

Dalit Movement and Social Justice

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Abstract:

History has witnessed the diverse social system in Indian scenario and that system was very unique in nature. Whole society was divided in to upper-caste and lower-caste, high-class and low-class, touchables and untouchables and so on. Such Social classification has distorted the entire social structure and social cohesion of Indian society, especially, down-trodden and, marginalized of the society like the Dalits, Tribes (Adivasis), women and children have been systematically denied the varied rights and opportunities for centuries and they pushed to the margin of the society. In Indian Social Structure, predominantly, the caste system of Indian Society had not permitted to grow the untouchables or dalits and tribes in all the dimensions. Their socio-economic and political status was very poor compare to other castes of the nation. Due to the age old practices or clutches of the Hindu societal systems like class hierarchy, caste system and religious practices have been created the disparate situations and unhealthy environment to dalits. The incongruent situations of the Hindu society had created the poverty, illiteracy and many socio-economic backwardness to the Dalits and Tribes of the nation.

Keywords: Dalits, Dait Movements, Social Exploitation, un-touchability.

Introduction:

Violation of human rights and denial of common rights to the people (Dalits) has been one of the major problems in India. The socio-economic environment of Indian society was inherently hostile to the provision and protection of human and civil rights of Dalits and other marginalized sections of society. The caste and varna system of Indian social stratification were not upheld and did not uphold basic rights for Dalits and the Society's tribes. In the Indian situation, the caste and varna systems were established by the writings of Manu. Manuscripts were key elements in establishing the 'varna system' (Chaturvarnas) of Hindu society. (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras) The Shudra community is considered a working class in society and has to serve all the three classes of the varna society/social system. Shudras again divided into sections like atishudra and dashyus. The varna system again split into two parts – Savraniyas and Avarnias; Savarniyas are touchable and avarnias are untouchable. The Indian village system gave separate spheres for each caste. The Avarniya or Dalit community was degraded and should live in separate localities in the villages and other Shudra castes should live in the main village. This type of village system created a discriminated

situation for Dalits. The social stratification of Indian society has separated Dalits from the mainstream in the name of untouchables and touchables.

Who Is A Dalit?

Dalit (oppressed or broken) is not a new word. Apparently it was used in 1930's as a Hindi and Marathi translation of "Depressed Classes", the term Depressed Classes was used by British Government to understand and study the marginalized class of the society and they categorized them as scheduled castes. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had preferred the term "Broken Man" as English translation of Dalits in his paper- "The Untouchables" in 1948. The Dalit Panthers revived the term "Dalit" and included it the scheduled tribes in 1973 in their manifesto. Buta Singh (ex- Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes) said the word Dalit is an unconstitutional.

Factors That Led to Dalit Movements:

In the early days of the Hindu religion it was divided into four parts or Chatur-Varnas and observed throughout the nation. Later, in the Indian situation, based on occupation and other reasons, innumerable castes and sub-castes arose. The Dalit community or untouchables were originally outside the mainstream of society and outside the caste

system. However, the downtrodden and marginalized class of the society, Dalits and other downtrodden who were deliberately degraded and oppressed by Brahmin and Savarni forces and never accepted and provided any socio-economic and political positions to Dalits and others. Early efforts against the caste and varna system, religious movements took a prominent position and changed the Indian caste scenario. Indian religious leaders or gurus started religious movements against the caste system and started protesting against the caste system. In the 12th century, Mahatma Basaveshwar and other shiva sharanas from Karnataka came with their Vacahna movement and other religious practices. On the other side of India, various bhakti movements and literatures emerged from time to time from various religious gurus like Acharya Ramanuja of Tamilnadu, Madhavacharya of Karnataka, Swamy Ramananda, Kabirdas, Tukaram of Maharashtra, Meerabai and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of West Bengal. prominent. Untouchable saints like Chennayya, Chokhamela, Nandana, Ravidas and several others tried to remove the problems of the caste system.

Dalit Movements in Modern India

The modern Dalit Movements finds its origin in 19th century when Dalit began to change their lives and Dalit aspirations began to be taken seriously. Most of the sources materials for the background of the movements were written not by the Dalits themselves but by those foreigners who became interested in them.

Who is the father of Dalit movement?

Dr.B. R. Ambedkar	
Known for	First Law Minister of Independent India and President of Indian Constitution Drafting Committee, Leader of Dalit and Buddhist Movement.
Awards	Bharat Ratna (Posthumously, March 31, 1990)
Nickname(s)	Babasaheb

Contribution of Social Reformers

Some social reformers contributed for the upliftment of Dalits are as follows:

Dr.Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar:- Ambedkar was born on 14 April 1891 and his father's name was Ramji Sakpal and his mother was Bhimbai Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a social activist, social worker, politician, writer and educator who contributed to social reform in age-old practices. Indian companies. Dr. B. r Ambedkar founded a Marathi fortnightly newspaper, The MookNayak, which was the voice of the Dalits of the nation and fought for the civil and political rights and privileges of the oppressed societies. He was a prominent leader of the oppressed classes and the weaker section of the society. With the establishment of Bhahiskruta Bharata, Dr. Ambedkar supported integrated development of dalits. He founded newspapers and organizations to promote social problems, their causes and improve the conditions of untouchables in India. In the fight against inequality, social oppression, untouchability and other issues, Samaj Samata Sangha, Bhahiskruta Bharat, Janta, Samata were some of the leading organizations and newspapers founded by Dr. Ambedkar and was a pioneer and political leader. for social justice in India. Dr. Ambedkar was not only a social leader but also an economist and political thinker and inspired people to practice inter-caste dinners and marriages which can remove social evil practices and barriers in society. Chavadar tunnel movement was one of the social movements that guaranteed untouchables to enter the tunnel and gave justice to dalits. In 1930 he fought for equality and social justice, he did many satyagruhas in this regard and entering Kalaram Temple was one example..

Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890):-First leader of Dalits. He concentrated his energies against the unjust cast system and he founded the organization (movement) called “Satya Sodhak Samaj” which had the main objective is to organize the Dalits/untouchables and members of satya shodhak samaj have to treat all human beings are children of God and worship the creator without the help of any mediator.

Narayan Guru:- Shree Narayan Dharma ParipalanaYogam was established by the shree Narayan guru within the kerala and outside the Kerala. The main objective of this movement was

that, “one religion, one caste and one God for mankind” and temples to be opened for all castes without any kind of discrimination.

Prominent Causes For Dalit Movement:

- 1) Caste System and Social Hierarchy
- 2) Social Exclusion and Untouchability
- 3) Oppression and inequality/ Discrimination

Conclusion:

Dalit movement was entered into society as a Social transformer and social revolution tools for the oppressed classes of the society and It was help to get basic human as well as fundamental rights such as liberty, equality and justice.

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