

Social Exclusion of Dalits in India

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Abstract – Millions of human beings the world over survive in conditions of poverty and social exclusion, and this is unlikely to change in the years to come. This grave situation affects the whole of humanity, which cannot and must not shut its eyes to it. While it lasts, we will all be somewhat impoverished and, in a certain manner, excluded. This paper has been written to study the social exclusion and its impact on Dalits in India. In the post reform era, India has done well in some economic indicators such as economic growth, exports, stock markets etc, but it was found exclusion in terms of agriculture, growth, low productivity, low employment, rural urban divide etc. Therefore, social exclusion is taking place in terms of region, social, women and children. But the term “social exclusion” has been in the field of intellectuals and policy planners. They used this term to identify the gap between those people who are neglected by the society on the basis of development. This paper highlights the social exclusion and its impact on Dalits in India. This study is based on secondary data which has been collected through journals, websites, newspapers and India exclusion reports etc.

Key Words: Social Exclusion, Dalits, Communities

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INTRODUCTION

“Social Exclusion” is defined as social process which involves denial of fair and equal opportunities to certain social group in multiple spheres in society, resulting in the inability of individual from excluded groups to participate in the basis political, economic and social functioning of the society. (S. Thorat, et). The term “social exclusion” was originally coined by Rene Lenoir, in French in 1974 to refer to various categories of people such as mentally and physically handicapped, suicidal people, aged invalids, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, multi-problem householders, marginal, social persons and other social misfits.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the concept of Social Exclusion
2. To analyse the impacts of Social Exclusion on Dalits in India

Social Exclusion and India

Exclusion as a social phenomenon is expressed in different forms all over the world. Social exclusion and discrimination are practiced on the basis of ethnicity, gender and religion. However in Indian society, social exclusion is mainly based on the caste and patriarchal systems. There are a number of groups of people who are being deprived to get their full membership in the

society. For example dalits, tribal, minorities, women and children etc. are discriminated. According to Indian Exclusion Report (IXR) (2016) that Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims continue to remain the worst-hit communities. This report determines exclusion by taking into account four public goods i.e. pensions for the elderly, digital access, agricultural land and legal justice for under trials. In the post independence era Indian society has been divided into four Varans such Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. These groups are divided on the basis of their birth. Brahmins are purified by water that reaches its hearts, a Kshatriya is purified by water that reaches his throat, a Vaishya by water taken into his mouth and a Shudra by water touched with the extremity. Due to Chaturvarnya, a Shudra has no right to take education, think to know the way to escape from his salvations etc. In 1950, the Indian constitution legally prohibited the practice of social exclusion and untouchability under its Article 17. This law obligates the state to make special provision for the betterment of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Despite this, instances of prejudice against Dalits still occur in some areas of Indian society.

Social Exclusion and Dalits

The Dalits are the one of most excluded community in Indian society not only in the current scenario but also in the post independence era. They are being discriminated by the upper caste Hindu in India for ages. The dalits constitute nearly one-fourth of the

Indian population. They are numerically important but even then they are continuously lag behind in terms of economically, socially and politically as compare to other castes groups despite the proactive policies followed by the under the provision of constitution. The constitution of India came into existence in 1949 which provides social and equality to all citizens of the country. 68 years after independence, political rhetoric and constitutional protection have failed to end atrocities against Dalits. According to National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) data, 704 murders and 2,233 rapes against SCs and 157 murder cases and 925 rapes against STs were reported in 2014. According to NCRB the crime against SCs and STs has been continuously rising in India. The table shows that highest incidence of crime against SCs is reported in Rajasthan, followed by Bihar and Odisha during the year 2013. The lowest rate is observed in Punjab. The rate is lower in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The state which witnessed a big jump in atrocities on SCs is Bihar. Other states with substantial increase in the crime rates against SCs during 2001-2013 are Kerala, Karnataka, Haryana and Odisha. On the other hand, states such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh witnessed substantial decrease in the rate of atrocities on SCs.

Table: Crime Rate on SCs in Different States

State	Years	
	2001	2013
Bihar	9.99	40.57
Gujarat	34.58	29.21
Haryana	5.60	9.64
Karnataka	18.93	24.5
Kerala	15.98	24.87
Madhya Pradesh	46.01	25.96
Maharashtra	6.33	12.64
Odisha	28.51	36.06
Punjab	1.91	1.42
Rajasthan	50.46	52.98
Tamil Nadu	19.70	12.78
Uttar Pradesh	30.53	17.11
India	20.11	19.85

Source: NCRB Report 2013.

