

# **Bharatiya Janata Party: Securing Social Justice**



Social justice means equal opportunity for every section of the society. A country can progress only when the underprivileged and marginalized sections of the society are provided equal opportunities for their social and economic growth in general and the country in particular. The Bharatiya Janata Party and its predecessor, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh has always been a strong votary of social justice for various minority as well as disadvantaged social groups. Going

beyond the traditional advocacy of this important cause, the party has also been consistently emphasizing that social justice is incomplete without economic justice and political empowerment; The means to secure social justice (*samajik nyay*) have to also promote social harmony (*samajik samarasta*).

### **Bharatiya Jana Sangh's Commitment to Social Equality**

Since its inception, the **Bharatiya Jana Sangh** has pledged to solve the problems of the depressed classes. It declared its resolve to undertake a phased programme to pull these backward classes up to the level of the rest of the society within a specified period of time. The Jana Sangh regarded unsociability as a slur on humanity. It is totally wrong and unjust that any human being should hate or discriminate against another for reasons of birth, ancestry or occupation.

In a meeting of its **Central Working Committee held in Delhi on 10 February 1952**, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh highlighted the following measures for the upliftment of the backward sections of the society including women.

### **Constructive Programme for the Backward**

The Central Working Committee feels that the workers of the Jana Sangh should take up the important work of organizing a network of Jana Sangh branches all over the country and through them, carrying on constructive programme for the cultural, social and economic regeneration of our society and for the building up of a sound and stable democratic political structure.

This constructive programme shall be carried on particularly among those sections of the society which need help because they lack in having opportunities, resources, education, leadership, unity, etc. In particular the work should be started: among Harijans and other backward classes with a view to seeing that the consciousness of their being a class apart from others, socially or otherwise, is totally eradicated and they are absorbed into the general mass of the society on the basis of full equality-a transformation which no legislation can bring about in the absence of intensive social work.<sup>1</sup>

At the Indore Session of the **All-India General Council on 7 September 1968**, the Jana Sangh in pursuance of the above-mentioned objective had adopted a resolution which said inter alia:

"After the achievement of Independence, it was hoped that sections of the people neglected for centuries, backward in regard to education and opportunities of development, and also economically indigent, would be enabled by giving them special facilities to move up to the level of the rest of the society and exert shoulder to shoulder with them for the nation's progress. It was hoped that the distinctions and discriminations between high and low would be abolished, and the entire society will live like a family held together by bonds of affection and equality. It is a matter of regret that the expected progress in this direction has not been made during these last 20 years.

The popular urge for social reform discernible in the people prior to independence has been on the wane. The All-India General Council expresses concern over the reports about the sorry conditions of Scheduled Castes and scheduled Tribes in various parts of the country. The General Council is of the confirmed view that the concept of social status based on birth, caste or occupation and of distinctions drawn on that basis militate against social unity. The entire body of people living in this land and attached to it by ties of filial devotion constitutes one family. Feelings of fraternity and equality strengthen unity. It is essential, therefore, that effective educational, reformist and agitational measures be undertaken to eradicate social disparities, untouchability etc."<sup>ii</sup>

**Report on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (All India General Council, Indore, 7 September 1968)**

**Equality and Affection as Basis**

After the achievement of Independence, it was hoped that sections of the people neglected for centuries, backward in regard to education and opportunities of development and also economically indigent, would be enabled by giving them special facilities to move up to the level of the rest of the society so as to exert shoulder to shoulder with them for the nation's progress. It was hoped that the distinctions and discriminations between high and low would be abolished,

and the entire society would live like a family held together by bonds of affection and equality. It is a matter of regret that the efforts in this direction has not been made during expected progress these last 20 years.

The popular urge for social reform discernible in the people prior to independence, has been on the wane. The All-India General Council expresses concern over the reports about the sorry conditions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in various parts of the country. The General Council is of the confirmed view that the concept of social status based on birth, caste or occupation and of distinctions drawn on that basis militate against social unity. The entire body of people living in this land and attached to it by ties of filial devotion constitutes one family. Feelings of fraternity and equality strengthen unity. It is essential, therefore, that effective educational, reformist and agitational measures be undertaken to eradicate social disparities, untouchability etc.

### **Cottage Industries for the Backward**

The question of social equality is linked with the issue of economic development of the backward classes. The policy adopted in this regard under the 3 Five-Year Plans has yielded little result. The Government has been making pompous declarations about Harijan Welfare and Tribal Development but the fact is that no attempt has been made to make them economically self-reliant. It is not enough merely to provide them educational facilities. So long, provision is not made in our plans for their economic betterment, for the modernization, protection and promotion of their cottage industries, it will not be possible to bridge the financial gap between the rich and the poor. Out of the amount spent on industrial growth during the last 3 plans a very small fraction has gone to these backward classes. Rules governing loans and grants for industry make it impossible for these sections who generally lack financial backing and resources to avail of such aid. If a certain percentage of the total outlay on industry be earmarked for these sections and suitable machinery set up by the Government to ensure that the loans and grants intended for them do reach them so that they are able to stand on their own feet and do not have to depend on the Government for their livelihood, a revolutionary step would have been taken in the economic life of the country and a commencement made towards bridging the economic gulf. The General Council demands that the Government should reformulate the Fourth Plan in this light.

### **Appointments of the Backward**

Till now reservations provided in government services for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have not been earnestly implemented. Often, even where Harijan applicants are available one or the other pretext is found to exclude them. Barring among Fourth Class employees, their percentage of representation in the services is very low in relation to their population. The pace of progress also is very slow. There can be no improvement in this situation unless the Central and State governments pay attention to it and adopt a stern attitude towards the appointing officers who disregard the prescribed rules in this regard.

### **Time-limit for Eliminating Backwardness**

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh is of the view that a planned programme should be undertaken to bring the backward sections in line with the rest of the society by a definite time-limit. The experience of the past 20 years has strengthened the feeling that backwardness and the safeguards extended on that basis are a phenomenon likely to stay with us forever. When the Constitution was being framed it was estimated that these safeguards would be done away with after 10 years. But even after 20 years of independence these sections have not been able to come up with the rest, and so the need is felt for continuing these safeguards yet. In the interest of social justice, it is necessary to probe the causes why our present policy pertaining to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has failed, and to initiate in every sphere of life such changes as can enable the weaker sections of the society to come up to the level of their brethren at the earliest'.<sup>iii</sup>

### **Revolutionary Campaign**

Distinctions of high and low were to be abolished. By bringing about a change of heart in the society, a feeling of faith and belonging needed to be created among our backward brethren. To this end, the BJS in its 15<sup>th</sup> All India Session held at Bombay on 26 April 1969, undertook the following 6-point effective programme:

#### **1. Educational Facilities-**

Students must be helped to secure admissions in schools. Scholarships for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are very often not given in time. Jana Sangh workers must contact local

authorities and ensure that this situation is rectified. Where required, books should be arranged for children. Arrangements should be made to see that in hostels students of all sections live together.

## **2. Social Equality-**

These sections must be invited to social ceremonial functions such as marriages etc. and similarly there should be participation in their functions. National festivals should be so organized as to enable Scheduled Caste sections to take part in them in large numbers. There should be joint programmes and community meals. Valmiki Jayanti, Ravidas Jayanti, Ambedkar Jayanti also should be organised jointly. Depressed Classes Conferences should be convened in different parts of the country. These Conferences should be organised through workers belonging to these classes.

## **3. Campaign against Oppression and Injustice-**

Panels of lawyers should be constituted at district levels to render free all legal assistance in cases of excesses committed against Scheduled Castes in any village or city. Whenever any such excesses are reported, Jana Sangh workers must rush to the spot, make due enquiries and take necessary action.

## **4. Economic Facilities-**

- (a) These sections must be helped to form cooperative societies.
- (b) Steps must be taken to secure for them loans from credit cooperatives so as to free them from the clutches of money-lenders.
- (c) Efforts should be made to provide them facilities in respect of land so as to ease their housing problems.
- (d) Special attention should be paid to the problems of agricultural labour.

