

Policy Report

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Caste, Urban Spaces and the State: Dalits in Telangana

Vanya Mehta



THE HINDU CENTRE

for

Politics and Public Policy

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ABSTRACT

This report looks at the emerging caste politics in the newly formed State of Telangana, as well as the policy towards Dalits, or, the castes that fall under the government category of Scheduled Castes (SCs). A survey was conducted in four Dalit neighbourhoods (*bastis*) in Hyderabad, the capital of the new Telangana State, covering 216 respondents. This report reveals notions of impurity and inferiority that still dictate the occupations and livelihoods of Dalits, particularly in the city of Hyderabad. It also analyses the tools available to Andhra Pradesh's and the newly created Telangana State's Dalit population to understand how Scheduled Caste reservation policy shapes the space and availability for inclusion in the public and private sectors.

Of late, several studies led by economists and sociologists look into the effects of caste discrimination on the ability of Dalits to get employment, education, and equal status in society. This report highlights some of the challenges faced by the Dalit community in Hyderabad as well as the effectiveness of the policies in pre- and post-bifurcated Andhra Pradesh.

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I. Introduction

On, December 2, 2012, a landmark bill was passed in the Andhra Pradesh State Assembly to increase the allocation of the State budget to 16 per cent for the welfare of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to match the proportion of their population within the State. In that same year, Andhra Pradesh's budget towards SC and ST development was approximately 9.3 per cent, which fell short of the government's target of 16.2 per cent, according to an article in *The Hindu* from March 17, 2012. A substantial increase in the total State budget for the welfare of SCs and STs presented a victory and an important line of inquiry: Who would be the true beneficiaries of this expanded budget? What have schemes in the past indicated about the infrastructural strength for addressing the complex barriers that caste discrimination presents to upward mobility?

The reservation system, as well as other social welfare efforts led by the government, would ideally provide a foundation for representation of all sections of society in educational institutions, political parties,¹ and the government. However, coupling the reservation system with India's multi-layered bureaucracy has often resulted in inadequate and unequal representation. Furthermore, curbing the caste biases of individuals, who wield stronger economic

¹ With respect to Scheduled Castes, one study has shown that quotas for representation in politics do not have a demonstrable effect on overall development of SCs, or literacy and employment of SCs, in constituencies reserved for SC representation (Jensenius, 2015).

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and political force, by guaranteeing upward mobility for SCs through reservations, is met with rigid resistance as well as uncomfortable adjustment. The policy agenda of equal access to opportunity unfortunately resides within a strict quota system that does not respond well to the complexity of the caste system. This report seeks to understand the imbalance in access to resources between different Scheduled Castes in Telangana and pre-bifurcated Andhra Pradesh, as well as the shortcomings of the reservation system to meet the needs of the underserved and marginalised groups within the larger category of Scheduled Castes.

Despite the commonly held belief that casteism and untouchability are prevalent only in rural India with few traces of this practice in cosmopolitan cities, this report reveals notions of impurity and inferiority that still dictate the occupations and livelihoods of Dalits, particularly in the city of Hyderabad. It also analyses the tools available to Andhra Pradesh's and the newly created Telangana State's Dalit population to understand how Scheduled Caste reservation policy shapes the space and availability for inclusion in the public and private sectors.

The report's findings are based on a survey that covered 208 households in four neighbourhoods in Hyderabad; each neighbourhood dominated by a particular Dalit caste. The survey was conducted in a Mang colony in Afsal Sagar, a Mehtar colony in Sultan Shahi, a Madiga colony in Sri Ram Nagar, and a Mala colony in Chintal Basti. The survey also included a very small number of people from the Buduga Jangam community living in Chintal Basti. As became evident throughout the research, Dalits live in separately situated *bastis* in Hyderabad, which are referred to locally by their

caste name.² The *bastis* were selected from a list of those areas where individuals are receiving a benefit scheme from either the Telangana State Scheduled Castes Cooperative Finance Corporation (referred to as TSSCC and formerly known as the Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Caste Finance Corporation), which falls under the Ministry of Social Welfare, or, the Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA), under the Department of Municipal Administration and Urban Development.

This report is divided into four sections. After the introductory section, I explain the survey methodology used and set the context of the status of SCs and the dynamics of caste within Dalit castes. The third section briefly describes the Dalit mobilisations in pre-bifurcated Andhra Pradesh and the history of caste politics in the region. This section explores some of the main reasons why Andhra Pradesh is an important State with regard to Scheduled Caste policy. The purpose of this section is to highlight the role of mobilisations in the formation of State policy as well as the strength of the dominant castes. The fourth section discusses the findings of the survey. The final section analyses the policy implications of the survey findings along with the latest changes in social welfare policy towards economic empowerment of SCs. While the government policy in Andhra Pradesh continues to morph in a seemingly positive direction, there appears to be a lack in structural change to absorb large budgetary shifts in favour of social welfare for Dalits.

² This became particularly clear when I was given a list of schemes given out to SCs from the MEPMA department. The location of SC beneficiaries was predominantly in caste-named localities.

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In a State that has seen a thriving culture of Dalit literature and activism, accompanied by a massive increase in budgetary allocation to development of SCs, this report is an example of a sliver of the current lived experiences of certain Dalit caste groups living in Hyderabad as well as an analysis of the policy framework developed to socially and economically empower the SC castes.

II. Context and Methodology

Access to urban space and inclusion can be organised into three categories: 1. physical (through land or housing), 2. within the government sector (welfare schemes and political, educational and job reservations), and 3. the private sector where there are no legislative measures that guarantee reservations. Through a survey in 208 households conducted in four different Dalit neighbourhoods in Hyderabad, accompanied by interviews with district collectors, the Telangana Social Welfare Ministry, and leading academics in caste studies and Dalit activists, this report seeks to contextualise the incorporation of Dalit communities in the city of Hyderabad.

The survey instrument asked 45 questions. Information about household income, educational background, employment, housing type, basic services such as availability of drinking water, drainage facilities, and electricity, were sought from respondents in the first part of the survey. The second part inquired whether the household members were a part of any unions, residential welfare associations, *Safai Karmachari Andolan*, or Ambedkarite organisations.³ The third part of the survey explored any perceptions the respondents may have about caste and politics in the city. Every interview taken was

³ Very few organisations fall under this category, from percussionists in the Mang Garodi community who gather under the name of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for several festivals to the organisations launched under Ambedkar's name such as Valmiki Ambedkar Association, all of which were separate from the Scheduled Caste Residential Welfare Associations within the neighborhood. We were not able to pin down the details of their activities.

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of the “household head”, which was in most cases the male earning member of the family. In the event that a household had more than one earning member, we surveyed the eldest member. The total respondent ages varied from 18 to 73, with an average age of 39.74 years. We found 19 cases where females were the head of the household, some of whom were widowed.

Interviews were also conducted with officials in the government bodies set up to address the needs of the SC population. The newly divided Ministry of Social Welfare implements its welfare schemes for SCs through the Scheduled Caste Development Department. Within this, the main bodies are the TSSCCFC (Telangana State Scheduled Castes Cooperative Financial Corporation) and APSCCFC (Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes cooperative Financial Corporation). These two organisations control most of the major schemes and distribute loans. In addition to this, the Andhra Pradesh Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (APSWREIS) and Telangana Residential Educational Institutions Society (TREIS) run schools across all districts for SCs, STs, BCs, and minorities. The report includes interviews with the chairpersons of the TSSCCFC and TREIS⁴. In unified Andhra Pradesh, there were six institutions responsible for the welfare of Dalits. Under the current Telangana government, several schemes are being introduced such as the Land Purchase Scheme, Kalyana Laxmi, Rehabilitation of Jogins, Bonded Labour, and Scavengers as well as the implementation of Rules of Reservation and Financial Assistance

⁴ Many of the bodies were still under the process of division at the time of interview.

to Students of Telangana. The entire Ministry of Social Welfare is under the direction of the Chief Minister of Telangana, K. Chandrashekhara Rao. The Hyderabad Scheduled Castes Cooperative Finance Corporation, separate from the TSSCCFC, operates under the directive of the District Collector and notably provides loans to risk-free SC beneficiaries in the city. The argument held by the advocates for the Andhra Pradesh SC ST Sub-Plan (SCSP) was that previously the funds were not reaching the people adequately (M. Anjaneyulu, Director of Center for Dalit Studies, personal communication, November 4, 2014). According to the latest Andhra Pradesh SCSP 2015-2016 plan, published by Minister of Finance, Yanamala Ramakrishnudu, the total budgetary allocation for all programmes is Rs. 10,690.28 Lakhs or 17.08 per cent of the total State budget. The allocation for Telangana's SCSP 2015-2016 plan lies at Rs. 8,089.24 crores, which is 15.44 per cent of the total budget.

