

Research Paper

Organisation of OBCs

Dr. Satish Shirsath

Associate Professor
Department Of Adult, Continuing Education
& Extension, University of Pune.
Pune -411007 (Maharashtra).

ABSTRACT

The Other Backward Class (OBC) is a socio-constitutional entity in India. The mention of OBCs has been made in our constitution as Socially and Educationally Backward classes (SEBCs). Caste is the only criteria for identification of OBCs. The castes in OBCs have promoted the preservation and development of the culture of India. Though they are about 346 (in Maharashtra) are not organised. For development, there is a need for getting organised. This issue has been discussed here, considering the situation in Maharashtra.

Glossary –

Gavgada-traditional system of social, economic, cultural and political functions at village level.

Gav –human habitation having characteristics of gavgada.

Kalelkar Commission –The government of India appointed first backward classes commission (1953) to enquire about the conditions of OBCs & to recommend development measures. Kaka Kalelkar was the chairman of the commission. Hence in general sense, it is called as Kalelkar Commission.

The government of India appointed second backward classes commission (1980) to Mandal Commission –enquire about the conditions of OBCs & to recommend development measures. B.P.Mandal was the chairman of the commission. Hence in general sense, it is called as Mandal Commission. Indra Sawhney judgement –After issuing office memorandum by the government of India, regarding Mandal commission recommendations (1990), several persons all over the country challenged this decision (methodology adopted by the commission and the recommendations) in various courts. All the cases were clubbed together with Indra Sawhney vs. Union of India and heard by the supreme court (November 16, 1992). It is a historic judgement of the Supreme Court, as it affected some aspects of OBCs and reinforced the decision of the government to grant reservation to OBCs.

Other Backward Classes (OBCs) : Genesis and Development –

After independence, the constitution of India has specifically mentioned the need to bring about development in the conditions of backward classes. Socially and Educationally Backward Class (SEBC) is one of such section. The article 340 of the constitution clearly makes the mention as 1,

(1) The President may by order appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make

recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition and as to the grants that should be made for the purpose by the Union or any State and the conditions subject to which such grants should be made, and the order

appointing such Commission shall define the procedure to be followed by the Commission.

(2) A Commission so appointed shall investigate the matters referred to them and present to the President a report setting out the facts as found by them and making such recommendations as they think proper.

(3) The President shall cause a copy of the report so presented together with a memorandum explaining the action taken thereon to be laid before each House of Parliament.

The SEBCs are named as OBCs and hence it will appear in further proceedings.

A nationwide first backward classes commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1953 under the chairmanship of Kaka Kalelkar. The Kalelkar commission submitted its report in 1955. However, it was not implemented and the issue was referred to the state governments. Accordingly different state governments appointed commissions/committees.

In Maharashtra a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of B. D. Deshmukh. After accepting the recommendations of the Deshmukh committee, first list of OBCs was declared containing 167 castes by the Government of Maharashtra. Certain provisions were suggested for the development of OBCs (in education and employment).

Second backward classes commission was established under the chairmanship of B.P. Mandal, which submitted its report in 1980. This report became instrumental in making the issue of OBCs loud.

While determining the OBCs, caste indicator is the base for consideration. In 1951, then law minister Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has clarified the concept 'class' (regarding OBCs) as, "... what are called backward classes ...nothing else but a collection of certain castes 2".

In this way OBCs constitute certain castes. In Maharashtra, there existed a list of OBCs. The Mandal commission has declared some castes in OBCs. After the historic Indra Sawhney judgement (1992), the National Commission for Backward classes and State commission for Backward Classes were established respectively by the Government of India and Government of Maharashtra. These commissions were assigned to the work of suggesting the respective

governments regarding castes of OBCs. This judgement has declared for finalising a list of OBCs which were common in state list and list prepared by Mandal commission .

Features of OBCs -

As OBC is a socio-constitutional entity and it contains certain castes, it is apt to discuss the features of these castes. The OBCs list of Maharashtra contains about different 346 castes. The OBCs from different castes are uneven, disrupted and disorganised groups. They have different features, contradictory to each others somewhere .Some castes (such as Gurav) are engaged in worshipping of gods & maintenance of temples and related work. Many Non-Hindu OBCs don't believe Hindu gods .Some castes were socially degraded as they were engaged in (socially useful but)unclean professions. In sanskritisation process some castes are driven or migrated, hence not available at some places; while some castes are dominant in particular area . They put impact on even Loksabha election . Even sub castes of almost all castes make them different .OBCs do not prefer agitations or struggle. Instead of fighting against injustice ,most of them tend to be submissive. As the major portion of OBCs is from Gavgada,their traditional occupations were interdependent. They relied upon Gav. They could not afford dissatisfaction or dissent of others in Gav .It reflected in their tendencies not to revolt .

