated to scheduled castes and tribes to ensure their political representation for 10 years. It is significant to note that according to “the article 15(4) of constitution of India, which provides a constitutional basis for reservation in education, did not form part of the Constitution as it originally stood in 1950, although there was provision for reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens under article 16(4). However, an equivalent of the current article 15(4) was the subject matter of considerable debate amongst the founding fathers of the constitution (*Singh, S.N, 1996*)”.

Reservation Policy in Education Sector

The Indian Government's approach towards the SC/ST population has primarily been shaped by the provisions in its Constitution which basically guarantees equality before the law and empowers the State to make special provisions to promote the educational and economic interest of the SC/ST and to provide legal and other safeguards against discrimination. The role of reservation in the education sector is mixed for the students of SC community. Article 15(4) empowers the State to make special provisions for the advancement of the SCs/STs. Under this provision, the State has reserved seats for SC/ST students in educational institutions namely in colleges and universities, diversified courses including technical, engineering and medical colleges run by the central and state governments and government aided educational institutions. These provisions are supported by a number of financial schemes which include scholarships, special hostels for SC/ST students, concession in fees, grants for books, remedial coaching etc.

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The Central Government has developed administrative mechanisms for regulating, monitoring and implementing the reservation policy and other affiliated programmes. These institutions can be divided into:

- a) Ones that are directly involved in regulation (i.e. preparing rules relating to reservation from time to time) and monitoring the fulfillment of the required quotas in the central government services,
- b) Those acting as investigative agencies in the event of violation of reservation rules, and
- c) Those that are concerned with policymaking and overseeing the overall development of the SC/STs.

Reservation in Higher Education – Present Scenario

According to the State of Maharashtra, the Supreme Court abolished state quotas in private unaided professional colleges and specifically held that the state could not impose reservations in unaided institutions. This led to the passing of the Constitution (Ninety-third

Amendment) Act, 2005 by the Parliament in December, 2005 inserting the following clause (5) in article 15 of the Constitution:

“Nothing in this article or in sub-clause (g) of clause (1) of article 19 shall prevent the state from making any special provision by law, for the advancement of socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the scheduled castes or scheduled tribes in so far as such special provisions relate to their admissions to educational institutions including private educational institutions; whether aided or un-aided by the state, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of article 30 (*Thorat Sukhadeo, 2007*)”.

It is to be noted that article 15(5) - does not specifically provide for “reservation” as such. It is only an enabling provision which empowers the state to lay down by law “special provisions” in the matter of admission to “educational institutions”. There is no particular mention of institutions of higher learning, universities or professional institutions as such. Educational institutions could also mean primary and secondary schools. Also, the “special measures” could mean several measures other than reservation (*Thorat Sukhadeo, 2007*).

However, taking the advantage of this constitutional amendment, the union government brought forth legislation namely, the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006 (the Act) under which the following scheme of reservation has been provided:

Table – 1: Classification of Reservation Category

Serial No.	Reservation Category	Weight age (%)
1	Scheduled Caste (SC)	15%
2	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	7.5%
3	Other Backward Caste (OBC)	27%

(Source: *Annual Report, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India, New Delhi, 2002-2003, Chapter5, Paragraph 5.2*)

As a result of this, about 50% of the seats have now come under reservation in all central educational institutions including institutions of higher learning and professional institutes like IITs, IIMs and government medical and engineering colleges. However, under the Act, the following institutions are excluded from the purview of reservation- institutions in tribal areas, research institutions as specified in the schedule to the Act, minority institutions and super-specialty courses as may be specified by the Central Government. It may be noted that the Supreme Court, in its various decisions, has held that there can be no reservation in super-

specialty courses. But the Act does not specify the super-specialty courses and it has been left to the discretion of the government to determine the super-specialty courses which are to be excluded from the purview of reservation.

