

Measuring Students Perception towards Reservation Policy

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Sukhadev Thorat, the great Sociologist and Economist, viewed that discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and ethnicity, nationality or social origin exists in many nations under diverse social, economic and political system. In order to correct the imbalance aroused due to this, many such countries have turned to practices of reservation, affirmative action, positive action or equal opportunity policy for these discriminated sub-groups in addition to general pro-poor policies.

Concentrating on Indian societies, following the guiding principles of state policies enshrined in our constitution which ensure social justice and equality of opportunity to all, special facilities are offered to the depressed class of our society to help them overcome the handicaps arising from deep rooted inequalities and to enable them to secure the same opportunities and position in life as others (Premi, 1974). Reservation is one of them. But being a very controversial concept, it brings out different issues like:

- a. Reservation in private sectors;
- b. Reservation of urban slum people;
- c. Reservation on economic basis;
- d. Reservation for women;
- e. Reservation on the basis of religion etc.

Lots of different views arisen here, are sometimes extremely contradictory to each other and show the different dimensions of reservation policy. Let us throw some light on the views of some eminent personalities about reservation policy. Some are the ardent supporter of it and some others are against it. There is another class of people who demand reservation but not on the basis of caste rather on economic grounds. Chitins (1998) considered reservation as a “stamping ground for several types of interests”. According to her it has become surrogate for a truly enlightened approach of social reforms. Nehru states “reservation meant to eradicate centuries of injustice, only increases the hold of caste identity and hierarchy”. Some people think that privileges and safeguards really weaken those who demand them.

Nalwa (1993) viewed that quota of reservation should be within reasonable and sensible limits. Reservation should not be so excessive as to overshadow the

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guarantee of equal protection of laws. Some perceive reservation as endangering the existing power relation, and tensions and conflicts on caste line become inevitable because of it (Sharma, 1982).

There is another group of persons who think that when already existing reservation for SC and ST had not benefited much (Sharma 1982, Galanter, 1984), as far as class I and class II positions were concerned, why there was an extended need for additional reservation? Some like Bhan (1982) and Lohia (1982) think that reservation in educational institutions, employment and political sphere is dangerous as it results in reinforcement of casteism inbreed inefficiency in the system and lead to frustration of the meritorious students and employees belonging to high castes.

Some other castes of people say that if for long term social gains, protection is required to sick industries, similar protection is required for socially backward groups for long term social gains (Chalam, 1998). Giving answer to the question of discontinuance of reservations 'Chalam' viewed that instead of this a cultural revolution for eliminating the principle of exclusiveness is required.

Reddy (Times of India, 2006) says "progeny of those who have got a position through quota should be denied the same privilege. One quota case in every family is sufficient". As far as creative fields like performing arts are considered it is well known fact that no amount of reservation can sprung talent among reserved category, as this field is about honing the skills that the person already possesses..

By concentrating on grounds of giving reservation and discussing some arguments in favour of and against the reservation policy and reading the protest that has been made all over the country by the mixed group of students, against the different criteria of giving reservation like: additional reservation to OBCs in the institute of professional and technical higher education, women reservation, reservation to Gurjar society etc., the investigator finds it mandatory to measure the perception of students about the reservation policy.

In absence of availability of suitable tool for measuring the perception of students, it was decided to develop one for accomplishing the objectives of measuring their perceptions. The investigator thought to develop a comprehensive questionnaire covering different dimensions of reservation policy. In the following sub sections different steps involved in the development of questionnaire; "Reservation policy and You", is being discussed.

Identification of Dimensions-

A basic prerequisite for developing questionnaire: Reservation policy and You (RPY) was the identification of dimensions of reservation policy through the

survey of literature. It was found by the intense survey that reservation policy varies in four major dimensions;

- Educational dimensions
- Social dimensions
- Constitutional dimensions
- Professional or economic dimensions.

Item writing-

The next step after determining the dimensions of reservation policy was to frame the items related to different dimensions. This was done with the help of different resources, such as, books, journals, magazines, news papers, expert's advices and other relevant documents. A good no. of items was constructed by the researcher to make a pool of items related to different dimensions of reservation policy. Attempts were made to present the items in effective form by keeping the guide lines given in Edward (1948). Though the items were originally constructed in English, they were translated in Hindi, also for getting response from both Hindi and English speaking respondents. The no. of items developed was 110. The response pattern of the items was 'yes', 'can't say' and 'no'. The statements developed were both of negative and positive nature. The preliminary form of the questionnaire was edited keeping in view the suggestions given by Edward (1948) and was refined with the help of supervisor's comment. Finally 80 such statements were included in the preliminary draft of the questionnaire.

