WELFARE SCHEMES FOR THE SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES IN TAMIL NADU SINCE INDEPENDENCE

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ABSTRACT

India has the largest amount of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people. It is a big challenge to empower their livelihood needs and adopt them into the normal society in the category of social, political and economic participation. The social welfare administration would make proper shape and development of the society. It leads social, political, economical, cultural and public welfare developments where a richer contented life could be possible for all the citizens. The social action resulting from social policies normally lead to the establishment of a welfare state; the welfare state is one in which, social security and social services are birth right of every citizen. Normally speaking the social services are democratically organized to meet the essential needs of the whole community and in which, the whole community participates as a matter of course.


INTRODUCTION

The Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes were considered the untouchables or Panchamas and were denied their rights in society and were trampled upon by the other castes. After independence, the constitution of India which envisages the welfare of its citizens, lays down in Article 38 in Part IV under Directive Principles of State Policy that the State will strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may, a social order in which justice, social, economic, and political-shall be uniform in all institutions of the national life. The State too is meant to look after the welfare of the weaker sections of the community. Article 46 lays down that “the State shall promote with special care, the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Shall protect them
from ensure s that separate and special welfare measures are followed for the advancement and protection of certain classes.

The Article 244 also lays down that the Union Government will have the power to direct the States in respect of administering Scheduled areas (in the later case, Scheduled tribes which are not in the Scheduled areas). Further part XVI of the constitution is concerned with “Special provisions relating to certain classes”, It deals with reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Parliament and Legislative Assembly for a limited period and with reservations in the services (Articles 330-336). Article 330 provides for a special officer for the Scheduled Tribes to be appointed by the president to investigate into all matters relating to the president to investigate into all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Article 339 states that the president may at any time and after the expiry of ten years from the commencement of the constitution by order appoint a commission to report on the administration of Scheduled Castes and the Welfare of Scheduled Tribes of a State. Articles 341 and 342 authorize the president to specify the castes, races or tribes which shall for the purpose of this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

In accordance with the recommendation of the state Harijan Welfare Commission, a separate Harijan Welfare Department was formed in April 1949 to look after the Backward Classes Scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes. A Director of Harijan Welfare drawn from I.A.S. cadre was appointed to look after the welfare of the above classeses.3 There were State Harijan Welfare Boards, District Harijan Welfare Boards, and Taluk Harijan Welfare were appointed, the Panchayat Union Commissioner and Deputy Superintendent of Police acted as official member of this board. At District level, the District Harijan Welfare officer, the Chairman of the Taluk Harijan Welfare Board, the superintendent of police were the member. The District Collector officiated as the Chairman, the District officer was the secretary of the District Harijan Welfare Board. The practice of untouchability in any form was an offence under the untouchability Act of 1955. It was enforced by all the State Governments through police Department and the progress of enforcement was reviewed by the Director of Harijan Welfare Monthly and quarterly.

The Tamil Nadu Government issued strict standing instructions to the Inspector General of Police and collectors to ensure strict implementation of the provisions of the untouchability Act of 1955. The untouchability Act of 1955 has prescribed punishment with
imprisonment which may extend to six months or a fine which may go up to Rs.500/-. To ensure vigorous enforcement of the untouchability Act the D.M.K.

In the untouchability (offence) Amendment and miscellaneous Provisions Bill of 1972 introduced in the above suggestions except the one regarding maximum of three years for third and subsequent offences. Instead they have proposed two years imprisonment. The Tamil Nadu Government also set up mobile police squads to prevent atrocities committed on the scheduled castes by caste Hindus. The mobile Police Squads started functioning with effect from the year 1972 during the D.M.K. rule. The mobile police squads were organized in six select districts-North Arcot, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli, Madurai and South Arcot.

Besides the law, a charge in the social outlook of the people was quite essential for the removal of untouchability; In fact it is no exaggeration to say that the D.M.K. government of Tamil Nadu stood as a pioneer in this field compared to other states. It also introduced many welfare schemes for the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes.

Education

In order to improve the economic condition of the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes it was very necessary to provide them with proper education for progress through acquisition of knowledge. In the sphere of education, the scheduled classes and scheduled Tribes occupied the lowest place. Till 1960, the Government of Tamil Nadu sent the expenditure incurred for (a) the purpose of maintaining schools, (b) provision of scholarship (c) grant of stipends for training of teachers. (d) providing mid-day meals, (e) Maintenance of free hostels at important centres, (g) grant of financial assistance to hostels, schools, etc., for the benefit of the scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes.