## **5. Employment Opportunities-**

The educated youth among these sections must be helped to secure employment. Generally, the quotas of reservations fixed for these sections remain unfilled. Departmental officials must be

pressed to fill these quotas. Where possible, the Jana Sangh branches may themselves set up employment offices to help the youth get suitable employment.

#### **6. Removal of Disabilities-**

In their campaign against untouchability, Jana Sangh workers should undertake surveys in their respective areas, to find out as to what disabilities and difficulties these sections are facing. A suitable constructive as well as agitational programme should then be drawn to remove them. When we meet next year for our All-India session, we should have the satisfaction of having taken concrete steps towards the fulfilment of our pledge to stamp out untouchability.<sup>iv</sup>

### **Bharatiya Jana Sangh Election Manifestoes promising Social Justice**

#### **Election Manifesto 1951**

The party believes in the equal rights of all citizens of India irrespective of caste, creed or community. Minorities and majorities based on religion will not be recognized by this party. Equality of opportunity to all and special aid to the backward sections of the people will be its basic approach to the solution of the country's problems. Special steps will be taken to promote their educational and economic advancement.<sup>v</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 1954**

### **Backward Classes**

1. Jana Sangh will make special efforts for the welfare of the backward classes by removing their disabilities and social inequality resulting from caste system and untouchability so that they may occupy their rightful place of complete equality and help in the consolidation of the society. All public places particularly temples and village wells, will be opened to all Hindus. And untouchability will be declared a cognizable offence.
2. With the above end in view, Jana Sangh will reawaken the latent unity of Hindu society, and not depending on law alone will rouse public opinion to the realisation of basic oneness among its various sections.<sup>vi</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 1957**

### **Special Facilities for Backward Classes**

1. Jana Sangh will make special efforts to get equal and honourable treatment to the socially depressed and economically backward sections of society. It will strive to eradicate untouchability and casteism. There will be no restrictions on the entry of any section of Hindus into temples.
2. In order to improve their economic condition, priority will be given to the depressed classes and tribes in the matter of redistribution of land. Their traditional trades and crafts will be developed. Arrangements for providing houses and drinking water to them will be made. Special facilities for their education will be provided. Necessary steps will be taken to link the tribal areas with the cities.<sup>vii</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 1962**

### **National Unity**



1. Educational and economic help to backward classes will be given to bring them in line with the whole society, with a view to obliterating all vexatious distinctions of high and low or touchable and untouchable.

### **Forests**

1. For the preservation and promotion of forests, the Jana Sangh will change the existing forest policy. Forests are needed not only for their products but also to check soil erosion and prevent floods. The present policy has been formulated merely to exploit the forests with a view to maximising the income without caring for the conservation and development of forests or for those who had been traditionally dependent for their livelihood on forests produce. The basis of Jana Sangh policy will be to utilise the forest with due regard to the rights - and welfare of the farmers and other forest people. Jungle contracts will be given to co-operatives of labourers and the *Vanavasis*.
2. *Vanavasis* will be allotted farmland in the forests as per the *tongya* system. They will be free to collect minor forest produce, and arrangements will be made to get them a proper price for it. They will be protected against exploitation by contractors and money-lenders. Debt redemption acts will be specially extended and effectively implemented in the tribal areas.
3. *Nistar* rights of the villagers in the forest will be secured. Villagers will be encouraged to plant more trees. Forest villages will be transferred to the revenue department and proprietary rights will be given to the farmers in these villages.<sup>viii</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 1967**

### **Backward Classes**

1. Bharatiya Jana Sangh will formulate a programme to bring the backward classes of society in line with other sections within a specified time. However, in case of sections, which have already come up, a vested interest in backwardness will not be allowed to develop. People with low income will get all facilities enjoyed by backward classes.

### **Forests**

1. Bharatiya Jana Sangh will arrange for afforestation on a wide scale. *Vanmahotsava* will be made a purposeful programme and not a barren ritual. Forest dwellers and forests are inseparable.
2. Forest dwellers, must, therefore, be made co-sharers in the wealth accruing from forests. Their traditional rights to forest produce shall be protected. *Vanvasi* labour must be given bonus out of the profits earned in forest contracts.
3. *Vanvasis* will be given rights over the land which they till. Deforested areas will be leased to them for cultivation and afforestation. The *Tongya* system will be revived. Collection of Tendu leaves will be de-nationalised wherever it has been taken up by the Government.<sup>ix</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 1971**

### **Egalitarian Society**

1. Jana Sangh is pledged to the creation of an egalitarian society in which there would: be no discrimination against, or in favour of any citizen on grounds of birth, heredity, caste or creed. In this society, there would be no place for economic exploitation or social disparity.

### **National Integration through Indianisation**

1. Untouchability is a crime against man and God. We shall implement laws against untouchability in letter and in spirit and, if necessary, make them stringent. We shall break the barriers that divide one Indian from another and accelerate the evolution of a homogeneous and egalitarian society.<sup>x</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 1972**

### **Programme**

#### **For Scheduled Tribes**

1. Extend the facilities presently available to the Scheduled Tribes in specific areas to the entire country:
2. Distribute among them all surplus and cultivable waste lands in and near the forests) and rehabilitate those displaced in the past

3. De-governmentalise minor forest produce, restore and preserve the traditional rights of tribals in governmental as well as private forest areas
4. Give them priority in forest services and the protection of the Minimum Wages Act
5. Develop forest-based industries and labour co-operatives
6. Strictly enforce debt relief measures; and
7. Take all appropriate steps for their progressive integration with the social mainstream.

### **For Scheduled Castes**

1. Make laws against untouchability more stringent and enforce them strictly;
2. Provide facilities within two years to do away with the system of carrying night soil on the head:
3. Ensure reservation in services for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes according to their population and set up Assembly-level Vigilance Committees to ensure its faithful implementation:
4. Arrange for extra training classes, refresher courses and in-service training for their benefit;
5. Allocate out of the resources earmarked for cottage and small-scale industries funds in proportion to their population, to such-those industries which provide employment to Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and periodically review the progress thereof; and
6. Implement the Directive Principles of the Constitution in letter and spirit so as to protect and promote their social, economic and educational interests.<sup>xi</sup>

### **Janta Party Manifesto 1977 (Bharatiya Jana Sangh Contested 1977 Lok Sabha Election under the banner of Janta Party)**

#### **New Deal for Weaker Sections**

1. It is a matter of deep shame that even three decades after the advent of independence, the social and economic conditions of the weaker sections of our society, particularly the scheduled castes and tribes, continue to be abject. They are still subject to many forms of discrimination and have been victims of foul atrocities. The average income of most of these

groups is below the subsistence level. Their social and economic backwardness have made it difficult for them to take full advantage of even the limited opportunities and facilities available. This in turn affects and inhibits the avenues of employment and promotion open to them, and the acquisition of the skills necessary to take up projects for self-employment or cooperative efforts in the fields of agriculture, industry and trades.

2. The Janata Party believes that the disparities that separate these members of our society from the more educationally and economically advanced sections cannot be radically reduced without a policy of special treatment in their favour. It will accordingly provide preferential opportunities for education and self-employment to these sections. In this connection it will reserve between 25 and 33 per cent of all appointments to Government service for the backward classes, as recommended by the Kalelkar Commission. Harijans will be provided house.

### **Ending Untouchability**

1. The stigma of untouchability must be effaced through legal and educational measures and by social action. The carrying of head-loads for scavenging will be banned and alternative facilities provided. The party will formulate a special programme within the framework of the Five-Year Plans for the substantial advancement of the scheduled castes and tribes and other backward classes and will provide adequate funds for the purpose. Special machinery will be set up to implement the programme and assure fulfilment of the relevant constitutional guarantees. Caste distinctions must be ended.

