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*Constitution, Reservation Policy and Dominant Castes Demand for  
Other Backward Classes Status in India- An Analysis of Kaps in  
Andhra Pradesh*

**Author**

*Dr. E. Venkatesu*

*Dept. of Political Science*

*University of Hyderabad*

*India*

*evs103@gmail.com*

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# Constitution, Reservation Policy and Dominant Castes demand for Other Backward Classes status in India: An Analysis of *Kapus* in Andhra Pradesh

Dr. E. Venkatesu

Associate Professor

Dept. of Political Science/SSS

University of Hyderabad

Gachibowli, Hyderabad-500046

Telangana, India

[evs103@gmail.com](mailto:evs103@gmail.com)

9441482535

## Abstract of the paper

The Indian model of reservations for the protection of the rights of historically marginalised, socially excluded, indigenous tribal groups, socially and educationally backward classes is the historical legacy, which was started in the colonial context and princely states during last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The legacy of reservation policy has constitutional status in post independent period. Therefore, The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have the reservations in proportion to their population, whereas the socially and educationally backward classes constitute 52% of population, but they got only 27% from 1990s onwards to bring them out from backwardness. However, for about seven decades of independence, certain socially high status, educationally well-advanced, economically dominant and politically ruling castes like *Kapus* from Andhra Pradesh, *Patels* in Gujarat, *Jats* of Haryana and *Marathas* of Maharashtra have been agitating for the OBC status. The present paper is an attempt to understand the intentions and reasons of *Kapus* for backward classes' reservations.

**Key Words:** Constitution, reservation policy, dominant castes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes/Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, Kapus, Commission, indicators, central government, political mobilization, election, education, employment etc.

## **1. Introduction:**

There are various nomenclatures for the special treatment of certain social categories such as indigenous ethnic groups, socially, educationally and economically disadvantaged communities. The nomenclatures are including affirmative action policy in the United States, positive discrimination in Britain, reservation policy in India, standardisation in Sri Lanka, reflecting the federal character of the country in Nigeria and sons of the soil preferences in Malaysia and Indonesia. The group preferences and quotas have existed in Israel, China, Australia, Brazil, Fiji, Canada, and Pakistan, New Zealand and the Soviet Union and its successor states (Sowell, 2004).

India is one of the countries in the world following reservation policy for more than a century beginning in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Colonial Presidencies and Princely states. In India, reservation policy is being used as an instrument for the upliftment of the historically marginalised such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) also known as Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBCs), who were subjected to the social deprivation (Venkatesu, E, 2014). These social categories have got separate identity in the Constitution, which is the basis for the post-independent reservation policy. The review of the literature reveals that the policy has got long historical legacy.

**1.1. Review of the Literature:** In the constitution the term backward classes indicates SCs, STs and OBCs/SEBCs. In the scholarly works (Galanter, 1984) it is denoting of several social categories such as

I. As a synonym for Depressed Classes, untouchables, Scheduled Castes.

2. As comprising the untouchable, aboriginal and hill tribes, criminal tribes, etc.
3. As comprising all the communities deserving special treatment, namely those included in (2) above and in addition the lower strata of non-touchable communities.
4. As comprising all non-tribal communities deserving special treatment.
5. As comprising all communities deserving special treatment except the untouchables.
6. As comprising the lower strata of non-untouchable communities.
7. As comprising all communities above the untouchables but below the most "advanced" communities.
8. As comprising the non-touchable communities who were "backward" in comparison to the highest castes.
9. As comprising all communities other than the highest or most advanced.
10. As comprising all persons who meet given non-communal tests of backwardness (e.g., low income).

Due to several initiatives such as land reforms, importance of adult franchise, green revolution and political mobilisation from 1960s, the OBC emerged as a powerful challenge to then ruling political parties. Therefore, it was an inevitable to recognise their hold in the electoral politics in the form of Mandal Commission. The Bharatiya Janata Party opposed the Mandal Commission from implementation, but accommodated the OBCs in the political positions (Jeffrelot, 2003). One of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission was to provide the 27% reservations in education and employment of the central government institutions. After a sever battle, the 27% reservations was started to implement from 1993 onwards. But in the process of implementation, there are several issues have been coming up. The issues are creamy layer, obtaining caste certificate, and dominant castes demand for the OBC status (Venkatesu, E, 2015).