The scholarships awarded by the central government to the scheduled cast and scheduled Tribes helped them to continue their education. During the D.M.K rule, the State Government introduced a new scheme known as the Gandhi Memorial Scholarship. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who had secured highest marks in pre-university class in each district (one boy and one girl) were given a lump sum grant of Rs.500/- at the time of admission and a recurring scholarship of Rs.100/- per month for three months. The above said scholarship was granted for a period of six years. This was in addition to any other scholarship to which the student was ordinarily entitled. From the year 1970-71 to 1974-75, the Gandhi Memorial Scholarships were awarded to 377 students amounting to about Rs. 4,46,200/-.
A new scheme known as the Tamil Nadu Harijan Welfare loan scholarships was introduced in 1971-72, by the government of Tamil Nadu. This loan scholarships were awarded for 1,960 students. The expenditure incurred by the government amounted to Rs. 9,58,617/- during the period of four year stretching from 1971-75 under their scheme an annual loan ranging from Rs. 970/- to 1,750/- per annum was sanctioned to each candidate. No interest was charged on this loan amount. Similarly financial assistance was also given to five law graduates belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to enable them to enroll and practice as advocates. Sum of Rs.500/- and 750/- was given as loans to these candidates from the year 1974 - 75 onwards.

The Tamil Nadu government also approved a scheme of training for 5 Scheduled Castes and scheduled Tribes candidates on Chartered Accountant course in 1975. Financial assistance was given to these trainees to meet toward the cost of books. Pocket expenses, boarding and lodging charges, examination fees etc. Moreover, the government had ordered for the opening of one hundred single teacher Harijan Welfare Elementary Schools during the academic year 1975-76 at an estimate cost of Rs. 8.02 lakhs. The system of supplying Mid-day Meals to the Harijan Students in the Harijan Welfare Schools was intended encouraging them to attend schools regularly is older prevent their parent from taking them out of the school augment their family income. A sum of Rs. 30 lakhs was provided in the Budget Estimate of 1974-75, towards the supply of Mid-day Meals to the Harijan Welfare schools run by the Department. In Selected schools other than Harijan Welfare Schools, a sum of Rs. 9 Lakhs was provided for the supply of Mid-day meals to the Harijan Children. About 1.5 lakh puils were benefited by the Mid-day meal scheme.

Incentive prizes in the form of clothing were given to scheduled castes students who have regular attendance in the schools, for inducing percent attendance. The Head masters and Headmistresses who attained 100% attendance in these schools were given Silver Medals at the district level. The boys and girls who secured the highest marks in the S.S.L.C Public Examination were awarded prizes in the shapes of savings certificate to inculcate students. A silver shield was also presented percentage of passes in the state every year. A loan scholarship scheme was also implemented from 1971 to help the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes student for preserving professional courses.

Due to increasing enrolment, more number of schools were opened and the teaching staff also increased. The teachers found it difficult to find adequate accommodation in the places where the schools were located. So from 1967-68 a phased programme of providing...
accommodation for teachers was inaugurated at a cost of Rs. 5,000/- per house. A proposal was made to increase the amount to Rs. 10,000/- in the plains and Rs. 11,000/- in the hills.  

**Special Coaching Centres**

The government introduced the scheme of giving special coaching to boys and girls who had good academic record. The Director of Collegiate Education selected those students who had secured 60% and more marks for this special coaching. The students selected for coaching were given travelling allowance and daily allowance and daily allowance for their expenses during the period of coaching. This scheme was aimed at bringing rural students to Madras, so that they might utilize educational facilities like libraries, laboratories, attending lectures and to benefit from the guidance of college professors in the city. This scheme was later extended. Upto Madurai, Trichy and Tanjore districts. A sum of Rs. 50,000/- was provided in the Budget Estimate for 1975-76 for the above-mentioned scheme.

Free tuition was proposed to the scheduled classes and scheduled Tribes students in the Pre-University course and in the three year degree course to two batches comprising of 200 students each in the morning and evening. These students were given special tuition in Presidency College. Madras and also three hundred girls in two batches of 150 each got this tuition benefits by the students of the Government Arts College for women, Madras. During 1974-75 about 306 boys and 33 girls were benefited under this scheme. The government also sanctioned special coaching to failed scheduled classes and scheduled Tribe students in standards IX to improve their educational ability.