In Hyderabad, there are six schools exclusively for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and Backward Caste enrolment in the city under the APSWREIS, now TREIS, run by former Indian Police Service officer, Praveen Kumar, who is also a Madiga.⁵ According to Mr. Kumar, “only 10 per cent” of the 19 schools across Telangana have proper furniture. However, after the passage of the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan and increased funding for education for SCs, he said in an interview that TREIS would be able to afford better facilities for the TREIS schools. Further, the Hyderabad Scheduled Castes

⁵ In these schools, Mr. Kumar has banned the usage of the word “Dalit” among students as he feels the word, which literally means “crushed” or “oppressed”, is a negative reinforcement of casteism.

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Cooperative Finance Corporation's schemes range from providing free bus passes to commuters to loans for autos or small *kirana* shops. During the time of the survey, the Telangana government was just in the first six months of formation. This period, according to the Vice President of the TSSCCFC, B. Jayaraj, was marked by a complete halt of funding for any new loans or promised schemes. Additionally, the Telangana government's position on Dalits has shifted to exclude migrated communities, such as Mehtars, one of the communities surveyed. Thus, at the time of the survey, the Mehtar community's caste certificates were revoked. These certificates are not only a form of identification, but also a proof of identity for receiving benefits under various schemes.⁶

The 2011 Census enumerated the population of SCs in Hyderabad at approximately six per cent. In the 2001 Census, the population of SCs in Hyderabad was reported as eight per cent. Of the 59 Scheduled Castes recognised by the Government of India in Andhra Pradesh, 48 per cent are Madigas, 40 per cent are Malas or Mala Ayawaru, two per cent are Adi Dravida, and one per cent each are Adi Andhra, Buduga Jangam, Mala Sale, and Relli. (Open Government Data Platform India (OGDP), accessed October 31, 2015).⁷ Mang Garodis are a denotified, formerly nomadic, caste from Maharashtra that came to Hyderabad as acrobats and mat-weavers (Subbakrishna, 2006). Mang Garodis account for very little of the population of SCs, 1,397 people of which 1,286 are in urban areas. Mehtars, a manual scavenging caste, arrived in the State from

⁶ The community leaders reported this during the course of the survey.

⁷ Breakdowns of caste by district could not be found in the data provided by OGDP.

Haryana as servants to the British and are 7,037 of the total population of which 6,503 are urban.⁸ Buduga Jangams are a nomadic caste mostly found in parts of Karnataka and their population in Andhra Pradesh is 111,710, of which 70 per cent reside in rural areas. Both beggars and agricultural labourers (Venkateshwarlu, 1999), Buduga Jangams are under SC and BC status in both States. The most recent report states that the Buduga Jangam community has lost its SC status in Andhra Pradesh but has retained it in Telangana (List of Scheduled Castes, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment). Based on the Census data, it appears that most Buduga Jangams in fact reside in districts of Telangana.⁹ In 2013, as reported in *The Hindu*, the president of the Kurnool District Buduga Jangam Welfare Association in Andhra Pradesh raised a complaint in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly that the loss of SC status upon migrating from Telangana results in hardship for community. In the case of Madigas and Malas, the dominant SC castes in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the former were traditionally engaged in producing hides and skins as traded commodities, while the latter were largely agricultural labourers (Thirumali, 2013). The data presented in a later section discusses the situation of the communities surveyed.

⁸ Shailesh Kumar, a member of the Valmiki community, who is a Railway employee and used to live in the Mehtarwadi, is doing his M.Phil on the history of his own community and traces the history of the movement of this group.

⁹ The data for Scheduled Caste population by caste reports the Buduga Jangam population in the districts of Telangana only, as they had lost the status of SCs in Andhra Pradesh. See: <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/141226/nation-current-affairs/article/buduga-jangams-have-sc-status-telangana-not-andhra-pradesh>

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Over several decades, sub-castes within the SC category fought for more equal representation in the reservation system. Madigas, since the 1980s, have demanded a greater share of reservation benefits in all sectors, arguing that Malas historically captured the majority of the share. The movement for sub-categorisation of SCs led to the creation of an ordinance in 1999 to sub-divide the 22.5 per cent available government jobs. The ordinance divided SCs into four groups based on the level of “backwardness” of the community. This Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservations) Act, 2000, was declared unconstitutional on November 5, 2004, by a five-judge bench on a majority of 4 to 1. The Supreme Court’s decision in *E.V. Chinmaiah v. the State of Andhra Pradesh & Ors.* stated, among a variety of reasons, that it was violating Article 14 of the Constitution, which protects individuals from discrimination by the state.

The Court order further said that the Scheduled Caste group is a “class” and that it is not “open to the State to sub classify a class already recognised by the Constitution”. There were additional concerns regarding the possibility of “artificial inequalities” produced by classification. The Supreme Court order followed a decision made in a previous judgment in the case of *Food Corporation of India¹⁰ & Ors. Vs. Om Prakash Sharma & Ors.* (1998), which stated: “Mini-classifications based on micro-distinctions are false to our egalitarian faith and only substantial and straightforward classifications plainly promoting relevant goals can have

¹⁰ The Food Corporation of India is a government-owned body that executes National Food Policy, such as distributing food grain under the Public Distribution System or regulating market prices.

constitutional validity". This judgment forbade the possibility of addressing the inequalities among castes, which still remains an issue of concern to effective policy.¹¹ By viewing SCs as one particular class, the current order does not address the diversity within those castes, as well as the presence of migrant castes. Every Dalit caste corresponded to a different occupation, such as leather working or manual scavenging, and historically castes have discriminated against each other within this hierarchy. For example, there is a caste group known as Mala Masti, which is subservient to the Mala caste (Rajpramukh, 2013). Examples such as these indicate that there is a high possibility that castes with greater political and economic control will capitalise more from the reservations system than other castes.

¹¹ Later, in 2008, Justice Usha Mehra headed a commission that submitted a report favouring classification of reservation, stating that Madigas were benefiting less from reservation than Malas.

III. Telangana and Dalits

When I asked Mallepalli Laxmaiah, Director, Centre for Dalit Studies, and K. Satyanarayana, Director of Dalit Studies, English and Foreign Languages University, two individuals based in Hyderabad who are highly regarded for their work relating to Dalit studies and mobilisation, about what demands Dalits have from the newly created Telangana State, they both agreed on a surprising point: There was no such separate Dalit movement for Telangana. Although Dalit student union leaders dominated the Telangana student movements with the goal of gaining more political and economic control for Dalits in the new State, the main focus of the statehood agitation outside student campuses was in the name of economic inequality between the populations of the Telangana and coastal Andhra regions.¹² The movement itself, according to many leading activist-writers (K. Nalgundwar, personal communication, September 30, 2014), and the creation of the Telangana State, was not the greatest victory for the Dalit community and their demands for a larger share in the new State, either politically or economically.

