



Grassroots Political Movements and Political Participation of the Barot Community in Gujarat

Dr. Mayurkumar Barot

Research Scholar- Political Science, Surendranagar University, Wadhwan

Abstract

This research paper studies the role of the Barot community in grassroots political movements in Gujarat. The Barot community has historically worked as genealogists, storytellers and custodians of cultural traditions. In recent decades, social, economic and political changes in Gujarat have influenced the political participation of the community. The study examines the historical background, socio-economic conditions, political awareness and participation of the Barot community in local and state-level politics. The paper also explores how education, urbanization, social identity and cultural heritage have shaped the political consciousness of the community. The study highlights the importance of grassroots political movements in increasing democratic participation and empowering marginalized communities in Gujarat.

Keywords: Grassroots Politics, Barot Community, Gujarat, Political Participation, Social Movements, Community Identity

1. Introduction

Gujarat has a rich political and cultural history. Different communities in the state have played important roles in shaping social and political movements. Among these communities, the Barot community has a unique identity because of its traditional occupation as genealogists, bards and storytellers. Historically, Barots preserved family histories, cultural traditions and oral narratives for various communities, especially Rajputs.

With modernization, industrialization, urbanization and educational development, the traditional role of the Barot community has changed. Members of the community have entered different professions, including government service, private employment, business and education. Along with these changes, the political participation of the Barot community has also increased.



Grassroots political movements have become an important part of democratic processes in Gujarat. These movements are usually organized at the local level and involve ordinary people who work together to solve social, political and economic problems. The participation of the Barot community in such movements reflects the growing awareness of rights, representation and social justice.

This research paper focuses on understanding the role of the Barot community in grassroots political movements in Gujarat. It studies the socio-economic background of the community, their political awareness and the factors influencing their political participation.

2. Historical Background of the Barot Community

The Barot community has a long historical presence in Gujarat. Traditionally, Barots worked as keepers of genealogical records and cultural narrators. They maintained family histories known as “Vanshavalis” and performed bardic poetry during social and cultural events.

During the medieval period, Barots enjoyed social respect because of their knowledge and cultural contributions. They were closely connected with royal families and local communities. Their role was not only cultural but also social, as they acted as preservers of traditions and historical memories.

However, British colonial administration introduced modern systems of documentation and education, which gradually reduced the importance of traditional occupations. After independence, economic and social transformations further changed the occupational structure of the community. Many Barots moved toward modern education and employment opportunities.

Despite these changes, the community has maintained its cultural identity. Community organizations and associations have played an important role in preserving traditions while encouraging educational and social progress.

3. Socio-Economic Profile of the Barot Community

The socio-economic condition of the Barot community has changed significantly in recent decades. Education has become an important factor in improving social status and employment opportunities.



Many young members of the community have completed higher education and entered professional fields such as engineering, medicine, teaching, law, administration and business. Educational progress has also increased political awareness among the younger generation.

The occupational structure of the Barot community is now highly diversified. Some continue traditional occupations, but most are involved in modern professions. Urbanization has also influenced the lifestyle and social outlook of the community.

The economic condition of the community varies between urban and rural areas. Urban Barots generally have better access to education, employment, healthcare and digital technology compared to rural Barots.

Women in the Barot community are also becoming more active in education, employment and social activities. Their participation in self-help groups, educational institutions and community organizations has increased in recent years.

4. Grassroots Political Movements in Gujarat

Grassroots political movements are movements that begin at the local level and involve ordinary citizens. These movements focus on issues such as social justice, land rights, education, employment, local governance, reservation policies, environmental protection and community welfare.

Gujarat has a long history of grassroots movements. The Kheda Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi, the Navnirman Movement, farmers' movements, environmental movements and caste-based mobilizations are important examples.

Grassroots movements in Gujarat have often emerged because of social inequality, economic problems and political dissatisfaction. Such movements provide opportunities for marginalized communities to express their concerns and demand representation.

The Barot community has participated in various grassroots political activities through local associations, caste organizations, educational groups and social welfare movements.



5. Political Participation of the Barot Community

Political participation refers to the involvement of people in political activities such as voting, attending political meetings, joining political organizations, participating in protests and contesting elections.

