

Caste, Social Exclusion and development In South Asia

DFID Seminar organised by DSN Wednesday, 6th October 2004

By Sat Pal Muman

'The dwelling of Chandalas and Svapacas(should be) outside village; they should be deprived of dishes(apapatra); their property (consists) of dogs and asses.'

Manu Smriti X.51

'Slavery does not merely mean a legalised form of subjection. It means a state of society in which some men are forced to accept from others the purposes that control their conduct. This condition obtains even where there is no slavery in the legal sense'.

Dr B R Ambedkar

Introduction

I was requested by David Haslem, Chair of DSN to present my views by way of observations and commentary in relation to issues around Caste and Social exclusion and also to say something about the developmental efforts being undertaken to alleviate the Dalits from their miserable condition.

For my part, I will highlight some of the work that we have been doing here in the UK and point out some directions for the future in relation to India that we ought to consider.

I am not a full time professional in this field. I have been called to express my views on Dalit Issues from time to time and it is in that context that I am able to address you today.

I will only very briefly outline British Race Relations, Caste dynamics in Britain, Religion and Hereditary basis of Caste, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe Certificate, Dalit Atrocities, Social Exclusion and then a conclusion.

Background

In Year 2000, I presented a short paper entitled 'Caste in Britain' at a Conference organised in London by Voice of Dalit International in association with Dalit Solidarity Network. This paper outlined how Caste prevails in this country and how people from the Indian sub continent arrived as migrant workers also brought with them the additional baggage of Caste.

As migrants settled here the resulting increase in population over time have lead them to become more ethnocentric. It is now a well known phenomenon that what has happened here has also occurred in other parts of the world amongst the Indian Diaspora.

We have now established Castewatch UK to put a stop to this evil practice here in the UK. I will explain in bit more detail about the work Castewatch UK has begun in terms of its strategic aims and objects.

British Race Relations

Prejudice and discrimination on grounds of race engender hatred and violence that should not be tolerated by any civilised society. Violence on grounds of race can leave physical and psychological scars. Equally, violence on grounds of Caste also leave the victim physically and psychologically traumatised. Racial hatred is seen as black and white but Caste hatred is not easily understood and takes on much subtler forms.

Successive British Governments rightly felt a need to integrate the newly arrived immigrants into the British mainstream. The British Government enacted a number of laws spanning 4 decades. Indeed successive British Governments had been aware of how ethnic communities could be vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination on grounds of their background, race and ethnicity in the new surrounding. However, integration was not to occur at the expense of losing their separate identities and cultural values .

Roy Jenkins, Labour Home secretary during the 1960s offered a definition of integration when he said that integration was 'not as a flattening process of assimilation but of equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance'.

In 1966, under the Race Relations Act introduced by the Labour Party, a Race Relations board was established. A decade later the Race Relations Act 1976 set out to curb racial discrimination. The new

body set out to apply the law. The Commission for Racial Equality, was given extensive range of powers. The period of the 1970s also saw the emergence of an explicitly racist party of the extreme right, the National Front. The Anti Nazi league was set up in 1977 to counter National Front propaganda.

Indeed, the Greater London Council in the 1980s created an ethnic minorities community which addressed under representation of ethnic minorities in local Government. Britain as a whole is now actively embracing diversity.

In the UK, the main law dealing with racial discrimination is the Race Relations Act 1976, which was recently amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

In October 2003, the government announced its plans for a single equality body for Great Britain. This proposed body was given the working title of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR).

Now also we have the Human Rights Act incorporated into British Law....

The Human Rights Act was passed in November 1998, and in 2000(2 October) the Act came into force in the whole of the UK.

All of these efforts on part of the British Government indicate that discrimination on racial grounds will not be tolerated in British society.

Caste dynamics in Britain

As mentioned earlier, the monster of Caste is now raising its ugly head in British society. It has been an issue facing the ethnic communities for some time but has been brushed under the carpet both by the oppressor and the oppressed and has also escaped the attention of the authorities.

According to the 2001 census there are a nearly a million Indians resident in Britain.

Caste, at least amongst the Indian communities, plays a part in regulating their social affairs. Its affects are felt right across the communities.

At a conference held on 3rd July 2004, organised by CastewatchUK we heard moving testimonials of a young girl running a business where the exploitative classes refused to handle change through physical contact...

We also heard how an inter-caste marriage caused animosity and hatred between the couples families where the once again the exploitative class did not accept the marriage as valid.

There are too many examples where the dynamics of Casteism are playing havoc. Indeed the BBC Radio 4 programme broadcast in April 2003 entitled 'Caste divide in Britain' highlights the prevalence of Caste in Britain.

