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Commerce & Science Mahavidyalaya,
Umri, Dist. Nanded (M.S.)



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UNTOUCHABILITY AND CASTEISM : A GREAT OBSTACLE TO THE INDIAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Indian society has been formed with several religions majorally such as Hindu, Muslim, Shikh, Jain, Boudh and so on. Among the above religions Hindu religion, a prominent religion, this has an ancient and rich culture. Hindu religion is based on Veda, the oldest scripture, which applied Varna system. The Varna system in Dharma-shastras divides society into four varnas (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya and Shudras) on the basis of birth. Shudra is one of the four Varnas of the Hindu social order in India. It is the lowest rank of the four varnas. Shudras have constituted the hereditary labouring class serving others. They were oppressed, discriminated, treated worse than animals and had no chance of escaping their so called 'fate'. In course of time, they are labelled with several titles as Untouchables, Depressed classes, Harijan, Dalits and officially Scheduled Castes. In pre and post Independence of India the change in the lives of these people have not been found drastically especially in rural area. In the Modern times India is going to be emerged as a super power country in the world. But the stakeholder of the nation, Untouchables or Dalits, is experiencing depressed and wretched life. The leaders such as Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and so on who have tried to eradicate the untouchable issue from this country but failed. The untouchables suffered from various social, economic, political and religious disabilities. In the name of religion, they were thoroughly exploited in the most inhuman manner.

The paper aims to bring in notice the severity of untouchability and Casteism which stands as a great obstacle in the development of rural India. In rural areas, movement out of caste specializing occupations and access to resources is still difficult and slow for the lower castes, but in urban areas, caste is now a less significant part of daily life.

Caste became a lot less significant part of daily lives of people who lived in urban areas compared to rural areas, but its significance still varies by social class and occupation. Among urban middle-class professionals, caste is not openly discussed and is pretty insignificant, except when it comes to marital arrangements. Even then, there are adjustments made with considerations towards education, occupation, and income, as well as religion and language. Although discrimination on the basis of caste has been outlawed in India, is still exists in the community today.

Problem of caste system is indeed one of the greatest social evils in India. It is very harmful to policies because it damages democratic ideals. Casteism violates the basic principles enshrined in the constitution for promoting a new democratic polity, namely, the principles of justice, equality and above all fraternity assuring the unity and integrity of the nation.

Still today untouchability exist in India, however, far changes has been brought up but still some people faces untouchability in some rural areas. In rural India dalits are made to clean the human excreata and if you touch a dalit; you will have to take bath. Dalits are still prohibited from entering

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temples. Inter-caste marriages are prohibited and would often be met with violence. In almost as many cases, Dalits cannot rent a house in a non-dalit community. They must not touch the water pots or utensils of non-dalits, dalit religious leaders are never asked to celebrate a religious ceremony in a non-dalit area. Dalits could not enter the homes of non-dalits, nor could they eat together with non-dalits. There are some instances as a evidence of the issue.

Temple was washed after the visit of Bihar Chief Minister, Jeetan Manjhi, belonged to S.C. . However, no case has been lodged against the temple priests in the absence of a formal complaint. In the month of Sept. 2019, in a bizarre incident in Karnataka, A dalit MP from Chitradurga constituency, A. Narayanswamy was denied entry in Golla village. Locals said that he is untouchable.

The world has become a small town due to the exploration of science and technology. One portion of the country gossips about the globalization, space and robots, but another one didn't come out of Human Fundamental Rights. Still they are not considered a human being in his own nation. They are wasting their energy to get the Human Rights.

In the case of the Khairlanji Massacre that took place in 2006. Here, too, none of the accused of the brutal murder and rape of women in a Dalit family went to the jail. In fact, in 2010, the then state Govt. awarded Khairlanji village a prize for being a Tanta Mukta Gao (Dispute-free village).

