

Dreams And Reality Of Dalit Empowerment : Acceptance In Indian Politics
And Hindu Religion.

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ABSTRACT

The terms “ Scheduled Caste” signifies those groups of people who were out of the caste system or the varna hierarchy in the posts. These groups or castes have been discriminated against by the superior castes through the ages and they never had any kind of social acceptance from the majority of the people who belongs to the upper castes. The terms ‘ Scheduled Castes’ is a politico legal one. It was first coined by the “Simon Commission” in 1928 and then “Government of India Act, 1935”. When India became independent, this term was adopted by the Constitution for the purpose of providing them some special facilities and constitutional guaranties.

According to Dr., G.S. Ghurge, “ Scheduled Castes are those groups which are named in the Schedule caste order in force from time to time. The terms Scheduled Castes which comprises of the bulk of the “Untouchable Castes” , includes all those groups which are subject to some disabilities in major fields of life-service, religious, educational, economic and political.(Shankar Rao:2009)

As per 2011 Census report about 2/3 of Schedule Castes live in six states only. The highest number of Scheduled Castes is found in Uttar Pradesh of the total SC population in country followed by West Bengal, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

About 94% to 85% of the SC people live in rural areas and about 80% often depend on agriculture. Their literacy level is extremely low. The SC people who live as agricultural labourers, tenants and marginal farmers. Almost all persons engaged in jobs like sweeping, scavenging and tanning belong to the schedule caste.

Untouchables : People who constitute the bottom most place in the Indian social stratification system are often regarded as “ Untouchables”. All of them come under the category of what our constitution calls the “ Scheduled Castes”. The word “ Untouchable” applies to the despised and degraded Section of the Hindu Population. In simple words. “ Untouchable are those who occupy the bottom most place in the society and have been subjected to various social, cultural and other kinds of disabilities and exploitation for their very touch is regarded as contaminating or polluting the higher caste people.

As C.B. Mamoria has cited, according to 1931 Census report, if a caste suffers from the following restrictions, it may be termed as an “untouchable “ caste.

- i) Inability to be served by twice born or clean Brahmins.
- ii) Inability to be served by barbers, water Carriers, tailors, hoteliers, etc. who serve caste Hindus
- iv) Inability to enter Hindu temples.
- v) Inability to use public conveniences such as wells, schools
- vi) Inability to disassociate oneself from a despised occupation.

Problems of Untouchable Castes :

These untouchable castes have been suffering from various disabilities throughout the history. After independence, the practice of untouchability was declared unconstitutional, but the fact is that it still exists. The sufferings of the untouchables have not come to an end. This problem cannot be solved by an act of legislation.

➤ **Social Problems and Disabilities**

- (i) **Lowest status in the Social Hierarchy :** In the caste hierarchy the lowest status., They are considered to be ‘unholy’, ‘inferior’ an ‘low’ and are looked down upon by the other castes. They have been suffering from the stigma of ‘untouchability’.
- The distinction that arose between Aryans and Anaryans centuries ago culminated in the practice, of untouchability.

- (ii) Civic Disabilities : For a long time the untouchable castes were not allowed to use public places and avail of civic facilities such as – Village wells, ponds, temples, hostels, hotels, schools, hospitals, lecture halls, dharmashalas, choultries, etc. They were forced to live on the outskirts of the towns and villages during the early days. Even today they are segregated from others spatially. They were not allowed to enter the houses of the higher castes.
- (iii) Religious Disabilities : The untouchables also suffer from religious disabilities even today. They are allowed to enter temples in many places. Even after the successful campaign of Dr. Ambedkar demanding the untouchables right to enter the Kalaram temple at Nasik in 1930. The Vedic mantras which are considered to be more pure, could not be listened to and chanted by the untouchables because of the taboos. They were only permitted to make use of the Upanishad mantras which are considered to be less pure and more secular. Burial ground, were also denied to them in many places. However, things have started improving radically in these matters especially after 1990s. (ahuja:1999)

➤ **Economic Problems and disabilities :**

The untouchables are economically backward and have been suffering from various economic disabilities also.

