



SOCIAL WELFARE ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA: A STUDY ON SOCIALLY BACKWARD CASTES

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ABSTRACT

The term "Social Welfare" has a broader meaning than professional social work. Social problems, deprivations, poverty, suffering and social disorganizations have existed through history. India is the seventh largest country by area and second by population. It is the largest economy at market exchange rate and third largest by PPP, yet India is far behind the neighbouring country of China in the matter of development. No country and no society were free from this phenomena. Until the 19th century, societal institutions such as the family, the church, the guilds and the community were able to deal with all but the most over whelming social catastrophes. The un remedied problems are a potent and major source social conflict. The lives of all members of a social group are directly or indirectly affected by this conflict. The greater the social gulf within the society, the lesser is the social security and greater the social disorganization. Irrespective of the causes of social inequality or unequal distribution of opportunity the fact remains that every social' group has members whose plight calls for serious attention and vigorous social action to overcome the defects in order to restore a state of social equilibrium within the society. The concept of social welfare is essentially dynamic. The approach to social welfare work these days is more collective and aims at achieving public good. Social welfare is a specialised work undertaken for the benefit of the weaker and more vulnerable sections of the population. The social problems poverty, sickness suffering and social disorganization have existed throughout human history.

Key Words: Castes, Communities, Social Welfare, Society, Social Reform

Introduction:

India is the seventh largest country by area and second by population. It is the largest economy at market exchange rate and third largest by PPP, yet India is far behind the neighbouring country of China in the matter of development. The exclusion of a large workforce causing low productivity, low human development, urban-rural divide, gender and regional disparities, social inequalities etc are the problems for India. The Department for International Development (DFID) defined Social exclusion as “ a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, caste, gender, disability, migrant status and so on. Social problems, deprivations, poverty, suffering and social disorganizations have existed through history. No country and no society were free from this phenomena. Until the 19th century, societal institutions such as the family, the church, the guilds and the community were able to deal with all but the most overwhelming social catastrophes. As the modern societies became industrialised and complex, these social institutions were felt inadequate to take the formidable challenges that plagued the society. The magnitude of social problems with our present society makes it mandatory to organize under both public and private initiatives to solve the problems of the people in need. Even international organizations, of late, have also shared to some extent the responsibilities of tackling the social problems for the well being of all. At the same time as humanitarian ideas progressed about our responsibilities to assist those who are in need and distress, progress in biological and social science and in modern technology have provided new look for investigating the causes of human suffering poverty, deficiencies and dissatisfaction, opening ways to alleviate or cure certain social and industrial problems. However social welfare and social work never pretend to be able to solve all human and social problems. Social welfare can be defined as a system of laws, programmes, benefits and services which strengthen or assure provisions for meeting social needs recognized as basic for the welfare of the population and for the functioning of the social order¹. The term "Social Welfare" has a broader meaning than professional social work.

Indian civilization has flourished through out ages. Through out the period, a microscopic minority has cornered all the benefits and lived a life of a comfort, free from deprivation, while a silent majority had a life which was a saga of untold sufferings and misery. The chaturvarna system or the four fold division of society which classified the society into four broad groups namely Bramhins, kshatriyas, Vysyas and Sudras proved a Bane to the society. The first three groups enjoyed the material benefits with less of physical labour and the duties of providing the physical comforts was laid on the shoulders of the

gullible majority, the Sudras who slogged from sunrise to sun set for the aforesaid groups. Apart from these, there were the social out castes who were the untouchables. Their lives were the most unenviable and evoked sympathy and pity. They lived on the fringes of the society and were made to do menial jobs like disposing of right of soil and removing the carcass of animals etc. Their sight and physical presence was considered to be unattractive and loathsome. They were the exploited lot and they led a demeaning and condemned life. Devoid of any personal property and education, their social and economic status remained unchanged and unaltered despite the fact that many generations have passed by.

According to scholar statesman and the late president of India S.Radha Krishnan, Manu had based his chaturvarna concept of priest teacher, warrior, businessman and worker with a view to accord equal status, equal prestige and equal value to all section of the society but winds of change and waves of history turned function based chaturvarna into heredity based and that ultimately turned out to be the greatest curse for the country. Of all the sections, the sudras once put on the lowest of the social hierarchy were destined to suffer all types of deprivations².

