

Low Caste in India (Untouchables)

Umbreen Javaid

University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Abdul Majid

University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Saadat Faruq Zahid

Govt. Degree College, Kasur.

Abstract

Historically Dalits have the lowest social status in Indian society. They were generally segregated and banned from participation in Hindu social life. This problem is the product of the caste system which is deep rooted in society. The Indian government has adopted measures to improve their conditions, only a small number of Dalits are able to make use of these opportunities. They face difficulties in rural areas where traditions are strong.

The Dalit issue poses different and multifaceted problems to Indian state and society. Hindu social system relegates social status to the lowest level of the Hindu society. Some Dalits have acquired reasonable positions in Indian society through hard work and having education or by raising their economic status. However, they do not enjoy higher political status. The mind set of Indian people does not accept them equal to the high caste Hindus even if the Dalits get high education and good jobs.

Key words: Dalits, India, high caste Hindus, caste system, Ambedkar.

Introduction

Higher castes intentionally avoid close contact with the Dalit. Dalit status has often been historically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure involving leather work, butchering, sewers, latrines, removing of rubbish and animal carcasses Dalit work as manual labors cleaning streets. Dalit were commonly segregated and banned from full participation in Hindu social life. Some Dalits have successfully integrated into Indian society which is a consequence of the deep rooted caste system and Dalits are supposed to be suffering from the punishment for their deeds in previous lives. Another problem with Dalit is owing to their untouchable status. They hardly find any productive work.

The concept and feeling of un-touch ability is purely Indian value, it has been deep roots in the culture and philosophy of society in the spectrum social classification. This segment survives to serve the privileged upper Hindu caste as menial etc.

“ Because of this the fate of the untouchables has become miserable and what is important to note that, it is being continued in one form or other through the ages” (Sarkar, 2006: 15).

South Asian Studies 29 (1)

These groups of people in the unprivileged class were identified as scheduled castes in 1935, under the government of India Act, prior to which they were termed as depressed classes. The term Dalit in understanding the scheduled castes shrouded in un-touch ability has been used in later years through the very terminology was in use as back as 1930. At that time a Marathi newspaper was published from Pune and it was entitled Dalit Bandhu or the friends of Dalits.

Ambedkar's categorical use of the term "broken men" for the community identified as untouchables deserves mention in this regard through the theory of emergence of this depressed group of humanity has not received all sided support. Srinivas noted that caste system cannot be excluded from Indian society because it has become an institution. It is strong, powerful and well knitted in Hindu lining. As Hardtmann, 2009, noted that state policy does not favours the scheduled castes. It looks evidently that even after expiry of sixty years of independence provision of opportunities to Dalit has not been made significantly. The roots of caste system lie deep in social norms and values of Indian society. Introduction of change in one segment of the caste system means change in social structure of society, the structure that has a history of its own as Ambedkar has rightly observed.

In India, the term Dalit is used for the untouchable, they are exploited to outrages due to the social stratification of Indian society. Actually Dalits are easy target of other casts even in this independent nation where the written constitution guarantees equal rights and privileges to all citizens. From centuries they have been maltreated religiously, socially, culturally and most of all economically. "The term Dalit drives from the Sanskrit, dal, to crack, to open, and to split. Dalit is also a Marathi word for those who have been broken, ground down by those above then in a deliberate and active way" (Chandra, 2004: 1).

The government of India in 1999, accepted Dalit as dejected classes through an act stimulated by British officials. The census of 1931 of India, presented a new title, the exterior castes, by J. H. Hutton, an anthropologist and writer of Indian castes.

Still Dalits encounter the thin tragedy of social exclusion and violence even in the era of 21st century. Even the most literate educated emit the venom of 'untouchability' and associated prejudice. Caste system has proved as unshakeable, untouchable and more oppressive. No wonder, attempts by Dalits disturb the traditional social hegemony in rural India are still met with large scale violence, destruction of property, sexual violence against women and the like (Sarkar, 2006: 45).

The allocation of resources by the state at the name of casts re-vegetated and powered the caste with new vigor and spirit. The upper castes were facilitated better than the low casts.

Caste Hierarchy

Hindu society recognizes a caste hierarchy of four classes or varnas:

1. Brahmins (Priests and scholars)
2. Kshathriyas (rulers and soldiers)
3. Vaishyas (merchants and farmers)
4. Sudras (servant class)

Un-touch-ability conveys a sense of contamination and abuse. It also, implies convinced socio-religious incapacities. "It include customs, practices sanctioned by the rigid Indian caste system whereby persons belonging to the scheduled caste were debarred from entering Hindu Temples, public places, streets, public conveyances, eating place, educational institutions, etc." (Hardtmann, 2009)

Final Declaration of Global Conference against based discrimination:

"The participants of the Conference strongly condemn caste (occupation and descent based) discrimination and the practice of un-touch-ability, which is the source of immense human suffering and the cause of gross human rights violations and of dehumanizing and degrading treatment of 240 million people" (Kumar, 2012).

