

IMPACT OF DELIMITATION ACT ON NAYAKA TRIBES IN KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

The socio-political affects of the Delimitation Act on the Nayaka tribe, a Scheduled Tribe (ST) community in mostly resides in Karnataka, this paper from examined the political representation and historically background of Nayaka community have turned to political reservations. However, the 2002 Delimitation Act, which was put into effect in 2008, and other recurring delimitation procedures have reshaped constituency borders in ways that impact the political dominance of ST. The impact of delimitation on Nayaka political representation, voter strength, leadership development, access to development programs, general involvement and democratic processes in Karnataka examined in this article. This study identifies structural barriers and suggests changes to improve tribal political empowerment using qualitative analysis,

KEYWORDS: Delimitation Act, Nayaka Tribes, Karnataka politics, Tribal Empowerment, political Representation, Electoral Boundaries.

INTRODUCTION

By redrawing election boundaries in response to population shifts, the Delimitation Act has been crucial in forming India's democratic structure. Although its goal is to provide fair and equal representation, it has had a mixed and occasionally negative effect on underprivileged tribes, such as the Nayaka tribe in Karnataka. As a Scheduled Tribe under the Indian Constitution, the Nayaka tribe has a major population in several Karnataka districts, such as Bellary, Chitradurga, Raichur, Davangere, The tribe's voice in legislative forums has been intimately linked to the borders of reserved seats due to its historical disadvantage and reliance on political reservation for representation. This study examines critically how delimitation has changed the Nayaka community's political representation in Karnataka. It focuses on how the community's capacity will shape policy, secure development, and generate leaders has been affected by changes in constituency boundaries and the number or reorganization of ST-reserved seats.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NAYAKA TRIBE'S

It is evident from Karnataka history that the Valmiki people ruled over a number of locations, including Chitradurga, Bellary, Davangere, Raichur, Belgum, Surpur, Keladi, and others. The Valmiki community is also known as the Nayaka, Beda, and Palegars in Karnataka. These individuals are all referred to as Valmikis. Nayak is also used by the Beda (meaning hunters) as the final names. The Valmiki and Beda populations now identify as Nayaks as well. The Bedars are Vedars, and the Bedas are the Bedars. These individuals, known as Valmikis, are a sub-caste. some of the original kings were restored to their original ancient positions by the kings of Vijayanagara during their conquest." In order to accommodate the state's expanding population and boost its wealth, they also designated a few of their loyal and capable servants to oversee large areas of uncultivated waste land. They gave them instructions to clear the forests and turn the lands into agricultural land. These administrators established several "Palayams" or "Palepats" in accordance with the royal order, As a Scheduled Tribe (ST) recognized by the Indian Constitution, the Nayakas have a complex and rich past that intertwines with the political, military, and cultural narratives of Karnataka. Their historical trajectory reflects a journey from being warrior clans and administrative elites to marginalized communities striving for identity and empowerment in modern democratic structures.

DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF THE NAYAKA TRIBE

One of the most well-known Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Karnataka is the Nayaka tribe, sometimes referred to as the Valmiki Nayakas. The Nayakas are one of the major ST groups in the state and are widely distributed in southern, central, and northern Karnataka. They were recognized under the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 The 2011 Census of India estimates that 42.48 lakh people in Karnataka are Scheduled Tribes, making about 6.95% of the state's total population. The Nayakas are thought to be one of the largest tribes, making up between 40 to 45 percent population in the Karnataka, even though the census does not break down statistics for individual STs categorization has allowed the Nayaka group, which is divided into several sub-categories such as Valmiki, Bedar, and with greater populations in the following areas, the Nayaka tribe has a wide geographic range like a Central Karnataka The districts of Chitradurga, Davangere, and Shivamogga are Nayakas make up a sizable portion of the rural populace in taluks like Hosadurga, Holalkere, and Jagalur. Hyderabad-Karnataka (Kalyana Karnataka) Region: There are substantial Nayaka communities in districts like Ballari, Koppal, and Raichur. although Nayakas are

politically engaged in Sandur, kudligi, kamppli, devadurga, manvi, bellary rural, Hagaribommanahalli, and Siruguppa. Despite having a larger population than other tribal groups in Karnataka,