Since independence, the Government of India has been taking interest to alleviate, the suffering of the masses. It has been increasingly assuming responsibility for helping the handicapped, the destitutes and the weaker sections of the society. Earlier social welfare activities were considered a routine government activities. Of late, it has been realised that to improve several welfare activities, the government departments need a change in their administrative and other infrastructure in the execution of these welfare programmes.

Social Exclusion in India

Social exclusion in India can not be interpreted by the Euro-Centric approach. The social exclusion in India has to be understood against the background of the caste system, the traditional India's system of social ordering, controls etc. Since 1950's social exclusion in India has assumed a wider connotations and discourse. Those historically excluded categories in Indian society broadly are Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Women etc. The exclusion was forced primarily by the traditional caste based social order. This practice was legally abolished in 1950's. The constitution is apparently anti-discriminatory, anti-exclusionary, anti-exploitative and anti-oppressive.

Right from inception of planning era, after independence, the focussed attention has been given to provide special support to historically disadvantaged sections of the society. The Scheduled Castes(SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) have been provided special Status under the

constitution. The other disadvantages groups which required special support are other backward classes (OBCs), Minorities, Marginalised and vulnerable groups viz persons with disabilities, women, senior citizens street children etc. Of course their is perceptible improvement in the socio-economic conditions of SCs/STs over the years, the headcount ratio (HCR) for these communities remain higher than the National average. Further, efforts are still required to fill up the gaps to bring them in the mainstream.

Review of Literature

Jaiendra Kumar Jha in his study, Encyclopaedia social work series of Social Welfare and Social Work(2002)³ remarked that Indian traditional view of Social Welfare is based on daya, dana, dakshina, bhiksha, ahimsa, svaya-bhava, swadharma and tyaga, the essence of which are self discipline, and consideration for others.

M.U.Qureshi explained in his study Encyclopaedia of Social Problems and Social Welfare (2006)⁴ that the introduction of Panchayati Raj, provided for proper representation of members of scheduled castes and Tribes by reserving seats for them in the gram panchayats and other local bodies . It is also further stated to facilitate their adequate representation, concessions such as relaxation of age limit, standard of suitability, qualification regarding experience in the case of direct recruitment only, wherever necessary and inclusion of scientific and technical posts up to the lowest grade.

Sanjay Bhattacharya (2006)⁵ in his famous book, Social work Administration and Development explained that Administration is the core for the implementation of polices and responsibilities of the Social Welfare. In conclusion he stated that social administration encompasses every act, every technique and every considerations in processes necessary to formulate social policy into social services, thus it is concluded that' Administration of any organisation is very essential.

K.S.Kohli and S.R.Sharma in their book, Encyclopaedia of Social Welfare and Administration(1996)⁶ highlighted that the concept of Social Welfare has been borrowed from the western democracies by Indian Planners. Both in the socialist and capitalist democracies, the Welfare Programmes have drawn the attention of the governments and the general public alike. They also concluded that the concept of Social Welfare has been studied in the light of the theoretical modals developed in the west. The theoretical model has been studied in Indian Perspectives.

Jainendra Kumar Jha (2002)⁷ in his book, Encyclopaedia Social Work Series, Social Welfare and Social Work, stated that Social Welfare is a system of laws, programmes,

benefits and services which strengthens or assure provisions for meeting social needs recognised as basic for the welfare of the population and for the functioning of the social order.

Geol and Jain(1988)⁸ in their study, observes that the machinery for supervision and coordination remains weak. In many States coordination between Social Welfare education, health and Social service sectors is not satisfactory. Coordination between the functionaries of the Social Welfare board and the department are always inadequate. As a result, there is variation in the development of Social Welfare services between urban and rural areas.

Shah.P, Vimal and BinodC.Agarwal (1986).⁹have studied the different programmes by the government to the Scheduled Castes people and identified certain issues. On these issues they suggested some programmes that are given in their book Reservation Policy, Programmes and Issues.