Discussed below are some important events involving Ambedkar aimed at uplift of Dalits.

At Mahad in 1927, a conference class's people were held to discuss action. It was led by Dr. Ambedkar, and the main topic of discussion was the refusal of caste-Hindus to allow untouchables to lake water from the communal wells even though they had the legal right to do so since 1924. It was a peculiar type of religious discrimination: Hiindus allowed Christians and Muslims to draw water and it was only the presence of untouchable Hindus that offended their co-religionists. Led by Dr. Ambedkar nearly 10,000 delegates marched to Chowder tank and ceremonially exercised their civil rights to use the water-probably the first untouchables to participate in this form of social activity for 1000 years (Sarkar, 2006: 341).

The protest caused great concern to many orthodox Hindus. Chowdar tank was ritually purified by priests using a mixture compounded of cowdung, urine and curds. The Mahad Municipality revoked its 1924 decision, and declared that the tank was no more open to Dalits (Hardtmann, 2009).

Untouchable, 15000 in numbers, tried to gain entry to the major temple and Nasik in order to worship Shree Rama, and sat down in front of the gates when permission was not given. An agreement between the communities let to riots when it was broken, and so the Satyagraha-direct action campaign continued into the next year, leading to complete closure of Temple. Gandhi objected to the use of Satyagraha (his own weapon) against fellow-countrymen but he supported the aims of the Temples.

Entry campaign and appealed all Temples to throw open their doors to untouchables. This powerful plea of Gandhi's proved to be a very damp squib as no temple was thrown open following his request.

Although the temple entry campaign did not produce sweeping reforms for untouchables, it had important effects in India and outside world (Sarkar, 2006: 342).

The word 'Dalits' has gained wide circulation after upheaval of caste-based politics and political parties in India. It's a very recent development. Literally the term 'Dalit' in Sanskrit means 'oppressed' or 'broken'. Apparently it was used in the 1930s as a Hindu and Marathi translation of 'Depressed classes' the term the British used for what are now called the scheduled castes.

South Asian Studies 29 (1)

Since the early 1970s the word has come into increasing wider usage normally used in the original, narrower, caste based sense. The word was also used by B. R. Ambedkar in his Marathi speeches (Dutta, 2005: 1).

In the untouchables, published in 1948,

“Ambedkar chose the term *broken men*, an English translation of Dalit, to refer to the original ancestors of the untouchables for reason them. The Dalit panthers revived the term and in their 1973 manifests expanded its referents to include the scheduled tribes, neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women, and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion” (Omvedt, 1995: 72).

According to Ambedkar, Chaturvarnyar got degenerated into the caste-system. The caste-system influenced the Hindus lives in the past and continues doing so even today. Ambedkar strongly rejects the system. He analyses and explains features, characteristics evils and the all-round impact of the caste-system on Indian society, simultaneously taking into account the injustice done to the Dalits (Paswan, 2002).

Ambedkar gives in detail the features of the caste-system in India as follows:

Hierarchy: The four classes are hierarchically graded. Being based on birth, there is no spontaneity on duals part in the hierarchical gradations. Lindividuals, therefore, brands the caste-system as positively pernicious (Rawat, 2005: 323).

Reason for Disruptive Tendencies:

Ambedkar states that each caste is conscious of its existence.

“Its survival is the be-all and end-all of its existence.” A caste has no feeling of affiliation to others castes under normal circumstance and endeavours to distinguish itself from others castes.

Excommunication: A caste has an unquestionable right to excommunicate any individual guilty of breaking the rules of caste.

Anti-Social Spirit: The worst feature of the caste system is the anti-social spirit, Ambedkar said. Castes enjoy singing the hymnas of hate against one another which spoiling their mutual relations (Paswan, 2002).

Social Injustice: The Hindus according to Ambedkar deliberately try to prevent the lower castes, within the pale of Hinduism from rising to the cultural level of the higher castes. He holds an opinion opposite to one held by Professor M. N. Srinivas.

