

Problems and Challenges of Beda Tribal Reservation in Kalyana Karnataka Region, Karnataka: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research examines problems and challenges faced by the Beda tribal community in accessing reservation benefits in Kalyana Karnataka region. Comprising seven districts (Bidar, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, Kalaburagi, Ballari, Vijayanagara), this historically backward region received special constitutional provisions under Article 371J (2012) providing 8% regional reservation alongside 7% ST reservation. Despite dual protection, the Beda community with approximately 32,96,354 population faces severe barriers: low educational attainment (regional literacy 63.71% vs state 75.36%), limited employment opportunities, bureaucratic implementation gaps, awareness deficits, and socio-economic marginalization. Analysis of government reports, census data, court judgments (2020-2024), and academic literature reveals that while legal frameworks exist, effective implementation remains compromised by confused policy circulars, inadequate infrastructure, institutional apathy, and persistent poverty. The study provides evidence-based recommendations for improving reservation implementation, strengthening institutional mechanisms, enhancing awareness, and ensuring genuine benefits reach Beda tribals in Kalyana Karnataka.

Keywords: Beda Tribe, Kalyana Karnataka, Article 371J, Tribal Reservation, Educational Access, Employment Challenges, Implementation Gaps, Constitutional Provisions

1. INTRODUCTION

Kalyana Karnataka (formerly Hyderabad-Karnataka), comprising Bidar, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, Kalaburagi, Ballari, and Vijayanagara districts, represents one of India's most backward regions. Covering 23% of Karnataka's area, the region was part of Hyderabad State until 1948 and integrated into Karnataka in 1956 but remains severely underdeveloped with literacy rate 63.71% (state average 75.36%), higher education GER 15% (state 32%), infant mortality 41 (state 35), and minimal industrial development.

The Beda/Bedar tribe, one of Karnataka's largest Scheduled Tribes with approximately 32,96,354 population, faces compounded vulnerabilities in this region. Historically associated with hunting and village protection, the community now primarily depends on agriculture and daily wage labor. In Kalyana Karnataka districts like Raichur, Koppal, and Kalaburagi, substantial Beda populations reside in acute deprivation.

The community enjoys dual constitutional protection: (1) ST status providing 7% reservation in education and employment under Articles 15(4) and 16(4), and (2) Article 371J (98th Constitutional Amendment, 2012) providing additional 8% regional reservation for Kalyana Karnataka residents. Theoretically, Beda tribals should benefit from enhanced opportunities through both reservations. However, reality reveals stark gaps between constitutional promises and lived experiences due to low educational attainment, poverty, awareness deficits, bureaucratic barriers, confused policy implementation, inadequate infrastructure, and systemic discrimination.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

Primary:

1. Analyze socio-economic status of Beda tribals in Kalyana Karnataka;
2. Examine legal framework governing tribal and regional reservations;
3. Identify problems in accessing reservation benefits;
4. Assess implementation effectiveness.

Secondary:

1. Document awareness levels;
2. Evaluate government interventions;
3. Provide evidence-based recommendations.

2.2 Methodology

This descriptive-analytical study employs secondary data from: Government sources (Census 2011, Tribal Welfare Department reports, Article 371J circulars, KPSC employment statistics); Legal documents (Karnataka High Court judgments, government orders); Academic sources (peer-reviewed journals, research papers); NGO reports. Analysis involved content analysis, comparative analysis of socio-economic indicators, thematic organization, and critical evaluation covering 2012-2024.

: Secondary data dependence; lack of disaggregated Beda-specific data for Kalyana Karnataka; underreporting of informal discrimination; limited access to internal implementation reports.

3. KALYANA KARNATAKA: CONTEXT AND PROFILE

The region's unique trajectory explains contemporary backwardness. Part of Hyderabad State under Nizams until 1948, then integrated into Karnataka in 1956, it remained neglected for decades. Studies documented persistent backwardness leading to Article 371J introduction in 2012, acknowledging underdevelopment and mandating special measures.