We also heard a clip broadcast on 26th September 2004 on BBC Radio 4 in the Sunday programme wherein it was mentioned how members of Castewatch UK attended a fringe meeting at the Labour party conference voicing their concerns. The programme quotes one Mr Lakhani as saying that there is no evidence of Caste operating in Britain and that what is functioning is a venerable form of a clan system.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, says that Caste is ever ready to take advantage of the helplessness of a man and insists upon a complete conformity to its code both in letter and in spirit. A Caste can easily organise itself into a conspiracy to make the life of a reformer a living hell. He goes on to say that if conspiracy is a crime, I do not understand why such a nefarious act to ex-communicate a person for daring to act contrary to the rules of caste should not be made an offence punishable in law.

Due to its visibility CasteWatchUK is now beginning to receive hate mail....The exploitative classes will group and re-group and when called upon to explain the wretched social system they will enter into immediate denials. Caste becomes class and now as the BBC Radio 4 programme reveals Class has now become a venerable clan system!

In his book the Annihilation of Caste, he writes that 'the effect of Caste on the ethics of the Hindus is simply deplorable. Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu public is his Caste. His responsibility is only to his Caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his Caste. Virtue has become Caste ridden and morality has become Caste bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no Charity to the needy. Suffering as such calls for no response. There is Charity but it begins with the Caste and ends with the Caste. There is sympathy but not for men of other Caste. The capacity to appreciate merits in a man apart from his Caste does not exist in a Hindu. There is appreciation of virtue but only when the man is a fellow Caste man. The whole morality is as bad as tribal morality.' Caste has also crept into other faiths.

These sentiments find efficacy when we witnessed discrimination in the distribution of International aid during the aftermath of Gujrat earthquake

CasteWatchUK will work with all those who are engaged in removing the evil of Caste from this planet. Its aims are:

- To monitor caste discrimination practices or policies, which result in and perpetuate caste prejudice in the UK;
- To raise awareness of caste discrimination occurring in the UK and work for legal and democratic remedies;
- To plan strategies and help similar organisations to remove caste discrimination firstly within the UK and then elsewhere;
- To provide moral relief through education to those who are victims of casteism.

Moving onto issues affecting Dalits in India this is what I have to say...

Primarily, due to efforts of Dr. Ambedkar, the government of India recognised the twin evils of Caste and Untouchability and declared the practice of Untouchability illegal vide Article 17 of the Constitution. Unfortunately, Caste as an institution has not yet been abolished. It is integral to the religion of the Hindus which has formed the basis of all Caste based hatred in India.

Unfortunately, The constitution vide Article 25 also perpetuates an injustice by clumping Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs as Hindus stripping them of their religious freedom and religious identity. This is nothing short of genocide.

Religion and Hereditary basis of Caste

There are those who deny the hereditary basis of Caste. Dr. Ambedkar in his book 'Who were the Shudras' paints a vivid picture and describes how due to conflict between Brahmins and Shudras the Brahmins pursued the progeny of intercaste marriages by imposing strictures upon them. This is what he says..

The Chandala and Nishada are the issues of mixed marriages. Nishada is an Anuloma while the Chandala is a Pratiloma. The Anulomas are held to be eligible for Upanayana(sacred thread ceremony) but curiously an exception is made to this rule. Nishada who is the son of Brahmin from a Shudra woman, though an Anuloma, is held not to be eligible for upanayana. It is interesting to know why this exception is made. The only answer seems to be that this arbitrary act is an act of revenge against the children of one's enemy i.e. the Shudras.

Turning to the Pratilomas, Manu no doubt calls, all of them(shudras) as the basest of men. At the same time, the stigma on the Pratiloma is not evenly distributed among all of them. In the matter of rights and privileges, the Ayogava and the Kshattar are treated with incredible consideration, while the Chandal is subjected to unspeakable condemnation. An illustration of this discrimination in Manu Smiriti at x.46 says ...

Carpentering(shall be the occupation) of an Ayogava as to the Kshattar the Manu Smiriti at X.49 says .. catching and killing animals that live in holes (is the occupation) of Kshattar.

Compare with this what the Manu Smiriti has to say about the Chandala. A Chandala and a boar, a cock, and also a dog and a woman in her courses and a eunuch may not see a Brahmin eating.

One may not abide with outcasts, nor Chandalas, nor Pukassas, nor idiots, nor proud(people), nor with the low born(people) nor with Antyavasayins

One becomes pure by bathing if one has touched a Chandala, or a woman in her courses, an outcaste etc''

(It is curious that a woman is treated similar to a Chandala).