D. R. Bhandarkar from the letter’s paper “Foreign elements in Hindu population” as fellow: “there is hardly a class or caste in India which has not a foreign strain in it. There is an admixture of alien blood not only among the warrior classes-The Rajputs and Marathas but also among Brahmins who are under the happy illusion that they are free from all foreign elements” (Paswan, 2002).

Ambedkar’s second contention is that “the caste system cannot be stated to have grown as a means of maintaining purity of blood as castes come into being long after the different races of India had inter-mingled in blood and culture. To hold that distinctions of castes are really distinctions of race and to treat different castes as though they were so many different races is a gross distortion of fact” (Rawat, 2005: 328).

Ambedkar's whole life was shaped and influenced by his personal experiences, bitter and degrading, those of other untouchables who he had come to observe and also those his forefathers had suffered in the past when untouchability as a social practice was initially being observed by the Hindu society and become institutionalized and embedded in the Hindu social system. He therefore wished to enquire into the origin, growth, spread and perpetuation of caste and untouchability, their utility or otherwise, if any, and also the justification in continuing them in this era. This urge might have led him to enquire into and write his books like *Who were the Shudras and who they came to be the fourth verna in Indo-Aryan Society* the untouchables, who were they: castes in India, their origin, Genesis and Mechanism and Annihilation of caste. This leads us to discussion of Ambedkar's views upon Chaturvarya, origin of the Shudras, caste-system and untouchability (Paswan, 2002).

The Ideology

Social organization of the Indo-Aryans was based on Chaturvarya is the generally accepted theory. Chaturvarnya meant the division of society into four classes – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya, and Shudras, based on division of labour and heredity. In the Rig-Vedic period, descent or heredity was not a criterion of belonging to a particular Varna. Gradually the Varnas became distinguished, marked off and separated from one another leading to immobility between the four Varnas and created disabilities for the fourth Varna, the Shudras. Ambedkar opposed this system as being unscientific, inhibitive and degrading. He strongly criticized it (Rawat, 2005: 312).

The ethnic and religious pluralism (of India) is safeguarded by the constitution, in the words of S. D. Muni, no deliberate efforts were made to protect the culture and tradition of the ethnic groups. The emphasis has always been on the principle of equality or preventive discrimination, he states,

“with administrative convenience the avowed guiding principle for designing the federation, not much weight was given to the need for reflecting India's culture design. No specific provisions for religious or cultural minorities were incorporated, except that they were given equal rights. The principle of preventive discrimination, applied in the case of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, was designed more to undo their social and economic backwardness than to help preserve and promote their cultural distinctiveness” (Hashmi, 2010: 136).

Indian democratic development does not rely on constitutional guarantees only, in order to keep the states and provinces united under one flag, language re-organization was adapted to incorporated cultural identities into political and administrative units. However, it did not guarantee national cohesion. India, being an ethnic and religiously pluralist country, was not easy to be governed on the basis of linguistic reorganization, linguistic minorities continued to exist without being accommodated in large Hindi-speaking states (Shah, 2001).

Long before the social reformists and thinkers like Mahatma Ghandhi, B. R. Ambedkar, Shri Thakkar Bapa and some others there were Dhilanthropists and religious

South Asian Studies 29 (1)

reforms like Shri Chaitannya, Ramkrishna, Vivekananda, Dayanand, who rose against untouchability and preached the people to show love and respect by keeping the neglected humanity by their sides. Swami Vivekananda appealed before the people to call the untouchables as part and parcel to their body and mind by addressing them as their brothers. The great patriot and poet like Satyendra Nath Dutt of Bengal addressed, in one of his epoch – making poems. The scavenger’s as friends. He wrote, “who tells you, my friend, untouchable and impure? Purity always is following your track residing in homes becomes possible because of your presence. The caste system itself can be based on the psychological process of projection, in which every caste projections the badness and evil within their community on members of the lower castes” (Sarkar, 2006: 2).

Social Sphere

Caste has been viewed as defining order of India. Dalit in contemporary India bear the anguished burden of a long unbroken legacy of the deepest social degradation. They usually full at the bottom of almost any parameter relating to economic well being or quality of life. Starting from ‘achhut’ (untouchable) to ‘Harijan’ they have fallen into category of scheduled castes after independence. But after the 70’s the term “Dalit” has become increasingly popular, with its connotation of active anger, assertion and pride. The word “Dalit” literally means poor and oppressed persons. It not only includes scheduled caste but also include tribal, woman, bonded labour, minorities and so on. As mentioned earlier, for the purpose of this paper, we will confine our usage to the popular interpretation of term is scheduled caste. Regarding the position of ‘Dalit’ in social structure, they were placed right at the bottom, below the ritually sanctioned “line of pollution” regarding their location in the global geography they are placed under the category of developing nations (Sarkar, 2006: 35-36).