The political participation of the Barot community has increased because of education, social awareness and changing socio-economic conditions. Members of the community are actively involved in Panchayati Raj institutions, local governance and community-based organizations.

Many Barots participate in political campaigns, community mobilization programs and social reform activities. Community leaders often encourage political awareness through meetings, social gatherings and educational events.

The younger generation of the community is more politically aware and actively uses digital platforms and social media for political discussions and mobilization. Urban Barot associations also play an important role in promoting political participation.

However, some challenges still exist, such as limited representation in mainstream politics, economic inequalities and lack of awareness among certain sections of the community.

6. Factors Influencing Political Participation

Education is one of the most important factors influencing political participation. Educated individuals are generally more aware of political rights, government policies and democratic processes.

Higher education has increased political awareness among the Barot community and encouraged active participation in political activities.

Economic stability allows individuals to participate more actively in political and social activities. Members of the community with better economic conditions often have greater political influence. At the same time, economically weaker sections may face difficulties in participating fully in political processes.

The cultural heritage of the Barot community continues to influence political identity. Community pride and cultural traditions often become important sources of social unity and political mobilization.



Migration to urban areas has changed the political outlook of the community. Urban Barots are more exposed to political discussions, educational opportunities and civic participation.

The use of social media and digital communication has increased political awareness and community networking. Young people use digital platforms for sharing information, organizing events and discussing political issues.

7. Role of Women in Political Participation

The role of women in the Barot community has changed significantly in recent years. Traditionally, women had limited involvement in public and political activities. However, increasing education and social awareness have encouraged women to participate in social organizations, local governance and political programs.

Women's self-help groups and educational initiatives have helped increase confidence and leadership qualities among women. Their participation in community development activities has strengthened grassroots democracy.

Despite progress, gender inequality still exists in some areas. Social traditions and economic limitations sometimes restrict women's participation in political decision-making.

8. Conclusion

The Barot community of Gujarat has experienced significant social, economic and political transformation. From their traditional role as genealogists and storytellers, the community has moved toward modern education, professional occupations and political participation.

Grassroots political movements have provided important opportunities for the community to express their concerns, protect their identity and demand representation. Education, urbanization, economic development and digital communication have played major roles in increasing political awareness.

At the same time, challenges such as economic inequality, limited political representation and social barriers continue to affect the community. Strengthening grassroots democracy and encouraging inclusive political participation can help improve the social and political position of the Barot community.



The study concludes that the Barot community is gradually becoming an active participant in Gujarat's democratic and political processes. Their growing involvement in grassroots movements reflects broader social changes occurring in contemporary Gujarat.

References

1. Barot, Mayur (2024). The Role of Barot Corporates in Shaping Political Movements in North Gujarat. AYUDH: International Peer-Reviewed Referred Journal. Sp Issue (2): 65-68.
2. Barot, Mayur (2025). The Role of Barot Community Organizations in Shaping Local Political Discourse and Electoral Participation in Rural Gujarat. SURABHI: International Peer-Reviewed Referred Journal. 100 (2): 92-98.
3. Desai, A. (2016). The role of caste in grassroots politics: Insights from Gujarat. Cambridge University Press.
4. Hirway, I., Shah, A. and Shah, G. (2014). Growth or development: Which way is Gujarat going? Oxford University Press.
5. Kumar, S. (2017). Political participation and empowerment in Gujarat's marginalized communities. Palgrave Macmillan.
6. Patel, A. (2018). Role of community leaders in political movements: A case study of the Barot community in Gujarat. Journal of Social Sciences.
7. Rao, K. (2014). Grassroots leadership and political activism in Gujarat. HarperCollins India.
8. Shah, G. (2019). Social movements in India: A review of literature. Sociological Bulletin.
9. Shah, G. and Shroff, S. (1958). The Vahivanca Barots of Gujarat: A caste of genealogists and mythographers. Journal of American Folklore.
10. Trivedi, V. (2018). Grassroots movements and social capital in Gujarat. Springer India.
11. Yagnik, A. and Sheth, S. (2005). The shaping of modern Gujarat: Plurality, Hindutva and beyond. Penguin Books.