In the wake of dominant castes agitation, certain articles are published. One of the article on Marathas reveals that Marathas, from sociological origin point of view, are Kshatriyas, they have grabbed disproportionate political positions on Congress party including Chief Minister position and controlling the economy of Maharashtra(Deshpande, 2014). On *Patels* 'Quota for *Patels*? The Neo-middle-class Syndrome and the (partial) Return of Caste Politics in Gujarat'<sup>i</sup> The *Patels* in Gujarat politically highly mobilized and even occupied Chief Minister, they are the beneficiaries of Cooperative societies, businessmen of Diamonds, Detergent barrens, Motels in USA etc (Jeffrelot, 2016). *Jats* are not only prosperous and socially powerful in Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan but also call the shots in politics and governance in these States (Dogra, 2014). The survey of literature reveals that there is hardly any write up on the demand of kapus for the OBC quota.

The paper, basically, examine the hypothetical question of whether the Kapus come under the indicators set in the provisions of Constitution to get the socially and educationally backward classes? To answer to the question, the historical account of the reservation policy, the indicators, which are evolved for the measuring of the socio-educational backwardness in the Constitution, the dominant castes, which are demanding for the OBC status and reasons for the Kapus agitation for the reservations.

To achieve the objectives of the paper, the secondary sources includes books, articles, Commission reports and primary sources such as surveys are used for the historical analysis as well as the developing a case study of the Kapus in Andhra Pradesh.

The historical account of reservation policy in India reveals that, broadly, there are three phases, which includes (1) Evolution of special treatment or reservation policy for SCs/STs from late 19<sup>th</sup> century to commencement of the Constitution in 1950. (2) Efforts to extend the reservation policy for Other Backward Classes/Socially and Educationally

Backward Classes 1950s -1990s and (3) Dominant castes demand for Reservations from 1990s.

## **2. Reservation Policy before commencement of the Constitution:**

The traditional India was a highly stratified and hierarchically structured social system, which was formed based on caste. Caste is an informal social institution of kin relationship and those who have practiced similar occupation assigned on the basis of birth in a caste (Srinivas, 1996). In the process of colonial modernisation with the penetration of western education and ideas, there was a social upsurge from the lowest social order of the society for human dignity and self-respect during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (O' Hanlon, 1985).

The genesis of Backward Classes can be traced back to 1872 when British Government in Madras Presidency identified the lack of representation to the Muslims in education and employment. To make the Muslims as part of colonial education, the government had started schools in the Muslim localities and in Urdu, Persian and Arabic medium (Radhakrishnan, 1990). The Education Commission of 1882 focused on aboriginals and lower castes to provide special facilities in terms of education and employment. Backward classes proper also appeared in 1884 as a reference to 'aborigines' and 'low castes' in the remarks of the Madras government sent to the government of India in chapter nine of the Education Commission's report on the education of classes requiring special treatment (Ibid). Based on certain indicators such as educational backwardness and low socio-economic status the list of Backward Classes was prepared. Initially, the list was eleven names in 1883 increased to 39 in 1893 to 46 in 1903 to 122 in 1913 to 131 in 1923 to 182 in 1933 to 238 in 1943 to 270 in 1953 to 302 in 1963 to 323 in 1988 (Ibid).

During this period, the Education Committee identified that there is no proper accommodation of all the social groups, emerging pressure from the Caste Associations and social resistance, the British and Native rulers had introduced reservations in the education and employment opportunities for the lower castes. As a result, in 1883 the British rulers of Madras Presidency recognized 39 castes as Backward Classes and introduced reservation system in educational institutions and government jobs. The number of castes in this list grew to 238 by 1943 (Ibid).

In 1880s, the *Sahu Chatrapathi Maharaj* of *Kolhapur Sansthan* (indigenous princely state) took special steps for the representation of *Shudras* in government jobs. The *Mysore Maharaja* implemented reservation for the Backward Classes since 1895. *Travancore* and *Cochin Maharaja* took special steps for the representation of the oppressed in proportion to their population in the administration.

### **3. Reservation Policy after the commencement of the Constitution:**

The legacy of 19<sup>th</sup> century social resistance had become rich social capital for the incorporation of ‘Right to Equality’, ‘Social Justice’, ‘fraternity’ in the Constitution of India, which came into existence on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950. The makers of Indian Constitution such as BR Ambedkar raised the issue of caste centric annihilation and need for Constitutional status to the policy that was supposed to be introduced in the form of reservations/affirmative action/positive discrimination for the amelioration of the historically marginalized, indigenous and socially and educationally backward classes (Galanter).

The post-independent Indian Constitution ensured reservation policy through the following Articles.

Article 15(4) Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

(5) 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 any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes in so far as such special provisions relate to their admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of article 30.

Article 16(4) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.

(4A) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for reservation in matters of promotion, with consequential seniority, to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes which, in the opinion of the State, are not adequately represented in the services under the State.