Khade and 30 other businesspersons including a woman, are now part of a league of:-
“Dalit cropati(rich), comprising first generation entrepreneurs who run successful business and give jobs to others. And they haven’t used the ladder of quotas to get the top, preferring instead to strike out on their own, cooking a nook at the cynics who disapprovingly chuck at the very mention of an inclusive society based on positive discrimination. Propelled by sheer grittiness and tremendous self-belief, they have arrived at junction for removed from their predecessor and have acquired a clot their forefathers wouldn’t even have dreamt of. So much so, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is trying to formalize an association with their body, the Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICC)” (Outlook, 2011: 34).

Anyhow they are by no means done yet. “Every time I look at fortune magazine’s list of billionaires”, say Milind Kamble, CMD of Fortune Construction Company, Pune, “I wonder when one of us will make it to the list”. When he says “one of us”, Kamble is referring to the country’s most oppressed community, the Dalits, making it to the world’s list of the richest. Incidentally, Kamble takes some measure of pride in one of his recent

projects laying the pipeline supplying water to Baramati, the pocket borough of union agriculture minister shared pawar: “Mein pawar ko pani pilata hoon (give him water, literally, but the phrase could also mean get the better of someone)” he says cheerfully (Outlook, 2011: 34).

Outlook’s(2011:34) lists 30 Dalit crorepatris (sourced from the DICCI) is far from complete; members of this caste are likely to increase as the numbers are likely to increase no sooner did more entrepreneurs come forward. But what makes each of these success stories that much sweeter is the fact that it has come after years of fighting a system whose very structure is designed to keep Dalits out. Many of the enterprises are in areas not radically open to the community.

Mr. Surinder S. Jodhka of the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies at Delhi’s Jawaharlal Nehru University puts it,

“it is a tough struggle in a market where businesses are run on networks and caste lines and being a Dalit often means no land and virtually no assets. The discrimination is not just on the line of untouchability, a whole structure of stereotypes is built around them - that they lack the required skills or can’t speak good English – which take time to work around. The market, say many of these Dalit entrepreneurs, is not quite the leveler it is often made out to be. The poor and socially backward find credit facilities to start something big hard to come by Admits Kalpana Saroj, Chairperson of the Mumbai-based Kamani tubes, which she took over after clearing a debt of Rs 140 crore, Being a woman and a Dalit it was really tough to make the grade” (Michael, 2007).

Professor Anil Gupta of IIM Ahmedabad says: The state, has disengaged itself from where it should actively be helping. The state is busy in developing leadership institutes for upper classes. “Ironically, inclusion is an imitative being taken by some Dalits themselves” (Outlook, 2011: 42). Dr. B.R. Ambedkar observed on 18th March, 1956 while speaking at RamLillah Ground, “the highly educated class (from Dalit-Shoshit Samaj) have betrayed me. I had expected that after acquiring education – higher education, they will serve that society. But I see here a crowd of clerks who – are engaged in feeding their own stomach.” (Dutta, 2005: 203).

Harijan service has really developed into mere Harijan uplift. Practically no work is done among caste Hindus for the removal of un-touch-ability. What is the remedy for this?

“An experience shows that propaganda among caste Hindus can only be successful carried out by influential persons whose words carries weight with the general public. Such persons are hard to find. But it is within the capacity of every Harijan workers are often satisfied with mere uplift work among Harijans which is not sufficient. Many workers, while they do not observe untouchability themselves, are unable even to convert their own families. How they can they influence the outside world? Moreover it is my confirmed opinion that every Harijan worker has to make a point to beg for even one piece for Harijan from

South Asian Studies 29 (1)

those caste Hindus with whom he comes in contact. If all devoted themselves, heart and soul, to this task, very good results would ensure” (Michael, 2007).

A correspondent sends the following questions the answering.

1. “In the propaganda against untouchability, should a worker make use of the Hindu Shastras and religious texts to show that Hinduism does not sanction untouchability as we practice it today?
2. Should a Harijan evak, even in his private capacity, take part in inter-dining functions?
3. Should a Harijan who is employed as a domestic servant sit at meals alongside all the members of the family?” (Dutta, 2005: 97)

The names of most Dalit movements as-Ad-Dharm in Punjab, Adi-Hindu in U.P. and Hyderabad, Adi-Dravida, Adi-Andhra and Adi-Karnataka in South India – indicated a joint claim of being original citizens. This was demonstrated early in Maharashtra, and a pre-Amedkar Dalit leader, Kisan Faguji Bansode (1870-1946), cautioned Hindu friends of his caste in 1909 that: the Aryans you conquered us and give us unbearable harassment. After your conquest, you treated us even worse than slaves and torture us as you desired. Now, Dalits are no more your subjects and have no service relationship with Brahmans, and are not your slaves or serfs “we have had enough of the harassment and torture of the Hindu” (Dutta, 2005: 152).

