Periyar's Advocacy for Proportional Representation: Laws, Policies, and Politics in Modern India

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Abstract

This article traces the historical struggle for proportional representation. It examines the role of Periyar E. V. Ramasamy and the Dravidian Movement in shaping India's reservation framework. The evolution from non-Brahmin to the Dravidian consolidation, and the struggle for adequate representation in education and employment opportunities for socially and educationally marginalised and backward classes, remain milestones of the 20th century. Drawing on sources including the Non-Brahmin Manifesto, the Communal Government Orders, *Kudi Arasu*, *Viduthalai*, and judicial records, it argues that the First Constitutional Amendment (1951) and the Seventy-sixth Amendment (1994) enabled the majority of Dravidians, who had been denied education and basic human rights for centuries. And the legislation stands as the outcome of sustained Dravidian mobilisation rather than mere legislative concessions. It then assesses current debates on the 50% ceiling, the Economically Weaker Sections quota, sub-categorisation, and the caste census, and closes with policy recommendations grounded in the historical record.

Keywords: *Periyar, Proportional representation, Reservation, Social justice, Dravidian movement*

Introduction

The reservation policy in India has been one of the most debated social welfare policies. It provided an opportunity for socially and educationally backwards and marginalised communities to access education and employment opportunities in the public sector. It is primarily opposed because it helps people who were socially excluded as lower castes. The caste system amounts to the denial of education, employment opportunities, access to wealth, land, and other material and immaterial things. The oppressors who enjoyed the benefits of the inhuman caste system did not have sympathy or empathy towards the victims. During colonial rule, the publication of the political pamphlet, the Non-Brahmin Manifesto and the emergence of the Justice Party played a vital role in advancing social justice for the commoners. Periyar's Self-Respect Movement was a revolutionary social reform movement. From advocacy for reservation to the demand for proportional representation, Periyar and the Dravidian movement have historically contributed. The Communal Government Orders, the Poona Pact, and the

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First Constitutional Amendment played a crucial role in the contemporary reservation policy. This historical context is very relevant today. We have a reservation policy in both the state and the union, but not proportional representation. The demand to remove the 50% reservation cap and adopt Proportional Representation is a fight that will continue till people get equal treatment without caste bias and adequate representation in government and governance. This article explores the historical struggle for Proportional representation and the role of Periyar's Dravidian Movement in the Global South. This article asks how the Dravidian movement converted a demand for communal representation into a constitutional and statutory framework, and what that history implies for present claims to proportional representation.

Theoretical Framework: Caste, Redistribution, Recognition and Substantive Equality

The article draws on three complementary perspectives. The first is B. R. Ambedkar's account of caste as a system of graded inequality. It explains why formal equality cannot be judged without examining the social hierarchy that shapes access to education, occupations and public authority (Ambedkar, 1936). This bears directly on the historical discussion because the demand for communal representation arose from unequal access to institutions, not merely from a wish for numerical inclusion. The second is Nancy Fraser's distinction between redistribution and recognition, which shows that social justice has more than one dimension. Redistribution concerns the unequal distribution of material resources and opportunities. Recognition concerns status hierarchies and the devaluation of particular groups. Fraser also treats participation as a dimension of justice (Fraser, 2003). Read through this lens, reservation is a redistributive measure that widens access to education and employment. The assertion of dignity and political standing by excluded communities is a matter of recognition, and their meaningful presence in decision-making bodies is a matter of participation. The third is Marc Galanter's analysis of affirmative action and competing equalities, which places reservation within constitutional debates over formal equality, group disadvantage and remedial measures (Galanter, 1984). It is especially useful for the relationship between judicial interpretation and political mobilisation, as seen in *State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan*, the First Constitutional Amendment and later reservation judgments. Taken together, these perspectives guide the analysis of how historical claims for representation became legal and policy arrangements, and why any continuing assessment of those arrangements must consider both access and distribution within beneficiary categories.