(4B) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from considering any unfilled vacancies of a year which are reserved for being filled up in that year in accordance with any provision for reservation made under clause (4) or clause (4A) as a separate class of vacancies to be filled up in any succeeding year or years and such class of vacancies shall not be considered together with the vacancies of the year in which they are being filled up for determining the ceiling of fifty per cent. reservation on total number of vacancies of that year.

Article 46 Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections.—The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of Exploitation.



Article 335 The claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State: [Provided that nothing in this article shall prevent in making of any provision in favour of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes for relaxation in qualifying marks in any examination or lowering the standards of evaluation, for reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of services or posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.]

Article 340(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.

While following the Constitutional provisions, the post-independent Indian state introduced 22.5% reservations in public sector employment, education and political representation for the SCs and STs in proportion to their population right from the commencement of Indian Constitution.

Other Backward Classes can only get justice as per Article 340 of the Constitution. The Article 340 proclaims that the President of India can appoint a Backward Classes Commission to look into the concerns of the Backward Classes, investigate them and make recommendations to the State and Central Government.

1) The Government of India, on January 29, 1953 appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of *Kaka Kalelkar* and with 11 other members. The terms of references of the committee were to find out the reasons for Backwardness and make recommendations to bring them out of social and educational backwardness. The commission evolved certain indicators such as place in the social structure, educational level, and representation in government jobs, trade and business. On the basis of these indicators, the commission identified 2,399 castes as Other Backward Classes. The Committee concluded that 32% of the Indian population belonged to social, educational and economic backwardness and recommended the government to take necessary steps for their welfare.

However, the Chairman of the Commission *Kaka Kalelkar*, while submitting the report, recorded his dissatisfaction over the report in black and white for taking caste as the indicator to measure the level of backwardness. The report was submitted in March 1955 but there was hardly any discussion in the Parliament. The then Home Minister declared that the development of Backward Classes come under the purview of State governments, therefore, the Central government would not take any action. Because of chairperson's dissatisfaction, lack of initiation from Prime Minister to discuss in the Parliament and putting it on the state governments by the Ministry of Home Affairs, there was hardly any attempt for the advancement of OBCs so long as the Congress party was in power at the national level

By 1970s, because of the land reforms, green revolution and the political movements led by *Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan* and *Ram Manohar Lohiya*, the upper castes were losing their importance in village politics, which led to the changes in power dynamics at the

local level. With the rise of new social groups in the local politics, the Congress party was defeated and Janata party came to the power. The Janata government in 1979, constituted the Second National level Backward Classes Commission under the Chairmanship of *Bindeshwar Prasad Mandal*.

2) The Second Backward Classes Commission evolved three broad indicators and eleven sub-indicators to identify the social and educational backwardness. The indicators includes

A. Social

- i. Castes/Classes considered as socially backward by others.
- ii. Castes/Classes, which mainly depend on manual labour for their livelihood.
- iii. where at least 25% female and 10% male above the State average get married at an age below 17 years in rural areas and at least 10% female and 5% male do so in urban areas.
- iv. Castes/Classes where participation of female in work is at least 25% above the state average.

B. Educational

- i. Castes/Classes where the number of children in the age group of 5-15 years who never attend school is at least 25% above the state average.
- i. Castes/Classes where the rate of student drop-out in the age group of 5-15 years is at least 25% above the State average.
- ii. Castes/Classes amongst whom the proportion of matriculates is at least 25% below the State average.

C. Economic

- i. Castes/Classes where the average value of family assets is at least 25% below the state average.
- ii. Castes/Classes where the number of families living in kuccha houses is at least 25% above the state average.

- iii. Castes/Classes where the source of drinking water is beyond half a kilometre for more than 50% of the households.
- iv. Castes/Classes where the number of households having taken consumption loan is at least 25% above the state average.

The Commission, as per 1931 census, estimated the population of OBCs at 52%. and also recommended for initiating measures to bring about social, educational, economic and political transformation among OBCs. The commission strongly opined that the OBCs constitute about 52%, therefore, they must have 52% reservations in the central government institutions. Due to existence of Supreme Court ceiling of not exceeding the percentage of reservations more than 50%, the Commission recommended 27% reservations for OBCs along with several other measures for their development.

The Commission submitted its report in 1980, by that time, again, Congress was in power at the center. Therefore, the *Mandal* Commission Report gathered dust for about a decade. During 1989 Parliament election, the National Front in its election manifesto promised that they would implement the *Mandal* Commission Report. After the formation of a non-Congress government headed by National Front at the center, the Prime Minister *V.P. Singh* on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1990 announced that 27% reservations will be implemented for Other Backward Classes in all the Central Government Institutions.

