

# Essay on Job Reservation

The former British rulers of India introduced the system of keeping some govt. jobs and seats reserved for the so-called depressed classes, in pursuance of their policy of divide and rule. The Muslim league govt. Of undivided Bengal openly gave preference to Muslim candidates in govt. and other jobs. All these were done to divide and drive a wedge between different sections of the Hindu community. No doubt, caste Hindus i.e. the upper crust (the cream layer) of the Hindu society is much advanced in education and other qualification. Hence reservation was done in an apparent bid to neutralize (off set) the lead of the caste Hindus in all walks of life.

In independent India a constitutional provision was made to keep up this practice of reserving seats for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the samasad (Parliament) and state assemblies (Bidan) for ten years, in the first instance. But this practice has continued since then, the reasons being more political than economic.

To review or take stock of the entire situation of job-reservation Govt. of India set up in the past a commission with Justice Mondal of Bihar as the chairman. The commission recommended reservation up to 30% of Govt. jobs for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. But V.P. Singh, the then prime minister of India, sought to increase this percentage further, in favor of the S.C., S.T. candidates in vocational college like those of engineering and medical streams. Indigent (poor) and fairly meritorious students of the favored classes are also given paltry (of petty amount) scholarships. By this policy V.P. Singh practically stirred the hornet's nest (provoked the vested interest) of the caste Hindu students, who so long had the white-collared (high) jobs and berths as their close preserves (monopoly).

In the agitation that followed in 1990 at least fifty young men and women died. Some even immolated their lives (reduce) the zeal of the political parties to woo (invite) the backward classes and the weaker sections of the society. Every big party now wants to play the modal card, to secure more votes of the backward classes. Recently Tamil Nadu Govt. passed a special bill in the legislature to raise the percentage of job reservation for the Harijans and Girijans up to seventy and this also received the assent of the president. In the case of Karnatak, however, the Supreme Court has allowed reservation of jobs only up to 50%.

Those who have to broad interest of the country at heart think that to accord (grant) any special privilege to a particular section is to affect national integration. Already some Muslims have started demanding reservation of jobs for them as a backward community. And women are not far behind. They too demand special privilege for them. So the main stream of the national life will suffer in the long run. The stand taken in this respect by the leftists seems to be more reasonable. They are in favor of keeping jobs reserved only for the economically backward classes. A citizen of India whose annual income is less than even Rs. 1,000 should be considered a really backward person. He is entitled to some favor and compassionate (kind) consideration like the handicapped persons.

Finally, it has been found that a section that is allowed to keep out of open competition for a long time becomes complacent, self-satisfied and unenterprising. So merit or talent should come before all. Otherwise a day will soon come when the responsible posts in the administration (as also of semi-govt. enterprises and undertakings) will be manned by incumbents (representatives) of reserved classes. This happens at the cost of over-all administrative efficiency. If half the jobs that matter are reserved and filled in by candidates of socially backward sections than that will surely dampen the ardor and

spirit of enterprise of the forward sections. So not political but economic standpoint should be the criteria to allot and fix the percentage of reservation. A broad comprehensive national outlook is needed for this.