Research Methodology

The study follows a qualitative historical-analytical design. It traces how demand for proportional representation developed in the Madras Presidency and later related to constitutional and reservation policy in India. The analysis is chronological but also follows recurring themes: unequal access to education and public employment; political mobilisation by non-Brahmin and the Dravidian Movement; the link between representation and anti-caste politics; constitutional protection for affirmative action; and current debates on how reservation benefits are distributed and implemented. The Historical materials include the Non-Brahmin Manifesto, the relevant Communal Government Orders, resolutions and proceedings of political and social movement conferences, writings attributed to Periyar in *Kudi Arasu* and *Viduthalai*, constitutional provisions, legislation, reported judicial decisions and the historical

and sociological scholarship on the non-Brahmin movement, the Dravidian movement, caste and affirmative action. These sources are read against one another to follow the movement from political demand to administrative and constitutional arrangement. Wherever the article quotes periodicals or conference resolutions, the final reference list gives the issue, date, page and archival or published edition, provided these can be verified.

The need for Reservation and Eradication of Caste

In the old days, religious education and priestly jobs were reserved for Brahmins. Whereas the remaining castes were obligated to service jobs known as caste jobs. Though the work done by any caste is needed by a person from another caste, due to the graded-inequality nature of caste, they treat each other unequally. The idea of graded inequality was proposed by Ambedkar (1936), who argued that caste is a hierarchy of unequal ranks and not a simple division of labour. Untouchable, Unseable and many more caste categories were created. Each one follows different rituals from birth to death. Though it may look like they lived peacefully, they were divided by their casteist mindset, and the structural infrastructures were also established accordingly. The separate temple, God, water tank, village, etc., remain evidence.

The leaders of Anti-Caste Movements like Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Periyar EVR, and Dr B.R. Ambedkar played a vital role in securing access to education and the right to live with dignity and self-respect. Periyar rationally criticised and challenged caste, gender, religion, God, rituals, customs, and religious scriptures across social, economic, and political life. During the colonial period, modern educational institutions such as the Department of Public Instruction, English convent schools, and the universities in Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta were established. The British education policies enabled non-Brahmins to receive a formal education. However, due to early access to education and the Brahmin community's emphasis on English, they managed to monopolise admission and government jobs under British rule. Organised demands for communal representation emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries under colonial rule, and the category 'Dravidian' itself was politically constructed in this period (Pandian, 2007). On the one hand, the Dravidian Movement worked hard to eradicate caste in society by uniting people under the umbrella term Dravidian as a caste-less sect. They propagated modern rationalism and demonstrated and destroyed superstition in the people's minds. Also introduced Dravidian as a way of life in opposition to caste-based cultural practices. Moreover, on the other hand, they focused on the development of the majority population by enabling access to education and employment opportunities through reservations.

The Non-Brahmin Manifesto and Justice Party

Highly educated non-Brahmin leaders like Dr C Natesan, Dr TM Nair, and Sir Pitti Thiyagarayar published a non-Brahmin manifesto. In which the published data on education and employment, and the over-representation and under-representation of communities, were debated. The Brahmin monopoly was openly criticised and challenged. The manifesto published in December 1916, shortly after the South Indian Liberal Federation was founded in November 1916 (Irschick, 1969). The Non-Brahmin Manifesto stated that, in 1913, Sir Alexander Cardew presented to the Public Service Commission that, between 1892 and 1904,

out of 16 candidates in the competitive exams for the Provincial Civil Service, 15 were Brahmins. Also, the category-wise comparison included Deputy Collector, Engineer, and Accountant. Similarly, regarding the condition of education, the manifesto briefly discusses a meeting of the Madras Legislative Council, held in November 1914, at which the registered graduates of the University numbered 650, of whom 452 were Brahmins, 12 non-Brahmin Hindus, and 74 belonged to other communities.

For the first time in Indian history, people of different castes were brought under the umbrella term "non-Brahmins". For the welfare of the Non-Brahmins the Dravidar Sangam was formed and which later became the South Indian Liberal Federation (SILF).

"To promote the educational, social, economic, industrial, agricultural and political progress of all non-Brahmin communities in southern India"

Objective of the SILF from its constitution (Varadarajulu,2010).

Because of their popular Justice journal the party was called Justice Party. Most of the non-brahmin leaders were once part of the congress party they eventually left Congress because of the Brahmin domination. The Brahmin leaders of Congress opposed the idea of representation citing the merit and skill.

Communal Government Order: New ray of hope

The Justice Party won elections and formed government in Madras presidency in 1920. On 16th September 1921 a government order passed which is popularly known as the communal government order, which provided representation of non-Brahmins, including Christians and Muslims of the Madras Presidency.

