**CHAPTER – I**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Since, independence, India has been making continuous efforts to develop its rurality. The community development programme was the first to tackle the problems of rural India in a comprehensive manner. The weaker sections of Indian society are classified into scheduled castes and scheduled tribes under the schedules of Indian constitution. The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have been oppressed through centuries on account of an iniquitous and rigid social order. Their upliftment involves a multi-faceted planned process of soico-economic transformation. This has been sought to be achieved through an overall policy of protective discrimination. This policy consists of legislative and administrative measures designed to benefit weaker sections in terms of education, employment, financial assistance, political representation and protection against exploitation has been assured to enable them to develop in the network of Indian society.

Since, time immemorial the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have been subjected to several social, economic and political discrimination, even though, they constitute a numerically dominant minority group. Their condition remained practically the same till recently. Several attempts have been made during pre-independence period to improve their conditions. But these were mostly in the forms based on humanitarian principles. A systematic and organised attempt at a national level was made by the government only during the post-independence period by providing constitutional provisions. Several measures have been undertaken to improve their conditions in several fields.

Even after the emergence of information technology oriented information society in the new millennium, the atrocities against dalits are not stopped in many parts of the country and still prevails in several places of the country. They are treated as untouchables and ill-treated as inhuman. And thus about 161 million people of the Indian total population are relegated to the margins of Indian casteridden society. Though the Constitution of India has outlawed the practice of untouchability in any form as a criminal offence, the disadvantaged dalits are ostracized from and even persecuted in the day-to-day life of Indian Society. Even the remedial measures of reservation of the jobs and the educational privileges did not suffice to undo the injustice done to the dalits.

In short, the dalits are dehumanized through exclusion, denied through exploitation and defaced through elimination. At this crucial juncture, there is some belief that if their economic status improved. Along with this it will induce them to actively participate in the politics which may improve their social status and get remedy for their sufferings. Thus, even in the political arena, many reservation policies are adopted by the Indian government to give opportunities to them to participate in the administration of both the central and the state governments. Irrespective of all these arrangements, the dalits are coming to the mainstream due to various reasons

Scheduled Castes are defined in Article 366(24) of the Constitution of India, as - “such castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within such castes, races or tribes as are deemed under article 341 to be Scheduled Castes for the purpose of this Constitution.” Article 341 of the Constitution of India States that (1)The President may with respect to any State or Union Territory and where it is a State after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification, specify the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union Territory, as the case may be. (2)Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Castes specified in a notification issued under clause (1) any caste, race or tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification. The introduction of the term „Scheduled Caste‟ can be attributed to the most coveted Government of India Act of 1935. In April 1936, the British government issued the Government of India Scheduled Caste order 1936, specifying certain castes, races and tribes as scheduled castes in the then provinces of Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Bombay, Central provinces and Berrar, Madras, Orissa, Punjab and United Province. Prior to these, they are known as depressed classes. The depressed classes were systematically categorized in 1931 census by John Henry Hutton, the then census commissioner of India. The Scheduled Caste population is also referred as „Untouchables, „Dalits, „Harijan etc. The deprivation of Scheduled castes can be traced back to the historical processes of economic & social exclusion and discrimination based on caste system.

**CHAPTER – II**

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

**RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Political participation refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society show active interest and play a role in the selection of rulers. It includes voting, seeking information, discussing, attending meetings, contributing financially, and communicating with the representatives, enrolment in a party, canvassing and registering voters and working in campaigns. It is clear that the term political participation draws our attention to political activities rather than attitude and behaviour of private citizen to those who are professionally involved in public affairs. The constitution of India has assured equal political rights of political participation irrespective of caste, class, religion, gender and place of birth. However, the scheduled caste communities are lagging behind in respect of political participation. There are multiple factors are present in our society which threatening them in politics, and one of the factor is caste. In India, the scheduled caste communities have different sorts of disadvantage to affective political participation, in this paper, an attempt has been made to explore the level of political participation and political awareness of the SCs in Kannur. The purpose of this study is to examine the political activities and political participation of scheduled castes in Kannur.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

There are different facts and concepts about the dalits of Kerala state. The different facts are such as socio-economic life, cultural events, customs, sufferings, struggles, recent dalits liberation movements and so on. All these facts are very important for the research on dalits in Indian sub continent. However, this unique study is only concentrating on the political participation of the dalits. Even in the political participation of the dalits, much importance is given for their political awareness.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

* To study different political activities of scheduled castes
* To find out the factors those have acted as deterrents to their participation in the political process. To study socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes
* To study political awareness of scheduled castes

**HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

* Caste is playing great role in motivating scheduled castes.
* The common mass of scheduled castes are much affiliated to Communist party.
* The extent of political awareness among the scheduled castes’ women is low.
* Political party is the main agent in mobilizing the scheduled castes.
* The constitutional provisions are in favor of empowerment of Scheduled Caste's Women, respondents regarding the politics.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

**SOURCES OF DATA**

Primary and secondary sources

**SAMPLING PLAN**

**Sampling technique/method**

Non probability and convenient sampling technique was used for the purpose of this survey to identify responses.

**Population**

The population under study is scheduled castes of Kannur District.

**Sample size**

The size of the sample in the study is 50

**DATA COLLECTION**

**Primary data**

The method used for collecting primary data was survey method and interview method by using a structured questionnaire.

**Secondary data**

Secondary data were collected from information gathered from the books, internet, journals, etc.

**TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS**

Percentage analysis method was the tool used for analysis of data:

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

* Due to constraints of the study, only Kannur Disctrict is selected and so it cannot be claim to be a comprehensive study of the population.
* The sample size is restricted to 50 respondents
* Non co-operation of the respondents.
* The duration of the study was limited that an extensive and deep study could not be possible.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Terry Clay Eakin made an interesting study of political behaviour and participation pattern of Bombay College Students in his study, "Student and politics- A Comparative Study""'. The study is divided into six chapters; amongst them the last chapter entitled 'Political Participation' will be more relevant than any other chapters in the context of the present study. The study is limited in its scope in the sense that it is confined to student in the college and their participation within the spectrum of college activities. The author found that a vast majority of student felt that they should participate in college activities (83%). Furthennore, three-fourth of the respondents are actual members of at least one organisation, 16 percent serve as office-bearers in one of these organisation such as students societies, academic or cultural clubs, literary and debating society, the gymkhana, the Indian history society and Gujrati Sahitya Mandal and the Chemical Society. The Bombay Sample Students had mixed feelings about political parties.76 percent of tlie students respondents felt that parties are necessary for India and so adults should be active in political parties. 47 percent of them support a particular political party and 17 percent are members of politically -oriented organisations. The study found that 28 percent have worked for a political party or individual candidate during an election campaign. Comparatively a lower percentage of 17 percent are found to be members of political related groups. Some of the organisation, they joined include The National Council of University Students in India, Akhil Bharatiya Vidhartlii Parisad, International Union of Students and the All India Students Youth Federation. So far as protest activities are concerned, 22 percent of the students approved of these activities. In a question as to how they would change an unjust college rule, a low percentage of just 4 replied for staging a demonstration. In actual participation in demonstration or mai'ches, 7 percent reported to have participated to challenge a college policy and 10 percent reported to have engaged in community demonstration held away from the college and organised by apolitical parly.