### **Tribal Interests**

1. The land and forest rights of the scheduled tribes will be safeguarded. Forest policies should not be formulated or implemented at the cost of the adivasis. Nor should forest contractors be permitted to exploit these simple people. Forest villages should be converted into revenue villages. Tribal cultures are part of India's varied heritage and shall be given due protection and every encouragement.<sup>xii</sup>

## **Janta Party Election Manifesto 1980 (BJS contested 1980 Lok Sabha Elections under the banner of Janta Party)**

### **Social Achievements and Tasks**

1. The Janata Party reiterates its conviction that the Indian polity cannot be identified with the religion, language or culture of a section of our people, and that any sectarian approach is not only contrary to our philosophy of life but also to the national ethos so painstakingly built during our freedom struggle.
2. A series of specific measures have already been outlined in for dealing with the problems of diverse social and economic interests in our population. These will have to be vigorously implemented, with particular emphasis on those intended for the benefit of the poorer, deprived and vulnerable sections of the people. The underlying aim must be to remove all manner of discrimination, to reduce inequalities, to remove grievances and tensions, to promote social harmony and to move towards a well-integrated society.
3. The periodic occurrence of violent communal disturbances and atrocities on the scheduled castes and tribes and other weaker sections of society has been a cause of utmost anxiety and concern.
4. The party considers it to be a matter of shame that such incidents still occur, and will endeavor to prevent them by taking concrete steps to create an atmosphere in which all communities and castes find equal security and by strengthening and reorganizing the intelligence and law enforcement machinery. A specially trained anti-riot police force will be organized consisting of all sections with effective representation of the minorities, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to put down such violence firmly. Special courts will be established and summary procedure will be introduced to deal expeditiously with the persons, groups or organizations who are found guilty of instigating and abetting such violence; if necessary collective fines will be imposed and officers will be punished if they are found to be negligent.
5. The party deplores and rejects Mrs. Gandhi's approach of isolating the minorities, the Harijans, the tribals and others and then enlisting their support severally for narrow political ends. The party will follow an approach that leads to abiding ties and loyalties that cut across sectional and sectarian divisions. The party is convinced that true and lasting unity can only

be built by recognizing a diversity of needs and interests and weaving these into a national framework of goal fulfilment.

### **Backward Classes**

1. The Janata Party is fully seized of the problems and aspirations of the people who are economically and socially backward. Realizing the complexity of the problems involved, the Janata Government appointed a Backward Classes Commission under the chairmanship of B.P. Mandal. The party will see that the recommendations of the Commission are expeditiously processed and acted upon when they are received.

### **Scheduled Castes and Tribes**

1. Special regard has to be paid to the difficulties, social as well as economic, faced by the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The party believes that the concessions and facilities provided in the Constitution for these sections of our society, including reservation of seats in Parliament and State Legislatures, should be continued as long as social discrimination remains.
2. The Untouchability Act will be effectively enforced to eradicate the evil of untouchability. To the extent land is available, the Janata Government will provide land to members of the scheduled castes and tribes who are presently exploited as agricultural labourers, so that they become self-sufficient and find their rightful place in rural society. In the distribution of surplus land which becomes available upon the implementation of ceiling laws, preference will be given to landless members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
3. They will also be provided opportunities for self-employment. The party will take steps to remove the degrading drudgery of traditional occupations through the employment of mechanical means of handling refuse, night soil and disposal and utilization of dead cattle.
4. The party will pay particular attention to the needs of the tribal population in the forests and of the people residing in the neighborhood of forests. To this end it will evolve a new and progressive forest policy which rests on a partnership between the forest tribes and the forest authorities. The forest contractor system will be replaced by forest panchayats or cooperatives and vulnerable areas will be conserved and placed under protection until

their regeneration is assured. Slum areas will be assisted to transfer to ecologically sound and economically more productive systems of agriculture and land use.

5. The party will carry out policies which enable the tribal people to grow in accordance with their own genius, protect them from exploitation, land alienation and indebtedness, and build on their own institutions for modernization and development. The Backward Classes Commission will be requested to examine the problems of members of the scheduled castes who have changed their religion and who are socially and economically backward, in all respects, as is being done in the case of other backward classes.<sup>xiii</sup>

### **Bharatiya Janata Party and its stance on Empowerment of Minorities (1980-2019)**

After the formation of a new party following the collapse of the Janta Dal coalition, The BJP took note of the fact that during the last few years, oppression of Harijans and tribals has increased manifold. In keeping with the policy of securing social justice for minorities, the new party resolved to exert its full strength in defence of these underprivileged sections.

#### **Policy for Weaker Sections**

In its **National Council Meeting held at Gandhinagar from 1-3 May 1992**, the BJP made a statement regarding Humanistic Approach to Economic Development. As regards the weaker sections, the following lines were said-

‘.....The BJP sincerely believes that a healthy and vibrant society cannot afford to ignore any section of the society. Economic developmental programme would be meaningful only when it effectively takes care of all sections of the society and provides them with equal opportunities. In order to restore social equilibrium in society it is essential to give special treatment to hitherto neglected sections of the community. Similarly, women because of their specific and peculiar problems require special support. The BJP has all along been addressing itself to this aspect of unequal development and distributive justice. This approach and the consequential directions have all along been specified and stressed throughout in our economic policy statements. Major steps suggested in this context may be stipulated by way of illustration as follows:

1. Special assistance to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women in promotion of cottage industries and small scale industries and all schemes and programmes of rural development.
2. Reservation in employment;
3. Adequate representation in various watchdog committees such as consumer protection councils and public distribution system;
4. Separate Cooperative societies to promote entrepreneurial skills of the members of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and women; and
5. Adequate funds should be earmarked for the upliftment of weaker sections such as scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, economically underprivileged backward sections and women, taking into account their requirements.’<sup>xiv</sup>

### **Cooperatives for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes**

The BJP would like to promote the skill of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and improve their livelihood through Cooperatives. These cooperatives would not only help in the promotion of their skills but would also help in bringing these people in the national mainstream. The



special and specific problems of these sections of the community have to be handled with imaginative flexibility through cooperatives. Apart from providing linkage with market these cooperatives would help in bridging cultural linkages with other parts and sections of the country.<sup>xv</sup>

### **Party Resolutions on Ensuring Social Justice**

In a meeting of the **National Executive held at Gandhinagar from 8-9 October 1985**, the party restated its objective as follows:

"The Bharatiya Janata Party aims at establishing a democratic state which guarantees to all its citizens, irrespective of caste, creed or sex, political, social and economic justice, equality of opportunity and liberty of faith and expression."<sup>xvi</sup>

In a **National Executive Meeting held at Bhubaneswar from 19-21 December 1997**, the party launched a scathing attack on the 'United Front' government for its all-round failure. The party termed the Dalits and Tribals to be the worst sufferers of this misrule by the coalition government at the center. Following is an excerpt from the same-

“ Rule of law has suffered enormously with the Constitution being treated contemptuously by the UF Government. The poor and the vulnerable, especially the Dalits and the tribals, have suffered the most under a dispensation that lacked both direction and purpose. The latest carnage in Bihar, in which 61 poor villagers, most of them Dalits, died is symptomatic of the unaddressed plight of the vulnerable sections of society. That the UF, including the sanctimonious Left, has chosen to turn a blind eye to the jungle raj in Laloo's Bihar, speaks volumes. “<sup>xvii</sup>

In a **National Council Meeting held at Gandhinagar from 3-4 May 1998**, the then Party President Shri Kushabhau Thakre spoke of the need to empower the deprived sections and highlighted the fact that laws alone are not sufficient.

“.....What is needed is raising consciousness levels and empowering the deprived sections. Ten years ago, we adopted a policy on the problems of the Scheduled Castes at Agra. We followed this up with a Social Charter at Bangalore. Over the years, we have increased our representation of Scheduled Caste legislators, both in State Assemblies and Parliament.