However, there was an outcry from upper caste political leaders, government officials, trade and commerce, dominant civil society, media and others against the union government decision. In opposing the 27% quota of OBCs, the castes, which are demanding for OBC quota also joined. The political parties under the leadership of Backward Classes, non-Parliamentary leftist parties, Dalit, civil liberty associations, progressive intellectuals stood up for the cause of reservations to OBCs. As the pro and anti-reservation agitation was going on, *Indira Sawhney* challenged 27% reservations in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court

of India upheld the 27% reservations through its verdict in 1992. The verdict was entered into Gazette of India in 1993, from then onwards 27% reservations have been in implementation in central government institutions, especially in employment and from 2007-08 onwards in educational institutions. In implementation of the 27% reservation policy, there are certain hurdles such as Creamy-layer, lack of awareness to the beneficiaries and difficulties in obtaining caste certificate from the government, therefore, hardly 14% of reservations have been filled in the public sector. Another important issue that has been emerging is the dominant castes demand for OBC status

#### **4. Dominant Castes Demand for Other Backward Classes Status:**

From late 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1990s, it was the downtrodden sections of the society especially SCs, STs and OBCs fought for the reservations. However, from 1990s, the dominant castes, such as *Kapus* in *Andhra Pradesh*, *Marathas* in *Maharashtra*, *Jats* in *Haryana* and *Patels* in *Gujarat* started demanding for the reservations in the OBC quota. Dominant caste means numerically the strongest in the village or local area and economically and politically exercises a preponderating influence (Srinivas MN 1959). These communities have not only benefited from the post-independent political system through occupying key positions but also industrial development and Green Revolution in the country but also vehemently opposed the reservation policy at the state and National level to the Backward Classes up to 1990s. Because of State initiative, judicial intervention and support of the civil society organizations, the Backward Classes/OBCs have reservations but the dominant communities have been trying to grab the cake of backwards through violent agitations for putting a pressure upon the State.

The demand of dominant castes for OBC status was rejecting by the National and State level Backward Classes Commissions, struck down by High Courts and Supreme Courts and opposed by the Backward Classes Associations on the demand of dominant

castes. Even civil society is also opposing, which is established in a survey on Youth (Lokniti, 2017).

**Table-1 on Measuring youth Support for demand of non-OBC farming Communities to be included in the OBC category (%)**

	Fully Support	Support but only after increasing existing OBC quota	Oppose	No Response
Youth (overall)	26	10	34	30
Hindu Upper Caste	18	6	53	23
Hindu Dominant Farming Castes	23	11	41	24
Hindu Peasant OBC	32	11	30	28
Hindu Artisanal and Service OBC	26	10	33	31
Hindu SC	33	11	30	27
Hindu ST	13	5	17	64
Muslim	26	11	30	33
Others	23	14	39	24

Source: CSDS- KAS: Attitude, anxieties and aspirations of India's Youth: changing Patterns- A report.

The survey found youth to be more opposed to this demand than in support. While every fourth youth (26%) was found to be in favour of inclusion of such communities within the OBC category, about one in every three or 34 percent were averse to the idea. One in every ten gave conditional support to the idea; that is, they were in favour of inclusion but only after increasing the existing OBC quota beyond 27 percent.

In this adverse situation of the three castes, kapus could not learn any lessons, but initiated the violence through destroying the public property to include in the OBC list. Therefore, it is essential to study the agitating community.

#### **4.1. Contextualising the Kapus in Political Economy of Andhra Pradesh:**

Carolyn M. Elliott, while applying the concept of dominant castes in the context of political process of Andhra Pradesh, elaborated that the important source of their power is control over the land as they are the owners, finance capitalist to loan and having the

channels to represent their interests to the politicians and administration at the block and district level. Their position has been strengthened through making appointments in the local bureaucracy of village with power to collect revenue and maintain the law and order, which made them as part and parcel of the state recognition and power. Having control over the land is a potential source to subjugate the lower caste through making them to depend upon the landed gentry for either daily, attached (*jajmani*) or bonded labour to produce and render the services and through extending readymade loans for an unending annual interests. The second source of their power links with the politicians and bureaucrats in the power structure and getting positions in the local administration. The micro level basis of the electoral power politics of two dominant castes has also been characterized as provincial propertied classes (Balagopal.K 1991) as well as crony capitalist class (Harish Damodaran 2008) in the changing context of globalization.

