

# Caste and State

Introduction to Sociology

# Lecture we cover

- What is State beyond institutional understanding?
- We will engage with Marxian views and their criticism to understand the importance of studying everyday state
- Foucault Ideas on Governmentality will be covered – empirically we will engage with the case of Bihar to understand the intersections of caste and state and how caste has influenced state power.

# Lenin and Marx

- All political disputes and differences of opinion now turn upon the concept of state.
- Marx – the relation between state and civil society. The autonomy of the former and the oppression of the latter linked. State as class domination
- Engels – the state presents itself to us as the first ideological power over man.. It constitutes “illusory common interest”
- State remains an elusive object of analysis
- state as class power.

# Marxist studies

- State as a mask of class power
- Abstract formal object (how did the idea of state come into existence?)
- Marxist theory needs state as abstract: Hegel – state as concentration of class relationship
- There is a tension between – theory and practice – state as abstract form in theory and in practice we mobilise against state
- Conflation and confusion of theory and practice

# State idea – Philip Abrams

- State presents itself as legitimate – exercise in legitimation
- Presents itself as legitimate, secular – disinterested in domination
- Mystification is vital point of construction of state
- Armies and prisons as back up – regimes as states
- Need to decipher legitimacy.

# Contd..

- State as ideological fraud → state is the unified symbol of an actual disunity.
- Central to it is the maintainence of an essentially capitalist economy
- Cogency of the *idea* of state as an ideological power and treat that as a compelling object of analysis
- The ideological function is extended to a point where conservatives and radicals alike believe that their practice is not directed against each other but against state
- Find out state where they say it does not exist.

# Foucault -- Governmentality

- LIBERTY??
- The effective exercise of power need not imply removal of liberty
- Where there is no possibility of resistance there can be no relation of power
- Resistance → refinement of modification of technique of power → new forms of resistance and evasion can be developed
- Relationship of power will often be unstable, ambiguous and reversible
- Domination: subordinate people have little room for manoeuvre because their “margin of liberty” is extremely limited

# Power

- Power as ubiquitous feature of human interaction
- “history as endlessly repeated play of domination” we move from domination to domination
- Dominance different from power → latter not bad in itself
- Game of power is played with a minimum of domination → condemns domination in the name of liberty

# Difference between games of power, domination and government

- Govern → wife, children, institution → governmentality
- Continuity between government of oneself, government of household and government of state or community
- Successful government of others is ability of other to govern themselves.

# Governmentalisation of state

- Government as regulation of conduct
- *State subsumed in to government*
- Government concerned with managing the population of the state
- **Discipline** → while discipline involves repression, discipline is productive power par excellence → it aims not only to constrain but also to enhance and make use of their capacities

# Pastoral Power

- Government- wellbeing of its subjects by means of detailed and comprehensive regulation of their behaviour
- Pastoral power - concerned more with the welfare of their subjects than with their liberty
- **Shepherd-flock metaphor**
- **Pastoral power (no consent of sheep)** contrasts markedly with the view of sovereign power **as based on consent**
- **So how did the populations and the state interact in India?**

# Coming to India: Caste and the Colonial State

- One that produced (Sustained?) relations of Dominance and Subordination
- Beyond Bureaucratic State
- State aligned with Dominant caste groups for revenue collection and Territorial Control – **Limited Raj**
- Indirect Rule with Strategic use of Caste Representation
- Technologies (alliance with dominants, Census, Bureaucracy replaced by Caste Power)