Similarly, we have been in the forefront for demanding the empowerment of Scheduled Tribes. Their social and economic problems are of a different nature and they should be tackled with a greater degree of sensitivity. By voting overwhelmingly for us, they have reposed their faith in the BJP. The party cannot afford to let them down. We should now concentrate on expanding our base among these sections of the society. We should reach out to as many people as possible and draw them into a larger, egalitarian Indian family where caste or tribal identities co-exist in perfect harmony and are not in conflict with each other.’’<sup>xviii</sup>

In his presidential speech at **National Council meeting of the party held at Nagpur from 27-28 August 2000**, Shri Bangaru Laxman highlighted that in the social sphere, the party had made conscious efforts to reach out to newer sections of Indian society by espousing the specific concerns of the various sections of our society, and by advocating the common regional and national concerns, that bind all of them. Consequently, the party's influence among the Dalits, Adivasis, and OBCs grew substantially.<sup>xix</sup> He also spoke of the party's approach being ‘‘Reservation Plus.’’ He stated clearly that *Samajik Nyaya* underpins our Party's vision for a new and resurgent India. The economic exploitation and social injustice that millions and millions of our brothers and sisters belonging to dalit, adivasi, and other disadvantaged communities have been subjected to for centuries have deformed Indian society. They have created a painful dichotomy between India's lofty cultural and civilizational values on the one hand and the wretched living conditions of so many of our fellow citizens on the other. This dichotomy is a wound on our national conscience that we cannot continue to live with in the 21st century. This wound will have to be healed or it will continue to distort and decelerate our nation's progress.<sup>xx</sup>

The BJP has always supported the policy of reservations for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and OBCs, and our support shall remain as strong as ever. The vast majority of our dalit, adivasi, and OBC brethren continue to live in poverty and educational deprivation. Most of them are not in a position. even to avail the existing provisions of reservations. When a majority of them remain condemned to continued poverty and illiteracy, they cannot conceivably take adequate advantage of political reservation. Therefore, the time has come for the BJP to put forward a bold new agenda before the nation to secure faster social justice, educational uplift, and economic advancement to all the underprivileged sections of our society. Keeping this in mind, he outlined a 10-point agenda for advancing social justice in which he made it very clear

that the BJP shall continue all the existing provisions of educational, employment, and political reservation for as long as is necessary, and ensure their effective implementation at all levels. He also promised effective enforcement of laws to curb social injustice at every level so that guilty in atrocities against Dalits, Adivasis, and lower castes are prosecuted at the earliest. Another agenda was to make traditional vocations more remunerative: A majority of the poor belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and OBCs are engaged in unorganized economic activities. They are employed or self-employed in arts, crafts, weaving, and other traditional vocations. There should be a national mission to improve their economic conditions by supporting their economic activities through better credit provision, better marketing, better management, and greater inputs from appropriate science and technology. Development of entrepreneurship among Dalits, adivasis, and OBCs is a critical need for the next phase of Social Justice movement in India. The greater the number of successful entrepreneurs, professionals, and managers from these communities, the higher will be their demonstration effect on other members of these communities. Towards this end, the functioning of bodies such as the SC and ST Finance Corporation, Backward Class Commission, etc. at the Centre and in the States should be thoroughly reviewed and improved.<sup>xxi</sup>

In his Presidential speech at **National Council Meeting of the party held at New Delhi on 27 October 2004**, Shri L.K. Advani ji spoke of accommodating various social groups and communities like tribals and dalits in the decision-making process. He pointed out that The BJP has a proud record of having the largest number of MPs from Dalit and tribal communities. Organisations linked to our parivar are involved in education and other welfare schemes aimed at the empowerment of tribals. Party functionaries must play a role in these important nation-building initiatives. We must not become prisoners of our own past. We have to press ahead, mindful of our commitment to the people, the future of the country and our own ideology.<sup>xxii</sup>

In the **National Council Meeting of the party held at Lucknow on 23 December 2006**, the then Party President Shri Rajnath Singh launched a scathing attack on the ruling party Congress by accusing it of kindling divisive identities thereby jeopardizing the national integrity. He said that – ‘.....Minority educational institutions have been excluded from the purview of the new reservations policy for Backward classes. As a result, the existing reservations for

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes stand removed from minority institutions which are now outside the purview of legislation. The Government has fallen back on expediency to justify this. Whereas in the matter of education it claims that caste is alien to Islam and Christianity, it is simultaneously campaigning to enlarge the Scheduled Castes category to include Muslims and Christians in employment. One of the new terms of reference of the Ranganath Mishra Commission on linguistic minorities was to find ways of incorporating Muslims and Christians into the category of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The BJP believes that such a move will encourage religious conversions. The BJP believes that all Indian citizens, regardless of language, class and creed are equal. The party condemns the Congress Party's assertion that some citizens are more equal than others and have first claim on resources on the basis of their faith. The BJP believes that equity demands special treatment and, where necessary, affirmative action for the poor and the disadvantaged.<sup>xxiii</sup>

In a **National Executive Meeting held at Patna on 12 June 2010**, the BJP passed a resolution on the then central government's assault on the federal structure of the Indian Union and its intolerance of India's political plurality. It accused the Congress of unnecessarily harassing the non-Congress governments in the states thereby aiming at surreptitiously seizing powers vested with the States and concentrating them in the hands of the Government in Delhi. For example, the Central Government had recently circulated a draft, proposing amendments to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995. The new draft included a provision whereby District Magistrates will be required to report any breach of the Rules directly to the Centre. This is a clear instance of trespassing on the State's jurisdiction.<sup>xxiv</sup>

After gaining power at the Centre in 2014 Lok Sabha Elections, the **BJP National Council met at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi on 9 August 2014** and passed a resolution in which the party highlighted the able leadership of Shri Narendra Modi as the biggest factor in this resounding victory backed by the strong support of the Organisation and hard work of local leadership and *Karyakartas*. Resolution also spoke of the successes achieved in Chhattisgarh, Bihar, MP, Jharkhand, UP, Rajasthan, Rural Gujarat, Rural Karnataka and Rural Maharashtra by the party which showed that it had got a huge mandate of the poor and downtrodden. The fact is that BJP got huge support on seats reserved for SC/STs in these elections as a result of which

maximum number of SC/ST MPs got elected on BJP ticket. Three SC candidates of BJP, won on general seats.<sup>xxv</sup>

In its **National Council Meeting held at Kozhikode, Kerala from 23-25 September, 2016** on the occasion of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Birth Centenary Resolution, the BJP called for the celebration of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Birth Centenary Year as the Year of the Welfare of the Downtrodden across the country. The resolution said that in order to realize the objective of total reconstruction, the important primary goal should be to eliminate economic inequality, discrimination and disparities. In the slogan of *Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas*, besides developing the spirit of equality, freedom and dignified life is also imbued, and to achieve those goals the party dedicated itself to celebrate the year as the Year of the Welfare of the Downtrodden. During the long years of Congress rule in the country the weaker and deprived sections have been deprived of transparent allocation of basic amenities. The result was that poor have become poorer in the rural areas whereas in urban areas dalits, backwards and economically weaker sections have been reduced to a life in the slums. To end all social disparities so as to establish an egalitarian society and to bring the SCs and STs into the mainstream of development, the BJP promised to promote a sense of social harmony so that social justice could be rendered to the marginalised sections. To link the economically weak - backward classes, farmers, Dalits and Tribal sections of society - with the mainstream of development, the BJP government for the first time broke the historical hindrances existing in the country since long, through its commendable efforts.<sup>xxvi</sup>

**In a Resolution Passed in BJP National Executive Meeting at Bhubaneswar (Odisha) from 15- 16 April 2017**, the Bharatiya Janata Party welcomed and congratulated Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's decision to give constitutional status to the National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes. After 70 years of independence, it was seen as a historical, far-sighted and unprecedented decision taken by any government in the interests of the backward society living in the poor and far-flung areas of the society. The long pending demand of providing justice to the weaker sections of the society had been fulfilled. It was expected that with this historic decision, all the backward classes of the society will get justice. This commission was expected to discharge other functions as well, related to the protection, welfare, and development and advancement of backward classes. It was said that this commission will give justice to the socially and educationally backward classes by empowering them by

exercising the inherent rights of Articles 16-4 and 15-4 under the Constitution. The goal of building an egalitarian society has been the commitment of the BJP and with this decision the BJP government had taken a step in that direction. The ability to materialize the vision of a just India and egalitarian society lies in this important decision taken by Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.<sup>xxvii</sup>