There was an acute dearth of scheduled castes and scheduled Tribe candidates qualified in typewriting and shorthand in spite of the non - availability of scholarships. This was because the students discontinued the course, half way through without paying the tuition fees. The scholarship given for the tuition fee was often misused, for the money was then given to the students directly. To remove this the government of Tamil Nadu, experimentally introduced a special schemes of giving to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes candidates in type writing and shorthand in the district of Madras, Coimbatore, Trichy and Madurai. The scheme when first implemented in 1971-72, was introduced only in the district headquarters, but from 1975-76, if was extended to taluk headquarter also under this scheme the fees payable the students was paid by the government to the institute directly.
Training for Competitive Examination

As the standard of the candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who appeared for the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission Examinations was found to be very poor, a scheme was started for imparting special counseling and Training to candidates belonging to Scheduled Castes and scheduled Tribes who applied for the posts of Junior Assistants and Typists in the Tamil Nadu Ministerial and Judicial services. This was sanctioned in the year 1967 even during the congress rule. This training started about five months before the commencement of group IV competitive examinations and fifty candidates were admitted in each centre. Candidates were eligible for a sum of Rs. 40/-per months, a stipend to meet their boarding and lodging charges conversance, etc., during the period of training.

Pre-Examination Coaching Centre for Civil Services

To impart training to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe candidates appearing for I.A.S and I.P.S and allied services competitive examination conducted by the U.P.S.C the pre-Examination Training centre was started in the year 1966. This Institute was financed by the Government of India and managed by the government of subjects by efficient and experienced Professors and Tutors. Further, the Government of Tamil Nadu introduced the scheme of special orientation course for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates who appeared for competitive examinations for recruitment of officers in the armed forces. The scheme contemplated training to 15 candidates belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes and 15 belonging to Backward classes for a period of one year. 50% of the expenditure was yet from out of Harijan Welfare Department funds.

Government Hostels

The low literacy level of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was to the inability of the student to continue their education in places other than their home-town. This was because of the absence of inexpensive hostels. The hostel facilities were therefore provided for scheduled caste students who came from remote villages. Every year new hostels were opened based on the needs of the students and the financial resources available. To facilitate free mingling of Harijan students with caste Hindus as a step towards eradication of untouchability, a certain percentage i.e., 20% of Backward Class and 5% forward caste student were admitted in the Government hostels for scheduled castes.
There were 566 Government hostels run by the Harijan Welfare Department for the benefit as the scheduled castes and the details were given Table. The total strength of students accommodated in these hostels was 35,666 of which 26,534 were boys and 9,132 were girls.

The entire Harijan student community cannot be accommodated in the government hostels. Therefore boarding grants are given to voluntary and private agencies who admitted the scheduled caste and scheduled Tribe student in their hostels. The policy of the D.M.K. Government was not to recognize any few private hostels for the purpose of grants but to take over all the subsidized hostels in a phased programme. Most of the government and private hostels were located in private buildings. To provide suitable building for the hostels with all the basic amenities, a special programme of construction of 100 hostels at an estimated cost of one crore rupee was sanctioned during 1974-75. These buildings were to be constructed by the Tamil Nadu Harijan housing and development corporation. The Government also made arrangements for the regular medical checkup of hostel students by Medical Officers from primary Health Centres and Government Headquarters’ Hospitals every week from 1970-71 onwards. The implementation of this scheme was through the Director of Health and family planning, Madras, Part-time tutors were appointed for these hostels to help the students in their studies. 23

The various concessions granted to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the educational field enabled them to progress economically and socially. The various concessions like scholarships, free supply of books. Clothing and preference in matters of recruitment in government offices gave them a permanent footing in the society. The following table shows the number of Harjan schools and total strength of student in the schools during the D.M.K. rule.

**Housing Scheme**

The most important of the schemes launched by the D.M.K. Government, was the provision of houses to the Harijans. The government assigned government lands wherever available to the needy houseless scheduled caste and scheduled Tribe individuals for construction of houses. About 1,12,901 scheduled caste and scheduled Tribe individuals were provided with house sites every year on acquisition of lands for this purpose. Generally a maximum of 5 cents in rural areas and 3 cents in urban areas was being assigned for this housing scheme. A sum of Rs. 42 crores had been spent from 1950 to March 31, 1975 towards the cost of acquisition of sites for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.
The pattern of assistance was revised in 1970-71. The construction of single type fireproof houses was undertaken at a cost of Rs. 940/- each and double type house at a cost of Rs. 1,805 each. In 1972-73, for houses constructed on plains, the subsidy was Rs. 1,200/- and a further loan of Rs. 400/- was given taking the amount to Rs 1,600/-. For houses in hilly areas, the subsidy was Rs. 1,500/- and the loan Rs. 500/-.

Swarna Jayanthi Rozgar Yojana (Sjrsy)

In commemoration of 25th Anniversary of Indian Independence the government of Tamil Nadu sanctioned a scheme for the construction of houses for Harijan in 100 selected Harijan colonies at the rate of 23 houses per village at a cost of Rs. 46 lakhs. This scheme was implemented in 1973-74.