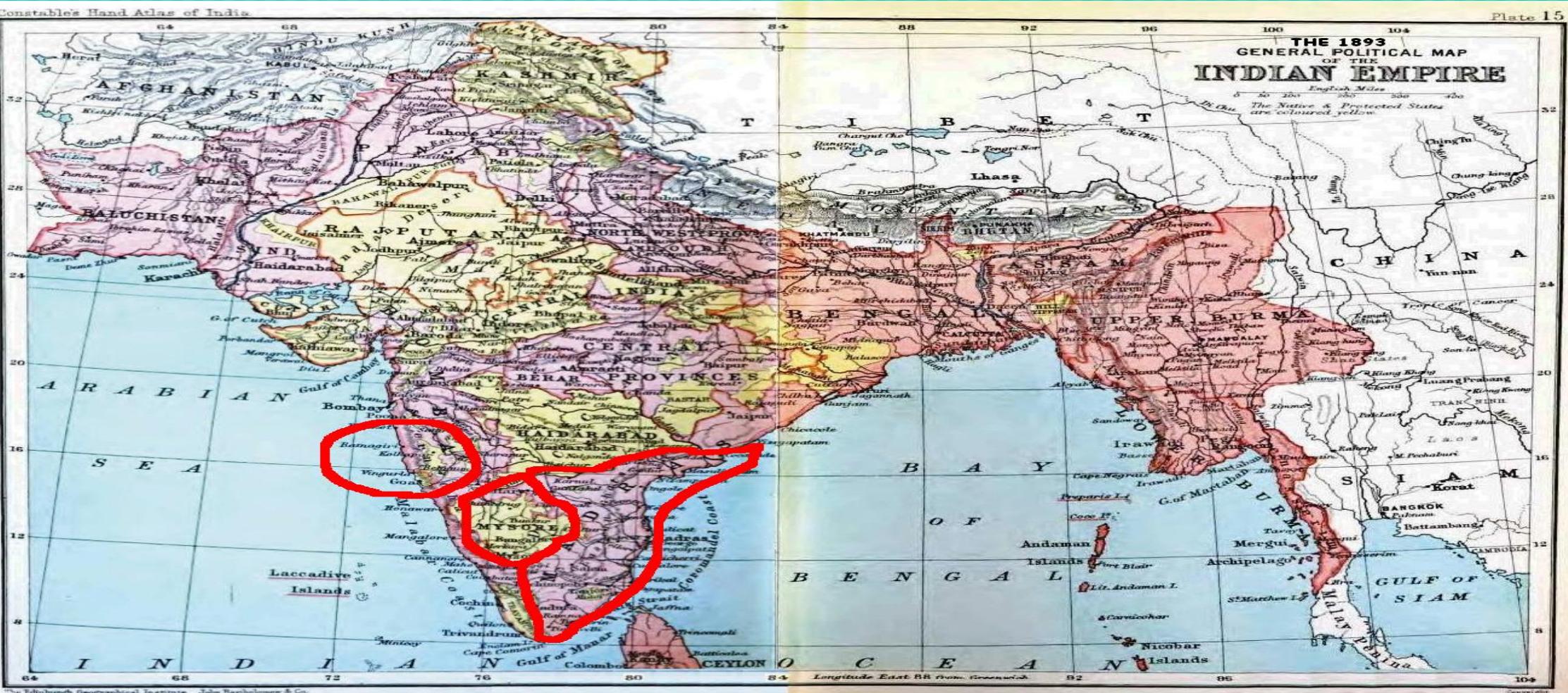


# Caste Reservations and State

- Growth of English administration- Brahmins and Bhadralok gained English education and dominated public services.
- Princely States introduced reservations for Backward Classes = Non Brahmins
- Brahmin and Non Brahman Conflict – Status (ritual), political and economic (Shahu vs Brahmins).
- Shahu Maharaja in Kolhapur ( 1902 – 50% reservations); Wodeyar in Mysore (1918 – 75% reservations); Justice Party in Madras (1922 -48 %)
- What we see is caste claims to ‘equality’ on state → through reservations.

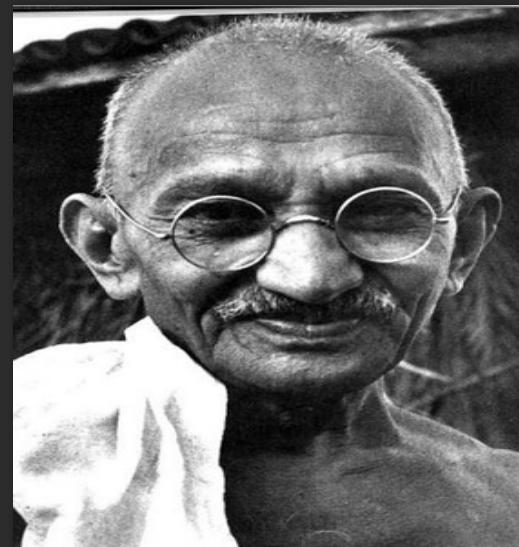


# The reservation-belt in colonial India



# Beyond Non-Brahmans: Outcastes as Political Minority?

- Ambedkar not convinced with Non-Brahman Model of Inclusion
- Tries Hindu Reform, Followed by Carving of Outcastes as Separate “Political [and religious?] Minority”
- Demand for Separate Electorates and its acceptance → Major blow for Congress Nationalism → the idea of ‘minority’ within Hindus went against Congress/Gandhi
- Ambedkar’s fears turned out to be true as Non-Brahman Movement merged with Congress in late 1930s



# Independent India and the dependence on reservations

- Secular Constitution recognises Caste, reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
- Article 340 - identify and suggest measures for improving the conditions of backward classes. ( Ambedkar's Influence)
- Nehru makes 'backward classes' – Other Backward Classes (OBC).
- First Backward Classes Commission- Karlekar Commission (1953)
- All came down to common denominator- caste (Jaffrelot). 2399 OBC castes identified and reservations in jobs and education recommended.

