

CASTE BASED DISCRIMINATION IN KARNATAKA

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DOI: 10.5958/2249-7315.2021.00164.7

ABSTRACT

Discrimination based on caste is so common in India that it has become routine to read about some kind of crime in the media on a daily basis. What started as a basic professional division has evolved into the world's longest hierarchical structure. In contemporary Hindu society, caste has become one of the most important distinguishing factors. The societal concept among the people persisted even after the Caste System was abolished by the Constitution. As a result, different forms of oppression and suppression continue, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly. The kinds of ideas individuals come up with to establish a divide are unpleasant to their core, from residing in separate sections of the cities to not wearing their footwear when visiting the villages. These actions of separating do not, however, cease with the backing of local authorities, or even in their absence. According to a recent research, the number of crimes against Dalits increased by 25% in 2016. However, when we look at the problem of caste-based crimes, we focus more on the northern regions of India. Even in its southern area, caste, on the other hand, is a source of evil. The frequency of such crimes rises in states with the greatest number of castes, such as Karnataka. There are, however, little measures or public attention focused on them. This research will concentrate on caste-based prejudice in Karnataka, particularly the Madigas caste.

KEYWORDS: *Caste, Constitution, Discrimination, Karnataka, Rights.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of treating one individual or group of people less equitably or well than other persons or groups, according to Collins Dictionary. Along with its variety, India has seen a wide range of prejudice. From religion to gender to area to caste, no stone has been left unturned in the attempt to discredit one group of people for the sake of boosting the ego of another. However, caste has played the most prominent part in India's heinous societal practice of discrimination[1].

The popular divide among the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras is the first picture that comes to mind when we think of the Indian Caste System. However, it goes far beyond than that. According to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, there are 1208 castes in India (as of 2008). According to the BBC, there are about 3000 castes and 25,000 sub-castes in this area. This makes the widespread use of caste as a weapon of abuse in India much more understandable[2].

The greater the number of distinctions, the greater the potential for separation and, as a result, unjust treatment for little causes. The concept of hierarchy could be observed in many other cultures all over the globe, according to Al- Biruni, a renowned Iranian explorer and scholar who traveled to India in the eleventh century. But it was the concept of pollution that set them apart from the Indian setting. This concept of "pollution" is what has kept this hierarchical system from breaking down since ancient times, making the Indian Caste System the world's longest-running

hierarchy.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 In Today's World, What Is Caste:

After years of exploitation and discrimination, the architects of our Constitution finally saw the necessity to provide these downtrodden groups with particular protection. This resulted in the formation of the Scheduled Caste, which included Dalits, the Scheduled Tribe, which included Adivasis, and the Other Poor Caste, which included groups who were economically backward but did not face the social stigma of being untouchable. Reservations were established by the government in an effort to improve their situation. This included reserving a specific number of seats in educational institutions, employment, and promotions for SCs, STs, and OBCs. That works out to 15.83 percent, 7.5 percent, and 26.42 percent for each area, on average. However, the terrible living circumstances of the reserved have hardly improved as a result of these reserves. "Nearly 37 percent of rural Dalits and 40 percent of urban Dalits live below India's national poverty line," according to the current situation, compared to 28 percent and 26 percent of the entire rural and urban populations, respectively.

But what is the source of this poverty? Though caste and profession did not always go hand in hand, individuals in this group have been confined to lowly occupations from the dawn of time owing to the fear of contamination. Even in modern times, this has been the case. Due to discrimination in the hiring process, they have been trapped with stereotyped occupations that pay less and are very dangerous to their health. Dalits, for example, make up the bulk of India's bonded laborers. Even when they are hired, they are paid less than their peers from higher castes. Another explanation for this may be because these advantages were created so that oppressed members of these communities could gain self-sufficiency. People who have grown financially stable in these areas, on the other hand, are more likely to take use of such advantages. As a result, individuals who do not deserve these chances continue to live under oppression. Leaders of such communities claim to be fighting for their community's rights, but actually play politics in the name of caste and amass money, even squandering government-provided chances for the community's economically disadvantaged members[3].

In reality, the bulk of the oppressed class is unaware of the possibilities provided by the government. This may be explained by their lack of knowledge as a result of societal stigmas. Several instances have been recorded in which instructors in villages refuse to educate pupils from these classes. This is another another way in which disadvantaged people are pushed down by societal stigmas.

2.2 Discrimination Based On Cast In Karnataka:

When we think about caste prejudice, the first picture that comes to mind is of any situation in India's northern states. Even in the southern regions of India, however, caste-based prejudice exists. Karnataka, with 101 castes, was the state with the most castes according to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's report. The state also has the greatest number of instances of caste-based violence, which is unsurprising.