In fact, after six decades of the commencement of the Constitution, the time has come to impartially review the entire reservation system and ensure that only the best talents get place in educational institutions, irrespective of his caste or class. Apart from reservation provided to SC/ST/OBC, there are also various other kinds of reservation which prevail in higher education in India, such as-

- i) Reservation in favour of girl students.*
- ii) Reservation in favour of children of government employees.*
- iii) Reservation in favour of resident of particular territories.*
- iv) Reservation in favour of children of defence personnel.*
- v) Reservation in favour of candidates from union territories or the state of J&K.*
- vi) Reservation in favour of candidates who have passed through the qualifying examination of the same university as distinguished from those coming from other universities, etc.*

Although there are various kinds of reservations that have crept into higher education, present study mainly focused on the issue of SC reservation in higher education which has created much controversy and debate during the last three decades or so.

SCs/STs and Fair Access to Higher Education

In the context of the proposal for reservation of 15 percent and 7.5 percent of seats in higher education for the SCs and STs respectively, the key question is whether the SCs/STs of college going age with the qualifying level of education are underrepresented in enrollments to higher education to the extent of 15 percent and/or 7.5 percent or more of the total enrollments. In seeking an answer to these question three issues embedded within this question need to be sorted out. These are: age cut-off, the distinction between enrollments and completed level of education and crucially, the caste composition of the population with the qualifying level of education for entry into a given (next higher) level of education in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Finally, and even more importantly, assessments of fairness of access to higher education need to bear in mind that entry at each step in the educational pyramid is conditional on the successful completion of the preceding stage of education. Thus, holding a graduate degree is a must for entry into a post-graduate programme and a higher secondary or equivalent qualification is necessary for entry into an under-graduate programme, and so on down the line. It is only at the elementary or primary school stage that we are free of this consideration.

The current situation of SC/ST students are interested for higher education and the role of reservation policy as presented in the preceding part clarifies that Agra district need to work to achieve twin objectives of implementation of announced reservation policy for SC/ST students by the government and the mismatch in young generations of SCs/STs for the educated in terms of higher education and occupation. The gap analysis presented in section of literature review, clearly exhibits the needs for awareness of reservation policies between the communities of SC/ST meant for higher education. For impact of reservation policy for SCs/STs of Indian higher education we must take into consideration all factors associated to awareness, offered courses, availability in specialized courses, universities, national institutes, Indian institute's advertisements from time to time. The present study is an attempt to monitor the impact of reservation policy for SCs/STs in Indian higher education system and its proper implementation considering all the issues as given above. Higher education in India is in a miserable condition. Even after 60 years of independence higher education is not accessible to the SC/ST groups of the population. Hardly 7-8 percent of the population in the age group of 17-23 years is enrolled in the institutions of higher education. It is a matter of serious concern that higher education system in the country is facing deep financial crises. The government should fulfill its responsibility of re-examining reservation policy, recent decisions and the problems of higher education in the country.

Statement of the Problem

The study attempts to examine the education status/situation among the SCs/STs in the higher education sector in India and also ascertains the measures taken by the Government of Uttar Pradesh through the various promulgations in the Constitution, namely, the reservation policy and its socio-economic and political impacts on the marginalized social groups towards higher education in Agra District.

Chapter Scheme

The study will be organized tentatively into six to seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the topics, provides a brief conceptual overview of reservation policy in higher education. The second chapter provides critical reviews of the literatures based on the main concept of reservation policy and its current scenario applicable to higher education for SCs/STs. It will also assess the political dimensions and issues involved in reservation policy. The third chapter will indicate the objectives and methodology of the study. The fourth chapter traces the different variables required for data collection, data presentation and analysis through primary research. The fifth chapter understands results and discussions. The sixth chapter and concluding chapter summarizes the main points of the study and suggests various steps involved to streamline the reservation policy for SCs/STs in higher education followed by limitations and future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND GAP ANALYSIS

Before beginning to work on any particular concept it is always advisable to review the existing literature pertaining to the proposed concept directly or indirectly. In this regard an attempt was made to find out whether any literature exists on reservation policy for SCs/STs in Indian higher education system or not. A brief account of literature review and gap analysis as presented in the following part testifies that nothing as such has not been done in the past which, may be termed as evolution of reservation policy for SCs/STs in higher education pertaining to education sector in India and the socio- economic condition. Diverse issues relating to higher education sector as a whole were touched upon by different researchers to serve the different objectives.