Hans Blomkvist in "Social Capital, Political Participation and the quality of democracy in India" (Paper for amiual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 28-31 Aug.2003 in Philadelphia)" attempts to find out if government's response to citizen's demands is affected by different kinds of political participation. The authors selected five states of Gujrat, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Kerala and West Bengal covering 31 different rural and urban localities. The author argues that it is not only the level of government and regime type that is important for government responsiveness but also the political participation and social interaction among citizens. Incidence of poverty is taken as an indicator of government responsiveness. Variation in the level of poverty is 8 to 9 percent in parts of Haryana, Punjab, and Kamataka to such high levels as 50 to 60 percent in parts of Bihar, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The worst situation they found was in southern Orissa where 77 percent lived below the poverty line. There are a number of factors that helps in the reduction of loiral poverty such as rural economic growth, low inflation, endowments of physical infrastructure and human resources". To consider some other factors that may influence poverty alleviation is ternied by Atul Kohli as 'regime type' which is of considerable importance for the effectiveness of stateinitiated redistribution. He compared the government and policy outcome of the congress government in Karnataka, the Janata government in Uttar Pradesh and the Communist government in West Bengal. He concluded that ideology, leadership, organisation and class basis of the party (regime) matter much in making the redistribution policies 'tick'.

So fai- as political and social life in Kerala is concerned, these show rather astonishing figure. Eveiyday 87 percent Keralite reads newspaper and 79 percent listen to the news in radio while the corresponding figure for West Bengal is just 36 and 24 percent. Every second person in Kerala discusses "public issues" outside the household while it is 20 percent in West Bengal. The conventional explanation given in the paper is due to the kind of party in power. However, the author correlates the differences with tliree other factors such as social capital, education, and initial conditions. According to the author, the most important theoretical point with social capital is that it can help people overcoming the 'dilemmas of collective action'. Infonnal form of social capital rises when neighbours are chatting and friends are playing cards while the formal social capital takes the shape when an association is formed by a group of individuals to protect their interest. Social capital is unevenly distributed in the societies, even absent in some societies as that very few people in the Romanian city of Cluj-Napoca even spoke with people outside of their own household. At this backdrop, a battery of questions on social and political networks, interpersonal trust and associational memberships were included. The data collected by the author shows a low level of participation in formal associations; only 13 to 15 percent of the people were found to be member of any formal association. To the questions who talk with people outside of the household about public issues everyday or every week, Kerala with 72 percentages is the highest, followed by Orissa and Uttar Pradesh with 54 percentage points. The lowest on this count is West Bengal with 40 percent. Thus it is found by the author that in Kerala, there are much more extensive 'everyday' networks than people of the other states. As per the author's perception, the theoretical idea in reflecting such ordinary activities is that these networks can facilitate or can cause political participation. The core idea behind the social capital theory, according to the author is that connection between persons lowers the threshold or transactions costs or other kinds of communication. They enable people to cooperate. If someone knows a neighbour from chatting or getting advice, it then becomes easier to convince him/her to join in a demonstration against a grievance. Some other works done by BloomJcvist and Vernby confirm the theory that the size and intensity of networks affect people's propensity to take part in politics and in protest mobilisation.

A.C.Talukdar in his work entitled, "Political Transition in the grassroots in tribal India"' focuses on the impact of the working of the Panchayati Raj on the traditional political institution, the attitude of the people and the leaders towards the Panchayat and the extent to which the Panchayat are instrumental to political change and development. It makes an analysis of the process of political transition and modernisation at the grass root level through the functioning of the Panchayat bodies. It was based on tlie study of 10 gram Panchayat and one Anclial Samiti in the East Siang Distiict of Arunachal Pradesh. His study shows the success brought by the introduction of Panchayati Raj in bringing a number of changes in the socio-political spheres and setting in motion a process of poHtical transition and modernisation at the grass root level. The study finds a growing tendency in every village to replace the corporate nature of life with an individualistic one. The money pouring in for developmental purposes, facilities extended to the tribal people resulting in creation of jobs and contracts, have given rise to small middle class with its zest for modernisation. This phenomenon has also brought the entry of political parties into the village politics.

Sachchidananda’s study of elite covers status, mobility, network and the role of scheduled caste elites etc., in the social transformation of their own community. His study covers three categories of elite viz., legislatures, civil servants and social workers. The following are his findings:

* Among the elite, the economic status of legislators and some categories of civil servants is higher than that of others.
* A large number of elite suffers from inferiority complex.
* The political elite are conscious of the value of their vote.
* The elite has been most active in propagation of education through which social change of the betterment of scheduled castes is possible.
* Majority of the scheduled caste elite in the state of Bihar were found to have taken less interest in solving the problems of their kith and kin.
* Some who have improved their social status have forgotten their ties with their past.

**CHAPTER – III**

**THE STUDY**

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF DALITS**

The word dalit was coined in post-colonial India by the disciples of Ambedkar. They did not accept the word Harijan (Men of God) used by Gandhi for the untouchables in Hindu social order because of their aversion against him. The word dalit therefore, became the vernacular terminology for the oppressed classes, with a wider connotation for electoral sociology in the democratic polity of the country. Dalits are the people who have been excluded all along as outcasts and untouchables from the hierarchically ranked caste ridden Indian Society. The word ‘Dalits’ is the plural of the Sanskrit word dalit used both as noun and an adjective. Etymologically it is traced to the root dal, meaning “to crack, open, spilt, burst, cut, divide, tear up, to be broken, torn asunder, downtrodden, scattered, crushed, destroyed”.1 Though this term generally refers to various types of oppressed lots, it was often used from 19th century onwards by some popular reformers to refer to those castes out as untouchables.