Key Indicators: Literacy 63.71% (state 75.36%); higher education GER 15% (state 32%); IMR 41 (state 35); minimal industrial development; agriculture-dependent economy constrained by being India's second largest arid region; inadequate infrastructure particularly in rural/tribal areas; high unemployment forcing migration. Significant tribal populations including Beda community reside here, facing compounded disadvantages from both tribal identity and regional underdevelopment.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 ST Status and General Reservations

Beda community's ST notification under Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 provides: 7%

educational reservation under Article 15(4); 7% employment reservation under Article 16(4); special safeguards under Articles 244, 275, 342; protection under SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989.

4.2 Article 371J Provisions

Inserted through 98th Amendment (2012), Article 371J mandates: Separate development board with equitable fund allocation; reservation in educational institutions for regional candidates; reservation in state government posts by percentage specified by President; special Governor responsibility for implementation. Karnataka government implemented 8% horizontal reservation in education and employment for Kalyana Karnataka residents.

4.3 Dual Reservation Overlap

Beda tribals in Kalyana Karnataka theoretically benefit from: (1) Vertical ST Reservation (7%); (2) Horizontal Regional Reservation (8% under Article 371J). This dual eligibility should enhance opportunities but practical implementation has created confusion, litigation, and challenges examined subsequently.

5. PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

5.1 Educational Challenges

Infrastructure Deficit: Inadequate schools particularly in tribal areas; many children travel long distances causing high dropouts.

Quality Issues: Poor facilities, teacher absenteeism, unqualified teachers, medium of instruction challenges (Beda speak Kannada-Marathi mixture).

Economic Barriers: Despite scholarships, hidden costs (uniforms, books, transport, foregone labor income) create barriers; poverty prioritizes immediate economic needs over education.

Limited Higher Education: Regional GER 15% indicates minimal access; even lower for Beda tribals due to lack of institutions, economic inability, inadequate preparation.

Awareness Deficit: Many families unaware of reservation provisions, eligibility criteria, application procedures, documentation requirements—exacerbated by low parental literacy and limited institutional outreach.

Documentation Challenges: Obtaining ST certificates, domicile certificates, income certificates from remote areas involves significant time, effort, informal costs; delays directly impact admissions.

5.2 Employment and Recruitment Challenges

Limited Regional Opportunities: Minimal industrial development and government offices mean few jobs available despite Article 371J reservations. Confused Dual Reservation

Implementation: Multiple government circulars (2020-2023) created confusion about whether Beda candidates counted under ST or regional quota, sequencing of consideration, interaction between reservations.

Hobson's Choice Problem: Earlier circulars required candidates to choose between local and non-local cadre at application, forcing them into "pigeon-holed" positions defeating Article 371J purpose. Karnataka High Court (2023) termed this prejudicial.

Frequent Policy Changes: Circulars on June 6, 2020; June 15, 2022; February 1, 2023 changed implementation creating uncertainty; candidates applied under one set of rules governed by different rules mid-process.

Low Competitive Capacity: Poor educational backgrounds, limited coaching access (expensive, urban-

centered), inadequate guidance, limited exposure create double burden of regional and tribal disadvantage.

Awareness Gaps: Vacancy information, application procedures, examination dates often don't reach tribal communities; digital divide exacerbates this.

Verification Challenges: Multiple original documents required; candidates from remote areas struggle to procure timely; travel/accommodation costs for urban interview centers unaffordable; lack of exposure, poor communication skills, unfamiliarity disadvantage tribal candidates at interview stage.

5.3 Institutional and Administrative Challenges

Weak Implementation Machinery: Despite Article 371J being in force over a decade, institutional machinery remains weak; Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board has limited effectiveness; poor coordination between departments, KPSC, educational institutions.

Lack of Disaggregated Data: No data tracking Beda tribal beneficiaries specifically from Kalyana Karnataka; impossible to assess if benefits reach this doubly disadvantaged community.

Bureaucratic Apathy: Officers lack tribal sensitivity; unnecessarily stringent verification for tribals, lenient for others; delays, lost documents, additional certificate demands; absence of tribal welfare officers/special cells.

Legal Litigation: Confusion spawned multiple litigations regarding Article 371J interpretation, circular validity, individual grievances creating uncertainty; though courts provided clarity (Karnataka High Court 2023 upholding February 2023 circular), litigation caused delays affecting thousands.