Untouchability is considered an important feature of S.C.s. Even in some castes of OBCs they had to suffer from that stigma. The Sanskritisation process (in which imitation of upper castes is important feature)was practised for upward mobility .In Indian society ,it was practised by almost every segment, in which it was one tendency to declare own caste upper ;and treat inferior to other castes (lower in social stratification).M .N. Shrinivas has rightly depicted this attitude as follows, " I am equal to those who think of themselves as my betters, I am better than those who regard themselves as my equals, and how dare my inferiors claim equality with me" 3?. The changes in OBC list take place very often .In this way it is a volatile group . It is not so easy to categorise them in specific groups. However for convenience and study through sociological interpretation, OBCs can be grouped in following categories ;

- 1) Castes related to farming (peasants ,agricultural workers).
 - 2) Castes professing occupations in Gavgada -
 - 2.1) Artisans(Sonar ,Sutar),
 - 2.2) Castes engaged in production (Gawli),
 - 2.3) Service castes (Barbers ,Gurav ,Parit) .
 - 3) Non-Hindu OBCs –To determine OBCs the Mandal commission has introduced following criteria;
 - 3.1) All untouchables converted to any Non –Hindu religion; and
 - 3.2) Such occupational communities which are known by the name of their traditional hereditary occupation and whose Hindu counterparts have been included in the list of Hindu OBCs .(Example :Dhobi, Teli, Dheemar, Nai Gujar, Kumhar, Lohar, Darji ,Badhai, etc.)4
- As in Indian social structure consists of Non –Hindus (along with Hindus) and backward classes are prevalent among Non –Hindus ,this category carries importance . P.S.Krishnan categorises 5 social structure ,in which OBCs are placed (as follows);

TOPLAYER-

Castes of individuals/families in positions/occupations of privilege and prestige. Almost invariably Forward/advanced castes.

MID-LAYER- (arrows show tendency to break loose from dominationOf & seek equal position with castes of top layer)

Castes of peasants.
Generally SEEdBC/OBC

ER MID LAYER-

Pastoral castes	Castes of Artisans/Artisan Producers	Castes of those like rendering services
Almost invariably SEEdBC/OBC		

Bottom Layer

agricultural labour castes (mostly SC or Dalits) tribes outside tribal areas(ST) SN, VJ Castes/ Tribes (some SC or Dalit, Some ST & SEEdBC/ OBC)	Tribes of Scheduled Areas (ST) Very Backward Peasants of "ethnic homelands" & gatherers/ collectors of non-Timber forest produce
Layer parallel to bottom layer	

- *N=Nomadic, SN=Semi Nomadic, VJ= Vimukta jaatis(formerly 'criminal'), SEEdBC= Socially & educationally backward classes, OBC= Other backward classes

Following theory can specify the existence of OBCs in Indian social structure;

salad bowl theory –This theory describes the nature of American culture ,where people of different cultures have come together . In the salad bowl model, various cultures are mixed like salad ingredients ,however they do not merge together into a single homogeneous culture .Each culture keeps its own distinct qualities . 6The OBCs' existence in Indian society is just like salad ;where they are living with independent identities.

This theory can specify the status of OBCs in society .The OBCs ,as it is a constitutional entity and so far their existence in social structure is concerned ,they were the part and parcel in olden gavgada . Not only this ,they were instrumental in developing the gavgada and fulfilling the needs of the gav . "I am for the gav and the gav is for me " was the prime concern. Fulfilling the needs of the people and sacrifice for the gav was considered important and fundamental value .Collecting property or creating estate was not considered so important. 'Glorification of poverty 'was imbibed through religion ,culture ,customs and traditions .

Even in changing pro- industrial ,urban oriented scenario ,the major work force is from OBCs. Not only this ,the extent of white collar OBC experts is great .