POST-DELIMITATION AND POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION

Delimitation has had unforeseen effects for vulnerable people, such as the Nayaka tribe in Karnataka, despite its stated goal of guaranteeing equitable representation through constituency reconfiguration based on population fluctuations. Constituency boundaries throughout the state were changed in the most important delimitation exercise, which was conducted under the Delimitation Act of 2002 and put into effect in 2008. The Nayaka tribe seem to be a reduction in effective political representation as a result of these developments, which also caused their electoral voice to become fragmented and their access to venues for policy making to be limited. Some of the seats had changes in their borders, voter makeup, and even reservation status after delimitation. For example, certain ST-reserved portions were combined with common or SC-reserved segments, or they were reclassified. Nayaka's political power was diminished as a result of this restructuring, which weakened their base of support.

Until 1976, every Indian Census the seats of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and State legislative assemblies of India were re-distributed respectively throughout the country so as to have equal pre posts and representation from every seat. The apportionment was done thrice as per 1951, 1961 and 1971 population census. However, during The Emergency, through Forty-second Amendment the government froze the total Parliamentary and Assembly seats in each state till 2001 Census. This was done, mainly, due to wide discrepancies in family planning among the states. Thus, it gives time to states with higher fertility rates to implement family planning to bring the fertility rates down. Even though the boundaries of constituencies were altered in 2001 to equate population among the parliamentary and assembly seats; the number of Lok Sabha seats that each state has and those of legislative assemblies has remained unaltered since 1971 census it may only be changed the lokshaba and state assembly seats on alternate 1971 it many of 2002 delimitation act (84th amendment) continue the freeze on the total number of seats in each state till 2026.[2] This was mainly done as states which had implemented family planning widely like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Punjab would stand to lose many parliamentary seats representation and states with poor family planning programs and higher fertility rates like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan would gain many of the seats transferred from better-performing states

DELIMITATION ACT (2002) AND IMPLEMENTATION IN KARNATAKA

In India's electoral history, the Delimitation Act of 2002 was a pivotal moment. Based on statistics from the 2001 Census, it was put into effect with the intention of guaranteeing equitable representation by redistributing parliamentary and legislative assembly seats. Since the redrawing of electoral boundaries had a direct impact on the political visibility and power of the Nayaka group, Karnataka's Scheduled Tribes (STs) were severely affected by this effort. In order to create the Delimitation Commission and redraw the borders of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly seats, the Indian Parliament passed the Delimitation Act, 2002. The main goals were to reassign seats in accordance with the 2001 Census's demographic changes. to ensure that all constituencies have equitable representation of the population. to update and modify the borders and number of Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC) reserved constituencies the 84th Amendment to the Constitution allowed for internal realignment within states to reflect population growth and changes, even if the number of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies remained fixed until 2026. In Karnataka,

here is where the effects were most noticeable. The Delimitation Commission in Karnataka started working in 2003, and the new electoral map was implemented before the 2008 Assembly elections. Among Statewide constituency boundaries are being redrawn. a decrease from 15 to 14 ST-reserved Assembly constituencies. Lok Sabha segment reorganization, with Bellary (ST) and Chamarajanagar (ST) being the only two ST-reserved seats left. Despite being statistically justified, these changes had significant social and political repercussions, especially for dispersed tribal groups like the Nayakas. Tribal voting strength became less effective when constituencies with a large but non-majority ST population were combined with areas with a dominating caste. by the Delimitation Act of 2002, which had a big effect on Scheduled Tribes' political prospects. The Nayaka tribe saw a decrease in political representation, the loss of reserved seats, and the division of voter bases as a result of the redrawing of constituency borders. Despite being designed as a democratic reform, the procedure of strengthen reserved seats, the systemic injustices already present in Karnataka's voting system. It emphasizes the necessity of more inclusive frameworks that strike a balance between historical and socio-cultural reality and demographic accuracy, especially for neglected indigenous populations.