Brij Raj Chauhan (1975) “Scheduled Caste and Education”, has examined the spread of education among Scheduled Castes and has presented a good account of the problems faced by Scheduled Castes in getting them educated. However, not given importance to the standards of higher education on the development of Scheduled Castes by adopting a mechanism called scientific methodology.

C. Parvathamma (1982) “Housing in Rural Karnataka”, has studied the condition of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in her important work Scheduled Castes and

Scheduled Tribes. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in *untouchable* has given a good description of the condition of the depressed classes. This study shows useful information and has been widely referred to for its analytical superiority in higher education.

Anirudh Prasad (1991) “Reservation Policy and Practice in India”, has studied Reservation Policy in the modern context and has discussed its various facets and implications in Indian society.

Haroobhai Mehta and Hasmukh Patel (1991) “Dynamics of Reservation Policy”, examined the background of agitations in Gujarat during 1984-85. They also highlighted the major issues related to reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes. Analyzed the historical need for urgent implementation of reservation policy and evaluated the work and recommendations of all major central and state commissions constituted by the Government for upliftment of backward classes. Unemotionally and scientifically analyzed the report of the Mandal Commission and also presented a major sociological treatment of the problem.

S.N. Singh (1996) “Reservation Policy for Backward Classes”, highlighted the reports of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission and other backward classes Commissions of Government of India and some judgments of the Supreme Court and High Courts on reservation issues and examined the role of judiciary in protective discrimination in India.

B.K. Roy Burman (1992) “Beyond Mandal and After”, holds and examined the social and political processes during the colonial period, which resulted including in the Constitution, the provisions for positive discrimination in favour of the disadvantaged sections of the Indian population. Analyzed the imperatives and constraints underlying the establishment for the first and second communities at different points of time and the responses of the political elites of diverse huge to the recommendations of the Commission.

Hirmanmay Karlekar (1992) “In the Mirror of Mandal: Social Justice, Caste, Class and the Individual”, examined what constitutes social justice, the furtherance of which was claimed to have been the purpose of the decision as well as the principles of distributive justice without which social justice becomes meaningless rhetoric. Analyzed the concepts of caste and class and whatever the two can be equated and also explained why neither caste nor class but the individual has to be the unit for dispensing social justice and why the latter can be fully realized only in a society informed by the spirit of humanism.

Anirudh Prasad (1991) "Reservation Policy and Practice in India", expressed the view that the society is divided between reservationists and anti-reservationists and infighting has encouraged casteism to emerge as the biggest political party rising like a phoenix from its ashes. Protective discrimination in the form of quota-system is hanging at the altar of communal politics and casteistic pressures. The decision of V.P. Singh Government to implement, Mandal Commission Report has ignited the issue and made in-depth study of multi-dimensional problems relating to quota-system and exposes problems and demerits of reservationists and anti-reservationists slogans. The high ideals of the framers of the Constitution got frustrated in post-Constitutional period under the influence of pressure politics. The courts have also followed zig-zag track in asserting the rational objective and scientific criterion of determining the socially and educationally backward classes.

A.K. Vakil (1975) "Reservation Policy and Scheduled Castes in India", elaborated the various aspects of reservation policy with constitutional ideological perspective and further with its details of implementation. Found out and traced the fact whether the policy is honestly operated and also covered other issues like violence on Scheduled Castes, the riots that rocked the country and the conversion of the SCs as a result of their oppression by the Sawarna Hindus. Further, suggested certain devices to make the reservation policy more meaningful and more acceptable to the reservation policy by observing its impact on education, employment and economic conditions of the SCs.

R.G. Misra and Gurvinder Kaur (1990) "Reservation Policy and Personnel Selection", presented an objective analysis of reservation policy in personnel selection which is of grave concern to policy makers and administrators. Beginning with the implication of Varna Vyavastha in ancient India, they have briefly traced the history of discrimination against the hierarchically lower castes in the Hindu society and the efforts made by various social reformers to get rid of this evil. They concluded various efforts made by the Constitution framers, central and state governments for providing reservations to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. They have also discussed the roster system, carry forward rule; special development measures to facilitate entry of these classes in the services and made an attempt to determine their impact.