Dalits, Other Backward Castes (OBCs), and forward castes all united to fight for their rights against the coastal Andhraites, who have supposedly capitalised on government positions, political power, and

¹² The Co-Chairman of the Telangana Joint Action Committee was the founder of the Centre for Dalit Studies, Mallepalli Laxmaiah. Nevertheless, the Dalit student unions possessed their own Joint Action Committees. In Warangal, students from the Communist Party of India (CPI) Youth wing told me in an interview in August 2014 that Dalit students took over the reins of the Telangana student movement.

various aspects of the public and private sphere. However, it would be difficult to take the caste structure out of the Telangana struggle. For instance, political leaders in post-independence Andhra Pradesh were perceived to consolidate on the basis of their caste and there emerged a natural dialogue with regard to politics in the area: A mirror to the rivalry between landowning castes across the State. In *The Fall and Rise of Telangana*, Gautam Pingle¹³ points out that the Indian National Congress (INC) was viewed at the time as a “Reddy-dominated party” (Pingle, 2014, p. 75) in battle with the “powerful and rich Kamma community in coastal districts” (p. 80) for political power. He also notes that in the 11 cabinets formed between 1956 and 1980, “the Reddy contingent supplied an average of 26 per cent of the total, Brahmins (7 per cent), Kammas (8 per cent) and Kapus and other Backward Castes (28 per cent). Similarly in the seven assemblies, Reddys possessed an “average strength of 294 seats” from 1957 to 1985, with an average of 25 per cent of seats, “with Brahmins getting 9 per cent, Kammas 14 per cent and Backward Castes 17 per cent” (p. 81).¹⁴ The INC was challenged by the emergence of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP),¹⁵ which the “politically ambitious OBC elite gravitated to” (Srinivasulu, 2000, p. 4), post-Indira Gandhi’s Emergency period. The confrontation between political parties with regard to their safeguarding of caste-

¹³ Gautam Pingle is the Director of Research for the Administrative Staff College of India in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

¹⁴ These numbers are further explored and corroborated in the following article: Reddy, Ram G. “The Politics of Accommodation,” *Dominance and State Power in Modern India*, eds. Francine R. Frankel and M.S. A. Rao.

¹⁵ The TDP’s leadership, N.T. Rama Rao and his son-in-law Chandrababu Naidu, are of the Kamma caste.

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based interests continues to be an entry point to analysis on the part of intellectuals and journalists in the area.

The Chief Minister of Telangana and leader of the TRS Party, K. Chandrashekhara Rao (KCR), is from a Velama, forward, traditionally land owning caste, and has put forth a platform for Dalit empowerment. For almost four years of campaigning, KCR promised to replace himself with a Dalit chief minister after achieving control of Telangana State, as seen in several reports at the time. His unwillingness to do this is seen by many, including prominent scholar, Kancha Ilaiah, as a testament to the partiality he may possess towards his Velama caste.¹⁶ This would be hard to deny, as he has elevated both his son and daughter into the Cabinet. Nevertheless, KCR has publicly created the impression of a Telangana State by and for the Dalit cause, promising to introduce new measures almost every other day, as can be seen in his recent public statement to include the life histories of Dalit leaders in Telangana's textbooks, as well as to construct memorials in honour of Dalit leaders from Telangana. Policy-wise, he also launched an ambitious Land Purchase Scheme (LPS) intended to encourage access of up to three acres of land to poor landless Dalit women. The LPS has a funding budget of approximately Rs. 100,000 lakhs for implementation (Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan 2015-2016, p. 88). According to the Mr. Jayaraj of the TSSCC, due to the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, at the time of the research in October 2014, funds were not being released to the TSSCC.

¹⁶ Ilaiah also has publicly discouraged his peers to vote for TRS, describing the new Telangana government as "a wicked plan of feudal lords".

The Backward Caste population of Telangana, in total, is higher than in Seemandhra. Estimates mark the SCs, Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and minorities at 90 per cent of the total Telangana population (Hanumantha, 2014, p. 10). Therefore, one would expect that Dalits and OBCs feel a stronger claim to the land, government, and political structure of Telangana. However, their control over these three essential aspects is close to non-existent. KCR met with M. Laxmaiah, the founder of the Centre for Dalit Studies, promising to follow through with any measures to ensure that the new State will be devoted to Dalit uplift and benefit (Mallepalli Laxmaiah, personal communication, October 13, 2014). There is an undeniable strength that the Dalit lobby has with regard to the future of the social welfare schemes. However, when it comes to other aspects of the government, it is difficult to see where inclusion will be possible. For instance, KCR has placed his son K.T. Rama Rao as the Minister of Panchayati Raj and Information Technology and his nephew, Harish Rao, is the Minister of Irrigation, Mining & Geology: Three extremely important and revenue-generating divisions of the State government.

Currently, forward castes such as Reddys¹⁷, Velamas, Kammas, Kapus, and the backward caste of Goudas dominate both rural and

¹⁷ Reddys and Kammas are 6.5 per cent and 4.8 per cent of the States' population, according to the 1921 Census, which was the last to demarcate any dominant caste population percentages. Reddys are dominant in Telangana and Rayalaseema while Kammas are dominant in coastal districts. These castes and their control over land and water marks a great deal of their control over the village life, however, their grasp has now reached business and industry. In northern Telangana, Velamas are influential landowners, despite their population being only 3 per cent of the total State.

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urban spaces. This dates back to the Nizam rule, when the “landed gentry consisting of Muslim *jagirdars*, and Hindu *deshmukhs* belonging to the Reddy, Velama, and Brahmin castes, constituted the support base of the Nizam’s rule” (Srinivasulu, 2002, p. 14). A system of extraction of free goods and services, *vetti*, as well as illegal eviction of farmers, led to the rise of an anti-Nizam and anti-feudal peasant struggle. It is to be noted that Dalits often were confined to *vetti*, or bonded labour (Thorat and Sadana, 2014). K. Srinivasulu, in his study of caste and politics in Andhra Pradesh, describes the subsequent resistance movements in the 1940s as led by communists against feudal lords, with Kapu-Reddys in the main leadership positions of the armed squads and panchayats. At the end of the struggle, the wastelands and common pastures were redistributed to Dalits while the lands of the Brahmins, Reddys, and Velamas were distributed to Kapu-Reddy cultivators and tenants (Srinivasulu, 2002). Needless to say, the caste structure continued to institutionalise itself in the land conflicts and class hierarchy.

Space for Dalit political engagement also became intertwined with the Naxalbari movement in the 1970s. During the course of overthrowing the long-standing landlords in rural Andhra and Telangana, many Dalits gained access to education and began to rise in the ranks. The late poet K.G. Satyamurthy from Gudivada in Andhra Pradesh, founded the People’s War (PW) Party in 1980 and initially devoted his life to the communist movement and then conducted a series of classes around Andhra Pradesh to mobilise Dalits to fight against atrocities. He also later supported the creation of Telangana and the MRPS (Satyanarayana and Tharu, 2013). One of the first two Dalit advocates to be designated senior advocate in

the high court, Bojja Thakaram, started out his career of advocacy in the 1960s in Nizamabad. Filing cases on behalf of farm servants for false accusations from landlords, Thakaram began making his way as a successful civil rights lawyer. Meanwhile, as he says in his interview with K. Satyanarayana, Thakaram connected with a lecturer in a college in Nizamabad and “inspired by the Dalit Panther movement in Maharashtra, which was at its heights in the late 1960s and early ‘70s,” formed the Ambedkar Yuvajana Sangham (AYS). In 1971 when a landlord in Palem, a village near Nizamabad, killed a farmer, Thakaram remembers a massive public meeting condemning the attack, a kind of public assembly that “had never happened before. People were scared” (Satyanarayana and Tharu, 2013, p. 451). Thakaram was also the president of the AP Beedi Workers’ Union in the districts of Telangana as well as vice president of the AP Civil Liberties Committee. The Communist Party of India – Marxist Leninist (CPI-ML) supported Thakaram’s ascent in politics and in 1994 he resigned from the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in opposition to its alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Uttar Pradesh (Satyanarayana and Tharu, 2013, p. 453). The alliance between the BSP and the BJP officially formed closer to 1997 and was part of a larger political strategy to resist Ambedkarite politics yet retain Dalit votes, a strategy not only disliked by the likes of Thakaram but also resisted by the BJP’s OBC leadership in UP at that time (Jaffrelot et al, 2003, p. 151). In Andhra Pradesh, however, as more Dalits gained positions of power in the police force and through politics,¹⁸ these

¹⁸ For example, Thakaram cites one example when the Deputy Superintendent in Nizamabad was a Dalit and acted quickly to respond to a case of caste violence (Satyanarayana, 2013, p. 452).

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smaller Ambedkarite groups such as AYS were able to expand their power and network.