Mazumdar's (1964)¹⁰ study explores constitutional concept of Social Welfare and he seeks to create a social order in which freedom, equality and social justice are the central areas. Individual, a free agent requires government interaction to regulate the market forces so that he can participate in it freely and government is expected to plan and implement Social Welfare programmes for the uplift of the weaker sections.

M.U.Qureshi's (2006)¹¹ contribution on Social Problems and Social Welfare, stated that various State Governments Administrations administer a number of programmes for the welfare of Scheduled Castes through their departments of welfare of Scheduled Castes and other weaker sections. He also stated that the welfare programmes comprises - educational and training, economic upliftment of the weaker sections.

Significance of the study

Social Welfare administration is one of the scantily explored areas of social science research. Indian state being a welfare state, much focus and stress ought to have been given to Social Welfare. In India there are many deprived sections who need assistance badly to progress in life. This is the case more so with the SC, ST and BC people who have faced want and deprivation through out history. Positive discrimination should be shown to these vulnerable sections of society for the betterment of their lives - hence in the light of this observation Social Welfare becomes pertinent. Reflecting the same the framers of the Indian Constitution incorporated various measures in the part III (fundamental rights) and part IV (directive principles) of the constitution for the welfare of SCs, STs and BCs.

Need for the Present Study

The earlier studies were focused on genesis of caste system and untouchability and other dimensions of caste discriminations. Many researchers and academicians have to tally focused their attention on various aspects of the SCs, STs, and BCs development and their welfare from various disciplines like sociology, Anthropology, education and have done considerable work merely on the social aspects (caste) of Indian society in general and the scheduled castes in particular. Some famous writers merely touched the welfare administration, without making in-depth study of it. In order to understand the extent and depth of the problems, it is desirable to study the policy measures, how they are implemented and administered for the socio, economic development of the weaker sections. The need for implementation of Social Welfare administration to the needs of the SCs, STs and BCs is an earnest effort to bring socio, economic equality on par with other sections of the society.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows

1. To study the administration of Social Welfare in India.
2. To discuss the Social Welfare Programmes in India.
3. To evaluate the organization and activities of Social Welfare Department

Methodology

The present study is based on Secondary sources. Secondary data was collected from the reports of the Commissioner, Department of Social Welfare, Five Year Plans, District Social Welfare Officer and other officers were thoroughly studied and analysed. Further, various books, journals, magazines, published and unpublished articles were also referred.

Welfare Administration in India

DurgabhaiDeshmukh, the First Chairperson of Social Welfare Board stressed that India's declared objective is the attainment of a welfare state which assures that each individuals will be guaranteed a reasonable living standard and full opportunities to lead a complete life which will be every citizens birth right.

The progress and prosperity of a nation is Judged from the socio-economic status of its population, especially the weaker sections of the society suffering from abject poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, exploitation etc. as well as disadvantaged groups like women, children scheduled castes, tribal people etc. It is of prime importance that such

segments of the society mostly living in remote backward hilly rural and tribal areas should receive the serious and earnest attention of policy makers, planners, social scientists and academicians so that the down trodden section of the society can lead a decent life. Keeping the plight of these people in view, the framers of the Indian constitution incorporated various provisions in the nature of fundamental rights and Directive principles of state policy for the betterment of their lives. The following are the provisions.

1. The abolition of untouchability and the forbidding of its practice in any form (Art. 17)
2. The promotion of their educational and economic interests and their protection from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Art.46)
3. The throwing open by law of Hindu religions institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus (Art.25b)
4. To remove of any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to shops, public restaurants, hotels, places of public entertainment or the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partially out of state funds or dedicated to the use of the general public (Art. 15(2))
5. The forbidding or any denial of admission to educational institutions maintained by the state or receiving grant out of state funds (Art,29(2)).
6. Permitting the state to make reservation for the backward classes in public services in case of inadequate representations and requiring the state to consider the claims of the SCs and STs in the making of appointments to public services (Art. 16 and 335).
7. Special representation in the Lok Sabha and the state Vidhan Sabhas to SCs and STs (Art.330, 332 and 334).
8. The setting up of tribes advisory councils and separate departments in the state and the appointment of a special officer at the centre to promote their welfare and safe guard their interests (Art 164 and 338 and Fifth Schedule)
9. Special provision for the administration and control of selected and tribes areas (Art 224 and fifth and sixth schedules)
10. Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour (Art.23)