**A Political Resolution passed in the BJP National Executive Meeting at Talkatora Stadium at New Delhi on 25 September 2017** mentioned that the BJP led Government has a clear vision of achieving the objectives of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas. In this direction there was long pending demand for the constitutional recognition of Socially & educationally backward classes. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took up this matter with all seriousness and decided to extend the constitutional status to the OBC commission. The constitutional amendment bill was passed by Lok Sabha, but due to obstructionist behavior of Congress in Rajya Sabha, it could not become a reality. BJP is committed in getting constitutional status to OBC Commission and also condemns Congress for taking Anti OBC stand in Rajya Sabha. Trading the path of social justice, our Prime Minister pledged to eradicate the evil of social disparity in the New India. Equality in society will act as a catalyst in building a better & strong Nation by 2022.<sup>xxviii</sup>

**In a Political Resolution Passed in BJP National Executive Meeting at DR. Ambedkar International Center, 15 Janpath, New Delhi on 8 September 2018**, the BJP expressed its happiness over the fact that a New India is rising on the able shoulder, and out of the skilled hands of millions of young men and women, especially the SCs and STs. The party had extended soft loans to over 7 crores of them through MUDRA Yojana; hence today the youth in India are no longer just job-seekers; they are job providers too.<sup>xxix</sup>

**In a National Council Meeting held on 11th-12th January 2019**, the BJP passed a Resolution on the Welfare of the Poor in which it was mentioned that the government had for the first time made provisions of minimum support price (MSP) for forest produce for the tribals, which helped them increase their incomes. The tribals have benefitted from different schemes under the 'Van Bandhu' program. The government has given entitlements (Van patta) over many lakh hectares of forest land to tribal communities for agriculture. The *Janmabhoomi*, *Shikshabhoomi*, *Karmabhoomi*, *Deekshabhoomi* and *Mahaparinirvanbhoomi* of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar were developed into '*Panchateerthas*' by the government by making Smarak in these places. The

government also started Ambedkar International Centre. A separate budget of 95,000 crore rupees for different schemes for dalits and tribals was allocated. For the welfare of OBC, the budget was been increased by 41%. The government had also completed the dream of formation of OBC commission.<sup>xxx</sup>

## **BJP Election Manifestoes: Commitment to Securing Social Justice**

### **Election Manifesto 1984**

#### **Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes**

The BJP resolved to-

1. Enforce laws against untouchability very stringently;
2. Give preference to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;
3. In the allotment of surplus land to agricultural labor, and housing sites to the homeless;
4. Take steps towards employing mechanical means of handling refuse, and thus to do away with the degrading practice of carrying night soil on the head;
5. Evolve a new forest policy based on a partnership between the forest tribals and the forest authorities;
6. Frame policies which protect tribals from exploitation, land-alienation and indebtedness and enable them to grow in accordance with their own genius.<sup>xxxii</sup>

### **Election Manifesto 1989**

#### **Law and Order and Protection of Weaker Sections**

The BJP views with alarm the rise of social violence in the country. This includes communal violence, atrocities on Scheduled Castes and Tribals, and criminal assaults on women. The BJP believes that the weaker sections need an effective protection from atrocities and the Party is

committed to the security of life, limb, property and honour of all citizens. In case of a serious eruption of violence, the BJP commends that-

1. A judicial inquiry will always be held;
2. The inquiry report will be published;
3. Those guilty of incitement to violence or dereliction of duty will be punished;
4. All sufferers will be suitably compensated and rehabilitated;
5. An indepth socio-economic study of riot-prone areas to take effective steps for riot-prevention will be conducted;
6. The Police Force be transformed into an efficient and impartial instrument of law and order, through modernisation programme and better service conditions;
7. Political meddling in police work be stopped and a machinery for redressal of Police/ People's grievances be created.<sup>xxxii</sup>

### **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**

The BJP stands for all such measures which will bring the SC and ST people at par with the rest of the society, not in terms of economic status alone but on broad spectrum of social life giving them a rightful place of honour to live with a sense of belonging. The BJP will

1. Enforce laws against untouchability and atrocities very stringently and set up mobile or special courts to try cases of atrocities against SC and ST;
2. Atrocity prone villages will be identified and steps will be taken to safeguard the life, honour and property of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes;
3. A massive campaign to eradicate untouchability will be launched;
4. Full allocation and utilisation of funds under special component plan in proportion to SC population will be ensured;
5. A national level financial agency on the lines of NABARD to cater to the credit needs of SC/ST will be set up;



6. Ensure greater participation of SC/ST in small, cottage and rural industries;
7. Launch vigorous schemes during VIII Five Year Plan coinciding with Dr. Ambedkar's centenary to raise SCs and STS families above poverty line;
8. Implement the reservation policy for SC and ST by resorting to special recruitment drives so as to fill their quota within the shortest possible time;
9. Put an end to the carrying of night soil as headload and introduce modern technique for disposal. Also take steps for effective rehabilitation;
10. Separate heads of account for SC/ST expenditure will be maintained by the Central and the State Governments;
11. A befitting memorial to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar will be established in Delhi during his centenary year;
12. Evolve a new forest policy based on a partnership between the forest tribals and the forest authorities
13. Frame policies which protect tribals from exploitation, and indebtedness, and enable them to grow in accordance with their own genius;
14. Remove the impediments in the speedy development of Tribal and Hill areas and settle the pending claims for grant of permanent pattas to the tribals by amending the Forest Conservation ACT (1986);
15. Amend the laws relating to the collection and marketing of the minor forest produce to protect the economic interests of the ST;
16. Convert all forest villages into revenue villages; and
17. Formulate a sub-plan for the economic development of the Scheduled Tribes.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

### **Reservation Policy**

In the opinion of the BJP the question of reservation has to be viewed with an open mind free from all prejudices of any kind. For this BJP commends-

1. Reservation should be continued for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as before;

2. Reservation should also be made for other backward classes broadly on the basis of the Mandal Commission Report, with preference to be given to the poor among these very classes; and

3. As poverty is an important contributory factor for backwardness, reservation should also be provided for members of the other castes on the basis of their economic condition.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 1991**

### **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**

The BJP sincerely believes with all its heart in the upliftment of SC and ST. To this end we will

1. Energetically enforce anti-untouchability laws
2. Make free legal aid available to SC in cases under these laws;
3. Make all village wells available to all castes and communities
4. Set up a financial agency on the line of NABARD to cater to the credit needs of SC & ST;
5. Promptly fill up the shortfall in jobs reserved for SC and ST;
6. A befitting memorial would be constructed in honour of Dr. Ambedkar;
7. Evolve a new forest policy based on a partnership between the forest tribals and the forest authorities:
8. Protect SC and ST for exploitation and indebtedness
9. Formulate a sub-plan for the economic development of Scheduled Tribes; and
10. Remove all impediments in the speedy development of hill and forest tribal areas.

### **Other Backward Castes**

The BJP is pledged to the socio-economic uplift of Other Backward Castes particularly the more backward among them. BJP in its 1985 resolution and subsequently in its 1989 Election Manifesto commended the following reservation policy:

1. Reservation should be continued for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as before;
2. Reservation should also be made for other backward classes broadly on the basis of the Mandal Commission Report, with preference to be given to the poor among these very classes; and
3. As poverty is an important contributory factor for backwardness, reservation should also be provided for members of the other castes on the basis of their economic condition.

In view of the shocking manner in which the National Front government implemented the Mandal Commission Report which resulted in self-immolation of youths and pitted caste against caste and community against community. BJP feels that the reservation policy should be introduced taking into consideration socio-economic ethos. Reservation policy should be used as an instrument of social justice and promoting social harmony as well. The question of reservation has to be viewed with open mind free from all prejudices of any kind.