Andhra Pradesh was second state to launch the Panchayati Raj institutions in 1959 which have institutionalized the landed castes domination and hegemony in the local politics of rural areas. The rise of factionalism within the Congress party has played the role of opposition so that there was hardly any serious attempt for the downward percolation of power and resources to benefit the lower strata of society. Whatever the developmental initiatives, which were introduced in post-independent period right from community development onwards, were cornered by the local landed gentry and facilitated for the economic enrichment. Subsequently, the existing iniquitous socio-economic base of the power relations have been institutionalized in post-independent period through electoral politics and their instrumentalities such as local bodies and legislative bodies at state and national level, which have concentrated the power in the hands of dominant castes. Subsequently, the concentration of political power in the hands of dominant caste contributed for the consolidation of their socio-economic status. These social categories have been the

center of attraction for all sorts of ideologies, which includes leftist, centrist and rightist. In the initial years of the formation of state, social cleavages had been reflected in the series of political events such as defeat of Congress government headed by Sanjeeva Reddy in no-confidence motion due to dominance of Kammas in non-Congress and Communist parties.

The achievement of Chief Minister Position by the Reddy community has led to the elevation of dominant caste to the state level in the political process of Andhra Pradesh. In the early years of the formation of Andhra Pradesh leftists and centrist political parties such as Communist, Congress and non-Congress were competing for the political power. The Congress party, while representing for the legacy of nationalism and *Gandhian* ideology coopted the rising aspirations from the mass movements such as Telangana armed rebellion through the abolition of *Zamindari* and *Jagirdari* agrarian structure, which was by nature exploitative, plundering and looting of the farming community. The hijacking of radical agenda of the Communists through the abolition of feudal agrarian relations initiatives like Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) and Green Revolution in the areas, where there has been a well-developed infrastructure for irrigation provided, in a cumulative manner, contributed for the economic enrichment of the dominant castes and perpetuation of their power.

In the chequered history of the political process of Andhra Pradesh from 1953 to 2014 and after 2014 reveals that there has been two dominant castes i.e., Reddy and Kamma, political power. Right from the formation of integrated Andhra Pradesh in 1956, while merging Telangana, the Reddy community, predominately in Rayalaseema and Telangana, not only extended the support to Congress party but also occupied the positions of leadership. The Kammas, numerically strong in coastal Andhra, asserted the non-Congress parties like Communist party, Telugu Desham and BJP.

**Table- 2 on Caste Composition of AP Cabinet 1956-1994 Percentages**



Year	Brahmin	Reddy	Kamma	Kashatriya	Velma	Kapu	Muslim	BC	SC	ST	Others
1956	23.07	38.38	7.69	-	7.69	7.69	7.69	-	7.69	-	-
1960	7.14	35.75	14.28	14.28	7.14	7.14	7.14	7.14	7.14	-	7.14
1962	6.25	37.50	12.50	6.15	12.50	-	6.25	-	6.25	-	6.25
1964	11.12	33.34	7.14	2.14	7.14	-	7.14	-	7.14	-	7.14
1969	7.14	28.60	10.71	7.14	7.14	10.71	3.57	10.71	10.71	-	7.14
1971	8.00	20.00	16.00	8.00	8.00	12.00	4.00	12.00	12.00	4.00	4.00
1972	10.34	13.80	13.80	6.89	6.89	20.72	2.44	20.72	13.80	3.44	3.44
1973	5.55	16.66	11.11	5.55	5.55	22.26	5.55	22.26	11.11	-	5.55
1978	6.06	24.25	12.12	3.03	6.06	18.18	9.09	18.18	12.12	-	6.06
1980	6.66	20.00	15.55	2.22	-	22.22	4.45	22.22	13.32	4.48	4.45
1982	5.88	24.67	14.70	2.94	-	29.41	2.94	29.41	8.82	2.94	2.94
1982	3.12	18.75	15.62	3.12	3.12	28.12	6.25	28.12	9.37	3.12	6.24
1983	6.66	26.60	15.33	6.66	6.66	13.33	6.66	13.33	13.33	-	-
1985	4.16	20.83	16.66	4.16	4.16	8.33	4.16	20.83	8.33	8.33	-
1989	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1994	2.6	28.9	7.9	2.6	2.6	9.5	5.2	18.4	15.8	2.6	2.6

(Source: G.Ram Reddy, "The Politics of Accommodation: Caste, Class and Dominance in A.P." (ed.) Francine . Frankel and M.S.A. Rao, Dominance and State Power in Modern India:Declining of a Soical Order, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1989,Vol.1. 306).