Hinduism as counter-revolution-B.R. Ambedkar

It must be recognized that there never has been a common “Indian culture, that historically there have been three Indias, Brahmanic India, Buddhist India and Hindu India, each with its own culture ... it must be recognized that the history of India before the Muslim invasions is the history of a mortal conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism” (Dutta, 2005: 159).

Hinduism as Feudal Backwardness: The Dalit Panthers

The present Congress rule is essentially a continuation of the old Hindu Feudalism which kept the Dalits deprived of power, wealth and status for thousands years ... the entire state machinery is dominated by the feudal interests, controlled all the wealth and power, who today own most of the agricultural land, industry, economic resources and all other instruments of power ... (Dutta, 2005: 177).

Dalit movement generally, an aspect of a world wide “new left” upsurge. Indeed, it was at this time that the term “Dalit” or downtrodden, the 1930’s and 1940’s Marathi/Hindi translation of this British category of “Depressed Classes”, became widespread a militant alternative to the Gandhian term “Harijan” and colourless government “scheduled castes” (Dutta, 2005: 181).

The Dalit Politics

The “unique journey” that A. K. Roy had called for seemed to be beginning in the 1970s. Several youth went to the villages, new activists sore from the masses, social turmoil increasing as economic and political pressures mounted, and new voices sore as other low-caste and oppressed sections joined the Dalits in organizing (Dutta, 2005: 185).

Dalit, is a modern term used for the untouchables. Who have been exploited and subjected to atrocities due to caste system of Indian society. Dalits are targeted even after independence and the constitution of the country guarantees equal rights and privileges meant for all citizens. From countries they have victimized the dalits religiously, socially and economically.

The religious roots of the term Dalit can easily be derived from “the Sanskrit, Dal to crack, to open, and split”. Dalit is a Marathi word used for broken, ground down by those who are above them in a thoughtful and dynamic way. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, a well known Dalit leader, and the architect of the Indian constitution, said that the word dalit describes the burdened, suppressed and broken victims of Indian caste-ridden society. This term details the outcastes and hated community.

In its findings, jury for the rational public hearing of Dalit Human Rights, held in Chennai, India on April 18-19, 2000, stated:

“The state, by its inaction, fails to implement all its laws and rules and to take stringent measures and action when dominated castes perpetrate atrocities clearly responsible for the many act of violations of Dalit’s human rights by its agents and instrumentalities ... Despite thousands of cases filed, the rate of conviction is abysmally low. International jurisprudence, including the UN convention on the elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, to which India is party, makes the state responsible for violation of human right even by non-state actors” (Prem Kumar, 2005: 296).

Recognition and poor implementation of SC/ST (POA) is limited to national bodies and it has been observed as by Kumar:

“The committee is concerned with the continuing discrimination, including evidence suffered by women of the Dalit Community, despite the passage of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989. Change take time is only yet another delay tactic that change takes times is not an excuse not to implement laws and programmes established to eradicate caste prejudice and discrimination. Yes, change is bound to take time, but how much time is proportional to the political will of the state to implement its laws and the international human rights treaties to which it is party. Implementation of the human rights conventions and covenants also takes times, yet the Indian government has not even begun to follow through on the recommendations of the UN committees” (Kumar, 2005: 296-7).

Violence against Dalit Women

As Dalit men migrate to cities in search of jobs, women were left to work as agricultural work in villages. Women were attacked as they were voice-less in feudal arrangements and has no rights. Consequently, caste clashes broke out and Dalit women were attacked.

Many of young Dalit men in Andhra Pradesh at the time of cultivating sugarcane were targeted. Only women, children and the elderly were left in the village and the women were particularly targeted sexually. A social worker in the village claimed that there were sexual attempts on many women, but they don't want to talk about it. Many are unmarried or their husbands are away. They revealed fear of the consequences if these things were made public. More than 700 families have to displace after this attack. They took shelter in neighboring villages.