**Identity of Dalits**

The dalit identity has evolved over several decades. For several centuries in the past dalits were considered as part of the majority Hindu community. However, the dalits were deprived of economic opportunities and social standing by the majority community. Ambedkar was pained to see the continuous illtreatment of the dalits by the society. He demanded political representation for the dalits on the basis of separate community distinct from the Hindus.

Mahatma Gandhi an ardent champion for removing untouchability within the Hindu religion named the untouchable as Harijan – Men of God. Gandhi said probably that Antyaja brethren would lovingly accept that name and try to cultivate the virtues which it connotes… may the Antyaja become Harijan both in name and nature.2 But this nomenclature did not appeal to most of the Scheduled Castes. They thought that this new name does not provide a new world-view symbol or path to attain equal status. Ambedkar and his followers did not find any difference whether they are called achchutag (untouchable) or Harijan as the new nomenclature did not change their status in the social order. Later on, a section of Scheduled Caste leaders rejected the term ‘Harijan’ considering it as an insult rather then an honour. Ambedkar strove for an egalitarian social order. Such an order was not possible within Hinduism where it’s very foundation had a hierarchical structure with the Scheduled Castes at the bottom. Ambedkar stressed the fact that the Scheduled Castes should get organized and educated in order to get self-respect.

It is true that Ambedkar did not popularize the word dalit for untouchables. The word ‘Dalit’ emerged in 1960s as a consequence of public discourses. This was widely used by Marathi literary writers and neo-Buddhists in place of the usage of the terms Harijan and achchuta. The dalit writers have popularized the word in their essays, poems, dramas, autobiographies, novels and short stories. The word gained currency in public spheres during Scheduled Castes and caste Hindu riots in the then Bombay region in the early 1970s. Dalits began to use the term to assert their identity for rights and self-respect.

All social groups have multiple identities, so are also the dalits. These identities change with their context. They belong to different religious communities, linguistic groups and castes. What is important is that with these identities, they have begun to use the term dalit as a suffix, i.e., one is a Hindu, Muslim, or Christian Dalit as well as a Chamar, Mahar, Jat or Vankar Dalit and also a Gujarati, Maharashtrian or Bihari Dalit. There are other identities within each of them which may be called sub-units like Protestant and Catholic Christian. Dalits have retained their traditional identity in one context and at the same time, have developed and claimed a new social identity ‘of their choice’ in the other context.

**Scheduled Castes and Political Awareness**

From the time of Round Table Conferences held in Britain, the Scheduled Castes were of their separate identity. When Gandhi represented Indian National Congress at the Round Table Conference, the depressed classes of Uttar Pradesh sent a telegraphic message to London that Ambedkar and not Gandhi was their representative and leader. A major common identity among the castes included in the list of Scheduled Castes is that all of them belong to a recognizable, depressed section of the society. They are a part of the social force basically in the independent India. This social force is represented by Scheduled Castes. They account for a sizeable population in India. This makes them a force to reckon with. It is providing a meaningful content to the political process. The organizations which consist of scheduled castes have worked for social upliftment, economic development and effective participation in the political process. The caste associations have provided the channel of communication, base for leadership and have helped them to operate and participate in the democratic framework in meaningful ways. The participation of caste in political life is two fold. There has been politicalisation of caste and slowly the hold of caste on individual has got loosened. The caste has also played a prominent role in the political life of the country. Identity of issues and matters of vocal emphasis behind caste are being translated into political success. Scheduled Castes have emerged as a virtual social force. Their efforts can be grouped into social strivings on the basic of nature, scope, support, mobilization and issues involved. The Scheduled Castes attempt to effect a change in the phase of resistance.

Caste has remained as a major obstacle in the establishment of a casteless society and has worked as a dysfunctional unit. It is seen that political connections are a reflection of the social realities and politics is one instrument which a particular caste or group exploits to strengthen itself. Up to the last century, caste had played a part in every important sphere of the social, economic and political life. Beteille points out that the new political awareness is giving rise to an impatience with the traditional authoritarian system. He concludes that participation in election campaigns and contact with party bosses tend to create among the younger Scheduled Castes a sense of impatience towards the slow and uncertain process of social mobility through imitation of the styles of life of the upper castes.

It is considered by many caste groups that politics is a means to advance themselves. Within increasing politicization, people have realised the importance of having their interest represented and groups are formed for that purpose to represent the different interests.

**Dalit Social Cohesion**

Ambedkar viewed the national freedom struggle as a liberation movement not only against the British rule, but also against the domination of upper caste Hindus over the Harijans. When India became a Republic in January 26, 1950, Ambedkar remarked that “we will be equal in the political field, but totally unequal in the socio-economic areas. This is a paradox.” Because of the tireless efforts of Ambedkar the Scheduled Castes have emerged as a new social force. They have undergone a many bloody and violent experience and will be facing many more in the future. This tenacity of purpose has made them a volatile social force in Indian polity.

The Scheduled Castes are for training themselves to become the effective members of a political community. They are going through a rapid learning of norms, attitudes and behavior permissible as well as acceptable to an on going political process. The Scheduled Castes resort to direct political action through collective bargaining to improve their economic position. They have formed themselves into strong unions and successfully resisting extremes forms of exploitation and discrimination. There are symptoms of their awakening and consciousness of their position.

In modern times politics and government are put in a kind of market situation. We are now witnessing a kind of silent as well as perennial conflict within the social system evolving divergent social forces. In order to grab or remain in power, groups require support of Scheduled Castes.

**Political Awareness and Sharing of Power**

One of the basic changes in the new political process is the on set of competitiveness among the different castes for the purposes of owing and sharing power. The caste importance has been increased because of the numerical strength of vote and this fact has become a potent factor in our electoral system. Because of the importance of numerical strength, caste solidarity has increased. Also the horizontal unity among the equally placed castes has also come up. This phenomenon is known as fission. The Scheduled Caste is not a homogeneous group, but the common experiences, non-standing exploitative sufferings, new opportunities that have sprung up of late since independence have helped them to be united. This unity has provided them with sustainability for the thrust of share in political power, economic gains and privileges. In order to analyse the structural unity of the Scheduled Castes, it is essential to study their traditional structure, which has helped them to organize and strive for purposes of mobility and share in the power.

The Indian society has been organized around caste. For the maintenance of the purity and prestige of the caste, caste Panchayat and village Panchayats are common in India. In rural India every caste has its own caste Panchayat.