Corruption: Informal reports of fake ST/domicile certificates by non-eligible candidates; inadequate verification, limited prosecution enable malpractices reducing seats for genuine candidates.

5.4 Socio-Economic and Cultural Challenges

Poverty: Overwhelming poverty creates barriers—children contribute household income through labor; delayed scholarship disbursement doesn't match immediate expense needs; malnutrition affects cognitive development; lack of stable income prevents long-term educational/career investments.

Social Discrimination: Despite legal protections, Beda tribals face discrimination in educational and employment settings; negative stereotyping, social exclusion, prejudiced treatment create hostile environments.

Cultural Disconnect: Formal education and government employment culturally alien to Beda tribals; curriculum doesn't reflect tribal knowledge; dress codes, communication styles, work cultures reflect mainstream urban culture creating alienation.

Geographic Isolation: Remote settlements with poor connectivity limit access to information, services, opportunities; physical distance to district headquarters, examination centers, offices creates barriers.

Limited Role Models: Scarcity of educated/employed Beda individuals limits aspirations; families with no community success experience find it difficult to envision such pathways for children.

5.5 Challenges for Beda Women

Compounded disadvantages from tribal identity, regional backwardness, and gender:

Lower Educational Access: Female literacy significantly lower; cultural norms prioritize boys' education, safety concerns, early marriage, household responsibilities limit girls' access.

Limited Mobility: Social norms restrict movement outside home, limiting access to institutions, examination centers, distant employment.

Safety Concerns: Sexual harassment risks justify limiting education/employment outside home.

Lack of Women-Specific Support: Absent hostels for tribal girls, women's police stations, gender-sensitive grievance redressal, mentorship programs.

6. CASE STUDY: ARTICLE 371J IMPLEMENTATION (2020-2024)

June 2020 Circular: Required option exercise between local/non-local cadre at application, forcing premature choice.

June 2022 Circular: Modified procedure but retained problematic option exercise.

February 2023 Circular: Recognized prejudicial impact; clarified separate notifications for local/non-local posts; local candidates could apply for both, considered for non-local first, then local if unsuccessful—avoiding forced choice.

Karnataka High Court (August 2023): Upheld February 2023 circular, stating government "ultimately and hopefully, realised that issuance of separate notifications and adopting separate recruitment processes for local and non-local cadre posts was more advantageous to local person hailing from Hyderabad-Karnataka region and was in line with constitutional intent underlying Art 371-J."

This years-long confusion affected thousands including Beda tribals who faced uncertainty about eligibility, proper procedures, selection processes; many missed opportunities.

7. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND LIMITATIONS

Existing Initiatives: Tribal Welfare Department implements Ashram schools, scholarships, vocational training, livelihood support—but spread across all tribes, unclear specific allocation for Beda in Kalyana Karnataka. Kalyana Karnataka Region Development Board mandated under Article 371J has limited effectiveness due to inadequate funding, bureaucratic delays, lack of tribal-specific focus. Special recruitment drives occasionally conducted but infrequent. Coaching centers established but limited reach to tribal areas.

Limitations: Inadequate funding relative to need; funds often underutilized due to implementation capacity constraints. Generic programs not specifically designed for doubly disadvantaged groups like Beda tribals. Absent systematic monitoring/evaluation to assess if benefits reach Beda tribals; without data, impossible to identify gaps and course-correct. Top-down design/implementation without meaningful Beda community participation.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Legal/Policy Reforms: Issue clear guidelines on ST and Article 371J reservation interaction ensuring candidates benefit from both without forced choice; avoid frequent procedure changes; mandate disaggregated data tracking tribal candidates from Kalyana Karnataka by community, gender, post/course type; establish dedicated taluk-level cells for expedited certificate issuance with online tracking and strict timelines.

Educational Interventions: Significantly expand quality residential schools (Ashram) for Beda children in Kalyana Karnataka; establish bridge courses and remedial coaching for learning gaps and entrance exam preparation; ensure timely scholarship disbursement covering all expenses plus additional higher education support; provide bilingual approaches in early years transitioning from home language; establish mentorship programs connecting successful Beda professionals with students.