- i. No Rights of Landed Property Ownership –
For centuries the untouchables were not allowed to have land and business of their own. It is only recently their ownership to the property has become recognised
- ii, Selection of occupations Limited : The caste system imposes restrictions on the occupational choice of the Members. The occupational choice was very much limited for the untouchables. They were not allowed to take up to occupations which were reserved for the upper caste people.
- iii. Landless Labourers : Majority of untouchables are today working as landless labourers. More than 90% of the agricultural labourers in India belong to the depressed classes which include the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Even today they are the lowest paid workers.

- **Political Disabilities** : The untouchables hardly participated in the political matters for centuries. They were not give any place in politics, administration and the general governance of the country. They were not allowed to hold any public post. Political rights and representation were denied to them. Under the British rule , they were given the right to vote for the first time. The untouables or the SCs living in the city are trying to organise themselves in the form of “ Dalit Sangharsha Samithi” and such other organisation to fight for their rights. Their political influence is mostly raised. Their total influence in the Indian politics is, so far, not very much impressive.(Sachdeva:1998)

Harmful Effects of the Practice of Untouchability

1. Untouchability divided the Hindu Society into the ‘ touchable’ and ‘ untouchable’ group and served to develop mutual dislike.
2. Untouchability perpetuates inequality. It has affected our democratic system very badly.
3. Untouchability led to perennial conflicts between the upper castes and lower castes for generations. Sometimes resulting in loot, arson, murder, rape, molestation, burning of houses and crops and so on.
4. Untouchability has developed in them a sense of inferiority and lack of confidence which damaged their personality development.
5. Due to practice of untouchability, the nation was deprived of the opportunity for making use of the talents, abilities and crative capacities of a sizeable number of people for hundred of yrs.
6. The practice of untouchability is a black spot on the Hindu Society.
The concept s of human equally, uphold by religions and preached by prophets were valueless in the context of social relations. Untouchability was itself the Supreme example of Social inequality. The untouchability were denied certain basic privileges of living. They could not use tanks, wells, inns or schools meant for upper caste people, not to speak of places of worship or public institutions. In the eighteenth century the old injunction of the Tantra dominated Hindu Society. (Chopra: 1974)

Dalit Movement of Jyotirao Govindarao Phuley

Satya Shodhak Samaj – 1873

The Satya Shodhak Samaj (Truth Seeking Society) established by Jyothirao Pooley in Poona in 1873 represents the beginning of a Non-Brahmin Movement in India.

This movement against the Brahmin supremacy by the lower castes came to be known as Backward classes movement. Phuley started a social movement called the “ Satya Shadhak Samaj” on 24th September 1873. Through his writing and practices he led a revolt against the tyranny of the caste system and the hegemony of the Brahmins. Phuley tried to fight against Brahmin domination, in a number of ways. Phuley was concerned with the eradication of Untouchability, illlteracy, expolitical of non-Brahmins by Brahmins, acquiring representation for non-Brahmins in services in local bodies etc. He extended the membership of the Samaj to all castes including the Untouchables.

Phuley perceived the necessity of educating the lower caste people. He believed that all the suffering of non-Brahmins were due to the monopoly of Brahmins in education. He was inspired to start three more schools, two were opened in 1851 and third in 1852. To broad-base the cause of education he organised a Society for the education of low caste. Hindus and put these schools under its management. Thus Phule’s struggles marked the beginning of the non-Brahmin movement which is also regarded as the “ Backward Classes Movement

Conclusion :

In contemporary Indian Social System where has caste base social segregation and stratification from British India and also after independence as well as post independence Indian Society where has taken several social constitutional and legal measures to update the socio-economic as well as political status of untouchable. Recently Indian Constitution has established 33% reservation for women and decided that in which constitution where will have more than 50% of Dalit Population there Dalit Representatives will be must and elected as people representative to established their voices but unfortunately their voice become repressed by other higher caste people from long time period. Though in reality it is shown that each and every steps of State Government and Central Government has taken by written plans and Yojana but not implementing in reality if you so in Village Panchayet level, no Dalit Representative can take decision freely as he /she wants. Villages higher caste and elite class and big farmers are always making are repressive situation to obey them and to work as they wants. Till now a most of the Indian State whereas the inhabitant of Dalit population gradually become tortured, raped and murdered by the higher caste people due to for their provertiness, untouchability and stigmatization even in education field most of the Dalit candidates have to lost their prospects by the cunning deprivation process of higher caste.

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