

The Almighty Brahmin!*

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* *This was written about fifteen years ago.*

I have a consuming interest in caste without having the slightest bit of prejudice for or against any of them.

Whenever I am in a conference, seminar or a social function, I count how many of the most important belong to what castes. It has never been more than a matter of curiosity. But one conclusion is inevitable: Whatever be the sphere of curiosity - literary, scientific, bureaucratic, or whatever, the Brahmin remains the top dog. It may be ethnic, or it may be the result of several generations of learning, of which they held the monopoly till the last century, or both combined. Before I give details, we should bear in mind that Brahmins form no more than 3.5% of the population of our country.

My statistics come from a pen friend, Brother Stanny, of St. Anne's Church of Dhule in Maharashtra. He has compiled figures of different castes in government employment during British rule, the largest proportion of government jobs (40%) were held by Kayasthas. Today* their figure has dropped to 7%. Next came the Muslims who were given special privileges by the British. They had 35% jobs in 1953, in free India their representation has dropped to 3.5%. Christians, likewise favoured by the English, had 15%, their figure has dropped to 1%. Scheduled Castes, tribes and backward classes, who had hardly any government jobs, have achieved a representation of 9%, have achieved a representation of 9%. But the most striking contrast is in the employment of Brahmins. Under the British they had 3% - fractionally less than the proportion of their population; today they hold as much as 70% of government jobs. I presume the figure refers only to gazetted posts. In the senior echelons of the civil service from the rank of deputy secretaries upward, out of 500 there are 310 Brahmins, i.e. 63%. Of the 26 state chief secretaries, 19 are Brahmins; of the 27 Governors and Lt. Governors 13 are Brahmins; of the 16 Supreme Court Judges, 9 are Brahmins; of the 330 judges of High Courts, 166 are Brahmins; of 140 ambassadors, 58 are Brahmins; of the total 3,300 IAS officers, 76 are Brahmins. They do equally well in electoral posts; of the 508 Lok Sabha members, 190 were Brahmins; of 244 in the Rajya Sabha, 89 are Brahmins. These statistics clearly prove that this 3.5% of Brahmin community of India holds between 36% to 63% of all the plum jobs available in the country. How this has come about I do not know. But I can scarcely believe that it is entirely due to the Brahmin's higher IQ.

[Courtesy: *The World Sikh News*]