In India, the social welfare administration is being carried out by a number of agencies formal and informal, governmental and non-governmental, multi lateral and bilateral at central, state and local level. The present study focus on the initiative of the government in social welfare activities. Bearing the responsibility of the government in mind with regard to the upliftment of the down trodden and to give effect to the various provisions of the constitution related to the welfare of the down trodden, the department of social security was

set up in the central government during the tenure of Prime Minister Lai Bahadur Sastri. The justification for setting up the Department of social security was that the Ministry of Home affairs, Ministry of labour and Ministry of Education were implementing certain social welfare programmes. Since they were scattered, coordination among these programmes was difficult. Therefore, the department of social security was established consisting of the different subjects that were located in different ministries in 1964¹².

In 1966, the Department of Social Security was redesigned and was called Department of Social Welfare. In February 1973, work relating to the S.Cs, S.Ts and B.Cs went back to Home Affairs Ministry due to public pressure and political expediency. Although the Administrative Reforms Commission had suggested combining Social Welfare, the suggestion was not accepted. Then by 1975, Social Welfare had come to refer to Welfare of the Women & Children and the Welfare of the Physically Handicapped only.

Again the Department of Social Welfare was bifurcated into two - (1) Ministry of Welfare and (2) Department of Women and Child Development. The Ministry of Welfare covers 20 subjects (Operation of bilateral agreement on development and relief supplies, Relief of the disabled, Unemployed, Social Welfare - Social Welfare Planning, Project formulation, research, evaluation training and so on) and the Department of Women and Child Development comprises 12 subjects. Now this department is under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD). The situation in the State Government is no better. There is no uniformity in the structural setup of Social Welfare subjects in the governments. By and large Social Welfare refers to programmes for the welfare of the Women, the Children and Physically handicapped at the State level.

It is noted that Social Welfare is a State subject and Central Government has a peripheral role. In the VIII Schedule of the Constitution of India, Social Welfare subjects are scattered between the Centre and the State. Some subjects are under the responsibility of both.

There are mainly four patterns of financing Social Welfare programmes - (1) Central Sector Programmes (National Institute for the Blind) (2) Centrally Sponsored Programmes (Child development Scheme) (3) State Sector Programmes (Beggar Homes) and (4) Centrally aided programmes. Central Government's role has generally been one of promoter, pace setter and stimulator. Central Government has been promoting social legislation, laying down national priorities, encouraging and promoting the voluntary sector, advising the State Governments and so on. The State Government's role has been in the area of development of

basic institutional and non-institutional services, meeting statutory obligations, enforcing minimum standards.

The above discussion reflects that the meaning of Social Welfare that comes through the policy statements and plan document is different from the impression one gets through the programmes that have been operationalised. Conceptually it has remained vague about what is Social Welfare.

Levels of Social Welfare Administration in India

The Organisational structure of Social Welfare Administration in India has been divided into three levels, namely Central Level, State and District or Block levels.

(a) Central Level

The Central Social Welfare Board at the central level consists of General Body at apex level, the Executive Committee in mediating level and the Chairman at lowest level. The Executive Committee is the authority for decision making and the Chairman is the one who administers the day today affairs of the Board. The administrative structure has been divided into staff and line agencies, for the running of the administration of the organization. This cannot be a single man's show. Immediately after the Chairman, there is an Executive Director, assisted by Five Divisional Heads, namely - Joint Director (Planning Monitoring and Coordination), Joint Director (Industrial Programme Administration), Joint Director (Welfare Programmes), Internal Financial Advisor-cum-chief (Pay and Accounts Divisions), Joint Director (Administrative Division), etc¹³.

The success and failure of any organization depends upon the quality of participation, interest and responsiveness of its management. These members adopt the mechanism of institutional bodies to formulate policies because they cannot manage the affairs individually and in isolation from one another.