This data show that the states government has failed to implement the Prevention of Atrocities Act (POA), 1955 and SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 properly. According to National Crime statistics show that violence against Dalits has been continuously rising. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), crime against Dalits- ranging from rape, murder, beating and land matters increased by 29 % from 2012 to 2014. Some Major incidents of violence against Dalits that show how badly their lives are in 21st century.

1. In Feb 2016, Raju who belongs to a Dalit family was murdered at the age of 28 just because his ownership land was disputed with upper caste family. His death was hardly a surprise. The family had been harassed and

threatened for 25 years over a piece of land they had acquired in the village.

2. In 2016, two 8 years old Dalit children drank water from the pot of their teacher. They are beating brutally and the school dismissed 11 children from school. But just two had drunk the pot. The case was highlighted at national level, but the police investigation was closed down.
3. On March 28, 2016, Delta Meghna 17 year old Dalit girl was raped in her school in Bikaner. She was raped by her physical trainer when she was cleaning his room. Delta called her father to tell him what had happened. Her father promised to pick her up the next morning. But when he arrived there, he found that she had been poisoned and her body was thrown into a water tank. No doubt, the suspected persons were arrested but her family do not carry high hopes for justice because the accused are associated with ruling political party.
4. On 15 October, 2002 five Dalits men were brutally lynched by a jat mob, on suspicious of cow slaughter in Dulina, Jhajjar. But investigation showed that the Dalits were merely transporting the carcass of a dead cow.
5. On August 2005, Dalit basti attacked by armed Jats after the murder of a Jat youth (Baljit had a fight with Shivpal a Dalit) in Gohana, Sonapat. Although police arrested four Dalits responsible for the killing of Baljit. But Jat Mahapanchayat was not satisfied with action of police. 60 Dalit houses torched. Dalits were forced to flee the village.
6. On 11 July, 1996, 21 Dalits were slaughtered by Ranvir militiamen in Bathani Tola, Bhojapur, Bihar. 1 man, 11 women, 6 children and 3 infants were deliberately single out by the attackers. Ranvir Sena descended on the village and set 12 houses on fire. The attack was reportedly in retaliation for the earlier killing of nine Bhumihar in Nandhi village, by the CPI. The conflict began when CPI(ML) began organizing the agricultural labourers and demand increase in daily wages.

There are lots of incidents in India which highlight that Dalits are constantly living under fear of roof. The headlines of newspapers support this fact: "Dalits boy beaten to death for plucking flowers"; "Dalits tortured by cops for three days"; "Dalits killed in lock-up at Kurnool"; "Dalits burnt alive in caste clash"; "Dalit woman gang-raped paraded naked"; Dalits are not allowed to drink from the same wells, attend the same temples, wear shoes in the presence of an upper

caste etc. Dalits are not capable to raise their voice because the police, village councils and government officials often support the caste system which is based on the religious teachings of Hinduism.

Tyrants get emboldened not because they are doing the right thing, but because good people remain quiet during these discriminations with Dalits. The study here suggest some concrete measures to control these incidents not only by the law rather the society should take some steps such as:

1. **Talk:** The society can control these bullies and abusers of upper caste are to stop them directly. But since that could be extremely dangerous and life threatening, start with the next safe thing- opening your lips and questioning them about their cruel act which they have done. If the tyrants do wrong, don't glorify them rather they should treat as a criminal.
2. **Educate the Dalits about their rights and laws:** 85% of the Dalits in villages drop out of school as they are fed up of the discriminatory attitudes and heavy insults, abused they face from the upper caste teachers and upper caste students. As a result they don't even finish their basic high school education. Unless they finish their high school they can not avail reservations. Educate the house maids, servants or the Dalits in rural areas about reservations and motivate them to finish high school. Maybe they will find courage to go back to school and finish their education.
3. **Oppose and raise the voice against the religious superstitions:** Discrimination on the basis of caste is very strongly supported by Hinduism. We should oppose them. According to Hinduism, for the Dalits to obtain education and to want to be in a better position as the savarna castes is a sin. As long as this continues, there will always be hindrances for the Dalits to rise.
4. **Protect the Dalits:** The police authority should the victim suffering from extreme atrocities and the government should rehabilitate the same.
5. **Promote inter-caste marriages:** This works the best. And is the ultimate medicine as well as result of the medicine.

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