Above table indicates that in the initial years of the formation of AP, the political representation in the cabinet was prevailed by the Brahmins and Reddies. Over a period, there has been a decline of their representation, even then, their representation was much higher than their population. During this period, the Kammas and Kapus have improved a lot in terms of representation. There an increase in the representation of backward classes, but it was not in proportion to their population. One of the interesting finding is that the representation of Kapus and backward classes was almost same up to 1982, it was about 30% in the cabinet, though there was variation in terms of population. However, it was drastically declined the representation of Kapus and BCs in 1983 with the emergence of Telugu Desham

party. From 1983 onwards, the backward classes have become loyal vote bank to the TDP, whereas the conflict was intensified between the Kammas and Kapus, which led to the violent politics in Vijayawada.

#### **4.2. Formation of Kapunadu and aggravation of conflicts Between Kammas and Kapus:**

The literal meaning of Kapu is cultivator of the land but Kapu social group is different from the rest of the cultivating castes such as Reddy and Kamma. All these cultivating castes come under the *Shudra Varna* of the four-fold classification of Indian society. But they trace their roots to the Aryan descendants of North India during ancient period and migrated to South India.

**Table -3 on Spread of different Kapu Sub-sects in Andhra Pradesh**

Place	Name of the Sub-sect
East Godavari, West Godavari	Kapus
Krishna, Guntur	Telagas
Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam	Toorpu Kapus
Visakhapatnam, East Godavari	Ontaris
Rayalaseema, Nellore	Balijas
Hyderabad, Telangana	Munnuru Kapus

Source: Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation on Backward Class Movement: A Study of Kapus in Andhra Pradesh (p.g 45)

The sub-castes of Kapu community includes Kapu, Telaga, Bailja and Oontari (see for geographical location of these castes in the table no-3) claim that they are about 17% (this was including Reddy Kapu, Toorpu Kapu and Munaru Kapu) whereas Anne Vaugier estimates Kapus are 9%. Kapu Community primarily served as Protectors of villages from Bandits in the Medieval Ages who later took to other Professions like Village heads and Farmers during times of peace. During times of war they also served as Soldiers, Governors (Nayaks), Commanders in many of the Andhra Dynasties. Hence, the term Nayaka/Naidu became synonymous with the community. They are also known as Naidu, Rayudu, Reddy, Naicker etc. Kaapus are the intermediate agrarian caste. The kapus were Munsabs, village officer for the collection of revenue (Rao, S, 2016). Modern day Kapus are predominantly an

agrarian community and diversified into business, industry, film industry, academia, bureaucracy, information technology etc (www.kapusangham).

It is submitted the Kapu, Baliya, Telaga and Ontari communities of Telaga and were included in Backward communities list in 1915 and this has been notified in the notification No: 67 Port St. George Gazette part 1.B. Education 460 1.9.1919 grant-in-aid was granted to Telaga sub castes i.e. According to Communal G. O. 613 (1921) Kapus also got the place in backward classes list along with rich landlords such as Reddys and Kammas in the composite Madras state. Kapu, Baliya and Ontari were continued as backward classes from 1915 to 1956. The said communities were deleted from the list of backward classes in 1956 as the Kapus secured 95% of jobs in the BC category, whereas rest of the BCs put together could get only 5% of the jobs in BC quota (Gouth, 1999).

According to G.O No: 3250-dated 14.10.1961, the Kapus were included in the BC list. However, AP High court struck down the said G.O declaring that kapus had equal status on par with Kamma, Reddy and Velama castes in respect of traditional caste occupation of cultivation. This fact clearly establishes that inclusion to the detriment of the interests of backward communities.

Subsequently, Anantharaman Commission was appointed in 1968. The Commission prepared a list of 93 castes as BCs and classifies them as ABCD groups. Anantharaman Commission could not consider Kapu, Baliya, Telagan and Ontari castes to include in the list of BCs as they could not fulfil the criteria of backwardness. However, the Commission listed *Turpukapus* of North Coastal Andhra and *Munnuru kapus* of Telanganain in BC list due to their socio-educational backwardness.

The demand for the inclusion in the backward classes list to get the benefit of reservations was started by the Kapus of coastal Andhra. The coastal Andhra consisting of Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur district etc. The coastal belt of

Andhra Pradesh is also known for fertile land, well-developed infrastructure for irrigation like Dawalswaram, Prakasham barrage, Nagarjunsagar dam and Pattisema irrigation projects since late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The region is known for highly commercialized cropping pattern, capitalist mode of production. The entrepreneurial initiatives, due to Green revolution, has produced lot of cine producers, actors and actresses, business entrepreneur class, Entertainment industry, real-estate, highly commercialized corporate education and health institutions(Upadhyaya). So long as Congress party was in power under the domination, of Reddy community never allowed the Kapus to be included in BC list interestingly, throughout the Congress regime they were the loyal vote bank and they also got political representation. Therefore the voice and identity of the Kapus also not a serious issue in the state Politics during Congress regime.