"In Government jobs, to increase the proportion of non-Brahmins getting jobs, the board's standing order Ref.128(2) provides a method to share the job opportunities as per the proportion of various classes, and caste" (Veeramani,2005).

The heads follow:

- Brahmin
- Non-Brahmin Hindus
- Indian Christian
- Mohammadans
- Europians and Anglo Indians
- Others

The third communal government order was clear and in detail it explained the implementation process through 12 different orders. S Muthiah, a Justice Party leader and Minister, implemented the Justice Party's communal government order. Finally, the Non-Brahmins of the Madras Presidency gained a path to social justice.

The Congress party opposed the initiative by the Justice party. As a result, many Brahmins joined the Congress party. In 1924, at the Thiruvannamalai Congress Conference, Periyar urged the nationalists to address the problems faced by the non-Brahmins. In 1925, at the Kanchipuram Conference, Periyar moved a resolution to provide 50% reservation for the non-Brahmins. But due to the high drama by the Brahmin leaders, it failed. Congress failed to enact Proportional Representation multiple times. After realising that the Congress intended to serve the interests of Brahmins, Periyar and his allies left Congress, and eventually the Self-Respect Movement emerged. Several non-Brahmin leaders participated in the struggle against British imperialism, but several Brahmin Congress leaders were keen to secure government jobs for their kith and kin. This account reflects Periyar's own interpretation of the Congress position, which is examined in the wider scholarship (Pandian, 2007; Washbrook, 1976).

The Poona Pact and Separate Electorate for Dalits

The Morley-Minto reforms in the early 20th century (1909) paved the way for Indian representation in the legislative councils. The Indian Council Act of the British Parliament provided a separate electorate for the Muslims. In which the Muslims exclusively vote and elect the Muslim representatives. But the non-Brahmins were not given the same. In the nationalistic perspective it has been seen as a tactics for the communal division. But a demand for fair representation in Politics and power is a greatest support for the Nation which is dived by caste. In 1917 and 1918, Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, toured India, and the Montagu-Chelmsford Report followed in 1918. The Government of India Act was passed in December 1919 after the Joint Select Committee deliberated in 1919. The British Parliament's joint select committee was unable to do justice to the non-Brahmin communities. Hence, Dr TM Nair went to Britain to seek communal representation in the Indian legislative council. Till his death he fought for the cause of social justice and he died in London.

In 1925, Periyar started Kudi Arasu, a Tamil weekly, which remains evidence of the struggle for proportional representation. Congress called Periyar as a communalist. He replied to them

*"We find Brahmin-Sudra differentiation in temples, shrines, schools, public roads, hotels, etc. Were the high and low discriminations, created by us or by Brahmins? If anyone should think over all these, no one will dare to call us communalists" (*Veeramani, 2005).

On 17th and 18th of February 1929 the Self-Respect Movement organized its first self-respect conference in Chengalpet, Madras Presidency. Influential leaders like Dr Subbarayan, Chief Minister of Madras, WPA Soundarapandiyan MLC, PT Rajan MLC and many leaders of the non-Brahmin Movement joined the conference. The resolutions passed in this conference was implemented in the state of Tamil Nadu by various governments, it also made Tamil Nadu as a role model for India. The removal of the caste sure names was one of the immediate social changes began from this conference. The conference unanimously passed a resolution to investigate the representation of non-Brahmins by forming a committee comprised of legislators. *"As a teacher and examiner, schools, colleges, and other training institutions have been occupied by one category, which was against the development of non-Brahmins"* (Kayalvizhi J & Elaiyakumar R, 2023). It also urged for the development of the oppressed communities in the Presidency. *"The Government should give the lands to the scheduled castes*

and landless. First, preference must be given to Untouchables in vacant government jobs" (Kayalvizhi J & Elaiyakumar R, 2023). The conference urged the government to provide free books, clothes, food and other support, so that the untouchable's children can get an equal status to other categories. Through the above resolutions we can understand that the movement is much focused on the formation of Dravidian Consolidation. The Non-Brahmin to Dravidian identity shift begins from. Because the movement understood that the demand for Proportional Representation and Eradication of Caste are the inevitable work plan of a social reform and social justice movement.