Dalits and Social Discrimination

| Source of deprivation | Type of identity | Nature of oppression | Patterns of mobilization |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Degrading ritual status | Untouchable | Socio-cultural repression | Social reform movement for social equality |
| Poverty | Slave | Economic Exploitation | Bargaining for betterment of economic condition |
| Powerlessness | Subject | Political disenfranchisement | Mobilization for political participation |

Source:

1. Quoted from T. K. Oommen, *protest and change: Studies in social movements*, Sage, New Delhi, 1990, p. 255.
2. Dr. R. M. Sarkar, *Dalit in India Past and Present*, Serials Publications, New Delhi, India, p. 47.

“Untouchability, in its basic sense, is out and out in Indian phenomenon, and it has deeply penetrated into the social philosophy of the totalistic Indian life where the privileged sections of the stratified society enjoy the life at the cost of the untouchable section which have been forced to do all sorts of menial and laborious jobs, work as scavengers and sweepers, removers of carcasses of dead animals in the villages and also as the carriers of right soil. Because of this the fate of the untouchables has become miserable and what is important to note that, it is being continued in one form or other through the age” (Kumar, 2005: 15).

The relevance of Dalit education to social, economic, cultural and political development of the individual, family, community and nation is universal acknowledged. In India Dalit are the last line of job, health, education and sometime even food. So unless Dalit are educated there will be little scope for the socio-economic transformation of the society.

First objective of this study will deal with the analysis of census statistics of education. Discussing the development status of Dalits from different area, it will be better to have a view of education status of scheduled caste in India.

There could not be more astute a step than this. Untouchability, after all, was an important dimension in the depressed classes, in accessibility to schools. I observed that for the total freedom of India, but the untouchable, battle for the for inclusion was never to play second fiddle to the other demands of the mainstream politics. Dalit thought that the health

education and politics could be used as the twin weapons to fight the social exclusion of the Dalits.

Ambedkar's Movement

Dr. Ambedkar began an agitation by Dalits to draw water from the Chavadar tank at Mahad on the same day. Hitherto reserved for caste Hindus with animals, cows, buffaloes, dogs freely drinking from this tank (Singh, 2005: 19). The Manusmriti was burnt here as a mark of Dalit protest against untouchability (Singh, 2005: 20). The historic speech made by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on this occasion reminds one of the memorable words from Abraham Lincoln's speech in 1954. "This nation cannot endure as half slave and half free" (Singh, 2005: 20).

Social Change

If prejudice about untouchables is still prevalent in Indian society, to what does India owe existing public policies designed to eradicate Untouchability? Obviously current programmes have not met expectations, but they have made the task easier for untouchables to compete in mainstream Indian society. How is it that a majoritarian democratic system, operating in 'politics of security' that guarantees an often bitter scramble for education and economic opportunities had assured some such opportunities to a severely disadvantaged minority (Singh, 2005: 31).

SC/STs made slaves of Hindus

Alas, today our people, forming over 30% of the country's population, have become not only loyal but free slaves of the ruling Brahminical people (Voice, 2011: 4).

The "reservation", however, give the Brahminsit rulers two powerful tools to enslave our people. Since they are the bosses of the country they took our the job of recruiting our people into education and employment.

1. This powerful tool helped the enemy to not only break our backbone but hinduise meaning only break our backbone hinduise (meaning enslave) the entire "educational" SC/STs (Voice, 2011: 4).
2. Job reservation for SC/STs can be availed only if you are educated. If you are not educated how can you enter the reserved sector? As the owners of the land, the Brahminists simply denied education to our people. This kept out a major portion of our people, who are poor village dwelling, poor and hence uneducated. Once you have no education, you cannot enter this reserved sector (Voice, 2011: 4).

Agents of the Enemy

Not only these Dalit Babus refused to lead the uneducated, poor Dalits outside the reserved sector but in many cases they served as the agents of the enemy to destroy the little

South Asian Studies 29 (1)

remaining Dalit movement. Some Dalits officers write some pathetic heart rending stories of “Dalit exploitation” only when they are in trouble. They remember their community only when they are kicked (Voice, 2011: 4).

Human Rights decimated

Several names of “Dalit capitalists” were published in the Time articles including a famous Dalit sister, Kalpana Saroj, of Bombay. The article says that the emerging small capitalists: “have proved that India now offers enough opportunities, irrespective of caste and creed, to make it in life with hard work” (Voice, 2011: 5).

The Constitutional Safeguards

In order to safeguard the interest of schedule castes, who suffer from all deprivations, the constitution provided special concessions to enable them to catch up with the rest of the Indian people, in the process of social and economic development (Sarkar, 2006: 252-253).