S.N. Singh (1996) "Reservation Policy for Backward Classes", provided a complete review on Social Justice and Reservation Policy in Uttar Pradesh concluded that the state has been a nerve centre for Indian political but the segment of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes

and other backward caste population (around 60 percent) still suffer from alienation, inferiority and socio-economic status. Despite the provision of reservations in government, public sector and private, the share of scheduled castes and other backward castes has found to be very low in comparison to high castes.

R. Santakumari (1980) “Scheduled Castes and Welfare-Measures”, emphasized on the different parameters of Scheduled Caste Communities of Kerala state. The author has attempted to examine the impact of government’s welfare programmes on the Scheduled Castes. The study also endeavours to identify the factors in the sub-cultures of these communities which contribute to the differential attitudes and behaviours towards welfare programmes which in term contribute to different impact on them. The author brings out the important features of higher education structure and concludes that there has not been any lack of awareness of the different programmes of educational welfare of the government among the Scheduled Castes.

Jacob Aikara (1980) “Scheduled Castes and Higher Education”, conducted a study on the Scheduled Caste students of the collages in the city of Bombay. The study investigates into the root causes of dropouts and stagnated students among the scheduled caste community and the non-scheduled caste students. The study aims to find out the rate of stagnation and dropout among the scheduled caste students and to investigate the reasons for their discontinuing the studies. The author revealed from the findings that in comparison with the non-scheduled caste students the scheduled caste students were found to be inferior in economic, educational, occupational and academic background. The rate of stagnation and dropout was conspicuously higher among the scheduled caste than among the non-scheduled caste students. It was 77 percent for the scheduled caste and only 48 percent for the non-scheduled caste students. In order to meet the problem it is suggested that academic weakness of the SC students could be met with special academic assistance. Special coaching classes or special additional lectures could form part of such assistance. Where the medium of instruction (English) poses a problem for the scheduled caste students, efforts may be made to equip them better with knowledge of English.

A.K. Vakil (1985) “Reservation Policy and Scheduled Castes in India”, endeavours to evaluate the implementation of reservation policy in various sectors and sub-sectors. Explained the reasons of its faculty implementation and also recommends what measures should be used for its efficient and effective implementation. The book deals with the atrocities inflicted on the

SCs. Attempt have been also made to examine the change brought forth by the reservation policy in educational and economic field. The study reveals that constitutional development in India bears social and economic philosophy. Inequality created by provision of special facilities to backward classes is taken to harm the beneficial motive of the others. Hence, halt opposition is expressed which results in riots and continuous social tension. The educational and economic conditions of the SCs have been far from satisfaction. There are variations in the poverty of the SCs and these inhibit the designing of uniform economic policy for them. The banks provided loans to SCs at a lower interest rate. However, these facilities were inadequate. The govt. attempted to encourage mixed colonies but in this sphere also. It did not succeed to a large extent. In public undertakings 15% houses were reserved for the SCs this quota was never filled. No doubt the government incurred huge funds for the SCs but it could not execute the programmes seriously. As regards to the reservation in educational institution, the quotas for the SCs have not been filled. The living conditions in the hostels of the SCs have not been good. Their domestic conditions are far from satisfaction. The fruits reaped by the SCs with the help of reservation policy have been exhibited in an exaggerated manner.

Soran Singh (1987) "Scheduled Castes of India: Dimensions of social change", has made an attempt to analyse the changes in the socio-economic conditions of the scheduled tribes with particular reference to Jaunpur district in the eastern U.P. Major dimensions of social change in the field of social structure, occupation, economic condition, political participation and affiliation, education, health, housing and reservation quota are analysed in the book. The study reveals that they have acquired social importance on account of their voting rights after independence. They have given up eating beef and removing carcass and have been keen to wipe out the stigma attached to them of pursuing unclean occupation. Marriage among them is still considered as economic and social ceremony. Parents considered it their most pious duty to arrange the marriage of their children. 70 percent respondents are still within the precincts of joint family and only 30 percent have nuclear family. The study shows that respondents have started moving from their parental to other occupations. That is to say from dependent occupation of agricultural labourers to independent occupation such as trade like tanning leather. There is upward movement among the respondents in the field of educational attainments.