In the struggle for the political representation of the Scheduled Castes, the Poona Pact period was a crucial time. The Indian Statutory Commission, popularly known as the Simon Commission, reported in 1930, and the Communal Award of August 1932 subsequently granted the separate electorate and dual suffrage. Dr BR Ambedkar tried a lot to secure a separate electorate and dual suffrage for the depressed class. Periyar EVR and his comrades from the Justice Party and the Self-Respect Movement joined the struggle. Sir AT Pannirselvam, Raja of Bobbili Ramakrishna Ranga Rao, and Sir A Ramaswami supported Dr BR Ambedkar at the Round Table Conference. Entire India and the Congress opposed the Simon Commission, but Periyar welcomed it. In the north, Dr BR Ambedkar raised the issue of a separate electorate to the commission. Mahatma Gandhi opposed Dr BR Ambedkar, claiming that he was the true representative of the Untouchables and not Dr BR Ambedkar. A few Dalit leaders influenced by Mahatma Gandhi wrote to the same address in London. Many media houses called Dr BR Ambedkar communalist and anti-national. MC Raja, a Dalit leader from the Madras Presidency, supported the separate electorate at the Round Table Conference. Still, after coming to India, he opposed it and, condemning Dr BR Ambedkar, organised conferences in Bombay with the support of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. Periyar condemned MC Raja and Swami Sagajanandham. Mahatma Gandhi started fast unto death against the demand for separate electorate and dual suffrage.

Periyar wrote in Kudi Arasu 18/09/1932 that *"In fact, fearing that Gandhi would die, if the separate electorate for untouchables is withdrawn, then we are sure that it's like sacrificing seven crore people lives to save one" (*Kaattaaru, 2020). Through this, we can understand the density of Periyar's support for the separate electorate and dual suffrage. Unfortunately, The Poona pact was signed between Dr BR Ambedkar and Madan Mohan Malaviya. Dr BR Ambedkar represented the depressed classes and Malaviya represented Mahatma Gandhi and caste Hindu leaders. Even after Dr B. R. Ambedkar's death, Periyar continued to campaign for the cause. The Pact of 24 September 1932 replaced separate electorates with reserved seats in joint electorates. (Ambedkar, 1945).

The First Constitutional Amendment for Social Justice

After the formation of Dravidar Kazhagam by merging the Self Respect Movement and the justice party in the year 1944 at a conference held at Salem, Madras Presidency Periyar was constantly engaged in the Social Reform Movement. On 18th regional conference of Dravidar Kazhagam, held at Tuticorin on 9th May 1948, he passed a resolution that

"Caste based representation should prevail until we annihilate caste system in our country" (Kayalvizhi J & Elaiyakumar R, 2023). And in the same conference they urged the government of India to implement the caste-based representation policy in the recruitment of Post office, railway, all India radio and other job recruitments by the government.

The continuation of the Communal Government Order after the Constitution's enactment was challenged before the Madras High Court and, subsequently, before the Supreme Court in the case of *State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan* (1951). Here, we have to understand that. Champakam Dorairajan, a Brahmin applicant, argued that she was denied admission to a medical college because of the communal allocation of seats, though she is not qualified for medical admission. Her advocate, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar, also a Brahmin and a member of the Constituent Assembly, highlighted that the reservation is an injustice against Brahmins. Accepting their arguments, the Madras High Court and the Supreme Court held that the Communal G.O. was unconstitutional because it violated Articles 15(1) and 29(2) of the Constitution. *State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan*, A.I.R. 1951 S.C. 226, was decided on 9 April 1951.

The Judgement by both the Madras high court and the apex court created huge tension in the state. On 14th August 1950, Periyar called for a protest in Demand of Communal G.O. The consolidation of non-Brahmins under the term Dravidian began to emerge in the field of Politics. Periyar United the people and campaigned against how only the 3% Brahmins monopolised everything, and the 97% non-Brahmins remained illiterate. Following the judgment, the Dravidar Kazhagam organised meetings and campaigns throughout the Madras State, advocating for constitutional protection for reservations. They criticised the Brahmins (including the petitioner, advocate, and judge) for opposing reservations for the majority of people who had been denied education. For supporters of reservations, this judgment was more than just a legal ruling regarding admissions to educational institutions; it represented a constitutional barrier to their long-standing struggle against social inequality. As a result, the ruling quickly sparked widespread political mobilisation in the Madras State, particularly under the leadership of Periyar and the Dravidar Kazhagam.