(b) State Level

The State Social Welfare Advisory Boards were set up in different states between April 1954 and August 1954. The State Social Welfare Advisory Boards are functioning in all States and Union Territories except Dadra Nagar Haveli. The Central and State Social Welfare Boards work on 50:50 basis. The main objectives laid down for a State Social Welfare Advisory Board are

- To act as media for exchange of information between the field and the Centre and vice versa.
- To invite and examine application for grant-in-aid for Voluntary Welfare Organizations and recommend the same to the central Social Welfare Board.
- To advice and assist the Central Board in sponsoring new welfare programmes and activities.
- To Coordinate the Social Welfare activities undertaken by the various departments of the state government obviating all duplication or overlapping.
- To promote the growth of voluntary Social Welfare Organisations, with special references to the development of the welfare services in the areas left uncovered.
- To assist the Central Social Welfare Board in providing field counseling services for aided voluntary organizations.
- To administer the programmes or rural welfare projects

(c) District or Block Levels

In 1954, CSWB initiated welfare services for Women and Children in rural areas. But it was faced with the problems of non-existence of voluntary organizations working in the rural areas. Therefore, it had to take steps to sponsor a machinery for the implementation of the programmes meant for the rural areas. Consequently, the Board decided that a committee be set up consisting of a majority of non-official and a few official members who would be involved in the welfare or developmental efforts in the district for necessary coordination. The project implementing committee was set up from 1954 onwards at the district levels. By the end of the Second Plan, 324 such district level committees were set up throughout India. Project implementing committees in the district largely continued to remain bodies for the implementation of a single specification programme known as welfare extension project. These committees continued up to 1961, and thereafter, were wound up and the work was given to Mahila Mandals to promote voluntary efforts. The Board, therefore, at present is not having any organizational set-up at district level. The Family and Child Welfare project is handed over to the State Government from 1st April, 1982. The Board is not having any infrastructure at the block level as well. Hence, the operation of the programme at present is going through the voluntary organization.

Social Welfare is playing a significant and crucial role for the well-being of all sections of society particularly the suppressed, depressed and eliminated section like

Scheduled Castes in Indian society. In this conclusion the government has to take remedial measures to improve their socio-economic and educational growth in the name of Social Welfare concept. Hence, the present study is taken for this purpose.

The Social Welfare programmes

The Social Welfare programmes legitimately should fall in the sub-area of Social Welfare administration. The main job of the Social Welfare administration is to identify and clarify the problems of particular territory and contribute, possible solutions to the problems. But we must be aware of the fact that the success of Social Welfare ultimately depends on the adequacy of administrative apparatus prevailing in the county. The guiding principle of any good system of administration is, having the sense of fellow feeling, belongingness and entire well-being of the citizens. Now let us examine some of the Social Welfare services¹⁴.

(a) Education

Education is an important means to make us into rational beings. Without Education people are like animals. Aristotle the ancient Greek Political philosopher and father of Political Science rightly describes "Man is rational being"¹⁵. Through education there is possibility of well-being of the society. When people are educated, it is very easy to make them understand rationally what something really means. In this connection, the Constitutional safeguards provides, special plans and programmes for educational development of the Scheduled Castes. The educational programmes of the Central / State governments include reservation of seats in educational institutions, pre and post matric scholarships, special book bank facility, construction of hostels for boys and girls hostels, overseas scholarship, pre-examination training facilities and running of Residential Schools for Scheduled Castes children.

Article 15(4) empowers state Government to make reservation of seats of admission of Scheduled Castes in various educational and technical institutions. As per the Constitutional Provisions, 15 percent of seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes candidates in educational and technical institutions to provide education to all the suppressed weaker sections. It also provides the relaxation in age and the minimum qualifying marks to get admission in to the educational institutions. It is the duty of the Social Welfare agencies to provide education to all the downtrodden, suppressed and depressed class like Scheduled Castes to improve their better living conditions.