Mahendrakumar Meshram and V.J. Nandapurkar (2012) "Educational Development of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe", Education is the key to development. In the present

era of globalization, liberalization and privatization (GLP) dimensions with regard to availability and accessibility to educational opportunities particularly for Dalits and poorer sections of our society are changing very rapidly. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has emphatically raised the slogan of 'Educate, Organise and Agitate', 'giving the top most priority to education by giving it first place in his famous slogan. His vision on education has much relevance to the empowerment of Dalits in the postmodern society. The Architect of Indian Constitution Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar said, "Education is like the milk of lioness. The one, who consumes it, shall not rest without roaring." The dream of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to uplift the deprived people can be achieved by giving equal opportunity of education and social justice to every citizen of India. It is observed that there is absence of political inclination, negligence on behalf of Government mechanism and violation of Directive Principles. The genuine initiatives are needed to target the root causes of the problem involving the politicians, social activists, judiciary, executive and media in the area of Educational Development of Scheduled Caste.

Radhakrishnan, S. Kumari (1989) has illustrated the impact of education on scheduled caste youth in India: a study of social transformation in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Certain issues related to the higher education of scheduled caste youths in India are examined together with its impact on them. The issues relate to their socio-economic background and its influence on their educational career, the influence of infrastructure available to them and decisions concerning educational careers and their success, and the problems they confront in educational institutions and in wider society. The study analyses the nature and levels of the hopes and aspirations of scheduled castes as influenced by education, the impact of education on their awareness of caste conflicts, their perception about their role as educated in such instances, and their understanding and views on various government measures such as reservation and implementation of protective measures.

Jindal B R, Kaur Sandeep (2001) "Educational Status in Rural Population of Bathinda: Comparative Study", Investigation was carried out in district Bathinda to study the relative improvement in the educational status of scheduled versus non-scheduled caste respondents; and to analyze the socio-economic and psychological consequences of such a situation. A drastic change in the educational level of both scheduled as well as non-scheduled caste respondents was noticed. It increased gradually from one generation to another. Study concluded that as far as higher education of non scheduled caste children was concerned, they were in a better position as compared to their scheduled caste counterparts. Majority of the

scheduled caste children was studying in government schools. The factors affecting the difference in educational achievement levels of scheduled versus non-scheduled caste children came to be the occupation, family income, the family size and type of family. The scheduled caste families were having more favourable attitude towards intercaste marriage now as compared to non-scheduled caste families. Women education had helped in active and assertive participation in the family decision making process. The study also concluded that the attending of social and religious ceremonies of other castes was significantly higher in the case of scheduled caste as compared to non-scheduled caste households. Majority of both scheduled and non-scheduled caste respondents denied the existence of un-touchability in rural areas of Punjab. In their opinion, it was the result of improved level of education among the people. Although scheduled caste respondents had improved their educational and socio-economic status, yet they have a long way to go.

Sheetal Sekhri (2011) “Affirmative Action and Peer Effects: Evidence from Caste Based Reservation in General Education Colleges in India” has considered affirmative action and peer affects with evidence from caste based reservation in general education colleges in India. Focused on the review of affirmative action policies in higher education and argued that the beneficiaries of affirmative action could gain academically from positive peer effects, whereas critics argue that they could fall behind due to competition with better prepared peers and also examines different hypotheses in the context of caste-based affirmative action in college admissions in India.

All the studies referred to above reveals that hardly has any scientific, systematic and objective micro-study ever been conducted on the role and impact of reservation policy on the socio-economic conditions and status of Scheduled castes in India, though there has been a great need for such a study. The present study is a unique but humble attempt in this direction.

RATIONALE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Education is the most powerful weapon for fighting ignorance and illiteracy and to bring about a lasting social change, for a country's progress is measured by its level of education. The universal right to education, which is basic to the quality of life, is denied to these underprivileged classes and SCs community specially.