From December 1950 to May 1951 Dravidar Kazhagam organized three conferences in support of Proportional representation. Viduthalai, 5.12.1950 reported that In the Trichy conference Periyar made two important resolutions, one is that Union government should implement caste-based representation in the promotions as well and another one is that to boycott journals, newspapers which oppose the Proportional representation. Periyar viewed the Supreme Court's decision as a significant setback for the cause of social justice. In his speeches and writings during this period, he emphasised that equality could not be understood merely as equal treatment before the law, particularly when it ignored the unequal social conditions created by centuries of caste discrimination. He argued that if the Constitution prevented the State from providing representation to socially and educationally backward communities, then the Constitution itself needed to be amended. This argument resembles the later distinction between formal and substantive equality in Indian constitutional jurisprudence (Galanter, 1984).

Madurai communal representation conference was one of the important conferences, it condemned congress. Resolutions passed demanded the resignation of ministers condemning the judgement. *"According to Dravidar Kazhagam 'Communal representation' means giving reservation in education and employment opportunities based on the proportion of the existing population of the communities"* (Kayalvizhi J & Elaiyakumar R, 2023). This resolution demanded the policy to be implemented in both state and union government.

Though C.N Annadurai left Dravidar Kazhagam and established Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, but he joined Periyar's call for the struggle. The demand for Constitutional Amendment reflected in Delhi. The Home Minister Vallabhbhai Patel brought the issue to the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Minister of Law Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The Government of India came with The First Constitutional Amendment. While the amendment addressed multiple constitutional issues, including freedom of speech, agrarian reforms, and the protection of legislation under the Ninth Schedule, it is best remembered for establishing the constitutional foundation for affirmative action by inserting Article 15(4). The Constitution (First Amendment) Act received assent on 18 June 1951. *"Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes"* (The Constitution of India, 2026). Article 15(4) permits special provisions for the advancement of backward classes, including in education, while reservation in public employment rests on Article 16(4). This provision transformed the constitutional understanding of equality by recognizing that advancing socially and educationally backward communities required more than a formal guarantee of equal treatment before the law. It was one of the greatest achievements of Periyar and the Dravidian movement in the social justice history of Independent India. Through which the current reservation policy in India is alive.

The Reservation policy: A comparison between Tamil Nadu state and Union of India

In 1951, the reservation for the backward classes was 26%, and the Scheduled Castes got 16% in Tamil Nadu. In 1971, the DMK government, headed by the then chief minister of Tamil Nadu, Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi, increased the Quota for OBCs from 25% to 31% and for SCs from 16% to 18%. In 1979, the AIADMK government led by then Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran tried to implement a Rs 9,000 income ceiling. Dravidar Kazhagam opposed it vehemently. In the subsequent parliamentary election, they lost badly. Realising the situation, he withdrew the income ceiling and increased the reservation for backward classes from 31% to 50%. In 1989, the DMK government, headed by the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi, again increased the Quota, introduced subcategorisation of SC reservation, and raised SC reservation from 16% to 18%. Of this, 3% is exclusively given to SCAs. STs got a 1% reservation. MBCs and DNCs are given a 20% reservation. And in 2007 a 3.5% reservation was ensured for the BCMs (Muslims) within the backward class share. In total, the Reservation policy in Tamil Nadu state is 69%. Based on the Mandal Commission recommendations, in 1990 the Prime Minister of India, V.P. Singh, announced an order reserving 27% of the reservation as per Article 16(4) of the Constitution of India. As usual, a case was filed against the backwards class reservation popularly known as Indira Sawhney case. The nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court upheld the 27% reservation but unnecessarily

imposed a 50% cap on reservation. This judgment became a threat to the 69% reservation policy in Tamil Nadu. In *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992), the Supreme Court upheld the 27% quota, excluded the creamy layer, barred reservation in promotions (a restriction later overridden by the Seventy-seventh Amendment of 1995), and set the 50% ceiling, while allowing exceptions in extraordinary situations. Tamil Nadu's policy is discussed in the context of its wider political economy by Kalaiyarasan and Vijayabaskar (2021).