An organized political mobilization of the Kapus was started in 1982 in the process of violent faction politics between Vangaveeti Mohana RangaRao (hereafter VMR) and Devineni Nehru at Vijayawada. Vangveeti Mohanranga Rao Rao was representing for the Kapus and Devineni family for the Kammas. Subsequently, in 1983, Telugu Desham party came into existence under the leadership of NT Rama Rao, a well-known film star and belonged to Kamma community of Krishna district.

Just before the emergence of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) (1983), Kapunadu came into existence in 1982 at Vijayawada under the leadership of VMR. In Vijayawada, VMR was a staunch arch rival to Devineni Family which was from Kamma Community. For the Political domination in Vijayawada, Kapu and Kamma created factions and violent politics. Traditionally, the Kapus were the strong base for the Indian National Congress (INC) party, whereas the Kammas led the Communist Party and subsequent rise of TDP. The Kammas emerged as dominant over the Kapus the TDP came to the power, while N T Rama Rao (Kamma from Krishna District and Vijayawada is part of it) as the Chief Minister of Andhra

Pradesh. Devineni family, as Kamma from Krishna District, used political power of TDP to eliminate Kapu Leaders and subsequently VMR was assassinated in 1988 by that time VMR not only intensified Kapunadu activities by organizing a Public meeting at Vijayawada in 1985. Subsequently, the representation of Kapu community has drastically come down in AP cabinet from 28.12% in 1982 to 8.33% by 1985 (Table).

The retrospective analysis reveals that Kamma population is 5% and there representation in AP assembly from 1955 to 2004 was 12.9% whereas Kapus population is 9% and there representation in Legislative assembly was 7.54% and Reddy community population is 8% but they got the Lion share of 26.6% in Assembly. There has been a declining trend of political representation for the Kapus since 1983, therefore they have started demanding for Backward classes (BC) status. The Kapus demand for backward classes' status was rejected since 1956 to till date by the political regimes including Congress and TDP rule and series of Commissions appointed for the identification of backward castes by the state government.

#### **4.3. Formation of the Kapu Reservation Porata Samiti:**

As part of intensifying the Kapu agitation, Mudragada Padmanabham resigned to his MLA position on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1994 during Congress regime, As follow up action to his resignation Mudragada Padmanabham started Kapu Reservation Porata Samithi. In response to growing dissatisfaction among Kapus within Kapu community, the congress government in 1994 issued a G.O. to extend Economic benefits such as Scholarships and some other incremental benefits but not for the including them in BC list. During this period Government of Andhra Pradesh also constituted Justice Puttaswami Committee to examine the socio, educational and economic status of the Kapu community.

In 1990s, the Kapus raised the demand for BC status but it was neither gained a momentum within the community nor any political party support but some of the well-known

people of Kapu community like Dasrai Narayana Rao, cine director cum producer from coastal Andhra announced for floating a political party just before 1999 assembly election. Before floating a political party by Dasari Narayana Rao, the congress party accommodated him as Member of the Rajya sabha therefore once again the aspirations of Kapus to form a political party and capture the political power of the state was set aside.

Again in 2008 a well-known film star by name Chernjeevi, from coastal Andhra, floated the Prajarajyam Party (PRP). This was the first time to form a political party by the kapu community in order to contest in the election. There were lot of expectations on PRP for the change of ruling parties such as Congress led by Reddy group and TDP by Kammas. In 2009 election PRP contested in the election but it was able to win only 18 Assembly seats. Within a short span of period PRP not only joined the Congress government both at State and central level and also merged with Congress party.

Just before 2014 election, the Congress high command taken a decision to bifurcate Andhra Pradesh. In this context congress was rapidly declining and Yuvajana Shramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) was emerging as a serious contender in 2014 election to TDP. In the changing political scenario of Andhra Pradesh, Pawan Kalyan, actor cum brother of chernjeevi (kapu) launched the *Janasena Party* in 2014, it was just before few months of election to parliament and assembly. But the party could not contest in the election. It has extended full-fledged support to TDP and BJP alliance. Therefore, in 2014 election Telugu Desam Party included in its election manifesto that a commission will be constituted to examine the Kapus for the backward class's status. During 2014 Assembly and Parliament elections, the TDP and BJP alliance has won the election. One of the findings of Post-Poll survey conducted by Lokniti (CSDS) in May 2014 was for the first time, since the origin of TDP, more than 55% Kapus voted.