However they are not organised :

OBCs constitute a major part of Indian population ,though there is a difference of opinion in telling its exact number .However they are not organised .Different features of different groups can be the prominent cause for it .Following are some causes for organisation ;

1) Getting organised is an important mantra in democratic era. We can raise voice against injustice, inequality, exploitation through the power of organisation.

Getting organised on caste basis can be casteism. Almost every caste is minor.

OBC category is proper for organisation.

2) Exchange of ideas, thoughts can possible through networking. It can promote social harmony.

3) OBCs constitute a major bulk in Indian population. Hence organisation of this major portion is important so far broad national benefit.

4) The OBCs have created a variegated and unique culture. It is important to preserve and promote this process.

In view of mobilising and spreading up OBC movement, there is a need for OBCs to get organised. Some points for it should be considered.

1. At the root of any public work, there should be 'faith'. Several organisations are working in OBC movement. Day by day, addition in new organisations & activities is taking place. Along with it, means of transportation and communication resources are also getting increased. However the issue of putting faith on others is getting lessen. There is a need to create faith through some activities, occasions and meetings.

2. There is a need to inculcate 'Democratic methodology'. Democracy should not be considered as mere political or administrative machinery. It should be inculcated in organisational transactions. It should be imbibed in attitude. Three aspects are important in this point – (a) we feeling – sense of collectiveness. (b) distribution of responsibilities/work – duplication of work can be avoided here. All can participate in common work, keeping own identity. (c) respecting the views of others, though some of them may differ.

3. There is a need of collaboration and co-operation. OBCs should seek co-ordination and collaboration with other forces of parallel thinking. Different castes in OBC have different problems. Co-ordination is needful to fight against them.

4. The variegation should be preserved. Alike variegation in castes, nature of work of different OBC organisations differ. They consist of agitation, demands, campaign, some cultural work, financial activities etc. Some persons work on individual level. All such activities which differ from each other in nature, can mobilise OBC work.

5. New challenges should be faced. The beginning of 21st century, created storm of globalisation, privatisation, liberisation, invasion of multi national industries, encroachment of computer in all the fields etc. It promoted competitiveness, but some ill effects also took place such as decrease in government and similar types of employments, hike in inflation. Though it is pathetic and grave danger, no one can deny its inevitability. In such condition, there is a need to construct strategies for fighting with the situation. e.g. if computer is being popular, it is apt to impart training of computers to new generation. Instead of blaming the reality, there is a need to accept the challenge.

6. There should be proper organisation of work. The OBC workers should direct the agitations & programmes. The OBC movement will not prosper, if they get orders from any outside powers or political parties. Otherwise it will loose the faith of common people. In this regard, the work of OBC movement should be carried on following levels,
-brainstorming and direction from thinkers & wise persons.
-social organisation.

-field work by volunteers.

It can bring balance and proper direction in work along with involvement of persons will be increased.

7. People should be imparted direct benefits. Ordinary OBC persons are not aware about various benefits. It makes them apathetic regarding participating in OBC movement. Their participation can be increased by giving them benefits.

8. There is a need to study positive qualities of some progressive communities. It is advisable to study good qualities and life-style of some developing, progressive communities. Some good qualities are seen in some communities i.e. exchanging information and knowledge, avoiding discussions regarding differences publicly, supporting the persons in distress, sense of unity etc. It is apt in putting ideal of some of such communities.

9. It is apt to study the OBCs outside Maharashtra. OBC is a nation wide entity. Though the Kalelkar commission and Mandal commission have discussed OBC issue on national level, there are many differences in OBCs from different states, there are differences in implementing machineries. There is a need to study regarding OBCs from different states. Some studious persons may undertake such studies.

10. Certain aspects concerning 'reservation' needs to be studied. According to the Constitution, reservations is available. It has been inculcated with the view of giving opportunity to backward classes, who are not properly represented. In it there are several technical aspects such as reservation quota, roster, certain legislations, rules regarding appointment, promotion etc. So far competition among different persons is concerned, care should be taken that differences should not be antagonistic.

11. In view of empowering OBCs for availing political power, they should be trained properly. In case of politics, there is a need to train OBCs regarding planning, working of election, administering power. It will empower OBCs in lifting political reservation and exploiting it.

12. Along with a political will, there is a need of beauracrat will in the process of making and implementing important decisions. In view of development of OBCs, the role of beauracrats plays important role. The extent of OBCs in government field & in administration should be increased purposefully. These people can develop their families along with they can fetch others for development. The feeling that our MAN is in administration, makes ordinary persons happy.