Caste solidarity at the village level has taken shape in the form of caste councils. These bodies not only guide and supervise individual behaviour but restrict some of the very personal actions of its members. Nowadays for number of reasons, the effectiveness of this body is on the decline. Establishment of the statutory law courts and the introduction of secular village Panchayats have minimized their importance. However, this institution is still effective, though much of its significance has disappeared. Very many surveys point out that caste council as a formal organization affects the decision making of its members. Some of the caste councils are able to affect the political thinking of their community people. In the past in the village panchayat elections this caste councils have played a crucial and strategic role.

The Scheduled Castes wanted to capitalize on the favourable conditions prevailing in the country. Two kinds of associations, namely, organization and federations came up. The caste organizations are limited to the single caste members. The caste federations are open to all Scheduled Castes who are listed in Scheduled Caste schedule. These associations are the outcome of historical precedence and modern changes. There are organizations which have the scope and width and range of all India level, State level, and district level. In this manner Ambedkar had created the All India Scheduled Caste Federation. The aim of this federation is to prepare the Scheduled Castes for gaining political power democratically. Ambedkar has clearly stated that the aim of this federation is to unite the Scheduled Castes to wrest power from the upper classes.

As there is an adult franchise which has come in vogue, the numerical strength of 15 millions Scheduled Castes, if they are harnessed properly half the members of legislative bodies can be Scheduled Castes and thereby political power can be captured. However, the failure of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation paved the way for the forming of another organization known as Republic Party of India. This party aimed at bringing in justice, freedom, equality and brotherhood among all through democratic means. However, this party also is not of much significance today.

Another association by Scheduled Castes known as Depressed Classes Association (DCA) has been organized to secure all round progress of the Scheduled Castes and expansion of the democratic values in them. It is nonpolitical organization. It actively participates in the social and cultural activities of the Scheduled Castes. Another organization known as Ravidas Sabha is most popular cultural organization among the Scheduled Castes of Uttar Pradesh. The annual procession of the Sabha has a greater significance politically. They convey the temper and militancy of the masses in very certain terms. These processions are occasions to instigate militancy and revive the unity and aggressiveness among the poor Scheduled Castes. All classes of depressed castes openly participate in this great occasion to express solidarity and integrity among the downtrodden section. This organization has been demanding for a long time that the Scheduled Castes have to evolve themselves into a cohesive front to achieve their ends.

**Collective Strivings**

Over the years the Scheduled Castes have developed an ideological vision for an equal and egalitarian social order. Their own perception about their status in the social order and the subjective and objective factors contributing to this community in recent past have raised their consciousness. This consciousness has enabled them to launch into some purposive effort to emancipate themselves from the yoke of this outdated institutional order. Since pre-independent period the effects of Scheduled Caste as a class and as a front have affected a social, psychological. economic, and political spheres of the society.

Rao has categorized the key ingredients in the social movements. According to him, it should have a) a self image, b) a specific idea about the institutional framework to oppose, c) a sense of social solidarity among its units, d) a collective action spontaneously or formally organized. Further, Rao has classified the Indian Social Movements which are categorized by him as reformative, transformative and revolutionary. On the basis of nature of ideology, he has pigeonholed them into units either as protest, or as millenarium or as a revitalizing one in nature and content. From this perspective it can be seen that the Scheduled Castes movement are not only emancipatory but also they strive to offer an alternative model to the age old stereotyped additional authoritarian, institutional framework. Because of variety of factors, the Scheduled Castes have worked around their own community, sometimes an account of protest or imitation, sometimes on the basis of strategy of co-operation. By this way they have succeeded throughout this country in wedging a challenge and sharpened competition to share power and decision making and resource distributing bodies.

Their struggles in the contemporary period are seen as ways and means for an intensive struggle for power. They have won the group solidarity to sustain a long struggle. Their struggles were directed against the discriminatory social structure and highly defamatory institutional order.

In the late 19th century, attempts were made by the depressed castes when they started organizing themselves. During the period of a new awakening of renaissance, strong social reform and anti-caste hierarchy movement and dalit liberation movement were really started in 1920s. But these movements did not visualize a caste free society. Adi Dharma movements in the Punjab in 1920s could be considered as one of the early scheduled caste social movements. The Mahar movements conducted by Phule and Ambedkar had its organizational beginnings in 1924. The Namashudra movement in Bengal, Adi Dravidian Movement in Tamil Nadu, the Adi Andhra Movement in Andhra, the Adi Karnataka Movement in Karnataka, the Adi Hindu Movement in central and western Uttar Pradesh and the movement of Pulayas and Cherumas in Kerala are the other examples. In all these movements, self-assertion was the basic principle to operate. The recent movements confirm this on going and ever-present tendency or reluctance to digest old values and norms.

Some detailed studies on this type of social movements can be mentioned here. They are: Satnami movement of the chamars in the Chattisgarh plains in Madhya Pradesh, ascendancy of Nadars in Tamil Nadu, mobilization of Izhavas in Kerala through SNDP Yogam, prominence of Mahars in Maharashtra and the Politicisaion of the Jatars of Agra. This mobilization manifests a common doctrine capable of arousing enthusiasm and commitment to sustained political activities reasserting newly acquired bargaining power.

In the 19th century, Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, NeoBuddhism and Adi-Dharma movements and the renaissance activities of the Justice Party and Satya Sodhak Samaj programmes have emboldened them to achieve the objectives within short span of time. These movements started in the pre and post independent period were launched either by upper castes or by the upper sections of the dominated castes. For mass unity, not merely the secularism and scientific thinking were the bases, but the idea of original inhabitant of the land was also taken. This bond of unity imposed the idea of self respect among untouchables, Scheduled Castes, Backward Castes and other deprived sections in the South India. Justice Party in Tamil Nadu altered the power structure. New political group and power set-up in the south are due to the factors such as negligible presence of the pure castes and outright numerical superiority of the lower and backward classes. Rigid old values were opposed vehemently through peaceful protest. This kind of protest is identified as a viable method in South and West India. But in the north and central India, persuasion and imitation were used as means for the mobilization of Backward Castes and Scheduled Castes.

In the early part of the 20th century, a very high level of consciousness was generated among the various castes. Many deprived castes took efforts to get an entry of their castes in the social mainstream in their rank as a higher one than they really belonged. To pursue this goal caste associations and federations were formed for the first time in the history of India. Caste groups conducted meetings and conferences to put their claims strongly. Gandhi and Ambedkar both were the champions of scheduled castes. As Gandhi thought that Congress party was not a political party as such but a forum to wage struggle for freedom, he utilized this resource and Ambedkar tried to lay foundation afresh.