Expert's Opinion-

The preliminary form of the questionnaire was given to the experts from the field of psychology, education and sociology for giving their valuable suggestions regarding appropriateness, content, language, relevance and any sort of ambiguities in the items.

In view of criticism and comments of the experts as well as suggestions by the supervisor some changes in language, item structure and statements' construction were made. Finally after rewarding, modifying and dropping some items in the light of suggestions, 64 items were selected. Now the 64 items were randomly arranged and thus, the tool was prepared for tryout.

The Try Out

At this stage the second draft of the test consisting 64 items were distributed among the small sample of three hundred and fifty six subjects consisting students

of class twelve, graduate and post graduate level of different educational institutions of Varanasi city. However, out of 356 questionnaires only 300 hundred could be utilized for try out purpose and the remaining questionnaires were either incompletely answered or not returned to the researcher at all. The scoring was based on the three point scale assigning the scores of 2 for response category 'yes', 1 for 'can't say' and 0 for 'no' for positive items and the reverse in case of negative items.

Item Analyses-

The item was analysed by calculating the t-value so that only those items remain in the final draft of the test which discriminate between the low and the high scorers. The procedure maintained in Gupta (2001) and Stanly and Hopkins (1972) was adopted and the item having t-value more than 2.35 or near about it was selected as an item having high discrimination power. For selecting the items 0.01 level of significance has been undertaken by the investigator. The calculated t-value of different items of the test is given below.

Table 1. Calculated t- Values for different statements

Item no.	High group		Low group		t-value	Level of significance	Remark
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
1	0.83	0.93	0.67	0.89	1.23		-
2	1.10	0.93	0.12	0.46	9.8	0.01	Selected
3	1.74	0.39	1.68	0.46	0.67		-
4	1.07	0.95	0.46	0.87	4.69	0.01	Selected
5	1.33	0.89	0.19	0.57	9.5	0.01	Selected
6	1.45	0.87	0.19	0.57	12.6	0.01	Selected
7	1.35	0.90	0.34	0.71	8.42	0.01	Selected
8	0.83	0.98	0.15	0.50	6.18	0.01	Selected
9	0.76	0.95	0.15	0.52	5.55	0.01	Selected
10	1.71	0.67	1.78	0.54	0.78		-
11	1.15	0.95	0.34	0.71	6.75	0.01	Selected
12	1.34	0.86	0.41	0.77	7.76	0.01	Selected
13	1.19	0.91	0.15	0.48	1.14		-
14	0.97	0.95	0.09	0.37	7.3	0.01	Selected
15	0.58	0.88	0.49	0.85	0.75		-
16	1.69	0.57	0.22	0.54	18.38	0.01	Selected
17	1.31	0.85	0.19	0.10	11.2	0.01	Selected
18	1.63	0.73	0.99	0.97	5.33	0.01	Selected
19	1.93	0.35	1.56	0.78	4.11	0.01	Selected
20	0.53	0.84	0.61	0.82	0.58	0.01	-