In addition to the communist-supported rise of Dalit leaders, there were several other movements in the struggle for equal representation within the Dalit castes. Prior to India's independence, Bhagya Reddy Verma, who is considered to be the father of the Dalit movement in Andhra Pradesh, led several struggles and founded separate schools for Dalits to promote education that otherwise excluded Dalits. Though a respected social reformer, Verma was known to be partial towards his own Mala caste, excluding Madiga entry into schools, according to P. Muthaiah in his interview published in the book *Steel Nibs are Sprouting*. This kind of behaviour prompted responses from the Madiga community and eventually, in the 1980s, the Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi came about as a reaction to the consolidation of Mala benefits (Satyanarayana and Tharu, 2013). Manda Krishna Madiga, who is still politically active and contested in the 2014 Lok Sabha under the Mahajana Socialist Party, which he founded in January 2014, led a strong movement to reclaim the Madiga identity as well as the reservations they believed to be rightfully theirs.

Professor P. Muthaiah, the current head of the Political Science Department at Osmania University, is a Madiga Dalit from the Khammam district of Telangana who proposed alongside Manda Krishna Madiga's MRPS for sub-categorisation within the Scheduled Castes category. This sub-categorisation of SC reservations, into four subdivisions of A, B, C, and D, was designed to give a higher share of reservations in jobs for those castes that are worse off than others. The "ABCD" reservation places each SC caste into a category based

on their relative socioeconomic status. Group A consists of Relli castes, Group B of Madigas, Group C of Malas, and Group D of Adi-Andhra castes. The Mehtar caste falls under Group A, as some of the most backward castes from the Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes Presidential Order, 1950. Buduga Jangams and Mang Garodis fall under the same category as Madigas, in Group B. “The fifty-nine SC sub-castes are not in a position to benefit from reservation in an even manner as these castes have already acquired unequal positions within the Dalit caste hierarchy,” Muthaiah wrote in the 1980s. This ABCD reservation¹⁹ faced resistance from a formation of Malas called the Mala Mahanadu. In Muthaiah’s work on the sub-categorisation of caste, he mentions Mehtars and Mangs as two Dalit castes who are as equal as Madigas in terms of backwardness and lack of access to the benefits of reservation. In his essay, Muthaiah argues that the sub-castes should receive categorisation, in which Mehtars are one caste that fall under the A category (the most marginalised). Later, in 2011, in an interview, Muthaiah recalls how “*safai karamcharis* told Krupakar Madiga: ‘The justice we did not get for 400 years, we received in four years’” (Satyanarayana and Tharu, 2013, p. 531).

When it comes to the inclusion of minorities in the current scenario, a scrutinising eye can see the uphill battle faced in the formation of Telangana. After a series of agitations led by students and activists in late-2009 and early-2010, the government set up a committee to consult political parties, public representatives, and village panchayats, and look at existing government data of Andhra

¹⁹ During the course of the survey, several individuals in the Mehtar caste hailed the success of the ABCD reservation.

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Pradesh. Called the Srikrishna Committee Report on Telangana, named after Committee chairperson and former Supreme Court Justice B. N. Srikrishna, the report was published in December 2010²⁰ prior to which a public assembly was held where tens of thousands of people alongside Joint Action Committees (JAC), or interest groups, presented their demands. The report summarises the views of Scheduled Caste representatives and states that Madigas have a great presence in the Telangana movement due to their larger population density in Telangana districts (Srikrishna Committee Report, 2010, p. 371). The report concludes, “Dalit leaders feel that separate states would resolve the Madiga/Mala dispute and at the same time increase political representation to the Dalits and allow them to exercise greater political power”. In the report, the Committee wrote that Andhra Pradesh is one of the most “progressive” States in the country, adding, “it could arguably be said that this very progress has led Telangana to revive the demand for a separate State in order to gain greater political space and to bridge more rapidly the remaining, though diminishing, disparities” (Srikrishna Committee Report, 2010, p. ii). This can be seen in the National Sample Survey’s 64th round, wherein 39.3 per cent of SCs in Hyderabad are in public services, and over the period of 1999 to 2008, the share of jobs for SCs has increased by 15.1 per cent (Srikrishna Committee Report, 2010, p. 312).

²⁰ The Committee consisted of Justice B. N. Srikrishna, a retired judge in the Supreme Court, Vinod Kumar Duggal, former Home Secretary, and one professor each from the National Law University Delhi, the National Council of Applied Economic Research in Delhi, and IIT Delhi.

The Committee's judgment on Andhra Pradesh as a progressive State is also evident in certain landmark judgments with respect to Scheduled Castes. There were several major Dalit agitations in the districts of coastal Andhra. After Tsundur Massacre in 1991, a special court was set up by Special Judge Anis in the village itself to deliver justice, under the SC/ST Atrocities (Prevention) Act 1989. The special court was reported in the *Deccan Chronicle* and *The Hindu* to be the first in history to set up in a village, and set a precedent for the country with regard to atrocities against SCs and STs.

Though the Dalit movement in pre-bifurcated Andhra Pradesh secured victories, losses such as the removal of sub-categorisation still followed. One could say that the movement in Andhra Pradesh has seen much greater solidarity, with massive resistance movements demanding equality and compensation for the massacres. In Telangana, the number of caste atrocities remains smaller (K. Satyanarayana, personal communication, October 15, 2014) and the resistance movement was largely brought under the Naxalite movement. Thus, Telangana's Dalit population is not quite as established as its Andhra counterparts. However, the strength of the intellectual and political movement remains:²¹ One that began as a struggle to allow Dalits to set foot in schools, to a time today when major positions in university departments are held by Dalits and students, intellectuals, and political leaders are holding vibrant, open debates on the space and scope for Dalit uplift in the new Telangana State.

²¹ For instance, Telangana-based writer and Dalit activist Kancha Ilaiah is widely quoted across the country for his views on caste politics and Dalit mobilisation.

IV. Findings from the Survey

There were 208 household respondents in the survey, distributed in four *bastis*. In each case, the respondent selected was the household head, while we also collected data on the occupation of the spouse of the household head. Of the respondents, 153 out of 208 were Telugu speakers and 53 respondents had at least one member in their family with a government job.

The first *basti* surveyed for the study is in an area called Afsal Sagar, Nampally, bordered on all sides by Muslim dominant neighbourhoods. Called the Mang Garodi *basti* by the surrounding locality, the Mang Garodi Scheduled Caste community migrated from Maharashtra “while wandering as acrobats and mat-weavers” (Subbakrishna, 2006, p. 200). Originally a nomadic group, the Mang Garodis settled in the areas surrounding the now demolished Afsal Sagar Dam.²² According to the leader of the Afsal Sagar SC/ST Residential Society, a handful of permanent government jobs were given to their community after men were brought over in the 1980s to handle carcasses after a disastrous flood that took place in Vijayawada.

²² In an interview with Anant Maringanti of Hyderabad Urban Lab, Mr. Maringanti confirmed through HUL’s research and conversations with the Mang Garodi community that they moved to the area in order to build the dam, and later settling around the same. Similar reports came from the Garodi community in our survey, though we could not get any official information on the migration of this nomadic caste.

There are three phases to the *basti*: Afsal Sagar I, II, and III. Police often monitor this area and conduct routine raids at the time of any burglary. The procedure, according to the residents in Afsal Sagar, entails arresting a handful of Mang Garodi men the day a crime is committed and releasing them later in the evening.²³ The leader of the *basti* filed petitions with the Chief Minister and Members of Parliament on behalf of the Afsal Sagar SC/ST Residential Welfare Society stating that Mang Garodis are unnecessarily targeted and discriminated against based on their caste.

In this *basti*, we conducted a survey covering 73 household heads or primary income generators²⁴ in the first phase of Afsal Sagar, which consists of approximately 150 households. Of these, three of the household heads were from Backward or Muslim castes, living on rent to a Mang Garodi resident. The remaining 70 respondent household heads were Mang Garodis. Of the total 73 respondents, three household heads were reported as women and 70 as men. The

²³ This was the description held by the main leaders of the SC/ST Mang Garodi Welfare Association. In several interviews with both men and women in the community, the Mang Garodi *basti* residents reported that just two weeks back, police raided their *basti* and arrested several of their male family members and released them the following day. Those we spoke to who had been arrested said no questions were asked and release occurred on the same day. They reported believing that while some in their community may be committing thefts in the area, the police are not making an effort to identify the culprits. Thus, the residents believe Afsal Sagar Phase I receives unnecessary attention, as it is the first phase of the Mang Garodi settlement, which extends over four phases. The residents admitted that there are members in their community who do commit petty crimes.

