



The Caste System and New India in progress

Course:

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF INDIA

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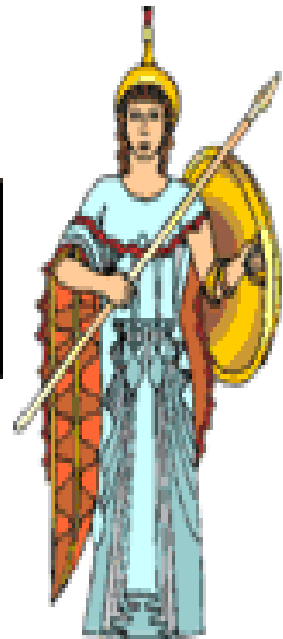
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Brahmans belong to the highest caste. They are priests and scholars.



Kshatriyas are soldiers and warriors.



Vaisyas are merchants and professionals.



Sudras are the lowest caste. They are labourers and servants.



In the Name of GOD



The untouchable as a society who Mahatma Gandhi (the leader of “India Independent Movement”) named them “*Harijans*” (God’s Children). The people, who are located out skirt of the caste (*Jati*) pyramid in Indian socio-cultural system. This article will have a look to this subject.

The people, who are considering as untouchables religiously, and based on the caste ruling system, must be, avoid them of not affecting of their impurity and pollution. Nowadays they have known mostly as “Dalit” or “scheduled backwards” that it identifies and separated from the main four “Aryans” classification *Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya* and *Shudra*. Cast system as a strong Identity-giver, framework or principles, classify people by race and blood and it determines, what kind of job every member of Hindu society can occupy and in which filed each person can work. In this categorized society, a person would be born and live there and ultimately will die within the caste which is belonging to it.

The history of India shows the opposes movements against same unjust Hindu rules, such as Buddhism or Jainism reforms, and also enlighten among Hindu society like Upanishad, Mahabharata, etc but they didn’t have full success in this matter and even contemporary social reformist icons like Mahatma Gandhi and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (as a Dalit leader), and so on, before Independent start their oppositeness against the discrimination toward this society and they made it illegal under legislation passed during British rule. The new constitution of independent India in 1950 also outlawed this old traditional practicing, especially under the article number 17 and other articles like 15(1), 15(2), 16(2), 23, 29 (2). The Constitution abolishes the discrimination on the basis of cast (1), but despite of this illegalness, basically the Social discrimination is going on among Indian society and it is even performs between Harijans as a most

affected victims of this custom, as well as other social classes. For instance Sub-castes amongst Harijans, such as the *dhobi* and *nai* should not interact with lower one *Bhangis*, who were explain as "out-castes" among Harijans. The Untouchables' phenomena as a cruel imposed fixed believe is based and found on the minds sets of Indian, during long history of religion and culture of Hinduism. Hindu culture considers inferiority and superiority of different castes as a God-given Item for mankind. So as it is clear, psychologically untouchably believe remains during the time, even now it is the accepted rule and it is practicing among its victims also, so long social reformists struggle to remove the Caste system won't be successful till now perfectly. Especially in rural context it still has fans. Dr. Ambedkar in 1933 referred to this subject as below:

"The Out-caste is a bye-product of the Caste system. There will be outcastes as long as there are castes. Nothing can emancipate the Out-caste except the destruction of the Caste system. Nothing can help to save Hindus and ensure their survival in the coming struggle except the purging of the Hindu Faith of this odious and vicious dogma" (2),

The Indian government officially recognizes historical discrimination on its lowest castes like Shudra and Untouchables, as they named them Scheduled Castes. The society that concludes near 3000 different untouchable groups that officially recorded as "Other Backward Classes (OBC)" and categories by "The Mandal Commission", and unofficially they estimates around 52% of the Indian population, at the same time the National Sample Survey announced them 32% (3). According to the 1991 official census, there were 138 million Scheduled Caste members in this society, just about 16 % of the total population.