13. It is very much expected that, the OBC unemployed youth should be provided for employment (in government /private sector), whether reservation exists or not. It is expected to, extend related information, assist the youth for prepare related technical aspects, remove obstacles in the way etc. It can be useful in getting the faith and support of youth.

14. Development of literature – So far OBCs are concerned, not much literature is available. Especially the literature which depicts the life of persons from OBC communities is meagre. It is said that literature is the mirror of the society & it guides for the development of the society. In this context, it is an appeal as well as challenge to develop and document the literature regarding OBCs. It can consist of biographical and research writings. It is advisable to publish informative, amusing journals, audio-visual aids.

15. Getting connected with progressive social movements having broad perspectives - The OBCs

remained backwards due to different imbalance & drawbacks in society (though they were artists and producers). There is a chain of social educators such as Mahatma Phule,Rajarshi Shahu ,Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar etc.Their thoughts and work can become torch light for OBC movement. Hence it is apt to ,collaborate with the forces (which are bound to such thoughts) on thinking level and agitation too. Phule-Ambedkar school of thoughts can be guiding to OBCs.

16. Put ideal of 'idols'-OBCs are having several problems & agonies. Along with it ,there are several great persons who not only became great individually ,but they brought out development in social life. Such persons can be a motivation to ordinary persons .

17. Enlightenment – It is very much essential to educate ordinary persons to leaders from OBC regarding several aspects such as OBC concept, methodological aspects ,strategies , various modifications. Such information is required for Non-OBC persons also. There is a need to impart education to elected OBC representatives ,administrators who are responsible for implementing certain development programmes for OBCs. Some modalities can be applied such as rallies at field level, camps, seminars, conferences, exhibitions, internet, audio-visual aids, some folk media such as ballads, kalapathaks etc.

18. Efforts towards development and self-sufficiency –The prime objective of OBC movement should aim to make the OBCs self-sufficient. An important thing, one should be clear that privatisation is growing day by day .The avenues of reservation are getting reduced .In such condition ,there is a need to motivate the youth for self employment ,entrepreneurship. For that the youth should be guided and assisted for such aspects. The satisfaction of needy persons & economic stability of his family can strengthen the OBC movement too.

19. Need of foreseeing – Beyond mere employments ,so called self-employment and such aspects it is essential to foresee the needs of tomorrow ,resources & methodologies for it .All these things should be collaborated. E.g. computer & entire ICT field is getting increased. There is a need to motivate the OBCs for getting education & doing career in it. OBC youth should be motivated to foresee the emerging problems & emerging professions .

20. Technical aspects in relation to OBCs should be known – There are different technical aspects regarding OBCs such as changes in certain things on government level such as income condition of non-creamy layer, OBC lists, indicators of different committees /commissions, judgements of various courts. All related information needs to be collected .

21. Information regarding Non-Hindu OBCs needs to be collected – Since the Mandal commission ,some Non-Hindu communities are included in OBC category. This is a praiseworthy effort of social and national integrity .There is an ignorance about this concept ,indicators of Non-Hindu OBC, included castes, problems of such communities etc. The work in this field is expected.

22. Promotion of Researches –Though OBC is a group having diverse dimensions and great extent, the researches in this field are not much . In view of knowing certain facts from this group ,there is a need of researches in various disciplines. Surveys ,evaluation studies, impact studies, case studies of certain successful personalities should be promoted. Students, researchers, or any person having analytical scientific and objective outlook can carry out

research. Such researches should be documented .

23. Increase the participation of students – According to 2001 census ,the youth population (upto 25 year) is about 50 %.The Mandal commission said that OBCs constitute 52 % of total population. Considering all this statistics, the number of OBC youth can be more than 20 crores. Though the enrolment of youth in higher education is not much ,and even their enrolment in schools is also not encouraging, the number of students can not be ignored. There may not be much awareness among OBC youth .However the OBC movement should reach to them ,which can enlighten them as well as their participation in movement can be increased. The youth who are deprived from education can be motivated to take education by any other distance way. Such youth can be enlightened by providing related information .

24. All such endeavours should be collected and documented – Various individuals and organisations are active in OBC movement .The philosophical foundation and working strategies of all differ. However collected documentation of all of them is very necessary .It can gather all the efforts ,which can direct for future .

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