²⁴ The only data collected on spouses, if female or male, was their occupation title. The rest of the information focused primarily on the household head.

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average age of the respondents from the Mang Garodi *basti* was 37 years.

Most government jobs that are available to Mang Garodis are on a contract basis to execute the Urban Malaria Scheme (UMS) under the directive of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). These positions involve spraying repellent in different areas of the city to ward off mosquitoes. Four of the 73 household heads surveyed held permanent positions, three respondents were working on malaria control and one was employed in irrigation as an office assistant. Permanent positions yield a higher salary and pension benefits, as well as a consistent pay. However, the jobs are still in either labour or office attendant positions.

The rest of the government jobs were outsourced²⁵ or contracted (42 respondents, or 58 per cent), within the GHMC. Five of the persons surveyed are still engaged in what the community views as their caste occupation, shearing livestock; the hair of which are then used by owners of the livestock to make wool and other products. Only three Mang Garodi household heads surveyed were in the private sector, while the rest were either unemployed (3/73 respondents) or labourers (11/73 respondents). There are five graduates, three of whom are unemployed or labourers, one woman who is working as a teacher within the *basti* for the Anganwadi school, and one man working in the formal private sector as a software engineer.

²⁵ Outsourced positions are usually given through an intermediary, who takes a cut of the salary before it reaches the labourer.

Among female spouses of male household heads, 59 of the 70²⁶ took care of the household, while six women recycled trash for money, three women cleaned toilets in households and offices, and two were engaged in their caste occupation of cutting goat hair. Those respondents who were engaged in the caste occupation lived in the part of the slum that did not have proper housing facilities.²⁷

The second *basti* surveyed, Mehtarwadi, is also in a Muslim sub-locality closer to the old city, in a division called Sultan Shahi. The Mehtars migrated from Haryana and are a caste of manual scavengers.²⁸ Mehtars prefer to be called Valmikis, as they are believed to be descendants of Valmiki, the scribe of the *Ramayana*.²⁹ The caste occupation has shifted into three different areas: cleaning toilets in people's homes, cleaning of public toilets known as Sulabh

²⁶ Three household heads were women, thus only 70 out of 73 respondents were female spouses.

²⁷ In these parts of the slum, houses are completely destroyed by rains and floods during the monsoon season and then they are completely rebuilt.

²⁸ It is to be noted that manual scavenging still occurs in the city of Hyderabad, despite being declared illegal in the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act of 1993. *The Times of India* reported the death of three manual scavengers while cleaning out a sewage drain in 2013. *The Hindu* reported in December 2012 that 200,000 people in Andhra Pradesh are engaged in manual scavenging.

²⁹ According to Shalish Kumar, a former resident of Mehtarwadi who now works in the Security division of the Railways and is doing his Masters in Philosophy at Osmania University on the subject of the history of Valmikis, this particular community was brought to Hyderabad from Haryana to be servants of the British. In Haryana, Dalits were not paid in money but in leftover rations. However, the British paid in gold coins, which allowed Valmikis to purchase items on their own. Many more Valmikis came to Hyderabad in search of work.

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Complexes, and through reservation, attaining a cleaning position in the Sanitation Department of the GHMC. Many of the respondents alleged that Muslims treat their caste slightly better than Hindus, as they at least do not engage in older practices of throwing water on the ground where the Mehtars have stepped. Many older women still clean toilets to make money for their family.

In Mehtarwadi, we surveyed a total of 63 household heads: 58 men and five women. Fifty-six, or 89 per cent, of the respondents were Mehtars. Of the remaining seven respondents, one was from the Mala caste, three Madiga, one Lambada (Scheduled Tribe), one from a Backward Caste, and one Rajput. Of all the male household heads, 17 have jobs in the private sector (29 per cent) and 10 have permanent jobs with the government (17 per cent). Many of the primary income earners in the private sector are auto drivers, mechanics, or construction workers. There are three Valmikis with Bachelor's degrees, all of whom are unemployed.³⁰

In the *basti*, those with permanent jobs live in proper houses built originally by the government but later expanded and rebuilt by the inhabitants, while the rest live in semi-*pucca* and *kutchra*³¹ houses. There are several *pucca* houses in the *basti*. However, upon deeper investigation we also found a row of inhabitants deep inside the *basti*, who do not have any drainage facility and suffer from persistent

³⁰ Three women and two men had Bachelor's degrees but complained of not receiving any response from job applications.

³¹ Houses are *pucca* (made of concrete), semi-*pucca* (concrete walls with a makeshift roof), or *kutchra* (made completely out of wood, metal, and various materials).

yearly flooding, a problem less common in other parts of the neighbourhood.

Twelve of the 63 household heads are still engaged in their caste occupation, which here is defined as cleaning toilets in the informal sector. These persons refer to their work as scavenging though their task may be an updated version of the manual removal of excrement.³² There are also those who own pigs and sell pork in the neighbourhood, which is also a caste-related occupation and is done only within the limits of the *basti*. Among the 58 female spouses, 43 were homemakers (74 per cent) and the rest (15 respondents, or 26 per cent) were labourers, sweepers, or toilet cleaners. Two women had permanent jobs in the Sanitation Department.

Another survey was conducted in 45 households in Chintal *Basti*, a slum with mostly Buduga Jangams, Muslims, and Malas, and we also surveyed another 30 households in Sriram Nagar, a Madiga neighbourhood consisting of four or five lanes of apartment-style homes. The survey conducted in Chintal Basti comprised 33 Mala respondents, nine Buduga Jangam respondents, and one respondent from a Mutraj caste.

Buduga Jangams live in their own sub-locality areas within slums in Hyderabad. The survey covered only nine Buduga Jangam households, of which four were widows without regular work.³³ In a

³² Four families in this neighbourhood reported deaths in their families due to the constant inhalation of acid, which is used to clean toilets.

³³ Due to the sensitivity of the community, full responses to the survey were difficult to obtain and much resistance was put up against the surveyors. Therefore, in these cases, proper consent could not be received and we halted conducting a full survey in the Buduga Jangam *basti*.

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study conducted by India Water Supply and Sanitation Council, Buduga Jangams were reported to be living in “hazardous and objectionable” conditions throughout the city. In Chintal *Basti*, most Buduga Jangams are either unemployed or contract workers. One Buduga Jangam respondent was a contractor for the contract labourers. Five of the nine Buduga Jangam respondents had no education and four among these were widows of the deceased labourers. The lone Buduga Jangam man with a Bachelor’s degree reported running his own business with other male members of the family carrying out door and roof repairs in houses across the city.

Among the 33 Malas surveyed in Chintal *Basti*, nine families had at least one person working in the government (six of whom had permanent jobs), while 13 respondents were engaged in the informal private sector. Among those working in the private sector were mechanics, cooks, a photographer, and several security guards or attendants. Seven out of 33 Mala respondents had Bachelor’s degrees, which make Malas in Chintal *Basti* the group with the highest education density in comparison with the four other *bastis*.³⁴ However, labourers were also present (seven of 33 Mala respondents). Overall, Chintal *Basti*’s Malas were far removed from their caste occupations and often declined to comment or acknowledge that anyone had engaged in this occupation before.

In the last *basti*, Sri Ram Nagar, around 250 Madiga households are settled on four lanes in an area called Bagh Lingampally. In this *basti*, we interviewed 27 Madiga household heads. Though many

³⁴ According to P. Muthaiah of Osmania University, Malas gained more access to education as far back as 1932, when the leader of the Dalit movement in Andhra Pradesh, Bhagya Reddy Varma, established several schools for Mala students only.

inhabitants still avail of some government benefit or scheme, and some are still in possession of white ration cards, which are used as identification only and cannot be used to get any rations, the neighbourhood was far more advanced than the previous three *bastis*. The apartment-style houses were very close together but some homeowners reported possessing ownership over more than one apartment unit. Flooding and drainage are not major problems here. One Madiga family, living in a flat at the beginning of the road, rents shacks to other Madigas and labourers on the same road. Of the 27 household heads surveyed, 10 respondents had finished the 10th standard while five had completed his Intermediate degree and one person had achieved a Bachelor's degree.