The Constitution of India has provided many safeguards to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes through repeated amendments to the Constitution for extending the period of reservation for them. These amendments have almost garnered majority support in the society. This reflects that the lowly poor and downtrodden Scheduled Castes are occupied by the society. Though they still remain as lowliest in the caste system, they are emerging politically.

In the context of the present conditions of the Scheduled Castes a few observations are made here:

• Sharing power in one form is an important element in rising up and maintaining the social and egalitarian status of a community.

• If there is effective political participation, it will facilitate the power sharing by the Scheduled Castes. Both institutional and no institutional activities help in the process of the political system.

• Political participation can be attained when one rises up in the social ladder. Social mobility is very important in leading the Scheduled Castes to greater political participation.

Social mobility emerges from the spread of education better occupation and positive perception of their own features. Age, mass media, means of transportation and communication, family income, etc. are other correlating factors for attainment of social mobility. Further intergenerational and intra-generational caste mobility all help towards social mobility.

The Government helps in the process of social mobility and political participation in an important way. It can increase or decrease the scope the speed, type and volume of mobility - participation process. The Government of India and the Government of Kerala under various provisions of the Constitution along with other political processes are playing their intervening role effectively.

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

**Definition of Political Participation:**

According to International Encyclopaedia of Social Science, 'Political Participation' refers to those voluntary activities by which member of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policies.

In this study, Political Participation is understood as referring to a wide array of voluntary activities taken by people with the aim of influencing government and its policies.

These activities include voting, campaigning, party-membership, organizing meeting, memberships of a pressure groups, meeting officials and elected representatives, contributing financially and competing for elected public and party offices etc. The nature of participation will be developed from the perspective of instrumental and communitarian model of political participation.

**Political Participation**

Political participation comes through the caste politics also. Every political party nominates a candidate for the constituency for the election, not because he is the fittest person to hold the post by virtue of the eminence, education, experience, popularity, etc. With all these things the candidate belonging to the majority community, the parties pitch him for the seat. The popularity of the candidate is decided not by his talent, eligibility and experience. But it is simply a question of belonging to the major community which is the cause for his success. In the elections the better man loses and the novice enters the legislatures. Nowadays, the caste groups have formed their own political parties to win in the elections.

The political participation in a higher family income group may be greater. They may show different voting strategies in a high income family there may not be problems of bread and butter in day to day family existence. The family members have good education and they are able to assess political issues by themselves. In bygone era, the political participation of high level income families were greater. For instance, in the Nehru family, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi and now Sonia Gandhi representing different generations are in politics. Similarly high level families throughout India evinced a political consciousness. It was only Mahatma Gandhi who successfully did not allow his children to enter politics.

However, a revolution in political participation has occurred when a leader of the stature of Mahatma Gandhi entered the political life of India. He made every Indian politically conscious and induced him to fight for the freedom of country in any capacity possible to him. In the post-independent era, Jawaharlal Nehru had charisma to drag people into politics. Before the advent of the regional parties in the political arena, politics was a part time for the rich people to indulge. The credit should go to the regional parties to involve the common man in political participation. These parties kindled the common man through the oration, writings, protests, drama, and cinemas to come and exercise their votes and participate in politics. It was through cinema and drama, public meetings and newspapers, the regional parties came to power. They brought the common man who is poor, backward, illiterate to involve themselves in political activities.

The higher classes and higher income groups have been changing their electoral strategies according to the changing situations and interests. They vote for the immediately winning power group or party. For example, the B.J.P. came to power with the help of the urban masses particularly the business men. But the same group deserted the B.J.P. in the next general elections in Uttar Pradesh. This shows that the urban high level income voters change their strategies according to their self-interests.

As the scope of the participation broadens, the opportunities for class and interest group participation multiply in both the rural and the urban areas. Neighbourhood participation can be used in either the villages or in the urban wards. In cities new settlements are more important for political organization. This is so because the municipality or corporation distributes important services on geographical basis, namely, roads, sewage disposals, police, water supply and fire protection. With a view to capturing votes the political parties fulfill the demands of the new settlements. In rural areas, the villages may be a base for political organization.

Forming the politics on communal lines may produce higher level of political participation than the structuring of politics in terms of patron-client relations, class or neighbourhood. Modernization leads to increased socioeconomic differentiation within a communal group.

The political party is the distinctive organization of modern participant politics. The greater the extent to which parties are linked closely with traditional patron-client groupings communal groups or class groups like peasant organization and labour unions, the more important role they tend to play in fostering political participation.

**Instrumental Model of Political Participation:**

The Instrumental model of political participation is wider in its scope and is all-embracing. It is based on the assumption that people's entry into political arena and resultant participation is promoted to defend certain objectives. These objectives may be altruistic or more narrowly self-interested. For instance, campaigning for famine, flood, and major accidental disaster relief are altruistic whereas preventing commercial development in a residential area is the instance self- interest participation. This view of politics is shared by thinkers and scholars as Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and Robert A Dhal. Verba and Nie, put "participation to us most importantly an instrumental activity through which citizens attempt to influence the government to act in ways the citizens prefer". It is, therefore assumed that the fundamental reason why some people participate, and while others do not is that participants consider that action is likely to bring them benefits excess of any costs involved.

There are important differences between scholars who share this broad instrumentalist perspective on participation. One such school of thought i.e.- a socio-psychological theory explains that the decision to participate results from a number of social forces such as their upbringing, environment, interest, knowledge of politics and a feeling of obligation to participate. However, it is generally alleged, that it is more likely to be evident amongst the upper-status individuals. Their financial security and better education pennies them to invest time, energy, and money on organisation which can gain political advantages. A major drawback of this theory is that it pays less attention to the context and issues which may prompt political action such as unemployment, housing, education, defence, play a subordinate role in the explanation. The 'economic' model of participation suggests that people act in a very strict instrumental terms and they make an assessment of the likelihood of achieving their objectives, compared with the time, energy, money which could be anticipated for getting involved in public participation. The civic orientation is considered less important in explaining the decisions to participate considering the comparison with direct interest that people have in solutions to their particular needs and problems. Thus, it focuses on participation with issues, needs and interest. Thus, if one is unemployed, or has children in primary education; this will tend to push one's participatory activity in certain direction rather than others. The higher participation among the higher status reflects the investment such persons have in society and the economy and which they wish to conserve, coupled with the availability of resources of finance, organisation, and contacts which give them relatively good prospects of a favourable outcome to their activity. Conversely, the less well -off lack the resources and power, relative to others to achieve their objectives and despite their needs greater, the poor, the homeless and unemployed may conclude that political participation is not worthwhile (Goodin and Dryzek 1980. Rational Participation: The politics of relative power, British journal of political science).