While taking clue from the election manifesto of TDP, the Kaapu Reservation Porata Samithi started its agitation from 2015 onwards and it has taken a violent form. As a response to the Kapu agitation, the government of Andhra Pradesh constituted Justice Manjunath Commission on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The Telugu Desham party promised the Kapu community to appoint the Commission for the study to include them in BC list<sup>ii</sup>. The Commission is in the process of studying the socio-educational and economic profile of Kaapus. There has been a lot of resistance from the backward Classes Associations during the public hearings of the Commission. Meanwhile, Lokniti conducted a survey on the Mood of the nation in the month of May, 2017. In this survey, there was a question that; Do you support or oppose the demand of Kaapus for BC reservations? The response is given in the table.4.

**Table- 4 on Public Perception on Kapu’s Demand for Reservations in BC quota**

Caste Community	Q29: Do you support or oppose the demand of Kapus for Backward Caste status in Andhra Pradesh?			Total
	1: Support	2: Oppose	8: Can’t say/No response	
01: Upper caste	8	11	9	28
	28.6	39.3	32.1	100.0
02: Reddy	10	6	2	18
	55.6	33.3	11.1	100.0
03: Kamma	10	20	11	41
	24.4	48.8	26.8	100.0
04: Kapu	61	18	22	101
	60.4	17.8	21.8	100.0
05: Other PP	8	11	5	24
	33.3	45.8	20.8	100.0
06: Yadav, Golla, Kuruma	8	16	11	35
	22.9	45.7	31.4	100.0
07: Gowda, Gavala	4	9	12	25
	16.0	36.0	48.0	100.0
08: Other OBCs	33	46	39	118
	28.0	39.0	33.1	100.0
09: Madigas	0	11	6	17
	0	64.7	35.3	100.0
10: Mala	11	26	20	57
	19.3	45.6	35.1	100.0
11: Other SCs	1	2	0	3
	33.3	66.7	.0	100.0
12: STs	3	19	10	32
	9.4	59.4	31.2	100.0

13: Muslims	5	23	11	39
	12.8	59.0	28.2	100.0
14: Christian	5	4	9	18
	27.8	22.2	50.0	100.0
15: Others	5	0	0	5
	100.0	0	.0	100.0
Total	172	222	167	561
	30.7	39.6	29.8	100.0

(Source: Mood of the Nation –A Survey conducted by Lokniti (CSDS-New Delhi) in May 2017)

The field based public perception reveals that about 40% of the respondents oppose the kapus demand for BC status, about 30% support from kapus and Reddy communities and for 30%do not have any idea of the kapus demand of BC status. The implication of the response may be having in the election to be held in 2019, it is because, the ruling Congress party listed the Marathas in Maharashtra and Jats in Haryana just before the national election in 2014 and subsequently, the Congress party was defeated.

## **5. Conclusion:**

From the Historical and Constitutional point of view reservations in Public institutions of Education, Employment and political representation has been provided to social excluded, hill tribes, artisan and service rendering communities, which are socially and educationally marginalized groups for centuries together. To these people, Indian social structure denied three basic rights such as education, wealth and political power. To make unequal's as equals, the Constitution of India provided through certain articles and provisions for the Positive discrimination/reservation policy retrospectively.

There are three phases in the evolution of reservation policy. These phases are providing of Special measures and reservations from late 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1950 when the Constitution assured the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for the legal rights and entitlements. Second phase is 1950s to 1990s during this period socially and educationally/OBCs have been provided reservations on the recommendations of Mandal Commission and Third phase was started in 1990s when economy of India was opened for



the Global players through structural adjustments and Liberalisation. In this context the dominant castes started an agitation for the preservations under OBC category. As these communities could not fulfil the certain indicators through which backwardness is measured. Therefore, the National and State level Backward Classes Commissions rejected them, Supreme Court and High Courts stuck down the demand and Civil Society opposed to include them in OBC list.

However, the Kapu community has been demanding for the Backward Classes status the evidences suggested that the Kapu community is a well-developed in terms of economy due to control of the land, business, cinema field, print and electronic media and political power. The political analyses of the Kapu community indicates that there political rivalry has been with the ruling Kammas. Kapus are not in a position to compete with Kammas. That is why they raised the demand of backward classes' status from 1994 onwards. Since 1953 to 2014, they were never allowed to enter into the BC list by the State government, Judiciary and Backward Classes associations due to the advancement of Kapus in all the fields. However, the TDP promised during 2014 election that commission will be appointed to look into the socio and educational backwardness of Kapus. Responding to their agitation the TDP government in Andhra Pradesh appointed Justice Manjunathan Commission. The decision to either include or reject the Kapus is depending upon the recommendation of the commission and subsequent legal intervention as the Backward Classes Associations has been opposing.

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