In the state, over 3000 Dalits, or around 9 people each day, are victims of caste-based crimes. According to the 2011 Census, the capital city's population of SCs and STs is 13.21 percent. Despite this, the city registers over a thousand instances of violence each year under the Protection of Civil Rights Act and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989[4].

There is no way in which Karnataka does not discriminate against its Dalits, from education to employment, from renting places to dwell to consuming the food provided. There have been many

occasions when it has been clear that prejudice against Dalits occurs not just behind closed doors, but also in the open. Temples, hotels, salons, and even Dhobi services all have examples of this. Many times, service providers must seek a middle ground in order to serve all castes fairly. Restaurants, for example, may use disposable plates and cups in order to avoid offending members of any caste.

Schools might be examined if we concentrate on the hidden ways in which prejudice still exists. Even after receiving free meals, the majority of youngsters bring food from their families. It is portrayed as though it were a class phenomenon, but it is done in such a way that caste-based segregation may continue unabated. Even while hiring chefs for schools and angandwaris, a caste check is performed to ensure that no caste has any issues with the cook. Cases like the one in Kuppegala District occur when it is not followed. In this instance, children from the higher caste refused to eat a Dalit cook's mid-day lunch.

Another kind of hidden discrimination is when Dalits restrict their mobility in order to avoid causing confrontation. "Dalits avoid certain locations like a temple, barbershop, or hotel where they won't be served or entertained," according to sociologist Professor GK Karanth. It's a defense mechanism to keep from being rejected and humiliated. As a result, prejudice continues, but there is no confrontation[5].

When investigations were performed in Bangalore, the state's well-developed metropolitan metropolis, records of segregation in the city were found, even to the point of establishing separate residential zones for Dalits. This separation is not limited to the oldest sections of the city, which were built with caste-based segregation in mind. In reality, prejudice is more pronounced in newer areas.

This is due to the fact that the city's growth has benefited just a few chosen groups, and as a result, the wealth gap is so great that individuals from disadvantaged castes are unable to buy properties in newer areas. As a result, the caste distribution in older sections of the city has altered, as upper caste people have now relocated into new areas, paving the way for SCs to move into older parts of the city.

Many times, it has been claimed that when Dalits want to rent a home, they must conceal their caste or the house would not be provided to them. This is true not just in minor cities, towns, or villages, but even in Bangalore, the capital city. In India, SCs and STs make up less than 5% of the population and live in 40% of the blocks. Builders often worry that allowing Economically Weaker Sections to live in their flats, as required by government regulations, would result in a loss of higher caste clients. The developers think that reserving certain apartments will prevent upper-caste purchasers from buying them. As a sort of defense, Dalits leave areas with a greater concentration of upper castes because they believe they are being discriminated against and that their culture is being attacked.

Even when the government relocates slums, residents in the surrounding region often grumble and resist. They think that slum residents will result in increased trash dumping and hence uncleanliness. Locals also thought that allowing slum residents to live in their neighborhood would increase robberies and crimes. The villagers' prejudice towards the Dalits is fueled by their caste-based prejudice against them[1].

According to the Gini Index, the city really scores low. The Gini Index is a method of assessing inequality that ranges from 0 to 1, with the higher the Gini value, the greater the degree of disparity in distribution. This is very useful in determining caste-based segregation in a given area. The state's Gini Index is 0.62, according to a research conducted by the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore. Despite the fact that this is better than the statistics of other metro cities, the difference is significant.

These prejudices, as predictable as they are, are not exclusive to urban areas. According to a research done in rural Karnataka on the situation of caste-based prejudice, 21% of Non-SCs do not even invite individuals from the Dalit group to events at their houses. Marriages make up the majority of the functions. Those that were invited claim that they were either given separate seats to sit in or requested to be placed in a different location since the community regulations dictated it. Even when non-SCs welcome them to their homes, the Dalits are fed in cow huts or on the ground. A small percentage of non-SCs would not even shake hands with Dalit people[6].

2.3 Personal Narratives:

People from the Dalit community have come out on numerous occasions to share their personal experiences. The Ballari District is one of them. Tayamma, a P K Halli inhabitant, spoke about her experiences as a Dalit. She described how members in her community do not have access to safe drinking water or clean bathrooms. She described how her neighborhood is forced to drink water that is clearly polluted. When it comes to the toilet, she has the option of using a rectangular enclosure, a regular women's toilet, or returning to open defecation. The public restroom is likewise not a good option. It doesn't have any pits or doors, and it's right close to a busy road.