Reservation Policy has been greatly helpful in raising economic condition and social status of Scheduled Castes. Hence this policy must continue for the sake of promoting social equality in the country. One of the most criticized topics on the reservation policy is that it takes the edge off against the endorsement of merit. There is no doubt on the massive demand for higher education in a country like India. And on the contrary quality education is not accessible to all as it is extremely under-provided. Consequently, there is stern rationing in admission for seats, particularly in the top institutions. The issue therefore is not on reservation, but how reservation would be applicable to get the best outcome in the prevailing social circumstances.

One of the prominent factors for bringing up reservation in higher studies is apparently the lack of socially neutral process. The institutions for higher learning are overly dominated by the candidates who are mostly from the upper caste as they are more associated and inclined towards education as well as they can afford them too.

It must be understood that intelligence and talent aren't the monopoly of a few social groups. In fact it should be spread across the society normally and evenly. It is clear to everyone knowledge that the current system is inefficient as the selection of candidates is only done from a smaller section of society in place of the entire population. This will later on affect the sub-optimal outcome for society as a whole. The reservation for the higher education is on the basis of social competence grounds, which is quite separate from other arguments about creating a more democratic and inclusive education process in general.

The children of poor prematurely classes/groups forced to do work. Due to lack or pre-school, school and intermediate level of education affect their physical and mental development. The degree of failures in the lower socio-economic class is very high in primary to higher education. Literacy and out of school training programmes strengthen their socio-economic and material upliftment. The process of urbanization also had many problems. Poor people migrated from rural areas to seek better opportunities creates tremendous problems of housing, employment, schooling,

higher education programmes etc. Hence, they have no clarity about their rights like reservation and scope of SC/ST category students for higher education program. Every society needs educated people who should be directly involved in its democratic life. The socio-economic and cultural conditions of weaker sections like SCs/STs of the society make it imperative that they should be helped to acquire new knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, active participation in higher educational programmes not only for their own betterment but for the good of the country as a whole. Our country therefore needs to encourage all efforts to higher educate the less-favoured sections of the population specially where SC/ST form the majority.

The rigid formal education system is not reaching all the sections of a society particularly to SCs/STs and all categories of men and women. Only the other groups by and large except SC/STs avail themselves of higher education facilities and exposure through enrollment in universities and technological institutions in the region. The fixed point of entry and exist of formal and higher education makes it more difficult for students from the weaker sections of the society called Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) re-enter it. Because of certain causes the formal higher education system became less suitable for the deprived sections of the SC/ST society along with the proper implementation of reservation policy for higher education. Much more emphasis will have to be placed on the non-formal ways of higher education participation by the students of SC/ST community particularly for those who are excluded and have no idea of the benefit of higher education as well as prospects of the credentials. The importance of higher education has also been recognized by the Government of India and it now forms an essential part of the revised educational planning.

Education is now recognized as a lifelong process. This is applicable from SC/ST illiterates to formally high educate. The formally higher educated can continue their education and knowledge in the areas associated with their studies and work, or they can take up new subjects to study for their personal enlightenment. The formally higher educated can conveniently adopt programmes like correspondence courses, in service training, additional job training etc depending upon their interests.

In the present study an attempt will be made to work out in detail the pros and cons associated to the proper use and impact of reservation policy for SCs/STs in higher education in the target region of research work i.e. *Agra District*.

The scope of the study will include complete assessment of the colleges, universities in the region including all aspects of policy implementation for major participation in higher educational

programmes offered from time to time specifically for SC/ST candidates. Reservation Policy has been helpful in improving economic condition and social status of Scheduled Castes/Tribes. Respective contribution of reservation policy and different issues associated to them will be critically analysed and limitations will be brought on the surface. Finally, a meticulous attempt will be made to select and monitor the impact of reservation policy in higher education programs at different level of SC/ST candidates.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study will be carried on with the following objectives:

1. To assess the existing situation of reservation policy for SC/ST students at higher education level.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of reservation policy for SC/ST students at higher education level.
3. To determine the size of availability of SC/ST students interested for higher education.
4. To identify/explore the problems faced by SC/ST students while enrolled for higher education.
5. To explore whether reservation policy in its present form has succeeded in improving the conditions of the SC/ST students in higher education.
6. To suggest strategies for improvement of reservation policy for SC/ST students in higher education.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The tentative sets of hypotheses of the study are as follows:

Hypothesis–1: The awareness of reservation policy for SC/ST students at higher education level.

