

**RESERVATION POLICY AND EMPOWERMENT OF SC & ST  
WOMEN IN INDIA : A CASE STUDY OF ODISHA**

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# **RESERVATION POLICY AND EMPOWERMENT OF SC & ST WOMEN IN INDIA : A CASE STUDY OF ODISHA**

## **ABSTRACT**

Every individual is born free and equal. There is difference among them because of their physical structure or mental ability. But we find that except these differences there is also difference among them that is based on caste, color, religion etc. which are social in nature; that means these are man made. Because nature treats all human beings as equal, there is no discrimination on the grounds of anything. But our social structure creates all these differences among the people which are the cause of discrimination. Reservation policy intends to uplift those who suffer from discrimination. It is a policy of favoring members of disadvantaged section of society who currently suffer or historically have suffered from discrimination within a culture. Historically, people are disadvantaged because of their caste or gender or tribe. So, through reservation policy the framers of the constitution sought to achieve the goals like; bridging inequalities in employment and pay, increasing access to education, promoting diversity and redressing apparent past wrongs, harms or hindrances. In India, reservation policy has evoked mixed reactions. Many people oppose reservations as they believe that it goes against the principle of merit. But the supporters argue that reservation has proved to be beneficial to many underprivileged as the social condition differs from individual to individual. Hence it is imperative to study reservation and how it has benefitted some sections of the society.

The affirmative action like Reservation Policy started after independence to act as a tool of empowerment of the marginalized sections. It is interesting to take a look at the effectiveness of the Reservation Policy after seventy years of independence. The purpose of this research is to objectively assess the effectiveness of reservation to empower the SC and ST women. Empowerment is a way of means, which enables people to control things which influence their life. The term empowerment has a diverse perspective in the diverse social and political sphere. When we are talking about empowerment certain terms come to our mind that

includes: self-strength, control, self-reliance, own choice, a life of dignity in accordance with one's values, capable of fighting for one's rights, independence., own decision making, being free, awakening and capacity.

Empowerment is a complex process and difficult to define. There are various approaches to empowerment; for example, a welfare-based approach, target-based approach, rights-based approach and capability approach. Each of these approaches has its own advantages. But the present study is using the rights-based framework and capability framework to conceptualize the process of empowerment. The basic objective of these two approaches is to assess how much autonomy one enjoys in the process of empowerment. The study is designed to assess their autonomy when they get employed with the help of reservation.

*The main aim or purpose of this research is to find out whether reservation brings women empowerment to SC and ST Women.* This research also focused on different government policies and programme of the government for the empowerment of women, special focus on the marginalized (SC and ST) women of Odisha. So, in this research the researcher tries to study the implication of reservation policy in women empowerment. How reservation can uplift the marginalized women to lead an independent life without any dependence. This research also highlights whether reservation really improves the representation of women in different sectors, particularly in political sectors. This research also helps whether reservation helps in reducing social discrimination and what are the ways to reduce discrimination in society. It also helps the government to formulate different policies for women empowerment and drawbacks in implementation in reservation policies. This study also discovers different ways of discrimination at the workplace, how discrimination can be reduced through awareness and with the increase of education. It reveals the experience of women who are empowered by availing reservation from different job sectors. This research will provide necessary inputs in reducing loophole in policy implementation and in the formulation of the new policy in future.

The present research is a welcome addition already existing rich literature on reservation and empowerment. But whether the reservation process has any positive co-relationship with empowerment is a topic which has not captured by the academicians. The present research will provide a welcome addition to the existing literature on the subject itself. Apart from that, the study will also help the policymakers to make changes if necessary. From policy making perspective, the study is highly necessary. The present research is intended to probe how reservation has helped the SC and ST women to empower. To find out possible solution to this question, the researcher chooses the purposive sampling method for the study. This research is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data are collected from respondents belonging to different professions who have been benefitted through the process of reservation. The researcher has chosen six professions in which SC and ST representation are there because of reservation. These professions are like: Teaching, Banking, Civil Service, Politics, Doctor and Police. The total numbers of samples are 120 representing both SC and ST Women.

The present thesis is divided into eight chapters which include introduction and conclusion.

The first chapter is introduction which includes objective, hypothesis, significance, research question, statement of the problem, conceptual framework and selection of the study area.

The second chapter makes a detailed review on the available literature on reservation policy, empowerment and status of marginalized women of my research area and tried to find the research gap.

This third chapter makes an elaborate analysis of different methodology and explains the methodology adopted for this research.

Fourth chapter discusses the conceptual framework of reservation policy and it also compares the various reservation policy of different countries.

The fifth chapter makes a conceptual analysis of the concept of empowerment.

This sixth chapter makes a detail and elaborate analysis on the status and role of SC and ST women of Odisha. In this chapter there is a discussion on the policies and programme by government of Odisha for the empowerment of SC and ST women.

This seventh Chapter makes argument based on the field data.

This eighth Chapter concludes the entire thesis with findings and suggestions.

This empirical study shows that reservation policy has a positive impact in the life of SC and ST women particularly in the economic autonomy of the SC and ST women. However, social discrimination still exists in the society. People treat in a other way if one gets a job through reservation. In Political Terms, reservation has not yielded any significant changes to their life.

Keeping in view the problems faced by the SC and ST women, it is suggested that 1) They should be promoted in higher education. Reservation should enable them to compete with others. 2) Proper training should be given to office peer groups on the idea of inequality to reduce the pressure of office peer groups. Political Parties have a greater responsibility in promoting social justice. They should give more candidates from SC and ST communities in general constituencies so that they can prove themselves. This will also lead to increase in inter-community faith system. So it can be concluded that reservation has benefitted them in economic sense. But in terms of collective empowerment, reservation has not yielded any significant results.

Signature of the Candidate

Signature of the Supervisor