In addition, the BJP:

1. Will start a chain of first class residential schools where the really bright children of really poor families of all castes and communities will be admitted, educated and otherwise looked after, to come into their own and enter Services, Business and Professions in open competition;
2. Most of the non-agricultural OBCs are artisans. Foreign and metropolitan competition has hurt these people badly. BJP will train and equip them, so that they can find a place of honour in the new social economy.<sup>xxxv</sup>

## **Our Social Philosophy**

### **Harmony and Equality through Integral Humanism**

The Bharatiya Janata Party's social philosophy, which is the bedrock of its social agenda, is rooted in integral humanism. It rules out contradictions between society and its various components, as also between society and the individual, or, for that matter, between the family, the basic building brick of our social structure, and the individual. From this stems the BJP's commitment to the eradication of social and economic disparities that have prevented India from emerging as a modern, dynamic nation; to the creation of a socially integrated Bharatiya society which can proudly enter the new century. The BJP will help all socially and economically weak and backward sections of society, through special welfare and other schemes, to reach their full potential, For us, it is a historic task which we are resolved to fulfil.

### **Equity and Equality**

1. The BJP will adhere, through its policies and programmes, to the ideals, principles and goals of equity and equality as enshrined in our country's Constitution;
2. The BJP will promote a casteless socio-economic order which will effectively provide access to equal opportunities to all citizens, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion or gender;
3. The BJP will ensure that the place of an individual in society will not be determined on the basis of his birth; and
4. The BJP will dismantle practices, customs, beliefs, usages and institutions which are divisive and discriminatory, and which in any manner hurt the dignity of the individual.

### **Untouchability**

1. The BJP condemns unequivocally the practice of untouchability which is not only against the law of the land but runs counter to the very concept of integral humanism. Not surprisingly, the first brick of the Ram temple at Ayodhya was laid by a member of the Scheduled Castes, Kameshwar Chaupal.
2. The BJP will endeavour to create an ethos of equality in social and inter-personal relationships.

### **Weaker Sections**

1. The BJP will make the existing institutions and Constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes operationally more effective.
2. The BJP views the provision of special facilities and special opportunities, including reservations, in the Constitution as practical steps to advance the deprived and under-privileged sections of society. The BJP will continue with the existing policy on reservations till social and economic equity is achieved.

### **Our Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**

The BJP's goal is to achieve social equality for all Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes through political and economic empowerment. To achieve this goal, the BJP will:

1. Stringently enforce laws against untouchability;
2. Inquire into all cases of atrocities, publish the findings, punish the guilty and rehabilitate the victims as expeditiously as possible;
3. Lay stress on education, vocational training and skill upgradation;
4. Take prompt action to fill up the backlog in jobs reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The reservations policy will be backed up with a statute;
5. Set up a financial agency on the lines of NABARD to cater to the individual and institutional credit needs of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;
6. Provide more facilities for greater participation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in small scale, cottage and rural industries, as well as in trade and commerce;
7. End the pernicious practice of carrying night soil and scavenging; accelerate the rehabilitation of those engaged in
8. Wipe out the evil of bonded and child labour and rehabilitate the victims;
9. Launch a massive housing programme for the homeless in villages;
10. Allot pattas for land, home site and homes in the name of wives/widows/daughters;
11. Take necessary steps to protect tribals from exploitation, especially by contractors, and indebtedness,

12. Amend the existing forest policy to restore to the Vanvasis their rightful share of forest wealth and produce, as well as provide viable marketing facilities,
13. Expedite the processing of the claims of Vanvasis and Girijans for pattas in forest and hill areas
14. Disallow the diversion of monies from Plan and Tribal Sub Plan funds meant for the welfare and development of Vanvasis and Girijans;
15. Prevent land alienation through conversion of tribal lands for industrial and other purposes;
16. Formulate and implement a National Policy for the rehabilitation of families displaced by development projects. This rehabilitation policy will be multi- dimensional and not merely provide financial compensation or means of livelihood. Governed by the principle of total rehabilitation, it will include social, economic, educational, environmental, occupational and cultural aspects.
17. Encourage the setting up of inter-state regional coordination councils to implement a common welfare programme for tribals living in contiguous arenas of neighbouring states.
18. Erect a befitting memorial in honour of Maharishi Valmiki and Babasaheb Ambedkar in the national Capital.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 1998**

### **Our Social Philosophy Rooted in Integral Humanism**

#### **Equal Rights for all in Satta (power), Sampatti (prosperity) and Samman (dignity)**

1. The BJP will actively promote a casteless socio-economic order that will effectively provide access to equal opportunity for all citizens, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion and gender.
2. The BJP will, if necessary through legislation, dismantle practices, customs, beliefs, usages and institutions, which in any manner hurt the dignity of an individual.
3. The BJP will ensure that the place of an individual in society is not determined on the basis of his/her birth.

## **Untouchability: A Crime Against Humanity**

1. The BJP will remove the last vestiges of untouchability, which we believe is an unpardonable crime against humanity.
2. The BJP will strive to inculcate an ethos of equality in social and inter-personal relationships.
3. A befitting National Memorial in honour of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, who dedicated his life to the cause of social justice, will be erected at Chaityabhoomi in Mumbai on the lines of national memorials like Raj Ghat, Shanti Van and Vijay Ghat.

## **Our Commitment to the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**

Nearly four-and-a-half decades of Congress rule and the recent UF regime have failed to empower the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. While thousands of crores have been spent, ostensibly for their welfare, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes face increasing impoverishment and marginalization. Eighty per cent of members belonging to these sections of Indian society have been pushed below the poverty line. The BJP is committed to the social, economic and political empowerment of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, so that the wrongs of the past are corrected in a time-bound manner for a better future. To fulfil our commitment, we will be guided by a policy whose highlights are as follows:

1. Existing institutions and Constitutional safeguards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will be strengthened and made operationally more effective.
2. The provision of special facilities and preferential opportunities, including reservations, will be implemented in a manner so as to benefit the broadest cross-section and largest number of SCs and STs.
3. The reservations policy will be backed up with a statute and all backlogs will be cleared within a specified time-frame. Special tribunals will be set up under CAT to expeditiously deal with complaints of non-implementation of the reservations policy and related grievances.
4. All cases of atrocities against members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will be promptly inquired into and the guilty punished through special courts.

5. A comprehensive development package will be introduced for the economic empowerment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The highlights of this package will include:

(a) Setting up of a credit agency on the lines of NABARD to meet individual and institutional credit needs;

(b) Vocational training, skill upgradation and financial assistance to encourage greater participation in cottage and rural industries and other means of self-employment;

(c) Food-for-education schemes to raise literacy levels;

(d) A comprehensive national programme of minor irrigation facilities for irrigable land held by SCs and STs;

(e) Endowing every landless rural family of the SCs and STS with land and ensuring sustenance level of income through requisite facilities;

(f) Amending the existing forest policy to provide Vanvasis their rightful share of minor forest produce;

(g) Processing claims of Vanvasis and Girijans for pattas in forest and hill areas promptly; and,

(h) Separate development plans for tribals living in the plains.

6. The specified allocation for the Special Component Plan (17 per cent) for Scheduled Castes and the Tribal Sub-Plan (8 per cent) for Scheduled Tribes within the total Plan

allocation will be strictly followed both at the Centre and in the States. Every effort will be made to ensure that allocated funds do not lapse and are spent as per Plan provisions.

7. The pernicious practice of carrying night soil will be eliminated and all those engaged in scavenging rehabilitated.

8. Allotment of pattas for land, home site and homes in the names of wives/widows/daughters. These will be properly drawn up and handed over to actual beneficiaries;

9. Unifying the Banjaras under a common category and ensuring that they are benefited by the Minimum Needs Programme;



10. Necessary steps to stop the exploitation of tribals by contractors and to free them from indebtedness. We will consider enacting a law whereby the outstanding debts of those tribals who have paid back the principal amount and 50 per cent of the capital as interest, will be written off;

11. Stringent action to prevent tribal land alienation through conversion of tribal land for industrial and other purposes;

12. A National Policy for the 'total rehabilitation of families displaced by development projects. The policy will include social, economic, educational, environmental, occupational and cultural aspects;

13. An engineering and a medical college will be set up in the national capital in honour of Maharishi Valmiki and Babasaheb Ambedkar. Fifty per cent seats in these institutions will be reserved for students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs;

14. Panchayat institutions in scheduled areas and tribal areas will be made effective and functional in the light of Bhuria

Committee's recommendations;

15. Claims for inclusion into the ST list by erstwhile 'criminal' tribes and others will be entrusted to a commission for recommendations.