A dalit lady sarpanch was forced to flee with more than a dozen Dalit families on the night of 7th June 2018. Facing threats and a social boycott, the Dalits had decided to leave their Rudrawadi village in Maharashtra's Latur district. An eight-year old Dalit boy suffered severe burn injuries after he was made to sit on hot tiles as a punishment for an alleged theft in th premises of a local temple in Arvi, district, Wardha, Maharashtra.

A Dalit boy, Nitin Aage, 17 years old, was murdered and hanged from a tree in 2014 allegedly by upper caste members because he talked to one of the accused' sisters in Kherda village in Jamkhed taluka of Maharashtra's Ahemadnagar district.

On 7th May 2017, in Deri village of Madhya Pradesh, a dalit groom, Prakash Bansal, is allegedly beaten up on his way to the wedding venue by four upper caste men for 'daring' to ride a decorated car to his wedding.

On 5th May 2017, a violence broke out in Shabbirpur village in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, after dalit youths started a protest against a procession being carried out by the Thakur community to commemorate 16th century king, Mahrana Pratap. Enraged Thakurs torched 50 dalit houses, leading to the region being on tenterhooks for hooks.

In June 2017, a farm worker, Mareppa Harijan, and his son Ningappa, from Haligondakanal village in Karnataka are tied to a tree and beaten up by another villager, who suspected Ningappa had eloped with his daughter.

On 30th Sept. 2017, in Gangur village of Karnataka, five dalits are assaulted during the Vijaydashami procession. Violence broke out as a backlash from the upper castes, who had prohibited entry of Dalits in the village temple.

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Human activist Manisha Tokle revealed, that hardly 20 to 30 per cent cases are actually registered under the atrocities Act while rest are rejected at the beginning. It is also disheartening to note that cases of sexual harassment against Dalit girls that are raising remain unreported. The Government of India is not paying attention to the depth of the problem and its legal obligations in regard of the abolition of untouchability.

As per the 2011 census, the Dalits or the Scheduled Castes (16.6) and Scheduled Tribes (8.6) comprise over 25 percent of India's population. The Indian government has constituted many laws and policies to help the Dalit population, atrocities and injustices which are quite common all over the country. In order to prevent such uncalled incidents against the Dalits, the government enacted the Prevention of Atrocity (POA) Act on March 31 in 1995. Indian Constitution ensures that every citizen of India should be equal. Untouchability practice was inhuman and was violating the principles of equality. Hence to deal with this Article No. 17 was added by our constitutional makers which say that every type of untouchability is abolished and to shape this principle Indian Parliament constituted Civil Rights Act. However, social ostracising against the Dalit people is still rampant in the country.

The atrocity incidents against the Dalits in rural area are gradually increasing every year. The violence issues for the past 15 years depict the picture of the Dalits' life threatening conditions in the society. Lack of the execution of law by the authorities to prevent the atrocities against the Dalits is one of the causes for the crimes committed against oppressed community. Law alone cannot make the changes in the mindsets of the caste hysteria people. Enforcement of law, without any barriers and giving high punishments only can give hope to the marginalized people.

Over the decade to 2016, the rate of crime against dalits rose more than eight times (746%); there were 2.4 crimes per 100,000 dalits in 2006, rising to 20.3 in 2016 according to an IndiaSpend analysis of 2016 National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data.

Chandra Bhan Prasad, widely regarded as the most important Dalit thinker and political commentator in India, commented, "If India becomes predominantly urban, and remember there are predictions that by the year 2050 more than 40 per cent of Indians will live in urban areas, I believe caste will lose its force."

Some of the ill effects of caste system in rural India are as follows: It hindered national unity, it stood against democracy, it resulted in suppression by the higher castes, it hampered national development, it resulted in religious conversion, it undermined the ability and aspirations of the people and it created a false sense of prestige among higher castes. The rural picture is very gruesome. The result is in migrating dalits to urban and industrial area where they may face less intensity of the discrimination.

In brief, it is my hope that these information will provide critical data for the Dalit movements and for the Govt. of India to examine seriously and systematically and address its own gaps in ending the discrimination.



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