(b) Health

Health is also an another significant feature of Human beings. In earlier days people died of many kind of diseases due to their ignorance. Therefore, taking care of health can help the individuals lead to healthy and sound life. Healthy body indicates the sound mind. If mind is sound a man can take any decision rationally. Therefore, right mind always takes right decision. So, it is the duty of Social Welfare agencies to make people aware of health so that they can look after themselves on their own¹⁶.

(c) Housing

Housing is one of the welfare services of the Social Welfare administration in the state. The social agencies look at the condition and standard of the people and provide not only the better living conditions but also facilitate better housing. Housing is one of the basic need and requirements of the people. Along with bread and clothes, every human being needs a house to rest and to live in. It is the duty of the State which looks after the needs of the people, finds out their problems and provides awareness and gives possible solutions to the problems.

Functions of Welfare Administration

The main functions of welfare administration may be divided into the following kinds: fact finding, analysis of social conditions and of services to meet human needs, decisions on the best ways of reaching their objective, planning and allocating resources, setting up organisational structure and work assignments, staffing the agency, supervising and controlling personnel finances, recording and accounting, and supplying financial resources. The first four functions may be characterised as 'enterprise determination', the other five as 'enterprise execution'.

1. Fact finding depends on the social agency's programme and objectives which, are determined by whether the agency is a public institution or a private organisation. Fact finding requires research into the social or health conditions that make the planned services of the agency necessary. In case of a public agency, the results of the research findings are submitted to the legislative body that determines the action to be taken. A private social agency might be set up when research results are presented to a council on .social planning or to a group of interested citizens.

2. An analysis of the social problems that the agency serves permits it to estimate the type and number of services that will be needed and to evaluate the trends for the future, based on statistical data of previous experiences.
3. After the agency diagnoses present social needs, it must decide which alternative course of action to follow, considering how it can make the most constructive use of its personnel and equipment.
4. Planning and allocating resources is carried out, on the basis of the preceding choice of alternatives, while considering how the objectives of the social agency may best be realised. The immediate and long-range goals of the agency are clarified and policies developed that direct the work of the agency to meet the changing needs of its clients.
5. Setting up the organisational structure of the agency leads to a distribution of duties to the members of the staff with a clear definition of responsibilities concerning their work, delegation of authority, and supervision, a description of staff and line services, and the establishment of standardised operations.
6. Personnel administration determines policies on recruitment and employment in the agency, on tenure, promotions, salaries, vacations, and working conditions. A fair evaluation of the performance of the staff is necessary to ensure efficient service and good morale.
7. Control of the agency's operation secures the proper function of the organisation and the attainment of its objectives. It requires coordination of the staff activities, supervision, and regular communication, consultation services, staff conferences, and financial control measures.
8. Recording and accounting for all essential activities and material expenses of the agency are necessary to provide a reliable analysis of its budgetary operations, which have to be reported to its governing body and to the membership or legislative authority under which the social agency works.
9. The mobilisation of the financial resources of the agency depends on its nature and structure. In public agencies, the administration of the budget requires negotiations for the allocation of funds with the central, state, or local government.

Conclusion:

The achievement of socio- economic development among SCs, STs, and BCs in general and educational development of illiterate and poverty-stricken children in particular depends upon the efficient and effective management of Social Welfare Hostels. In the light of the outcome of the present study these welfare institutions must be reorganized and

reoriented to provide comprehensive institutional care on one side and on the other side promote academic growth and success among school going children of the SCs, STs and BCs. Timely release of adequate funds, well-in-advance supply of Text books and other study material, adequate and good nutritious food, healthy and comfortable accommodation, regular medical care, congenial environment for regular study, maintenance of good discipline, honest, sincere and committed Hostel staff, and above all the cooperation of parents, teachers and general public all will go a long way in enabling the Social Welfare hostels to promote the growth and development among these children. The suggestions presented in this thesis and their prompt and effective implementation by the concerned would certainly result in systematizing the Social Welfare administration in general and management of Social Welfare Hostels in particular and in turn will enable the Social Welfare Hostels in state of Telangana to function with a greater welfare commitment and promote the building up of present generation of SCs, STs and BCs children as future stalwarts of our country in all fields of national development.

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