### **Our Commitment to the Welfare of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes**

The BJP is committed to ensuring social and economic justice to the Other Backward Classes. This is integral to our concept of Social Harmony (Samajik Samarasata). We reject the divisive and casteist politics of our adversaries that have neither economically empowered the bulk of the OBCs nor reduced their educational backwardness. We propose to:

1. Continue with the current reservations policy for the Other Backward Classes till they are socially and educationally integrated with the rest of society;
2. Provide training, financial support and management and professions of OBCs; facilities for upgradation of skills in traditional industries

3. Take corrective and remedial measures in view of recent macro-economic policy decisions that have rendered several sections of people belonging to the OBCs jobless:  
and
4. Make the National Backward Classes Finance Development Corporation fully operational.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 1999**

### **Agenda for Governance**

#### **SCs, STs and Backwards Classes**

The interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes will be adequately safeguarded by appropriate legal, executive and societal efforts and by large scale education and empowerment. We will provide legal protection to existing percentages of reservation in government employment and educational institutions at the Centre and State level. If required, the Constitution will be amended to maintain the system of reservation. We will continue to offer all assistance to the SCs, STs and Backward Classes to ensure their speedy socio-economic development. We will remove the last vestiges of untouchability from our society. Further, we will present a National Charter for Social Justice (Samajik Nyay) based on the principle of social harmony (Samajik Samarasata). We are committed to extending the SC/ST reservations for another 10 years. Reservation percentages, above 50%, as followed by certain states shall be sanctified through necessary legislative measures.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

## **NDA Election Manifesto 2004**

### **Social Justice and Empowerment**

1. A Monitoring Committee for Elimination of Social Disparities will be set up to focus on social and economic justice for SCs, STS, OBCs, denotified and nomadic tribes, and the poor among forward classes and minorities. States will be encouraged to set up similar committees.

2. A National Tribal Policy will be enunciated for the all-brethren round socio-economic development of our vanvasi
3. Regularization of land rights of tribals living on forest land and promotion of their livelihood activities based on forest produce, if necessary by suitable amendments in the forest laws.
4. Provisions of the policy on reservations will be strictly implemented. A major drive will be launched for filling up all backlogs in jobs and promotions for SCs and STs. Private sector enterprises will be given incentives for creating more educational, training, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for SCs and STs.
5. Functioning of various Commissions and Finance Corporations for the development of SCs and STs will be improved.
6. Laws to check atrocities against SCs, STs, and other weaker sections will be strictly enforced.
7. The newly announced Commission for Nomadic and Denotified Tribes will be made operational.
8. Reservations for the poor among 'Forward Classes' will be introduced after receiving recommendations of the Commission set up for this purpose.
9. Special encouragement will be given for preservation of the artistic and cultural traditions of SCs and STS, and for honouring their heroes.

### **Minorities**

1. A Minorities Development Agenda will be unveiled within the first six months to focus on a 3-E program: Education, Economic upliftment, and Empowerment.
2. The Agenda will especially address the needs of those belonging to poor and backward families, ensuring that they get an equitable share in government-supported schemes in education, housing, etc.
3. The working of the Minorities Commission will be reoriented to address their developmental and welfare issues.
4. The NDA Government gave unprecedented encouragement to the promotion of Urdu language and to the modernization of Madarasa education. This will continue.
5. A concerted effort will be made to increase minorities' representation in administration and public bodies.

## **Social Development**

Spread of Education among SCs, STs, OBC's and Minorities, and activities aimed at removing gender disparities in education at all levels, will receive increased support.<sup>xxxix</sup>

## **Vision Document 2004**

### **Social and Economic Justice**

The BJP has always been a strong votary of social justice for SCs, STS, OBCs and other disadvantaged social groups. Going beyond the traditional advocacy of this important cause, we have also been consistently emphasising two related imperatives (a) social justice is incomplete without economic justice and politic empowerment; and (b) The means to secure social justice (samajik nyay) have to also promote social harmony (samajik samarasta). To advance these ideals, the BJP commits itself to:

6.3.1 Strict implementation of provisions of the policy on reservations. A major drive has to be launched for filling up all backlogs in jobs and promotions for SCs, STS and OBCs.

6.3.2 Private sector enterprises will be incentivised for creating more educational, training, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for SCs and STs.

6.3.3 Strict enforcement of laws to check atrocities against SCs, STs and other weaker sections.

6.3.4 Provision of greater financial resources and better managerial resources for the delivery of education, healthcare, and other social security services to the poor and weaker sections of society.

6.3.5 Improvement in the functioning of various Commissions and Finance Corporations for the development of SCs and STs.

6.3.6 Operationalisation of the newly announced Commission for Nomadic and Denotified Tribes and development corporation for the shepherd community.

6.3.7 Safeguarding and promoting the economic wellbeing of fishermen and others

engaged in traditional occupations

6.3.8 Serious consideration to the recommendations of the newly established Commission for examining reservations for the poor among "Forward Classes".

### **Welfare of Tribals**

Of all the deprived and neglected sections of society, tribal Indians suffered the most during the long Congress rule. Their ability to benefit from the policy of reservations in education and jobs has remained far less than that of the Scheduled Castes and OBCs. Many of them have been uprooted from their habitations and livelihoods in forests. Frequently they are victims of exploitation by powerful local interests and harassment by the police and government officials. They rank the lowest in literacy, longevity, health status and other indicators of human development. The BJP is committed to ending the plight of India's tribals.

Ours was the first government, since Independence, to set up a separate ministry for tribal welfare and also a separate commission and a separate finance and development corporation for tribals. We shall take necessary steps for regularization of land rights of tribals living on forest lands and for promoting their economic activities based on forest produce. These measures, in addition to providing them livelihood security, will also help in preservation of our forests. The BJP believes that, as the original inhabitants of forests with a deep attachment to their natural endowments, tribals are the best protectors of our depleting forest and wildlife resources. We will also take steps to preserve tribal art and culture, honour tribal heroes, and frustrate efforts to create a wedge between tribals and non-tribals.<sup>x1</sup>

### **Dalits, OBC's and Economically Weaker Sections of the Society**

The BJP is committed to the principle of Social Justice (*Samajik Nyay*) and *Samajik Samarasata* (Social Harmony). Instead of pursuing identity politics which do not fetch benefits to Dalits, OBCs and other deprived sections of our society, the BJP will focus on tangible development and empowerment. The BJP will boost opportunities for entrepreneurship and commerce among Dalits, OBCs and other deprived sections of our society so that India's social diversity is fairly reflected in its economic diversity. Atrocities against Dalits, Tribals and weaker sections of society will be firmly dealt with. The extremely backward communities need urgent Government assistance. Special efforts will be made to reach out to them. In contrast to the UPA years when an additional 55 million people were pushed below the poverty line, the BJP will strive to bring families above the poverty line through aggressive policies and targeted programmes. A mission-mode approach will be adopted for providing the following to deprived communities: 1. Special educational facilities through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan. 2. Water, health, sanitation and hygiene for all families/habitations. A special component will be created in all development schemes to benefit the deprived sections of society. An 'Extremely Backward Communities Development Bank' will be set up for promoting skill enhancement through learn-and-earn schemes for their uplift. The BJP will introduce education and job quotas on the basis of economic criteria for all economically weaker sections of society other than Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs, who will continue to enjoy quota benefits.<sup>xli</sup>

### **Tribal Development: Long Term Strategy for Lasting Welfare**

It is a proven fact that incremental and piecemeal attempts for the development of tribals have not helped. Hence, the BJP will adopt a comprehensive, all-encompassing long-term strategy to empower tribals and ensure their welfare. We will draw upon the experience of our Governments in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh which have successfully implemented tribal welfare and development schemes. We will initiate a 'Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojana' at the national level, to be overseen by a 'Tribal Development Authority'. This scheme will focus on:

1. Setting up new schools and colleges, as also engineering colleges, polytechnics, agri-engineering colleges, nursing schools, veterinary schools.
2. Upgrading housing, water and health facilities.
3. Electrification of tribal hamlets and provision of all-weather roads.
4. Initiating new economic activities related to agriculture and agri-processing, horticulture, etc.
- 5.