**Political Socialization**

Research on political socialization deals with historical influences on adult political attitudes and behaviour within individuals life-span. The contents of political socialization can be grouped into three broad categories, namely, 1) attachment to political system, 2) partisan attitudes, and 3) political participation. Attachment and partisanship involve attitudes whereas participation involves good behavioural acts to a greater extent.

Political socialization implies society’s molding of the child to become a priori model usually perpetuating the status quo. Political socialization refers to the way the society transmits its political culture from generation to generation. The available theories of political socialization take to psychological or political forms, which are referred to by Easton and Dennis. The psychological theories treat his individual dispositions as the primary output variables of interest whereas political theories are mere expression of the key output variables which involve some aspects of political system and political policy

**Growth of Political Consciousness among Dalits**

The decade of the 1920s witnessed the emergence of dalit movement as a conscious, organized force in social and political life of Madras Presidency along with Bombay. The growth of political consciousness among dalits at the national level can be noticed between 1917 and 1929. This period witnessed the growth of widespread agricultural commercialism which eroded traditional caste and jajmani ties. Many artisans and village servants were displaced from their traditional occupation. These economic changes had a remarkable impact generating social change and laying a base for political turmoil. An important development during 1920s was the growing crystallization of Hindu-Muslim identity as antagonistic, and the consequent development of religious based nationalism

he resistance of untouchables to Sanskritization and reformist integrationist tendencies resulted in their organizing themselves. The Dravidian Movement which gave birth to the identity of Adi-Dravidians led to the construction of certain racial regional identities by the dalit themselves, namely, Adi-Andhras and Adi-Karnatakas. A legacy of the reform movement in late 19th and early 20th century was setting up of many caste organizations. These sought representation in government jobs and scholarships.

The non-Brahman movement in Madras presidency challenged the brahmin hegemony. Leaders of this movement asked dalits to form a committee of their representatives, so that non-Brahmans and dalits could move in one direction. The growth of education also had its due share in generating consciousness about social disabilities among dalits and growing assertion of claims to social and political recognition.

The rise and growth of trade unions also helped the growth of self-respect among urban dalit workers. In the name of Ambedkar, associations were started in all government and industrial organizations. With the growth of nationalism and anti-British feelings in early 20th century, the problem of the removal of untouchability assumed political significance. Another crucial factor was the increasing importance of dalit members with regard to communal representation. Caste-Hindus stressed the immediate need for improving the condition of depressed classes in order to incorporate them as Hindus. This sudden change was due to a realization of the fact that their neglect was a social and political danger. If they did not recognize them they might separate or they might join others. In this race, both Hindus and Muslims tried to convert them into their religious groupings.

**Scheduled Caste Politics**

Dalits in India are neither socially nor economically homogeneous. There are more than 400 sub castes among the Scheduled Castes in the country. They are hierarchically stratified so that they also practise untouchability even within their caste structure. There are cleavages and dissents among the Dalit communities. Ambedkar had painfully noted as far back in 1933 as follows: “You have a way of bringing about change, an improvement in your life conditions. That way is through political action, through appropriate laws. You can make the government provide for you what you are now denied – food, clothing, shelter, education. You must rid yourselves of internal divisions and organize strongly”. Ambedkar was concerned about the unity of lower castes to fight against the caste system. He felt that because of gradation among castes, it was impossible to unite the lower castes against the caste system. He said “Caste from a graded system of sovereignties high and low, which are jealous of their status… you cannot, therefore, have a general mobilization of the Hindus, to use a military expression, for an attack on the caste system”.

The participation of dalits in electoral politics has increased over a period of time. They are no longer captive voters of major political parties. Through their concerted efforts in electoral participation, they have created a new political identity for themselves by using the levels of competitive politics.

Changes among dalits are due to four factors. Firstly, with the spread of liberalism and radicalism, the principle of equality has been accepted as desirable one. Secondly, the caste system has been weakened from the traditional point of view due to the development of capitalism. Thirdly, the dalits have entered the rank of middle class as reservations have been made for them in jobs and in educational institutions on the basis of protective discrimination policy of the government. This has created a hope and confidence in their mind that they can improve their status. Fourthly, the increasing consciousness among dalits is due to the competitive politics within parliamentary framework with the allocation of reserved constituencies.

**Total population and Scheduled Caste population of India**

(1951-2011) The first general census after the independence of India and partition of the country was held in the year 1951 and it is also known as „year of small divide‟. The general population of India based on 1951 census was accounted for 361.1million. The total population of India according to 1961 census was recorded to 439.2 million and the growth rate was found to be 1.96. The year of 1961 is called as the year of population explosion as the growth rate started to increase at the rate of 2% since 1961. The total population growth of India shows an increasing trend throughout the successive census years. Table 2.1 shows the trends in the growth of the total population of India since 1951.

The scheduled caste population of India also shows an increasing trend throughout the succeeding census years but less than that of the total population. Table 2.2 showcases the trends in the proportion of Scheduled Caste Population of India since 1961 census. According to 1961 census, SC population was recorded to 64.4 million which accounts for 14.7 percent of total population of the nation. The proportion of scheduled caste population to total population demonstrates an upward trend from 1961 onwards.

**Scheduled Caste Population in Kerala since 1971**

The growth rate of the population of Scheduled Castes in the state is much lower than the all India growth rate during 1991-2001. The percentage of scheduled caste population to the total population of India is 16.20%, while in Kerala it is only 9.81% (2001 census). The growth rate in Kerala is 8.14% as against 20.55% for the country as a whole. The Scheduled Caste (SC) population of Kerala State is 3,123,941 as per 2001 census constituting 9.8 percent of the total population (31,841,374) of the State. The growth of SC population has been 8.2 percent which is 1.2 percent lower than the growth of total population (9.4 percent) in 1991-2001. The State has a total of sixty-eight (68) SCs and all have been enumerated at 2001 census.

**CHAPTER – IV**

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**TABLE NO 4.1**

**FAMILY TYPE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No of respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Nuclear family | 30 | 60 |
| Joint family | 20 | 40 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 60% of the respondents are from nuclear family and 40% of the respondents are from joint family.