On November 23, 1992, a special meeting was held at Periyar Thidal, in which the president of Dravidar Kazhagam, Asiriyar K Veeramani, called on all leaders inclined towards social justice to protect the 69% reservation. For 1000 years of injustice done to the Dravidians, through 3 Brahmins, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, J. Jayalalithaa, Prime Minister of India, P.V. Narasimha Rao and the President of India, Shankar Dayal Sharma, the 76th Constitutional Amendment in 1994 was introduced. Asiriyar K Veeramani and the Dravidar Kazhagam achieved their goal of protecting the 69% reservation in Tamil Nadu. Yes, the Tamil Nadu reservation policy is placed in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution, which shields it from ordinary judicial review, subject to the basic structure test laid down in *I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu* (2007). It was passed unanimously by the lower and upper houses of Parliament and received the assent of the President of India on September 1 1994. The 69 percent quota rests on the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of Appointments or Posts in the Services under the State) Act, 1993, which the Seventy-sixth Amendment placed in the Ninth Schedule.

The 103rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution introduced a new social category called the Economically Weaker Section, and a 10% reservation was given to them based on their economic backwardness. This reservation doesn't include the poor from the ST/SC/OBC communities. But in a way, it did two things to the existing laws. It exceeded the 50% cap under India's reservation policy. Another one is that a long-time critic who said Brahmins have been excluded from the reservation policy was also nullified.

On the other hand, the class conscious left parties' long-standing demand for class-based reservation was also achieved through the EWS reservation. The EWS reservation was introduced in Parliament by the BJP and supported by the opposition parties, the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist). The EWS reservation is not implemented in Tamil Nadu. The former chief minister, MK Stalin, supported the Dalit Christian Reservation and passed a resolution in the state assembly. However, the Supreme Court ruled against it. The 103rd Amendment (2019) inserted Articles 15(6) and 16(6), and the Supreme Court upheld it by a 3 to 2 majority in *Janhit Abhiyan v. Union of India* (2022); the minority objected to the exclusion of the poor among the SC, ST and OBC.

Table 1: Government of India Reservation Policy

Category	**Reservation (%)**
Scheduled Castes	15
Scheduled Tribes	7.5

Other Backward Classes	27
Economically Weaker Sections	10
Total	59.5

Source: Government of India (2022).

Table 2: Government of Tamil Nadu Reservation policy

Category	**Reservation (%)**
Backward Classes (excluding Backward Class Muslims)	26.5
Backward Class Muslims	3.5
Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities	20
Scheduled Castes	15
Scheduled Castes - Arunthathiyars	3
Scheduled Tribes	1
Total	69

Source: Government of Tamil Nadu (2010). The EWS quota is not implemented in Tamil Nadu.

The denial of opportunity and Merit

From academics to gen Z social media influencers, they never failed to put these arguments against reservation

- Because of Reservation only caste is there
- Because of reservation people don't have merit and eligibility gets the chance

Those who fail in exams doesn't given admission for colleges, those who fail to get a degree certificate, without fulfilling the required eligibility criteria none of them are given opportunity because of caste. For a long time, people propagated a false narrative that asking for caste certificates in schools and caste is the reason for caste discrimination. Even before establishing formal educational institutions caste discrimination was there. In the name of caste people were denied education, through the same caste people should be given opportunity. This is not just a phenomenon in India, the same is the affirmative action in the US or in any place where the people are racially discriminated against. Critics contend that group quotas may reward advantage within the beneficiary group, and that entrance examinations measure a common standard. The empirical literature shows, however, that caste continues to shape educational and labour market outcomes even among equally qualified candidates (Deshpande, 2011), which weakens the premise of a level field. The Mandal Commission estimated that other backward classes formed about 52 percent of the population (Government of India, 1980), an

estimate based on the 1931 census, which is one reason a fresh enumeration is argued to be essential. The United States comparison also needs care: in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (2023) the US Supreme Court ended race-conscious admissions, whereas India's quotas rest on explicit constitutional text in Articles 15(4), 15(5) and 16(4) (Weisskopf, 2004).