Thirteen of the 27 were in the private sector while six respondents had jobs in the government as attendants or guards. The remaining eight households either cleaned toilets or worked as labourers. Some small pockets of Madiga families lived in slums and had many unresolved problems such as drainage and flooding. The Vice President of the Residential Welfare Association of Sri Ram Nagar claimed that the problem in this *basti* was lack of space. The settlement is old, therefore many people do not speak much about what their family was doing before untouchability became an illegal practice in India.

INCOME AND EDUCATION

In the *basti* with the worst living conditions, the Mang Garodi *basti*, when asked what change or positive growth they had seen in the past 20 years, the respondents often said that before, “we did not even know what education was. Now, we know to send our children to

school.” Forty respondents agreed that education is the most important catalyst for upward mobility in the Mang Garodi *basti*.³⁵

In most cases, children are sent to government schools. However, those in the higher income bracket often reported sending children to private schools. Those in the lower income brackets, earning less than Rs. 5,000, often viewed school as a way for their children to receive a meal, clothing, and other such benefits. An observation worth noting is that several young adolescent women in the Mehtarwadi were educated and seeking employment, indicating that the families are also in support of educating their girl children. In the Mala and Madiga *bastis*, there was a more settled expectation that children would go to school, and many go to private schools.

In total, 86 of 208 respondents (41 per cent) had no education. Among men, as shown in Table 1, 18 had Bachelor’s degrees. In the Mang Garodi *basti*, 47 out of 74 respondents (63.5 per cent) had no education and only five had passed the 10th standard (6.8 per cent). In Mehtarwadi, 22 respondents out of 67 had no education (32.8 per cent), while about 16 had passed the 10th standard (23.9 per cent).

In Chintal *Basti*, there is a bit more distribution, with about 10 uneducated (23.3 per cent), 10 passing the 10th standard (23.3 per cent), 10 somewhere between 1st and 10th standard (23.3 per cent), five reaching the 12th standard (11.6 per cent), and eight with Bachelor’s degrees (18.6 per cent). Lastly, in Sri Ram Nagar, 11 respondents had passed the 10th standard (37.9 per cent) with

³⁵ During my interview with one person in the Mang Garodi *basti* who completed his MBA, he spoke in English. Interestingly, since he has found difficulty gaining employment, he has found ways to make money conducting baseline economic surveys for outside NGOs and organisations seeking statistics of his own locality.

about 11 lagging behind (37.9 per cent) and six reaching the 12th standard (20.7 per cent).

Table 1: Education Level of Household Head I

(Percentage in brackets)

<i>Basti</i>	No Educa tion	K-5	5-10 fail	10 th pass	Inter media te	BA/ BS	PG	Total
Chintal Basti	10 (23)	2 (5)	8 (19)	10 (23)	5 (12)	8 (19)	0	43
Mang Garodi Basti	48 (66)	1 (1)	14 (19)	4 (5)	3 (4)	3 (4)	0	73
Mehtarwadi	22 (35)	0	12 (19)	15 (24)	10 (16)	3 (5)	1 (2)	63
Sri Ram Nagar	6 (21)	0	5 (17)	11 (38)	6 (21)	1 (3)	0	29
Grand Total	86	3	39	40	24	15	1	208

In the household head's spouse results, which were all women, the distribution was far more unequal. While there are six Bachelor's degrees, there are 112 uneducated women across all *bastis* (54 per cent) and 29 who passed the 10th standard (14 per cent) and 29 who did not reach 10th standard (14 per cent). Seventeen had reached Intermediate or 12th standard, five had a Bachelor's degree, and there were no postgraduates reported.

Table 2: Education Level of Household Head II

<i>Basti</i>	No Education	K-5	5-10 fail	10 th pass	Inter	BA/BS	NA ³⁶	No Response	Total
<i>Chintal Basti</i>	12	1	3	15	6		5	1	43
<i>Mang Garodi Basti</i>	60	0	7	2	1		3	0	73
<i>Mehtarwadi</i>	33	1	9	6	5	3	5	1	63
<i>Sri Ram Nagar</i>	7	1	6	6	5	2	2	0	29
Total	112	3	25	29	17	5	15	2	208

Table 3 below indicates the education levels, income, and other information for all female heads of household with no male head. Fifteen out of 19 women are uneducated household heads with only two having passed the 10th standard and the remaining two somewhere between the 5 and 10th standards.

Table 3: Education Level of Female HH (with caste breakdown)

<i>Basti Name</i>	No Education	5-10 th Fail	10 th Pass	Total
<i>Chintal Basti</i>	4	2		6
<i>Buduga Jangam</i>	3			3
<i>Mala</i>	1	2		3
<i>Mang Garodi Basti</i>	2		1	3
<i>Mehtarwadi</i>	8		1	9
<i>Sri Ram Nagar (Madiga)</i>	1			1
Total	15	2	2	19

³⁶ The results that are “NA” indicate those who were widows. In these cases, the household head II was entered as Not Applicable.

As can be seen in Table 4 below, the women are all in unskilled labour or are unemployed. Many women we came across in the Mang Garodi *Basti*, who were living in shacks, did not have proper employment but collected bottles and recyclable trash from the neighbourhood to sell. This was a very common activity for women to help make ends meet in the household, whether widowed or not. In interviews with the widowed women in the Mehtarwadi, we came across one family of three sisters and a mother who had lost their father to a heart attack. Though the women were educated, they were unable to get jobs and believed it was related to their caste. Many such women are living off pensions from their husband's former job as well as the support of others in the neighbourhood.

Table 4: Employment of Female HH

<i>Basti</i> Name/ Caste	Cleans Toilets	Labour	Recycle trash	Unemployed	Total
Chintal <i>Basti</i>		3		3	6
Buduga Jangam		2		1	3
Mala		1		2	3
Mang Garodi <i>Basti</i>		2	1		3
Mehtarwadi	8			1	9
Sri Ram Nagar (Madiga)				1	1
Total	8	5	1	11	19

Table 5: Income of Female HH

<i>Basti</i> Name	Daily wage Labourer (Approx. Rs. 30-50 Day)	< or = Rs. 2,000/month	Rs. 2,000- 5,000/month	Rs. 5,000- 10,000/month	NR	Total
Chintal <i>Basti</i>	1	0	2	2	1	6
Mang Garodi <i>Basti</i>	1	0	2		0	3
Mehtarwadi		4	4	1	0	9
Sri Ram Nagar	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	2	4	9	3	1	19

The income levels are indicated in Table 5. Recycling trash earns a daily wage, estimated at around Rs. 30 to Rs. 50 a day. The unemployed women received the highest salary, approximately around Rs. 7,000 rupees a month, in most cases due to the pension received from their husband's job. Those who clean toilets in houses earned between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 3,000 a month and in a few families the head of the household had employed sons who were labourers.

HOUSING, SANITATION, AND *BASTI* CONDITIONS

In total, one out of 208 households reported living in their *basti* for more than three generations. While all four *bastis* have *kutchha* houses, many people were living in *pucca* houses assigned on a *patta* by either Indira Gandhi or N.T. Rama Rao. These homes have often not advanced at all in the past fifty years. Those families that were not able to move from the informal to the formal sector in the past two generations, are still living in *pucca* homes provided by the government that have basic amenities and very little space. In the

Mang Garodi *basti*, the first three rows of houses vary from *pucca* houses with proper concrete roofing to *pucca* houses with metal sheet roofing. Deeper within the *basti* are rows of *kutchha* houses that neither have any concrete nor proper roofing. They often suffer damage during monsoon and require repair. This is also where many of the people still engaged in their caste occupation of cutting goat hair live.³⁷ In total, Mang Garodi *basti* respondents reported over half of their houses as *kutchha* (52 per cent), nine semi-*pucca* houses (12 per cent), and 28 *pucca* houses (37 per cent). In Mehtarwadi, 21 had *kutchha* houses, 17 semi-*pucca*, and 28 *pucca* houses. Chintal *Basti* followed with 11 *kutchha* houses, 12 semi-*pucca*, and 20 *pucca*, while Sri Ram Nagar had 4 *kutchha* houses, 12 semi-*pucca*, and 13 *pucca* houses. On the surface, Sri Ram Nagar had the most number of apartment-style, *pucca* houses, though as one goes deeper into the locality, more semi-*pucca* and *kutchha* houses emerge.