Hypothesis–2: The effectiveness of reservation policy for SC/ST at higher education level.

Hypothesis–3: The literacy rates and levels of education between SC/ST and other students interested for higher education.

Hypothesis–4: The different problems faced by SC/ST and other students enrolled for higher education level.

Hypothesis–5: Appropriate admittance for many SC/ST students from lower category to have a fair chance for quality education through reservation policy.

DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Under this category, a lot of research work is required and involved according to multifaceted directions. It contributes collection of all the facts, figures and assumptions to be undertaken in figures for the statistical manipulation of the problem. The data for the proposed research will be collected mainly from primary sources through Questionnaire. Target groups such as SC students of different universities, colleges, institutions in the region will be the main sources of data, which are interested and keen to participate in higher educational programmes. The study comprises of data will be collected from rural and urban masses of SC/ST communities interested and prospective for higher education level in state of Uttar Pradesh with respect to district – *Agra*. However, primary study would generally being based on the classification of different blocks in the district containing colleges, institutions etc. There are fourteen blocks in Agra District of Uttar Pradesh namely, *Akola, Bah, Barauli Ahir, Bichpuri, Etmadpur, Fatehabad, Fathepur Sikri, Jagner, Jaitpur Kalan, Khandauli, Kheragarh, Pinahat, Saiyan, Shamsabad*.

Proposed Statistical Analysis of the Data

The analysis of data is the most skilled task in the research process. Analysis means a critical examination of the assembled/collected and grouped data for studying the characteristics of the object under study and for determining the patterns of relationship among the variables relating to it. The research study requires quantitative analysis involving the application of various statistical techniques. It summarizes large mass of data into understandable and meaningful form. Statistics makes exact description possible.

The research is based on analysis of primary data collected from economically and socially deprived classes of **Agra district** population in two target segments which is students from rural education institutes and urban educational institutes (government aided and autonomous both) with around 350 reserved category students.

The total collected data will be tabulated and analysed for the approximate size of population 350 and proposed to cover a sample of 300 students for data analysis and further calculation can be

done by using suitable statistical techniques like correlation and regression, chi-square test, test of significance, factor analysis, statistical modeling etc and interpreted accordingly.

Area of the Study: Agra city (*Urban* and rural^ area*)

Two target segments are listed as follows:

1. Educational institutes from urban area (Agra)

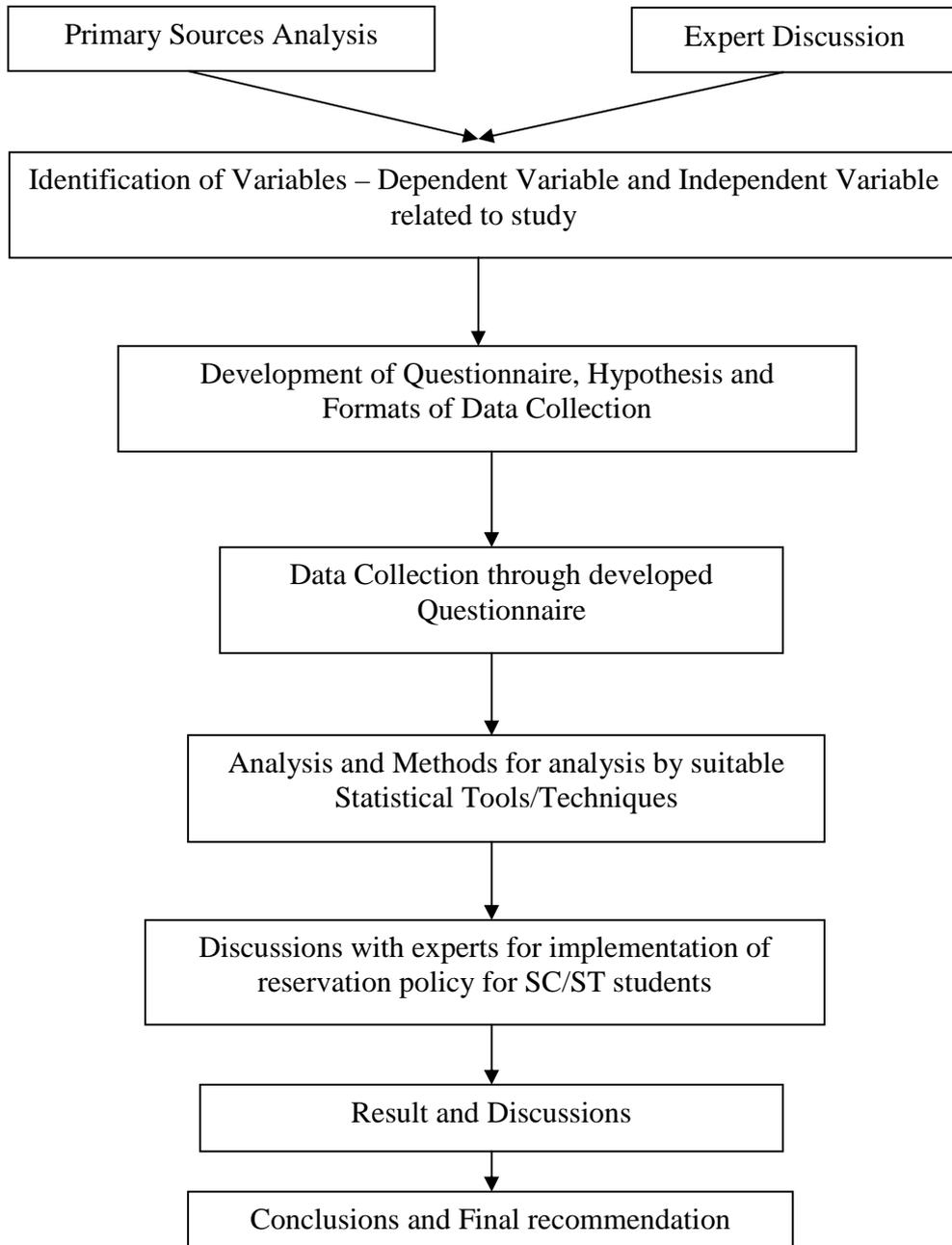
- Dayalbagh Educational Institute, D.E.I. Dayalbagh, Agra.
- St. John's College, Agra.
- S.N. Medical College. Agra.
- Bhimrao Amedkar University, Agra (Main campus).
- I.E.T. Khandari Agra.
- BMAS Engineering College, Agra.
- R.B.S Degree College, Khandari, Agra
- Institute of Engineering & Technology, Agra University, Khandari Campus, Agra
- Baikunthi Devi Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Agra
- Seth Padam Chand Jain Institute of Management, Khandari, Agra
- Faculty of Management & Computer Application, R.B.S College, Khandari, Agra

2. Educational institutes from rural area (Agra)

- Rameshwari Devi Kanya Mahavidyalam, Patholi, Agra.
- Babu Mohan Lal Artya Smarak Engineering College, Keeham, Chauma, Agra.
- B.R.E.I. Bichpuri, Agra.
- R.B.S., Bichpuri, Agra.
- C.H. Raghunath Singh Mahavidyalaya, Kirawali, Agra.
- Shri Megh Singh Degree College, Abidgarh, Agra.
- Banke Bihari Engineering College Jaupura, Agra.
- R.B. Degree College, Kalindi Vihar, Agra

Here * and ^ shows that target educational institutions, colleges in different blocks of city; may vary due to their availability, existence and smooth carrying out as per their affiliations and recognitions by the Universities from time to time.

FLOW CHART - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



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ANNEXURE - Ph.D. Thesis Outline

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