Ongoing contemporary issues

In September 2023, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution demanding an increase in reservations. Now, the Congress Party has also put forward the demand for the Caste Census and taken the path of Social Justice. The BJP led union government tried to portray itself as a social justice government by installing ST, SC, and OBC in the top-level positions in India. But failed to conduct caste census. Now the census is ongoing, but there have been issues raised by the OBCs, because there is no option to enumerate the OBC population. This has to be rectified; the OBC enumeration will provide a data backup for proportional representation. However, the BJP implemented the sub-categorisation of scheduled caste reservation in states like Haryana within a short span of time, implementing it immediately after the Supreme Court ruled in its favour. The subcategorization in OBC reservation is not contested much but the subcategorization of Scheduled Caste reservation was challenged before the court. But the supreme court ruled in favour. the Union government announced in 2025 that caste enumeration would be included in the next census . The Supreme Court's ruling on SC sub-classification is *State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh* (2024), delivered by a seven-judge bench by a 6 to 1 majority, with Justice Bela Trivedi dissenting. The Bihar caste survey of 2023 reported that backward and extremely backward classes together formed about 63 percent of the state's population, and the state's increase of reservation to 65 percent was set aside by the Patna High Court in 2024. These examples show how new data and the 50 percent ceiling interact.

Periyar EVR demanded for a proportional representation and logically her argued for the need of it. On 13.08.1950 he gave a speech on Why Communal G.O? he said *"The Brahmins monopolising these posts is detrimental to the Non-Brahmins, who form the majority of the population. Is this democracy? Is this the standard of our administration? If 87 percent of the population is kept under under this sad plight, is this democracy? Is it just, reasonable and fair to allow the 3 percent of the population to monopolize and dominate? Is it wrong to assert for our rights? We, the Dravidians, demand justice. We demand respect. We demand our share"* (Veeramani, 2005). It is still relevant today. The cases and judgements always create a new situation in the reservation policy. Whereas the representation in judiciary is one of the long-standing demands. The issues like Creamy Layer, Subcategorization, Dalit Christian reservation, Dalit Muslim reservation and the OBC Muslim reservation has been discussed in the contemporary time. Other than all these issues the demand for Proportional representation is one of the important issue which is still pending in Indian politics.

Suggestions

The following recommendations are presented as policy implications arising from the historical and analytical discussion. Their implementation should be guided by reliable and periodically updated data, transparent eligibility and allocation criteria, public reporting, and independent

monitoring. The objective should not be limited to announcing reservation percentages; it should also be to assess whether reserved opportunities are being filled, whether benefits are equitably distributed within eligible categories, and whether barriers to access are being addressed.

- The Government of India should conduct caste census, by using the data Proportional Representation should be given to ST/SC/OBC and Religious Minorities. Proportional representation should be implemented at both Union and State level across India.
- As there is no reservation policy in the private sector, the diversity and representation of ST/SC/OBC and Religious Minorities is not there in the top level management. So it is necessary to implement reservation policy in the private sector. (Athi Asuran, 2019)
- The government should stop disinvestment and privatizing the public sector. Instead, the government should focus on the governmentalisation.
- The proportional representation policy should accommodate suitable Subcategorization for the communities who doesn't have access to education and employment, proper Roaster Method also need to be implemented. So that each will get their share. The post-based roster system was upheld in *R.K. Sabharwal v. State of Punjab* (1995).
- Till that the Government of India should implement the reservation policy in the admission, employment and Promotion in full of it. And it should be monitored and evaluated timely.

Conclusion

The politics of reservation continues because of new movements against reservation like the "Reservation Hatao Andolan". So, it is necessary to understand the historical background of the caste problem and it's symptoms and the solutions, which impact everyday politics in India. Though there is no monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the Reservation policy, the zero reservation, dereservation or the non-found suitable in the admission and employment opportunities revealed through the Right to information act and addressed in the Parliament of India about the non-implementation of the reservation policy. Monopoly in any sector is not good. Diversity will always be better. In India those who suffer in poverty and unemployment are the majority of the non-brahmins, increasing the governmentalisation and implementation of proportional representation will help them to live with self-respect. Taken together, the evidence reviewed above supports the article's central claim: Periyar and the Dravidian movement turned a demand for communal representation into an enforceable constitutional principle through sustained mobilisation, the First Amendment, and the Seventy-sixth Amendment. The principal limitations are the reliance on movement sources and the lack of recent enumeration data. Future research should combine the caste census data, once published, with archival work on implementation and on the experience of the least represented sub-groups, so that proportional representation can be assessed on empirical grounds.

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