In the community, there have also been reports of violence. Dalit youngsters are often forced out of their jobs because the upper caste is unhappy with them being there. This clearly demonstrates how the Upper Caste, both directly and indirectly, determines the destiny of the Dalits. These incidents, however, go unnoticed. The Dalit community believes that this is how the community operates and that any kind of dissent is suppressed from the start. When Dalit students from rural come to cities to seek higher education, examples may be seen clearly. They are able to interact with their classmates. When they return to their communities, however, they become subservient due to caste hierarchy. The dynamics of relationships are shaped by the superiority and inferiority complexes. The Vokkaligas, Lingayats, and Brahmins are the most powerful castes. They account for 11%, 14% 19, and 2% of the population, respectively[7].

2.4 Madigas:

Madigas are a Dalit caste mostly located in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Odisha. They are expert craftsmen whose job usually include the use of leather to create items like as bags, drums, ceramics, shopkeeping, and rope manufacturing, among other things. In the north of India, they are known as Chamaar.

They have long been an important component of India's caste system. As a result, it's simple to see why they're one of Karnataka's most persecuted castes. The Madigas have faced persecution and prejudice their whole lives. The recent instance of a Madiga Dalit MP being barred from visiting a hamlet because it was considered against custom is an example of this.

Mr. A Narayanaswamy, a BJP MP, was attacked at PemmanahalliGollarahatti of Pavagada Taluk in Tumkuru district. This event reignited the debate about Karnataka's [8]discriminatory policies towards the Madiga community. However, when Sriram, a young guy from the Madiga Community, was questioned about the event, he said that such an occurrence did not surprise him. For centuries, they have grown used to living inhumanely. He raised an excellent point. "What would be the situation of a commoner from the same village if similar treatment was meted out to an MP, a person with a voice and status?"

Another neighbor discussed how no amount of government action could alter the position they are in. He described how government authorities intervened when Madigas were denied access to water from the communal well. However, since authorities were there, no one from the oppressed group went to collect water, he said. He said that these authorities will only be there for one day. If they do use the water, they will have to deal with the wrath of the community in the days ahead.

According to a sample study conducted by Swabhimani Dalita Shakti in Ranebennur taluk of Haveri district, almost 97 percent of Madigas did not get any assistance from the Dr B R Ambedkar Development Corporation or the state Social Welfare Department. When it comes to their workforce, Madigas account for 80% of manual scavengers, 75% of Pourakarmikas (women who work as garment cleaners), and 80% of Devdasis (women who are wedded to gods but labor as sex slaves). According to a study performed by Jeevika, an NGO, Madigas account for 85 percent of unpaid labor.

According to Dr. RV Chandrashekhara of NLSIU Bangalore, "ninety percent of the inhabitants in this society live in fear, without adequate housing, food, education, or job stability." The necessity of the hour is to internalize the concept of social justice and raise awareness among oppressors.

The fact that such blatant prejudice still exists in today's world is a major source of worry. Even in a city as modern as Bangalore, which is held to worldwide standards, age-old prejudices and practices continue to damage the feelings and livelihood of certain groups. No one is immune to the miseries of caste-based prejudice, from commoners to Parliamentary Leaders. Even more tragic is the fact that government-led initiatives aren't even utilized in the state, demonstrating a lack of public knowledge of their rights.

All of these mistakes can only be solved via education. Discrimination against Dalits begins in elementary school. As a result, such prejudice at the school level should be eliminated. People who raise a fuss over the castes of the staff or students should be ignored. When youngsters learn at an early age that raising concerns against a specific caste would result in their dismissal, whether as students, teachers, or even cooks, they will continue to do so as adults. When their caste problems are addressed earlier in life, such as via government involvement, they learn to overcome prejudices and enjoy a better life[9].

However, awareness should not be restricted to children. The government should increase awareness initiatives, whether via skits, programs, or other means, to encourage people to reconsider their age-old prejudices and stereotypes. People need to understand that caste is just a tiny component of their religion, and that tearing down the old system has no effect on their religious beliefs.

3. CONCLUSION

Based on caste Discrimination continues to be a significant aspect of everyone's life. For individuals from the oppressed classes of SCs, STs, and OBCs, however, it becomes a barrier to progress. They have been trapped in a socioeconomic situation that provides them with unequal chances in all aspects of life. Karnataka is not immune to such calamities. The state has the largest number of castes, as well as the highest rate of caste-based discrimination against individuals. The issue is caused by the dominance of castes like as Brahmins, Lingayats, and Vokkaligas, as well as the suppression of Dalits, particularly the Madigas. So that such atrocities are ultimately put to a stop, the government must take proper action against them.

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