# Postcolonial Congress/Developmental State against Reservations..

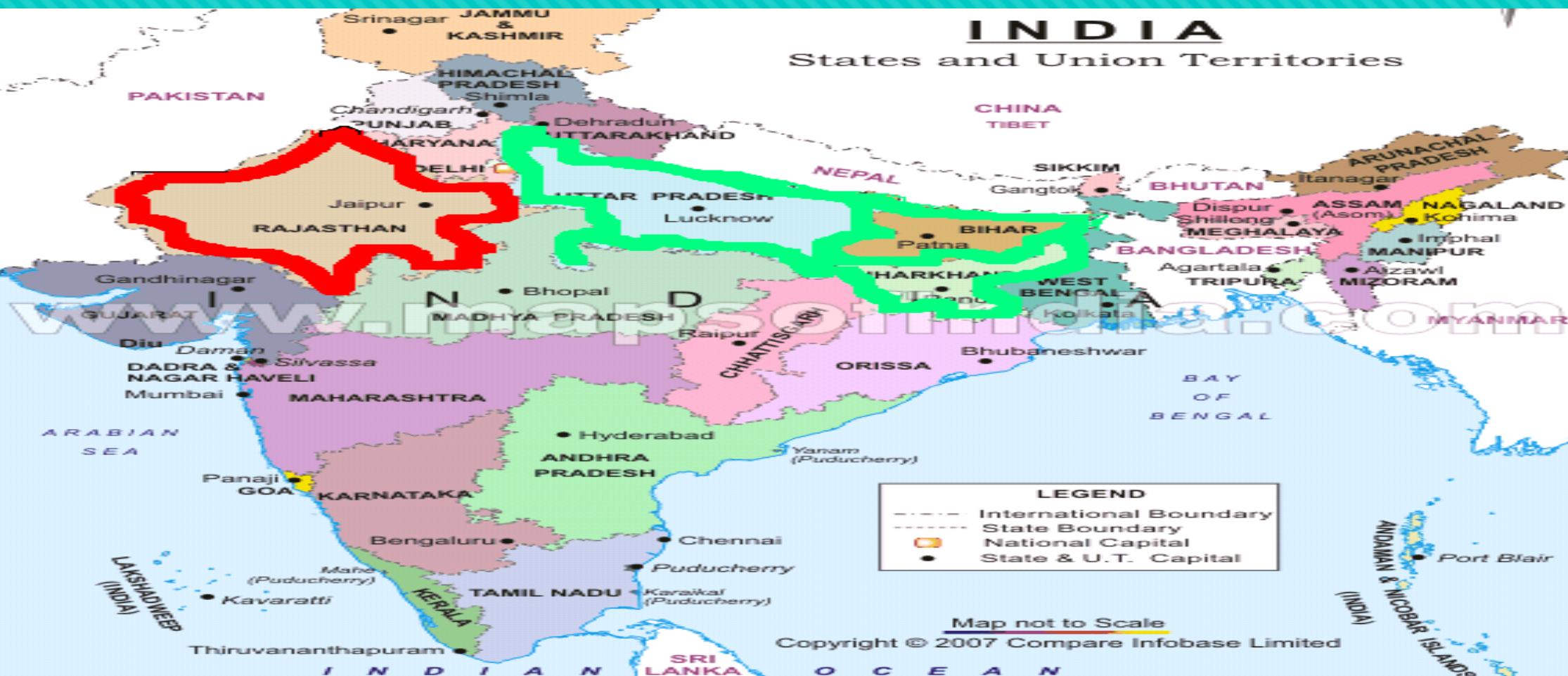
- Techniques of governmentality often predate the nation-state (Chatterjee 2004)
- A large part of the every- day politics of Indian democracy is marked by the operation of a form of power that works on principles very different from—and often opposed to—those of disciplinary society" (Chakraborty 2007:55)
- Congress Liberals at the helm whereas the party controlled by landlords in country side (Hataoo)