Tamil Nadu Harijan Housing and Development Corporation

To provide house for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in rural areas, the D.M.K. government resolved to construct one lakh houses within two years, through the Harijan Housing and Development Corporation. This corporation was started and registered under the provisions of the Companies Act 1956 on March 1, 1974. According to the 1971 census there were 14.5 lakhs Harijan families in Tamil Nadu. Therefore it was necessary to construct at least one lakh houses. The estimated cost of one lakh houses worked out to 30 crores of rupees. The houses were to have a plinth area of 240 sq.ft. with facilities like a smokeless kitchen, sanitary arrangement and a bath room. During the D.M.K. rule only 30,012 houses were built against the proposed one lakh houses of which the Scheduled Castes were given 25,154 and 4858 were given to Scheduled Tribes. The houses were given free of cost. The Congress government had allotted money for the digging of wells in Harijan colonies. This was continued by the D.M.K. government also.

Promotion of Inter-Caste Marraiges

The D.M.K. government to encourage inter-caste marriage awarded gold medals to the couples if one of the couples was a Hindu Harijan and the other caste-Hindus. A certificate of appreciation was also given. Hindu Harijan married to a higher caste Hindus was allowed to choose either of the parent’s caste which seemed beneficial to them. Further, the government had ordered that the applicant for interest free loans from couples where one of them is a Harijan should be considered favourably. The government also
ordered three cents of land for house sites for such inter-caste couples if they did not own housing sites already. The government also awarded Rs. 200/- to such inter-caste couples for purchasing utensils and meeting other incidental charges of setting up the family.

**Promotion of hygiene in Harijan Colonies**

To encourage cleanliness in the Harijan colonies, to improve the surroundings and maintain a healthy atmosphere which will contribute to the improvement of their status in society, prizes were awarded to well maintained colonies. The value of the first prize was Rs. 1000/- the second prize Rs. 500/-. Originally this scheme was introduced in 1961 by the Congress government in Tamil Nadu and it was also continued by the D.M.K. Government. The Harijan week celebrations were started in 1949 from 24 January to 30 January. The various schemes for the economic upliftment of Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes were asked to co-operate with the government in the eradication of the social evils.

**Community Centers and Community Halls**

There were 25 community centers in Tamil Nadu engaged in social education. They were supplied milk and mid-day meals. The children were entertained with play materials. During the D.M.K rule from 1972, two sets of dress, one set of dress, one for Deepavali and another for Pongal were supplied to the children attending these centers. Each centre was maintained by a male and a female social worker and a woman attendant. Five community halls were built in five districts for conducting marriage and for a get-together of caste-Hindu and Harijans.

**Legal Assistance to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**

Legal assistance was given to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in ejected eviction cases. The Tamil Nadu Legal Aid Rules (1975) ensured legal help to the Harijan. The application for legal aid were made to the District Harijan Welfare Officers of the districts concerned when the applicant first appeared before the district concerned when the applicant first appeared before the court. If the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes was an accused in civil or criminal cases, he was given in appeal and revision cases relating to (a) ejectment and eviction cases, (b) in case of accidents (c) in service matter and (d) in cases relating to social and economic rights individually or jointly.
To improve the economic conditions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the DMK Government implemented the following loan schemes. Till 1975 only Hindu Harijans were eligible to get this assistance and in 1975 the converted Christian Harijan were also exceeded the loan facilities.

The Congress government introduced the scheme of granting Rs. 250/- as a subsidy for the purchase of bulls in 1961. The amount was raised by DMK government to Rs 500/- in 1970 and Rs 600/- in 1974. Another scheme was grant of loans for digging of irrigation wells to the poor Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe farmers in the beginning the amount of subsidy was Rs. 1500/- It was raised to Rs. 2000/- in 1970 further raised to 2,500/- in 1975. Another scheme for their economic progress was to granting bulls implement to technically trained Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Persons.

In 1968 a scheme of granting interest free loans to the petty traders was initiated. Under this scheme eighteen traders were eligible for getting loans. The sanctioned amount was not to exceed Rs. 5000/- according to the nature of the trade and the demand and solvency of the beneficiaries. The amount was repayable in 100 equal installments.

Conclusion

The Social Welfare Board of Tamil Nadu was primarily established for the empowerment of women and it is known as the Women Welfare Board, after that it was renamed as Social Welfare Board. It prepared and executed many schemes for the Scheduled category people, Children, Women, Old Age people and others, who are need care and protection in this society.

References