The Indian low caste presence in political filed as well as Indian jobs, are showing improvement, as it increased from 1.18 % of all jobs in 1959 to 10.12 % of all jobs in 1995. The attendance of Dalit's icons in high political ranks and judiciary jobs show clearer horizon for this backward classes, such as :

- Indian president post, as K.R. Narayanan selected in 1997

- Selection of K.G. Balakrishnan in 2007 as the Chief Justice of India
- Electing of Miss Meira Kumar as speaker of Indian parliament in 2009
- Another successful Dalit woman who occupied chief minister post of Uttar Pradesh as the most important state in India is Miss Mayawati, etc.

Long high caste-ruled India, has faced with undeclared confrontation between the long-ruling high caste groups in one side and its Scheduled Caste groups on the other side. This confrontation brose itself in political face and some main political movement with the goal of improving Dalit class, were started in the Uttar Pradesh state and Bihar state, the two hubs for Dalit residence in India. This movement was successful, especially in UP by the effort of two main Dalit-ruled political parties like BSP (Bahujan samaj party) and SP (Samajvadi party) gain some results. They are very active and based on their activities, previous state government established by BSP and now the state government in UP is in the hand of SP leader. This socio-political struggle faces with some important success in Bihar also. The UP-Bihar Dalit political movement is a good example for this society to make a change in their political presence at least in India's political filed. Nowadays Dalit leaders by attracting Muslim minority vote banks in this state were achieved a big victory for low class of society and themselves and these two (Minorities and Dalits) can improve their position bilaterally and their join work toward removing long backwardness would be very affective.

It is a good example for Indian backwards that they can united on their backwardness and India's political system have the capacity to tolerant such a diversion in its socio-political field. But beside all the progress that this society achieved, still the majority of them face with huge problems that are suffering them during the long history of India. Lack of land for providing enough food and also good place for living and doing agriculture is the main problem for them. Lack of education opportunity, bring lack of job opportunity for them, and impose very bad situation ultimately to low castes.

Shortage of job opportunity in rural areas; send large numbers of this community to the suburbs of Indian big cities, the huge immigrants whose aim is finding new jobs in service or industrial sectors there. Bombay as well as other big cities in India, is the best example in this regard, So many members of this community attracted by the commercial capital city of India and now Bombay hosts a large number of them, who are living in slums as shelter.

The Times of India (4) on Mar 22, 2013 reported that one out of six urban



Indians are living in slums houses in around 4000 towns across the country, an amount of 17% of urban population. Based on NSSO (National Sample Survey Organization) in 2008-9 about 49000 slums are in India, the drinking water resources of 95% of them are tap or tube well. 57%

of slums build on public lands, for instance 12% of them located along railway line. (5)

India 2011 (6)census report 63% of 4,041 constitutional towns face with Slums



phenomena (2,543 India towns), about 108000 Slums with different size, as it is clear from 2009 to 2013 the number of slums doubled, and this census show that the largest number of Slums located in Maharashtra state. Greater Bombay (M) with 41.3% has the highest rate of slums, Kolkata (W.B) with 29.6% at the second

level, Chennai (TN) with 28.5% at third level and Delhi with 14.6% fourth level hosts slums in India.

As it mentioned in India census, Bombay slums are the most populated place which build by very small house and narrow passages with lack of drinking water and healthy place for children, it does not prepare the needed items for

their growth. It has not healthy and suitable atmosphere for mothers to bear their children. It has no social and educational facilities to upward its resident socially, it just provides somewhere to sleep and pass the night and start a new frequent day for its residences. So India backwards society suffered very bad situation that it becomes the subject of so many novels and story that contain their problems. The people that in a small place cook, bath, sleep and live. Now Bombay as a rich city in India as well as other Indian big cities faces with two different side of the economic and social spectrum of poverty and richness. So within a small distance you can see radical side of these two together.

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