Promoting dairy-based activities. 6. Creating employment opportunities by promoting bamboo-processing units and small-scale units. 7. Preventing tribal land from being alienated. 8. Facilitating access to minor forest produce and creating a network of rural markets. 9. Establishing a National Research Centre for the preservation of tribal culture and languages. 10. Providing adequate funds for tribal welfare and development.<sup>xlii</sup>

## **Election Manifesto 2014**

### **SCs, STs, OBCs and Other Weaker Sections: Social Justice and Empowerment**

The BJP is committed to bridge the gap, following the principles of Samajik Nyay (social justice) and Samajik Samrasata (social harmony). This social justice must be further complemented with economic justice and political empowerment. Instead of pursuing identity politics and tokenisms, we will focus on empowering the deprived sections of society. Steps will be taken to create an enabling ecosystem of equal opportunity - for education, health and livelihood. We will accord highest priority to ensuring their security, especially the prevention of atrocities against SCs & STs. We believe that accelerated social justice and integrated development is the key to the progress of our country and success of our democracy. The BJP is committed to bridge the divide following the principle of social justice (Samajik Nyay) and social harmony (Samajik Samrasata). Instead of pursuing identity politics and tokenisms, which have not led to any tangible results for the SC, ST, OBCs and other weaker sections of our society, the BJP will focus on tangible development and empowerment.

1. A high priority for SC, ST, OBCs and other weaker sections would be to create an ecosystem for education and entrepreneurship.
2. BJP is committed to the eradication of untouchability at all levels.
3. BJP is committed to eliminate manual scavenging.
4. BJP will look at more effective ways to pull these people out of the poverty line.
5. BJP will ensure that the funds allocated for schemes and programmes for SC, ST, OBCs and other weaker sections are utilized properly.

6. A mission mode project would be made for housing, education, health and skills development.
7. Special focus would be on the children, especially the girl child, with regards to health, education and skills development.

Tribal development will be one of the focus areas. BJP believes that half-hearted, incremental and piecemeal attempts for the development of tribals have not helped. So the BJP commits to make a comprehensive, all-encompassing long-term strategy to empower tribals and ensure their welfare. The goal would be to ensure tribal development while preserving the unique identities of this community. The Governments of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have successfully implemented the tribal welfare and development schemes and their model would be used for tribal welfare and development. BJP will initiate a 'Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojna' at the national level to be overseen by a 'Tribal Development Authority'. This scheme will focus on:

1. Setting up the entire education network for tribals.
2. Upgrading housing, water and health facilities.
3. Electrification of tribal hamlets and provision of all - weather roads.
4. Initiating new economic activities.
5. Promoting the products associated with the tribal culture by setting tribal haats in tourist towns and other centres.
6. Ensure that the tribal land is not alienated.
7. Facilitating access to minor forest produce and creating a network of rural haats (markets).
8. Establishing the National Centre for Tribal Research and Culture to preserve the tribal culture and languages.
9. Enhancing the funds for tribal welfare and development.<sup>xliii</sup>



## **Ensuring Justice for All**

We are committed to ensure benefits of constitutional provisions of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes. We will ensure that proper representation and opportunities are available for these sections.

We have decisively ensured that the economically weaker sections (EWS) of the society who belong to the non-reserved category are represented and have access to government jobs and higher education through the 10% EWS reservation which was long overdue. We will implement the law in the same spirit while ensuring that SCs, STs and OBCs continue to have their fair representation.

## **Conclusion**

The current BJP President Shri JP Nadda on 18 September 2021, while addressing a meeting of SC Morcha, had said that the party is committed to social justice and under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi, it is working to make Babasaheb Ambedkar's dream true.<sup>xliv</sup>

Social justice and social harmony are not mere slogans, but these happen to be the commitment and pledge of the Bharatiya Janata Party government to provide justice and equality to poor, oppressed, backward and tribal communities. The government under the able guidance and leadership of Modi ji is working day and night to ensure that these goals are fulfilled.

---

<sup>i</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh 1952-1980 Party Document, Education and Party Affairs, Vol. 5, p. 115.

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid.,pp. 96-97.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid., pp. 100-102

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-99

<sup>v</sup> Bharatiya Jana Sangh 1952-1980 Party Document, Policies and Manifestoes, Vol. 1, p. 292

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid., pp. 203.213.219.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid., pp. 185, 191.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid., pp. 163,171.

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid., pp. 153-154.

<sup>xii</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-143.

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid., pp. 89-90, 100-101

<sup>xiv</sup> Bharatiya Janata Party 1980-2005 Party Document, Policy Documents, Vol. 4 ( New Delhi: BJP, 2005), pp. 113-114.

- 
- <sup>xv</sup> Ibid., p. 97.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Bharatiya Janata Party 1980-2005 Party Document, Political Resolutions, Vol. 5 (New Delhi: BJP, 2005), pp. 366-367.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Ibid., p.134.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Ibid., pp. 290-291.
- <sup>xix</sup> Ibid., p. 173.
- <sup>xx</sup> Ibid., p. 185
- <sup>xxi</sup> Ibid., pp. 185-191.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Bharatiya Janata Party 1980-2005 Party Document, Presidential Speeches Vol. 2 (New Delhi: BJP, 2005), p. 11.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> <https://www.bjp.org/political-resolution/resolution-upa-governments-vote-bank-politics>
- <sup>xxiv</sup> <https://www.bjp.org/political-resolution/resolution-centres-assault-federal-structure-indian-union-passed-bjp-national>
- <sup>xxv</sup> <https://www.bjp.org/political-resolution/political-resolution-passed-bjp-national-council-meeting-jawaharlal-nehru>
- <sup>xxvi</sup> <https://www.bjp.org/political-resolution/pt-deendayal-janmshatabdi-resolution-passed-bjp-national-council-kozhikode>
- <sup>xxvii</sup> <https://www.bjp.org/political-resolution/resolution-2-resolution-passed-bjp-national-executive-meeting-bhubaneswar>
- <sup>xxviii</sup> <https://www.bjp.org/political-resolution/political-resolution-passed-bjp-national-executive-meeting-talkatora-stadium>
- <sup>xxix</sup> <https://www.bjp.org/political-resolution/political-resolution-passed-bjp-national-executive-meeting-dr-ambekar>
- <sup>xxx</sup> <https://www.bjp.org/political-resolution/resolution-welfare-poor>
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Bharatiya Janata Party 1980-2005 Party Document, Election Manifestoes, Vol. 1 (New Delhi: BJP, 2005), p. 410.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Ibid., p. 365.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Ibid., pp.379-380.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Ibid., p. 381.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Ibid., pp. 342-343
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Ibid., pp. 297-300
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Ibid., pp. 202-206
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Ibid., pp. 133-134
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Ibid., pp. 92-93
- <sup>xl</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-36
- <sup>xli</sup> Bharatiya Janata Party Election Manifesto 2009, pp. 36.  
[https://library.bjp.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/262/1/bjp\\_lection\\_manifesto\\_english\\_2009.pdf](https://library.bjp.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/262/1/bjp_lection_manifesto_english_2009.pdf)
- <sup>xlii</sup> Ibid., p. 37
- <sup>xliii</sup> Bharatiya Janata Party Election Manifesto 2014, pp. 16-17.  
[https://library.bjp.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/252/1/bjp\\_lection\\_manifesto\\_english\\_2014.pdf](https://library.bjp.org/jspui/bitstream/123456789/252/1/bjp_lection_manifesto_english_2014.pdf)
- <sup>xliv</sup> <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/bjp-under-leadership-of-pm-modi-is-committed-to-social-justice-jp-nadda20210918205922/>