Table 6: Type of House Owned

<i>Basti</i> Name	Kutchha	Semi Pucca	Pucca	No home/NA	Total
Chintal <i>Basti</i>	11	12	20	0	43
Mang Garodi <i>Basti</i>	40	7	26	0	73
Mehtarwadi	21	17	24	1	63
Sri Ram Nagar	4	12	13	0	29
Grand Total	76	48	83	1	208

³⁷ Some interviewees living in the slum-style, “*jhopra*” homes, alleged that the benefits from welfare organisations are capitalised by the *basti* leaders.

Table 7: House Ownership

<i>Basti</i> Name	NA	Freehold	Lease	Patta	Joint patta	Other	No legal right	Total
Chintal <i>Basti</i>	0	1	9	28	4	0	1	43
Mang Garodi <i>Basti</i>	0	5	7	37	8	4	11	73
Mehtarwadi	1	29	7	19	4	1	2	63
Sri Ram Nagar	0	7	6	11	5	0	0	29
Grand Total	1	42	29	95	21	5	14	208

House ownership, which is represented in Table 7, is difficult to categorise. While many people have *pattas*, the documents often became out dated or expired during the previous generation of family dwellers. Evictions were not reported, most likely because these *bastis* have been around for many years and have singular identities, but evicting Dalit *bastis* is not an uncommon practice in Hyderabad. One such case was an Ambedkar Nagar where Dalits were evicted for the creation of the Indian National Congress headquarters in Hyderabad, as shown in a study conducted by Natraj Kranthi and Kavita Rao of the Institute for Town Planning. Freehold titles were reported when the respondent alleged that the house and land was entirely theirs. This appears to be most common in the Mehtarwadi area, perhaps due to the way in which they settled during the time of the British. The highest concentration of ownership lies in *patta* or lease. Land ownership is a problem for Dalits, especially in cities like Hyderabad that are continually expanding to make extremely expensive localities. Some of the

respondents, who were renting properties in the *bastis*, claimed that the landowners lived in posh localities such as Banjara Hills.³⁸

ACCESS TO WATER

Access to water was significantly better for those living in the more prosperous Dalit *basti*, Sri Ram Nagar. Twenty three out of 29 residents had house connections in Sri Ram Nagar, while only three out of 29 received water from a public stand post and two individuals from either a neighbour's house or a municipal tanker. In Chintal *Basti*, out of 43 respondents, 44 per cent reported having a house connection for water while 19 per cent used a public stand post and 26 per cent accessed a municipal tank. In Mang Garodi *Basti*, 36 per cent had a house connection while 48 per cent used a public stand post and the remaining 16 per cent either went to a neighbour's house or a municipal tank.³⁹ In Mehtarwadi, 44 per cent of respondents had a house connection, while 49 per cent utilised a public stand post or municipal tank and the remaining less than one per cent went to a neighbour's house.

The Mehtarwadi and Mang Garodi *bastis* did not have access to water for 24 hours. Chintal *Basti* residents complained of irregular water

³⁸ Though this could not be confirmed, the general point to be made is that owners of some land in slums have moved to other places and leased the area out, in this case maintaining poor conditions.

³⁹ It is possible that surveyors or respondents were not clear on the difference between a municipal tank and a public stand post, which may lead to a slight distortion in the data. Nevertheless, the point to be taken is with regards to availability of house connections, which, though present, were referred to as inconsistent in the Mang Garodi, Chintal, and Mehtar *bastis*. This cannot be linked in any way to caste but is referred to in the study to give the reader a sense of the variety of conditions under which the different respondents were living.

supply for two hours a day from their house taps. The Sri Ram Nagar *basti*, which was evidently in a more prosperous location, did not suffer from water access in the same manner. In Mehtarwadi, the richer families were buying bottled drinking water as the locality was not receiving consistent public water supply. In all of the *bastis* combined, 180 of 208 respondents (86.5 per cent) do not report treating their water, while 5 reported boiling water before drinking and 11 respondents use a water filter.

DRAINAGE/FLOODING

The table below describes those who reported proper drainage and those who reported that flooding was still a problem in the *basti*. As can be seen, most people tend to complain that flooding is a problem but still say that drainage works. Based on the interviews, the statistics below do not prove representative as some people suffer far more from flooding and drainage than others. In every *basti*, there are some people living in *kutchas* houses, who either do not have drainage at all, or who have no way to prevent their houses from being destroyed during every rainy season.

Table 8: Drainage and Flooding

<i>Basti</i> Name	Yes PROPER DRAINAGE	Yes FLOODING PROBLEM
Chintal <i>Basti</i>	40/43	36/43
Mang Garodi <i>Basti</i>	70/77	74/77
Mehtarwadi	62/67	43/67
Sri Ram Nagar	29/29	27/29
Total	201	180

Table 9: Type of Gas Used

<i>Basti</i> Name	Gas	Kerosene	Wood	NR	Total
Chintal <i>Basti</i>	27	11	3	2	43
Mang Garodi <i>Basti</i>	0	19	54	0	73
Mehtarwadi	46	9	5	1	63
Sri Ram Nagar	22	6	0	1	29
Total	95	45	62	4	208

Ration cards are available to almost every resident of the *bastis*. However, with a government job or a certain income, those white cards become pink cards with which you cannot receive any rations. In total, 138 respondents out of 208 (64 per cent) possessed a white card while 15 (7 per cent) had a pink card. As many as 54 respondents (25 per cent) did not have either. Interestingly, in the poorer areas, ration cards were fewer in number than in the richer parts of the *bastis*, especially in Mang Garodi *basti*.

When asked about any particular government scheme or urban empowerment project provided, almost all respondents said they have received nothing from the SC Corporation or any other government body.⁴⁰ As many as 187 respondents said they received nothing and 17 reported receiving either a loan, scholarship for their children, free bus pass, or employment of some sort. One person

⁴⁰ During the time of the survey, the Telangana government conducted a household survey that same month to inquire on the socio-economic status of *bastis*. The Telangana SC Corporation Vice Chairman claims these statistics will be used to better target the people in need of government schemes.

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received a loan from the government in the Mang Garodi *basti* to open up a small paan shop in the neighbourhood. Another in the Mehtarwadi received a loan from the National Safai Karamchari Association to set up his own tent shop for weddings. Two people received a loan to purchase an auto rickshaw and a few others received a health insurance card from the SC Corporation. One question inquired whether the respondents saw any upward mobility or change within the *basti* over the course of their lifetime.

Many of the respondents in the Mang Garodi *Basti* and Mehtarwadi see themselves as local Telangana natives, yet the area around them refuses to view it that way. In the survey, a question was asked whether the respondent had engaged at all in the Telangana struggle. While the answers varied, several times the respondent would say, “We were never given the opportunity to join the fight.” Out of the 208 respondents, 71 said they did not engage in the Telangana discourse, while 130 said they did.

CASTE PERCEPTIONS

After visiting the Mang Garodi *basti*, in the last three *bastis*, I decided to introduce a question about whether the respondents had experienced untouchability in their lifetime. In Chintal *Basti*, out of 43 respondents, none responded that they had. In the Mehtarwadi, 15 Mehtars, out of 63 total respondents, reported experiencing any untouchability practices. Some described these practices as the throwing of water on the ground where they walk, or general hostility from vegetable vendors and others in the locality.⁴¹ In Sri Ram

⁴¹ It is worth noting that in my initial visits to both the Mehtar and Mang Garodi *Bastis*, when asking for directions to those particular areas, the surrounding locality

Nagar, where a preponderance of Madigas reside, nobody responded that they had experienced untouchability.