Under the provision of Article 341 of the Indian Constitution, the president of India, in consultant with the Governor of the state, notifies the schedule of such castes, which are to receive certain benefits including reservations in employment in respect of each state and union territory. The people belong to the castes persons (Chandana, 1989).

Therefore, Upadhayay has rightly considered the term ‘scheduled castes’ as both a legal and social concept (Updhayay, 1991).

After the independence more systematic attempts have been made by the government to deal with the problems of scheduled castes. They have been provided with special right and privileges and their interests are safeguarded through various provisions made in the constitution. These provisions have been made in the form of (1) protective measures such as prohibition of discrimination, of forced labours and untouchability, (2) welfare measures guaranteeing representation in various categories of public services, in state assemblies and in parliament and (3) development measures, providing grants-in-aid and other facilities for social and economic development. (The constitutional articles relating to protective measures are 15, 16, 17, 19(5), 23, 29 and relating to welfare measures 46, 64, 275, 330, 334, 335, 338 for their explanations and implications see Garg (1970: 134-35) and Dubay and Muthur (1972: 165) (Sarkar, 2006: 252-253).

With changes in their socio-economic status the mobile persons of the scheduled castes, or for the matter person of the any caste or community, develop a new interaction pattern with other of similar socio-economic status. Similarly, the pattern of their interaction with people of their own and other castes of relatively lower socio-economic status may also change. They may even perceive some changes in the behavior pattern of individuals of other castes and communities towards them (Sarkar, 2006: 252-253).

Untouchable in Schools

Any obvious practice of untouchability was not observed in the village schools. Children of all the castes were sitting together and there was no caste distinction in the sitting arrangement of the students, or in the source of drinking water in the schools. However, discussion with the lower caste children indicated that, although the adolescents of all castes interacted with each other without any hesitation, yet the upper caste children prefer to choose or make close friends or pals from their own caste group only. Likewise, the scheduled caste children tend to have closer relations with the children of their own caste. It was also revealed that upper caste students prefer to sit with their own caste friends in the class and particularly while eating food during the break time in the school, they avoid sitting together with Scs (Sarkar, 2006: 252-253).”

Measures

A face sheet was developed inquiring about socio-personal variables like age, gender, parental age, education and occupation and number of children in the family. Parental education was accounted by number of years spent in school or college. Material employment was taken as a dichotomous variable only and was coded as, mother employed = 1, mother not employed = 0. Father’s occupation was coded on the basis of status of occupation i.e. unemployed = 1; Labour/semi-skilled worker = 2; Self-employment or Skilled worker = 3, Service = 4; Own cultivation = 5; Nuclear family = 6; Joint family = 7 (Sarkar, 2006: 99).”

“Untouchability, in its basic sense, is out and out an Indian phenomenon, and it has deeply penetrated into the social philosophy of the totalistic Indian life where the privileged sections of the stratified society enjoy the life at the cost of the untouchable sections which have been forced to do all sorts of menial and labourious jobs, work as scavengers and sweepers, removers of carcasses of dead animals in the villages and also as the carriers of night soil. Because of this the fate of the untouchables has become miserable and what is important to note that, it is being continued in one form or other through the age” (Sarkar, 2006: 15).

Our upper caste rulers brag about India’s “robust democracy”, citing the regular elections they hold in India assemblies. And the oppressed victims of the upper caste rule are made to think that regular elections are the proof of democracy (Dalit Voice, June 2011: 3). Democracy does not mean holding regular elections, democracy must assure socio-economic political liberty and their human rights. That is the meaning of election. India has only elections after elections – each reinforcing the rule of the upper caste (15%) oppressors (Voice, 2011: 3).

Change of a ruling political party will not lead to any change in the socio-economic condition of the people. We had hundreds of such elections since “independence” but every election has only strengthened the rule of the upper caste oppressors. Well entrenched the rule of the upper castes are in full control of all political parties, including the communist parties. Hence a change of government after an election means just a change of name to the

South Asian Studies 29 (1)

oppressed (85%) but the core content of the ruling upper castes remain the same (Voice, 2011: 3).

Once again the oppressed (85%) constituting the SC/ST/BC's plus the religious minorities are taken for a ride and derided. The "change" brought about in the elections will not "change" the lives of the oppressed (Voice, 2011: 3).

It is our considered opinion that there is no ideological difference between any "national" political party. The Manuwadi communists who are drubbed and dumped into the Bay of Bengal, are the worst enemies of the Bangali Dalit, OBC, Muslims. Thank god, 34 years of uninterrupted fake Marxist rule is over (Voice, 2011: 3).