# Dependence on reservations, contd..

- Modernist Congress rejects the recommendations – socialism efforts important and reservations against merit
- Mysore had 59 per cent quota - State quotas challenged with the rejection of first backward classes commission.
- Balaji v. State of Mysore: Supreme Court rules- unconstitutional use of caste and 50 percent quotas against spirit of constitution- penalizes merit.
- **Non-Brahmin castes particularly in north India mobilise for caste reservations**

# OBC mobilisation belt in North India



# Rise of OBCs in North India: Democratisation of caste?

- Ram Manohar Lohia – Influenced by Ambedkar and Marx- Socialist Party , 1950-60.
- Electoral success of socialist party in Bihar puts pressure on Congress – first BC commission appointed in Bihar 1971, 20 % quotas
- In 1978 BC commission in UP recommended 29.5 % for OBCs (Janata Party). Congress returns to power scraps reforms.
- **Janata Party** – Second backward classes commission (Mandal) - 1978

# Mandal commission recommendations

- Caste is also a class of citizens and if caste as a whole is socially and educationally backward, reservations can be made in favor of such a caste.
- 3473 castes form India's backward classes representing 52 per cent of population
- Middle path – guaranteed minimum reservations of 27 % is recommended to keep reservations below 50 per cent.
- Give OBCs a feeling of participation in nation's governance – social and psychological spinoff.

# And Mandal Politics

- Congress returns to power at the centre in 1980– ignored the Mandal Commission. OBCs move away from Congress
- Janata Dal comes to power. In 1989 and V.P Singh announced implementation of Mandal Commission on August 15 1990
- Upper caste students protest across India, mostly in north India – around 63 self immolations – supreme court orders suspension of Mandal.
- Mandir Mobilisation of RSS/BJP

# Mandal Politics contd..



# OBC: Making of a political community?

- 1991 onward elections: OBCs voted for their caste leaders and not upper castes.
- OBC elected representatives rose from 11 % in 1984 to 25 % in 1996 and upper caste elected representatives fell from 47 % to 35 % (Varshney)
- OBC- collection of castes, Political parties: RJD, SP, JD, BJD.
- Dalit groups support OBC reservations
- Supreme Court recognizes – A caste can be and quite often is a social class in India

# Caste empowerment against Developmental State?

- *Bhurabal Hatao* (Bhumihars, Rajputs, Brahmins and Lals)
- Democracy not linked to rule of law or to notions of accountability, good governance or development.
- For Lalu Democracy is about the ways in which gaining control of state can level inequalities in the social field – this is democracy's radical potentiality (Witsoe 2011)
- State power important not Development

**It's Mandal versus kamandal, Lalu Prasad says ahead of Bihar polls**

Deepak Kumar Singh, Hindustan Times, Patna | Updated: Jul 19, 2015 08:13 IST



Lalu-Yadav



Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) president Lalu Prasad, 67, has made caste census an election issue in Bihar and questions why the BJP government was not releasing the data. In an interview to *DK Singh*, he says it's a fight between "Mandal and kamandal" and it will "go far". Excerpts:

## Corrupt Lalu? (Jeffrey Witsoe)

rupt. By the 2004 parliamentary elections, a survey found that 64 percent of all respondents thought that Lalu had “encouraged criminals personally” and 56 percent believed that Lalu was “corrupt.” Forty-nine percent agreed, however, that “Lalu is a true messiah of the poor,” and 46 percent agreed that “there is no alternative to Lalu in Bihar” (Kumar and Yadav 2004). Although people generally belie-

# State not as Maai –Baap; State as Lalu Bhai.

विकासशील सोच, दमदार नेतृत्व,  
खरा व्यक्तित्व, मजबुत शरिक्षयत  
नेक इरादे ईमानदार कोशिश.....

-लालू यादव

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Lalu Prasad Yadav @laluprasadrjd · Oct 11

अभी तो हमने हाफ को फुल पेंट करवाया है  
माइंड को भी फुल करवायेंगे  
पैंट ही नहीं सोच भी बदलवायेंगे  
हथियार भी डलवायेंगे  
जहर नहीं फैलाने देंगे॥

The collage includes:  
1. A man in white performing a ritual at a memorial site.  
2. A display of rifles and other items on a table.  
3. A large group of men in white shirts and brown trousers marching in formation.  
4. A close-up of a group of men marching.  
5. A man in white leading a procession of men holding sticks or flags.

# Caste and State – Some questions

- How does caste affect politics of religion and region?
- How does caste become a resources for governmentalisation?
- Caste as technology or caste (lower?) as populations who talk back?
- Caste helps democracy, so why look for modularity?
- Castes with lesser numbers may not have a voice.