**TABLE NO 4.2**

**EDUCATIONAL STATUS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No of respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Primary education | 8 | 16 |
| Middle level education | 13 | 26 |
| Secondary education | 12 | 24 |
| College and higher education | 17 | 34 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 34% of the respondents have college and higher education, 26% of them have middle level education, 24% have secondary education and 16% of the respondents have primary education only.

**TABLE NO 4.3**

**OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No of respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Agriculture | 14 | 28 |
| Labour | 15 | 30 |
| Government | 9 | 18 |
| Others | 12 | 24 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 30% of the respondents are labours, 28% are doing agriculture work, 24% are doing other occupation and 18% of the respondents are government employees.

**TABLE NO 4.4**

**MONTHLY INCOME**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Below Rs. 5000 | 7 | 14 |
| 5000 – 10000 | 15 | 30 |
| 10000 – 20000 | 18 | 36 |
| Above 20000 | 10 | 20 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 36% of the respondents have a monthly income of 10000-20000, 30% have 5000-10000 monthly income, 20% of the respondents have above 20000 and rest of the 14% of them have a monthly income below 5000.

**TABLE NO 4.5**

**INTEREST IN POLITICS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Interested | 24 | 48 |
| Somewhat interested | 16 | 32 |
| Not interested | 10 | 20 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**CHART NO 4.1**

**INTEREST IN POLITICS**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table and chart shows that 48% of the respondents have interest in politics, 32% have somewhat interest and 20% of the respondents are not interested in politics.

**TABLE NO 4.6**

**READING OF NEWSPAPER**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 40 | 80 |
| No | 10 | 20 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**CHART NO 4.2**

**READING OF NEWSPAPER**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 80% of the respondents are reading newspapers and 20% of the respondents are not reading news papers.

**TABLE NO 4.7**

**KIND OF MEDIA FOR LOOKING POLITICAL NEWS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| News paper | 17 | 34 |
| Radio | 9 | 18 |
| Television | 24 | 48 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**CHART NO 4.3**

**KIND OF MEDIA FOR LOOKING POLITICAL NEWS**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 48% of the respondents are using television for looking political news, 34% of them using news paper and 18% of the respondents using radio for looking political news.

**TABLE NO 4.8**

**KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE VOTING AGE OF ELECTION**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 45 | 90 |
| No | 5 | 10 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**CHART NO 4.4**

**KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE VOTING AGE OF ELECTION**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 90% of the respondents have the knowledge about the voting age of election and 10% have no knowledge about it.

**TABLE NO 4.9**

**CASTING OF VOTES DURING ELECTION**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 35 | 70 |
| No | 15 | 30 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**CHART NO 4.5**

**CASTING OF VOTES DURING ELECTION**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 70% of the respondents are cast votes during election and 30% of the respondents not casting vote during election.

**TABLE NO 4.10**

**MODE OF VOTE CASTING IN ELECTION**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Person | 15 | 30 |
| Leadership | 10 | 20 |
| Party | 12 | 24 |
| Caste | 2 | 4 |
| Religion | 2 | 4 |
| Sex | 3 | 6 |
| Language | 6 | 12 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: primary data**

**CHART NO 4.6**

**MODE OF VOTE CASTING IN ELECTION**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 30% of the respondents casting vote as a person in election, 24% casting vote as a party, 20% as leadership, 12% cast as language, 6% cast as sex and 4% cast as caste and religion each.

**TABLE NO 4.11**

**INTEREST IN ELECTION RESULTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Interested | 28 | 56 |
| Somewhat interested | 15 | 30 |
| Not interested | 7 | 14 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.7**

**INTEREST IN ELECTION RESULTS**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 56% of the respondents are interested in election results, 30% are somewhat in interested and 14% of the respondents are not interested in election results.

**TABLE NO 4.12**

**HAVING MEMBERSHIP IN POLITICAL PARTY**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 25 | 50 |
| No | 19 | 38 |
| Can’t say | 6 | 12 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.8**

**HAVING MEMBERSHIP IN POLITICAL PARTY**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 50% of the respondents have membership in political party, 38% have no membership in political parties and 12% of the respondents responded that they can’t say.

**TABLE NO 4.13**

**FORCED FOR VOTING**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 10 | 20 |
| No | 35 | 70 |
| Can’t say | 5 | 10 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.9**

**FORCED FOR VOTING**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 70% of the respondents said that they are not forced to vote, 20% are forced to vote and 10% of the respondents can’t say.

**TABLE NO 4.14**

**PARTICIPATION IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 30 | 60 |
| No | 18 | 36 |
| Can’t say | 2 | 4 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.10**

**PARTICIPATION IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 60% of the respondents participated in election campaign, 36% are not participated in election campaign and 4% of them can’t say.

**TABLE NO 4.15**

**MEMBER OF PRESSURE GROUP**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 12 | 24 |
| No | 38 | 76 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.11**

**MEMBER OF PRESSURE GROUP**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 76% of the respondents are not a member of pressure group and 24% of them are a member of pressure group.

**TABLE NO 4.16**

**MEMBERS IN TYPE OF PRESSURE GROUP**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Caste groups | 12 | 24 |
| Outside caste groups | 10 | 20 |
| Trade unions | 13 | 26 |
| Occupational associations | 7 | 14 |
| Religious groups | 8 | 16 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.12**

**MEMBERS IN TYPE OF PRESSURE GROUP**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 26% of the respondents are the members of trade unions, 24% are from caste groups, 20% from outside caste group, 16% from religious groups and 14% are from occupational associations.

**TABLE NO 4.17**

**RECEIVED COMPENSATION TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 16 | 32 |
| No | 30 | 60 |
| Can’t say | 4 | 8 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.13**

**RECEIVED COMPENSATION TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATE**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 60% of the respondents didn’t receive compensation to vote for candidate, 32% received compensation for vote and 8% not said the opinion.

**TABLE NO 4.18**

**COLLECTED FUNDS FOR ELECTION EXPENSES BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 28 | 56 |
| No | 17 | 34 |
| Can’t say | 5 | 10 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.14**

**COLLECTED FUNDS FOR ELECTION EXPENSES BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 56% of the respondents said that political parties collected funds from them for election expenses, 34% said as no and 10% of the respondents can’t say the opinion.

**TABLE NO 4.19**

**WRITTEN LETTERS OR PETITIONS TO POLITICAL PARTIES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 25 | 50 |
| No | 15 | 30 |
| Can’t say | 10 | 20 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.15**

**WRITTEN LETTERS OR PETITIONS TO POLITICAL PARTIES**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 50% of the respondents written letters or petitions to political parties, 30% are not written and 20% said that they can’t say the answer.