Our support is always these for all Dalits demands. But the 1932 Round Table Conference Resolution did not demand "home land" for Dalits. It was separate electorate for Dalits against which M. K. Gandhi went on fast and forced Dr. Ambedkar to withdraw it. This was way back in 1932. Following "independence" and the upper caste rule so oppressive, can you ever dream of "homeland"? Dalit are so much Hinduvised, divided and deprived you cannot even dream of it – Editor (Voice, 2011: 16).

Dalit – Jat Sikh divide in Punjab growing

In Punjab two castes are working on a war footing chamars are spreading their Ravidas religion. Over 15,000 religious text, AMRIT BANI, have been distributed. Jat are opposing this. Only Jat Sikh's are making organizing the programme on June 5, 2011 named (GHALLUGHARA) Genocide day of Sikhs. They do it on June 5 every year since 1985. The 1984 'operation blue star' took place and thousands of innocent Sikhs were killed by the Brahminical army at Golden Temple. In the history, this was the third attempt to destroy the Sikh religion. Two attempts were made during the Muslim rule that made Sikh and Muslims bitter enemies. Now the amenity between Jat Sikhs and Chamars are increasing day after day. If this is not stopped the result will be too dangerous. Leadership of each and every community has been taken over by the Babas (religious monks) in Punjab, whether it is Jats, Chamars, Churas and other castes. Baba Ranjit Singh Dhandrian Wala is growing very fast in Punjab and Jat Sikhs are calling him second Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindra Wale. He speaks like him and has the same voice. He is a young man of 30-35 years. You can hear him on youtube. Surinder Das Bawa is also growing very popular among the chamars due to leading Ravidas religion. "Political leadership of every party is bowing before these two Saints, Basas (Dalit Voice, June 2011: 17)". Community had this amenity, if, unchecked can prove dangerous for society in general and for leader specially.

Conclusions

The above discussions shows the actual face of communal division of India, the biggest democracy of the World. This type discriminatory approach threaten Indian democracy and social stability. If the Muslims of India, other minorities and the Dalits jointly start a struggle for their rights. The current Indian political and social order will run into serious trouble. The Indian constitution and universal human rights demand that all Indian,

irrespective of religion, caste, region, ethnicity and gender enjoy equal rights and protection of the state. Hopefully, the Indian state and society will meet this challenge.

Reference

- Chanddra, P. R. (Ed.). (2004). Liberation and Social articulation of Dalits. 2, 1-5-130-131-172-179.
- Dalit Voice. (2011). 30 (15), 4-5.
- Dutta, K. (Ed.). (2005). Dynamics of Dalits. 1-77-97-98-115-152-159-177-181-185-203. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House.
- Frotnightly Dalit Voice. (2011). 30 (09), 3-16-17.
- Hardmann, E. M. (2009). The Dalit Movement in India. Oxford University Press.
- Hashmi, A. S. (2010, 03 11). Politics of Ethenticity in Dictatorship and Democracy. Pakistan Journal of International Relations , 01, pp. 136-137.
- Isha, P. R. (Ed.). (2004). Liberation and Social articulation of Dalits. 01, pp. 1-4.
- Kahirasagar, R. K. (1994). Dalit movement in India and its leaders 1857-1956. New Delhi: M.D. Publications .
- Kumar, S. (2012). Socio-Political Concerns in Dalit Literature: A Critical Survey. New Delhi: Yking Books.
- Mendelson, O., & Vicziany, M. (1998). the untouchables: subordination, poverty and the state in modern india. India: cambridge University Press.
- Michael, S. M. (2007). dalits in modern India: vision and values. New Delhi: Sage Publication.
- Ourlook. (2011, 05 02). 34-37-38-42-44. New Delhi.
- Paswan, S. (2002). Encyclopedia of Dalits in India: General Study. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- Rawat, G. S. (2005). Dalit in the past and present. New Delhi: Sumit Enterprises.
- Sarkar, D. R. (2006). Dalit in India, past and Present. India: Serials Publications.
- Sarkar, D. R. (2006). Dalit in India, Past and Present. New Delhi: Serials Publishing.
- Shah, G. (2001). Dalit identity and politics. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Shinde, P. K. Dalits and Human Rights. India: ISHA Books .

Biographical Note

Prof. Dr. Umbreen Javaid is Director, Centre for South Asian Studies, and Chairperson, Department of Political Science, University of the Punjab, Lahore-Pakistan.

Dr. Abdul Majid, Assistant Professor, Centre for South Asian Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore-Pakistan.

Saadat Faruq Zahid, Principal, Government Degree College, Mustafa Abad, Kasur-Pakistan.