Another question posed to the last three surveyed *bastis* was whether or not they had heard any insults against them for their caste on a day-to-day basis, either in their work place or around their locality. In this question, again, very few respondents from the Chintal *Basti* and Sri Ram Nagar had this problem. In Mehtarwadi, however, equal numbers of respondents did and didn't face verbal abuse: 28 out of 56 responded facing none, while 24 responded facing some kind of verbal discrimination.

made several negative comments about both communities. For instance, a shopkeeper or meat butcher would comment that it is “unsafe” to go to these areas or that those people are “not good in character”.

V. Policy Implications

In understanding the struggles of Dalits living in Hyderabad, several policy points can be made regarding the future of reservation and social welfare schemes for Scheduled Castes. The SCSP intends to institute reservation in almost every sector of the government's bureaucracy, from health to education to employment, which is highly unlikely to be carried out. Without the baseline cooperation from District Collectors, politicians, and policymakers, implementing such a large-scale inclusive policy will be very difficult.

This can be seen by first examining what has already been introduced. In the Mang Garodi *Basti*, several complained that the SC Corporation's loans were capitalised by the leaders of the *basti* or other middlemen. These kinds of obstacles cannot be easily circumvented by the SC Corporation, which lends through the bank (B. Jayaraj, Vice President of TSSCCFC, personal communication, October 15, 2014). Additionally, the measures carried out by the SC Corporation do not meet the needs of the people adequately. For example, in every *basti*, there are several auto rickshaw drivers who received their vehicle through the government. However, there is a clear surplus of auto drivers in the city and the employment only gives a daily wage but does not provide space for upward mobility in the form of promotions or skills building. Another kind of loan often given is to open up a shop within the *basti* itself. Giving people money to open a small sweets shop or tent shop in the *basti* keeps

the residents in their own secluded existence. This does not help residents move beyond the space of the *basti* or begin conducting business with people of other castes and backgrounds. In a city where new industries are constantly cropping up and growth is extremely rapid, giving a Dalit a small *paan* shop does not count as inclusive policy. In an effort to empower the SC population, introducing more agencies to execute the deliverance of loans and subsidies is not the most effective form of upward social mobility.

The survey reinforces critical points with regard to the available employment for SCs, or Dalits, in the private sector. Other such studies have also delved into the nature of private sector inclusion for Dalits. Using national Census data, it was found in a study that the number of private enterprises owned by Dalits declined by 15 per cent between 1990 and 1998 and between 1998 and 2005 increased “by a very small amount” of only 17 per cent (Vidyarthi, 2014, p. 79). Similarly, the Srikrishna Committee report states that Hyderabad Scheduled Castes are “overly concentrated in the public services (39.3 per cent, as compared to a city average of 18.15 per cent)” (Srikrishna, 2010, p. 312). Additionally, from 1990-1998, “the absolute number of Dalit firm owners in agricultural, manufacturing, and mining and quarrying sectors declined by 3.8 per cent, 63.6 per cent and 16 per cent respectively”. Contrastingly, in wholesale and retail trades, hotels, and restaurants, Dalit owners of firms increased by 47.2 per cent. Most interestingly, the number of Dalit enterprises saw a significant increase in most sectors from 1998-2005, but a “notable decline of 33 per cent in the sector of health, education, community and personal services” (Vidyarthi, 2014, p. 85). This decline can be extremely problematic for the more long term,

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sustainable growth of the Dalit population. The private sector space held by Dalits in Hyderabad has not been measured transparently. Although several individuals in Sri Ram Nagar referred to their job as a “private job,” markedly not government but with formalised pay, some others were medical assistants, drivers, running printing shops, attenders at banks, or security guards, indicating their persistence in working class positions.

The highest degree of visible caste discrimination for the migrant Dalit communities appears to be in the government sector. This is particularly obvious in the case of the Mehtarwadi and Mang Garodi *Basti*. By giving both these caste groups government jobs in the same departments, the reservations began to reinforce the caste structure. Mehtars, or Valmikis, are only meant to work in the Sanitation department, while Mang Garodis are funnelled into the Malaria Department. Their own perception of their job is not high and this does not yield great results for their movement away from untouchability. If the prevailing assumption still exists that certain castes are polluted, then it is unclear how these groups will be able to move into the private sector as well without the challenge of discrimination. Although Madigas and Malas are not confined to particular departments, their jobs do not appear to engage with any skills building or higher education. The results also clearly show that higher education does not always bring about the possibility of a job. Similarly, Sukhadeo Thorat and Paul Attwell (2010) find that job applicants of college-educated Dalits and Muslims have a lesser chance of receiving employment than equally qualified high caste applicants in private sector enterprises. Another study conducted by Attwell and S. Madheswaran looks into wage discrimination against

SCs in the public and private sector, discovering “substantial” wage discrimination that is mostly due to “unequal access to jobs”, a finding that is confirmed in this study.

When it comes to legislation, as stated before, the SCSP has its limitations. Portions of the SCSP refer to the establishment of new schools and teacher training institutes. The SCSP does not identify regions or specific castes in more need than others, which is a basic flaw that ought to be recognised. In the case of urban empowerment of SCs and STs, the plan does not refer to any particular struggles of SC, ST neighbourhoods, but does allocate portions of the budget to SCSP. A major problem in the allocation of any funds to development in slums is the dependence on banks as well as middlemen. The SCSP offers no solution to this longstanding problem. While the Vice Chair of the Telangana SC Corporation alleged in an interview that KCR plans to remove the middlemen problem by introducing direct loans, it is too soon to judge whether this will come into place. In the *New Indian Express*, an article published in July 2014 quoted the AP Social Welfare Minister admitting that officials were not very aware of the SC/ST Sub-Plan Act. He stated that KCR has delayed replying to letters sent by AP chief minister Chandrababu Naidu on admission for students who could make use of fee reimbursement. After years of time taken to pass the legislation, political will still appears to hamper the ability of this Act to truly come into use.

Another legislation that KCR promises to deliver is the allocation of three acres of land to every Dalit in rural Telangana. Since many Dalits are landless labourers, the possession of land is in theory a meaningful effort. However, there is no guarantee that the kind of

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land given out will be cultivable. Additionally, the distribution of land does not ensure competition anywhere near the level of the landlords in the area. If the land is meant for agriculture, the recipients will have to be well versed in business and understand the market, which is likely to be difficult for poor and landless Dalit women, who may or may not have an education. Without the tools to cultivate as well as infrastructural support, land will not solve any problem.

Policy towards Dalits is often criticised as appeasement and vote-bank politics rather than genuine desire for uplift of the backward classes. In the case of the passage of the SCSP and other measures, it would be difficult to argue that Telangana is only going to treat Dalits as a vote bank. Additionally, the strength of the Dalit demand for Telangana as well as the bargaining power of Dalit activists in the formation of the new State through organisations such as the Centre for Dalit Studies may ensure certain provisions. However, the mere passage of legislation does not guarantee any form of inclusion and ought to be followed up in terms of its effectiveness. Already, complaints are coming from the Centre that the SCSP is difficult to implement the provisions in rural areas since it is too difficult to divide areas to ensure that only SCs and STs are beneficiaries. In this way, the SCSP looks more like a tool for rural and urban poverty rather than a document created to provide upward mobility to Dalits and tribal people with regard to their particular circumstances of discrimination. There is no doubt that the funding increase for skills training and higher education is both necessary and well thought within the SCSP. However, in order to reach out to the communities that are not receiving benefit, the government will have to address

the inherent bias that exists within their own structure. Social welfare schemes do not remove preconceived notions of caste.

The Hyderabad Scheduled Castes Cooperative Finance Corporation Director said in November 2014 in an interview, “Hyderabad is a cosmopolitan city. There is no caste discrimination or untouchability.” Yet when I approached communities, their socio-economic position remained linked to their caste. When the bureaucrats and Collectors of the areas themselves do not acknowledge a problem, it will be very difficult to foresee any upward mobility for the worse-off Dalit castes. There are three important aspects that ought to be addressed: the retaining of SC status of migrant communities, the ability for lateral movement in government positions for SCs, and if we can be so radical, a requirement that the development officers be empowered to address the presence of intermediaries. Even more, if crores of funding is going into ten different sectors of the government with the SCSP, instead, all the funding could be better utilised by consolidating into the implementation of the schemes that are already in place.

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