**TABLE NO 4.20**

**NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Election meetings | 14 | 28 |
| Election campaign | 20 | 40 |
| By financial Aid | 5 | 10 |
| Making speech | 8 | 16 |
| Nothing | 3 | 6 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.16**

**NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 40% of the respondents are participated in election campaign as a part of political activities, 28% participated in election meetings, 16% participated by making speech, 10% are participated by financial aid and 6% of them are not participated in political activities.

**TABLE NO 4.21**

**OPINION ABOUT THAT HIGHER CASTE HAS MONOPOLY IN THE RURAL POWER STRUCTURE**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Particulars** | **No. of Respondents** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 16 | 32 |
| No | 28 | 56 |
| Can’t say | 6 | 12 |
| **Total** | **50** | **100** |

**Source: Primary data**

**CHART NO 4.17**

**OPINION ABOUT THAT HIGHER CASTE HAS MONOPOLY IN THE RURAL POWER STRUCTURE**

**INTERPRETATION**

The above table shows that 56% of the respondents opined that higher caste have no monopoly in the rural power structure, 32% opined that higher caste has no monopoly in the rural power structure and 12% opined that they can’t say.

**CHAPTER – V**

**FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLSUION**

**FINDINGS**

* 60% of the respondents are from nuclear family and 40% of the respondents are from joint family.
* 34% of the respondents have college and higher education.
* 30% of the respondents are labours.
* 36% of the respondents have a monthly income of 10000-20000.
* 48% of the respondents have interest in politics.
* 80% of the respondents are reading newspapers.
* 48% of the respondents are using television for looking political news.
* 90% of the respondents have the knowledge about the voting age of election.
* 70% of the respondents are cast votes during election.
* 30% of the respondents casting vote as a person in election.
* 56% of the respondents are interested in election results.
* 50% of the respondents have membership in political party.
* 70% of the respondents said that they are not forced to vote.
* 60% of the respondents participated in election campaign.
* 76% of the respondents are not a member of pressure group.
* 26% of the respondents are the members of trade unions.
* 60% of the respondents didn’t receive compensation to vote for candidate.
* 56% of the respondents said that political parties collected funds from them for election expenses.
* 50% of the respondents written letters or petitions to political parties.
* 40% of the respondents are participated in election campaign as a part of political activities.
* 56% of the respondents opined that higher caste have no monopoly in the rural power structure.

**SUGGESTIONS**

* The existence of a sizable number of dalit legislators has not made any difference to the acute poverty, exploitations and caste violence. So the elected Scheduled Caste legislators should know their responsibilities to better serve the deprived classes over a period of several centuries
* This study proved that the dalits are unaware of the importance political participation. So the mass media and the NGOs should enlighten their political thinking and subsequently encourage participation.
* Political participation is constantly influenced by the social environmental variables such as income, occupation, education, age, religion, sex, mobility and religion. In general, participation is expected higher among the educated, members of the higher occupational income group. Still the dalits are depressed even after so many reforms in the states where there is high degree of illiteracy and poverty prevailing among their own people. So it is suggested to improve the education level and job opportunities among the dalits in the country.
* In the process of creating awareness among the dalits, the popular media such as television finds first place. The government and other agencies may further use this media to create not only the political awareness but also various levels of social, legal, economic and educational awareness.

**CONCLUSION**

The present plight of several crores of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is due to the ancient institution of “caste system”. The caste system determines the very texture of Indian politics. Obviously, the caste system is an extreme example of immobility. Castes have come out of ancient four fold classification of society known as varnas. These varnas later on, in due course of time became ‘Jati’ or caste. Every caste was again divided into several sub-castes. Each sub caste was again split into so many sub castes. There is virtually no mobility for an individual person under the caste system. He is forced to stay himself in small closed group. In caste ridden Indian society, the scheduled caste members are illtreated as they are economically and politically downtrodden. From time immemorial, there has been a continuous dominance by the caste Hindus over the untouchables.

Political knowledge encourages the people for their effective participation in the activities related to political affairs. Mass media play a vital role in creating consciousness and awareness regarding matters pertaining to politics. As most of the respondents have the habit of reading newspapers, they have adequate knowledge related to politics. As the educational status of the respondents is only upto school level, most of the respondents preferred only the vernacular dailies. A vast majority of them have the habit of listening to radio and watching television which tend to create awareness about political matters.

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* https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320564001\_A\_STUDY\_ON\_DALIT\_PARTICIPATION\_IN\_LOCAL\_GOVERNANCE\_SPECIAL\_REFERENCE\_TO\_TUMKUR\_DISTRICT
* https://www.allresearchjournal.com/archives/2018/vol4issue10/PartB/4-8-79-457.pdf

**APPENDIX**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Name of the respondents

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Family Type :

Nuclear family

Joint family

1. Educational status : Primary education

Middle level education

Secondary education

College and higher education

Occupation

1. Occupation of the respondent:

Agriculture

Labour

Government

Others

1. Monthly income :

Below Rs. 5000

5000 – 10000

10000 – 20000

Above 20000

1. Are you interested in politics?

Interested

Somewhat interested

Not interested

1. Do you read newspapers?

Yes

No

1. In which media you look for political news?

News paper

Radio

Television

1. Do you now the voting age of the electortes who has a right to vote?

Yes

No

1. Do you cast your vote during election?

Yes

No

1. How did you cast your vote in election?

Person

Leadership

Party

Caste

Religion

Sex

Language

1. Are you interested in election results?

Interested

Somewhat interested

Not interested

1. Do you have membership in political party?

Yes

No

Can’t say

1. Have you ever forced to vote?

Yes

No

Can’t say

1. Have you ever participated in election campaign?

Yes

No

Can’t say

1. Are you member of any pressure groups?

Yes

No

1. If yes please indicate name of the pressure group

Caste groups

Outside caste groups

Trade unions

Occupational associations

Religious groups

1. Have you ever received any compensation to vote for any candidate?

Yes

No

Can’t say

1. Do the political parties collect funds from you the election expenses?

Yes

No

can’t say

1. Have you ever written letters or petitions to political leaders?

Yes

No

Can’t say

1. What is the nature of your participation in political activities?

Election meetings

Election campaign

By financial Aid

Making speech

Nothing

1. Do you think that higher caste has monopoly in the rural power structure?

Yes

No

Can’t say