Employment/Skill Development: Establish robust monitoring of reserved post filling with penalties for non-compliance and periodic special recruitment drives; conduct comprehensive pre-recruitment training

for Beda candidates covering syllabus, strategy, interview skills, confidence building; establish vocational training centers in Beda-concentrated areas offering market-relevant skills; provide comprehensive entrepreneurship support including training, seed capital, market linkages, mentorship.

Institutional Strengthening: Establish dedicated Tribal Welfare Cells at district/taluk levels specifically facilitating reservation benefits for tribal candidates; set up helplines and information centers for guidance on procedures, applications, documents, grievances; conduct regular training for officials, teachers, recruitment staff on tribal issues, reservation policies, sensitive engagement; train and deploy Beda community members as resource persons bridging community and government machinery.

Awareness/Outreach: Conduct sustained multilingual awareness campaigns in Beda settlements about provisions, eligibility, procedures, support mechanisms; ensure teachers in schools with significant Beda enrollment guide students about reservation benefits and career pathways; provide digital literacy training and internet access enabling access to information, applications, e-learning.

Addressing Systemic Issues: Strictly enforce anti-discrimination laws with effective grievance redressal for tribal candidates; strengthen verification preventing certificate fraud while not harassing genuine candidates; prosecute fraudulent certificate obtainers; implement comprehensive development programs addressing poverty, health, housing, livelihood beyond reservation alone; develop gender-specific programs addressing Beda women's barriers including safety, hostels, flexible centers, harassment protection.

Research/Documentation: Commission detailed studies on Beda tribal conditions in Kalyana Karnataka, challenges accessing reservations, intervention effectiveness; establish regular monitoring/evaluation systems tracking whether benefits reach doubly disadvantaged groups; document and publicize Beda tribal success stories inspiring others and demonstrating possibilities.

9. CONCLUSION

The Beda tribal community in Kalyana Karnataka faces complex challenges accessing reservation benefits despite dual constitutional protection. Constitutional rights and legal protections, while necessary, prove insufficient without effective implementation, adequate institutional support, and sustained commitment to addressing systemic barriers. Problems identified—low educational attainment, limited competitive capacity, poverty, awareness deficits, bureaucratic barriers, confused policy implementation, inadequate infrastructure, social discrimination, geographic isolation—are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, requiring comprehensive coordinated efforts.

Article 371J implementation (2020-2024) marked by policy confusion, litigation, and uncertainty demonstrates how well-intentioned constitutional provisions can fail when implementation is flawed. The High Court's "Hobson's choice" observation reveals how administrative decisions undermine constitutional intent. For Beda tribals in Kalyana Karnataka, the gap between constitutional promise and lived reality remains wide. While theoretically enjoying enhanced protection through dual reservations, they remain among the state's most marginalized. Regional backwardness compounds tribal disadvantage, creating double burden existing interventions inadequately address.

However, measured optimism is warranted. The February 2023 circular and subsequent court validation provide greater implementation clarity. Growing tribal rights awareness, increased civil society activism, enhanced Kalyana Karnataka development focus suggest positive change possibilities. The key lies in sustained political will, adequate resource allocation, effective institutional mechanisms, genuine community participation, unwavering commitment to constitutional social justice principles.

Improving Beda tribal situations requires recognizing specific vulnerabilities, designing targeted interventions, ensuring effective implementation, maintaining rigorous monitoring, and willingness to course-correct when programs fail. It requires treating reservation as constitutional right not favor, and backwardness as surmountable challenge not permanent condition through sustained, intelligent, compassionate action. The path forward demands moving beyond legal provisions and policy documents to actual life transformation— ensuring every Beda child in Kalyana Karnataka accesses quality education, every eligible candidate is aware of and can effectively access reservation benefits, and Article 371J and ST status promises translate into genuine socio-economic advancement opportunities. Only through comprehensive sustained efforts can we honor constitutional social justice commitments and ensure the most marginalized communities in India's most backward regions realize full potential and participate equally in the nation's development journey.

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