LEADERSHIP AND CANDIDATE REPRESENTATION TRENDS

Over the past few decades, there have been substantial changes in the Nayaka tribe's leadership and representation of candidates in Karnataka. Even while the tribe has produced a few well-known political figures, overall representation is still unequal and frequently depends on electoral reservations rather than ongoing party inclusion or political activism. These instances, however, are uncommon and frequently unique rather than representative of the larger population. The majority of Nayaka leaders have come from reserved ST- seats, which restricts their leadership to particular regions. In order to maintain a cycle in which leadership is dependent on constitutional requirements rather than political merit or popular support, political parties typically only field Nayaka candidates in these designated regions. Additionally, this has deterred leaders from being developed outside of election periods. Nayaka candidates are consistently underrepresented in general seats, according to data from the most recent Karnataka Assembly elections. Even in regions with a sizable Nayaka population, political organizations frequently pass over Nayaka candidates in favor of dominant caste groupings. The wider systemic marginalization of tribal voices inside party hierarchy is demonstrated by this tendency.

IMPACT OF DELIMITATION ON ST RESERVED CONSTITUENCIES

By balancing population proportions across constituencies, the delimitation process—which involves redrawing electoral constituency borders based on the most recent census data—aims to provide fair representation. However, the delimitation exercises conducted under the Delimitation Act of 2002 (which was put into effect in 2008) have had significant political and social ramifications for Karnataka's Scheduled Tribes (STs), especially the Nayaka group. Although democratic parity was the goal of delimitation, the results have significantly changed the makeup, size, and efficacy of ST-reserved seats in the state. The number of ST-reserved Assembly seats in Karnataka decreased from 15 to 14 after delimitation. The demographic makeup of voters was also impacted by boundary changes made to a number of seats. The tribal vote bank was essentially diluted when some places with a high ST presence—such as those inhabited by the Nayakas—were combined with seats that were controlled by the general or SC.

for instance, until 2008, Nayaka participation was substantial in seats like Harapanahalli, Jagalur, and portions of Shimoga,

which were either entirely or partially included in ST-reserved areas. Many of them were relocated into general seats after delimitation, which greatly decreased the likelihood that ST candidates would be elected. In favor of population-based divides, the delimitation procedure frequently ignored sociocultural and community-based ties. Tribal communities were dispersed among newly established constituencies as a result of the dissolution of traditional ST strongholds. For example, when Bellary Rural, which has a large Nayaka population, was combined with areas where non-tribal groups predominate, its tribal impact was lessened. Tribal leadership continuity has been lost as a result, community mobilization has been undermined, and policy lobbying has become less effective. It was challenging for many seasoned tribal leaders to run for office or stay politically engaged because they were not included in the newly created ST districts.

Delimitation has also had the crucial consequence of making elected officials less receptive to concerns unique to STs. The interests of the majority are given precedence by elected leaders, who are frequently from dominant communities, in reorganized constituencies where STs constitute a minority or marginal group. As a result, ST-specific developmental issues including housing plans, school access, and property rights are not given enough consideration. Furthermore, because no single tribe has a significant impact on election results, the ST electorate's dispersion reduces accountability even in reserved areas. This frequently leads to a gap between elected officials and the real needs of the community.

CONCLUSION

The political geography of Karnataka was drastically altered by the Delimitation Act of 2002, which was put into effect before to the 2008 elections. Although ensuring electoral parity based on population was the main objective of delimitation, its effects on marginalized communities especially the Nayaka tribe have been complicated and, in many respects, harmful. The Nayakas, one of Karnataka's biggest Scheduled Tribes, have established strongholds in particular areas, allowing them a modest but noteworthy degree of political participation. But as a result of the boundary changes, important ST seats were no longer reserved, tribal votes were diluted, and tribal areas were combined with general constituencies controlled by influential castes. The Nayakas' experience shows that, even while delimitation is constitutionally justified, it can perpetuate structural disadvantage if it is not accompanied by community participation and sociocultural sensitivity. The Nayaka tribe's situation serves as a reminder of the necessity of inclusive election reforms that safeguard minority voices and make sure that democratic fairness is not

compromised by demographic changes. Policies going ahead must acknowledge the particular difficulties associated with indigenous participation and strive toward structures that advance fairness rather than erasure.

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