

Ethnically-based preferential government policies essay examples

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



Preferential government policies seek to give preferences in employment and education to marginalized ethnic groups. These policies are unique to countries that implement them. In some countries, the Preferential Government Policies are known as “ Affirmative Action”, “ positive discrimination” or “ sons of the soil preferences”. Irrespective of a country’s approach to these policies, Preferential Government Policies serve one prime role: to accord the disadvantaged ethnic groups special preferences. (Thomas, 1989 p. 21). In spite of the varying nature of Preferential Government Policies, they exhibit very similar political consequences in diverse political and cultural set-up.

Every government in the world today has either adopted the Preferential Policies or is facing a huge demand of the institution such policies. Many economically and academically challenged ethnic communities are calling for such policies. However, economic and political science analysts see this move as source as spread of increasing economic inequality. Myron Weiner, for instance argues that different communities may choose different professional and development paths. Some ethnic groups may prefer taking lower profile simply because their culture dictates so. In Myron’s in-depth analysis of Preferential Government Policies in the United States of America and India, the political outcomes appear to be very similar. However, the policies seem to be quite different from each other.

Myron highlights the preferential government policies in the United States with deeper discussions of the “ Indian Affirmative Action” in U. S., the government adopted preferential policies to eliminate mainly school segregation. In doing so, the 1964 Civil Rights Act aimed at promoting equal

opportunity and treatment to all blacks and the whites living U. S. the prime target group were the black whom the white discriminated against. This act did not go down well with critics of preferential treatment. They saw it as an avenue of promoting further discrimination. They argued that these policies would yield unequal results. Many people wondered if equality would be realistic in a society where discrimination had seriously widespread. In fact, some American citizens treated these preferential policies as a disguised means of applying quotas to specific groups of people against the others. The Indian affirmative action approach focuses more on group than individual rights. However, her constitutional treatment of the affirmative action is quite challenging. This is because the constitution recognizes both group and individual notions I expressing equality. For instance, Article 16 (2) agitates for the individual rights while Article 15 (4) and Article 16 (4) are modifications that recognize the group rights principle. The Indian constitution therefore, gives special treatment to “ socially and educationally backward” classes. These classes are thus accorded preference by the government in a bid to narrow down the gap between the higher classes and the lower class. These laws compel the Indian government to allocate legislative seats, grant scholarships, employ in government services, and admit students into educational institutions among other entitlements to the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. Despite the constitutional dispensation of the preferential government policies, the choice of criteria for identifying and including communities in to the schedules castes and scheduled tribes has remained very contentious. Government commissions have since argued from different grounds. Some prefer using average

education or income levels to gauge “backwardness” while others prefer employing social hierarchy. (Myron, 1983 p. 45)

This Indian approach has brought in a lot of controversy because some states have considered some castes with very large population for the preferential treatment. Besides, this has degenerated into ethnicity based on residence or language. For instance, referring to the disadvantaged groups as the ‘sons of the soil’ intimidates and segregates the immigrant communities in India.

Stiff opposition and backlash is typical in countries that implement preferential policies. For instance, Gujarat and Bihar castes in Indian ganged against the backward castes in a bitter opposition of the preferential treatment. In real essence, these reservations pose a threat to the upper castes and classes who would wish to maintain their status quo in the society. Lack of transparency and fairness in allocation of reservations has triggered intra-group conflict. Many cases of Christians rising against non-Christians or one tribe against another tribe have become common scenario. In Sri Lanka and Pakistan, the preferential policies catalyzed civil wars. (Thomas, 1989 p. 40)

References

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Thomas, S. (1989). A Special Report: “ Affirmative Action”: A Worldwide Disaster. *Commentary*, 88(6), 21-41.