					0.91		-
21	1.61	0.75	1.51	0.82	2.85	0.01	Selected
22	1.16	0.93	0.79	0.95	3.18	0.01	Selected
23	1.41	0.83	0.26	0.66	8.31	0.01	Selected
24	1.64	0.74	0.64	0.89	5.27	0.01	Selected
25	0.74	0.94	0.16	0.50	0.18	0.01	-
26	1.57	0.81	1.59	0.77	2.5	0.05	Selected
27	1.90	0.41	1.70	0.70	12.7	0.01	Selected
28	1.49	0.81	0.22	0.56	7.73	0.01	Selected
29	1.72	0.60	0.87	0.96	8.73	0.01	Selected
30	1.71	0.67	0.75	0.93	12.7	0.01	Selected
31	1.49	0.81	0.22	0.56	8.4	0.01	Selected
32	1.15	0.92	0.31	0.49	5.67	0.01	Selected
33	1.12	0.94	0.44	0.78	5.5	0.01	Selected
34	1.52	0.79	0.86	0.94	4.69	0.01	Selected
35	1.07	0.95	0.46	0.87	10.18	0.01	Selected
36	1.66	0.71	0.54	0.84	6.08	0.01	Selected
37	1.13	0.91	0.40	0.76	8.36	0.01	Selected
38	1.11	0.94	0.18	0.52	0.17		-
39	0.55	0.84	0.53	0.87	5.67	0.01	Selected
40	1.12	0.94	0.44	0.78	8.31	0.01	Selected
41	1.64	0.74	0.64	0.89	2.31	0.01	-
42	0.81	0.94	0.51	0.87	5.5	0.01	Selected
43	1.31	0.89	0.65	0.88	4.3	0.01	Selected
44	1.83	0.53	1.40	0.86	0.18		-
45	1.57	0.81	1.59	0.77	4.11	0.01	Selected
46	1.93	0.35	1.56	0.78	10.6	0.01	Selected
47	1.20	0.94	0.14	0.35	3.58		-
48	1.26	0.95	1.69	0.66	9.33	0.01	Selected
49	1.48	0.79	0.36	0.74	6.44	0.01	Selected
50	0.94	0.96	0.21	0.57	7.58	0.01	Selected
51	1.08	0.93	0.17	0.55	4.08	0.01	Selected
52	1.47	0.83	0.98	0.88	8.25	0.01	Selected
53	1.23	0.93	0.24	0.63	7.75	0.01	Selected
54	1.28	0.89	0.35	0.73	9.8	0.01	Selected
55	1.16	0.88	0.18	0.56	0.08		-
56	1.34	0.88	1.35	0.85	0.04		-
57	1.40	0.85	1.43	0.81	5.0	0.01	Selected
58	1.18	0.91	0.58	0.85	7.0	0.01	Selected
59	1.05	0.97	0.14	0.47	7.73	0.01	Selected
60	1.58	0.74	0.73	0.86	7.0	0.01	Selected
61	1.05	0.97	0.14	0.47	8.08	0.01	Selected
62	1.56	0.79	0.59	0.88	5.17	0.01	Selected
63	0.99	1.04	0.37	0.72	5.5	0.01	Selected
64	0.99	0.97	0.33	0.68			

Final draft

The final form of Reservation Policy and You consists of 50 items distributed over four dimensions which measure perception about reservation policy. Selected items from the try out were randomly placed in the final form. Dimension wise distribution of items is given in table 3.2. Out of fifty items, 9 were related to educational dimensions, 20 to social dimensions, 12 to constitutional dimension and 9 to professional dimension. This distribution of item is given in table 2.

Table 2. Dimension wise distribution of items in final draft

S. No.	Dimension	No. of items
1	Educational	9
2	Social	20
3	Constitutional	12
4	Professional	9

* Standardization

(a) Validity

Validity is that quality of a data gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to measure what it supports to measure (Best 2000). It concerns with what a test measures and how well it measures it. In order to ensure the content validity the try out form of the questionnaire was first given to the experts to check the relevance of the content therein. All the experts have scrutinized the sentences and only the approved and modified items were included in the questionnaire. Thus the test itself consist the content validity. As quoted by Holsti 1969, p. 143 "if the purpose of the research is a purely descriptive one, content validity is normally sufficient." Thus only the content validity of the test is sufficient enough for describing the test as a valid instrument for judging the perception about reservation policy.

(b) Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by split half method. It comes out to be 0.88. This value proves that the RPY is a reliable tool to measure perception of students on (1) educational, (2) social, (3) constitutional and (4) professional dimensions of reservation policy.

(c) Norms

The normalcy of the scores has been analysed first and then Percentile norm of the test has been calculated on the basis of perception scores obtained from 1009 subjects. Table 3 shows the percentile norms of the perception scores towards reservation policy.

Table 3. Percentile values of perception scores on different dimensions

PERCENTILE	educational	social	constitutional	professional	TOTAL
P10	4	4	5	1.8	17
P20	4	5	5	3	21
P25	5	6	6	3	23
P30	6	7	6	4	25
P40	6	9	7	4	27
P50	7	11	8	4	31
P60	8	12	9	6	34
P70	8	14	9	7	38
P75	8	15	10	7	40
P80	9	17	10	8	42
P90	11	20	12	9	48
P95	12	24	13.6	10	52

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