Manu Smirit at X.51 says that the dwelling of Chandalas and svapacas(should be) outside village; they should be deprived of dishes(apapatra); their property (consists of) of dogs and asses.

Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe Certificate

Today, what is the status of the off spring of a couple one of whom is a Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe.

The following criterion is used..

Father	Mother	Child
SC/ST	Non- SC/ST	SC/ST
Non-SC/ST	SC/ST	Non SC/ST

A scheduled Caste Certificate is issued to enable the individual to seek state relief like reservation etc.. Unfortunately the SC/ST certificate also perpetuates a social evil. The Dalits are caught out by the SC/ST certificate as they must have it to prove their identity. The social evil of Caste will acquire a new lease of life by the demands to extend reservation into the private sector. The Dalits are caught in a catch 22 situation by the SC/ST certificate which is conferred on hereditary basis along the patriarchal line.

Dalit Atrocities

Atrocities on Dalits are also a daily occurrence. The Government of India enacted numerous laws such as the

The Civil Rights Act 1955 and The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Despite these legal measures, Atrocities on Dalits are a daily occurrence. Professor Thorat and S. Venkatesan have highlighted this in their paper entitled 'Caste Conflict, Poverty and Human Development In India'.

The official statistic from 1990 to 2000, indicate that a total of 252,370 cases of various crimes were registered countrywide by the Dalits. If we look at the type of crime and atrocities, we get to know that on an average (Average for ten year): 553 Murders, 2990 Hurt cases, 919 Rapes, 184 Kidnapping/abduction, 47 Dacoity, 127 Robbery, 456 Arson, 1485 civil right violation under OCR ACT, 6174 atrocities under atrocities Act and 12, 995 other offences were registered every year by the Dalits. During the latest year 2000 the break-up of the atrocities and violence include 473cases of murder, 3139 of grievous hurt, 251 cases of arson and 992 cases of rape, 631 case under PCR ACT, 6350 cases under PA Act and 12149 cases of other offences.

When recounting statistics, it is easily overlooked that behind each statistic there is a human face.

Social Exclusion

Human society exists through social interaction. It is the social interaction that gives structure and form to what we do, what we say and how we say it. Our facial expressions, gestures and emotions can convey our inner most feelings. Individual esteem, politeness and the dignified way we treat others can add to our own dignity.

Social gatherings consist of disregarding aspects of behaviour, which might otherwise lead to loss of face. As matter of social etiquette, we do not generally refer to episodes in individual's past that might produce embarrassment. How we behave in a situation is based on our cultural conditioning. Different cultures adhere to different value systems and different value systems engender stereotypes. It's the stereotypes that lead to prejudice and discrimination. When our children are asked in the school playground what their Caste is, it is demeaning and derogatory. The intention behind the question is to cause maximum humiliation.

In a social climate, ethnic minorities in most societies face a future of continual discrimination, characterised by tension and anxiety. It is heartening to know that the British society has gradually embraced multiculturalism and laws exist in Britain that provide for equal opportunity and forbids discrimination on grounds of race.

Whilst many migrant communities have adapted and also have adopted, albeit in a limited ways, the indigenous culture but they also maintain their own traditional values in the types of dress they wear, adherence to marriage customs, family life, religious beliefs and ceremonies.

Casteism engenders group closure where certain Caste groups maintain boundaries separating themselves from others. These groups deploy exclusion devices limiting and prohibiting inter-marriages or restrictions on social contact. Casteism devalues human relationships that would otherwise be a rewarding and enriching experience.

Spiritual violence is being inflicted upon the Caste groups, causing psychological trauma, distress, low-esteem, loss of dignity and the bigots in our midst must not be allowed to get away with it.

Conclusion

The problems faced by the Dalits are politically charged and complex. In their struggle to establish their human dignity and human rights. The Dalits are accused of being anti-national. We saw a glaring example of this at the WCAR in Durban when efforts were being made to equate Caste with Race. A demand for Dalit Human rights is seen as anti-national by the exploitative classes. What these fellows don't seem to realise is that the equity and justice are the foundations of a stable democracy and that iniquity and injustice pose a greater threat to democracy and stability.

Those who have taken the cudgel of the Dalits stand accused of interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign country. India is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Economics; the Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination etc.

Indeed the Liberty, Equality, Justice and Fraternity for every citizen is also guaranteed by the Constitution of India itself. Given these legal instruments it is incumbent upon the Indian government to honour their legal obligations and remove the insidious form of prejudice and discrimination based on Casteism.

It has to be acknowledged that over the years, the Government of India has made attempts to uplift the Dalits by operating numerous schemes through agencies like National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC), Assistance to Scheduled Castes and Development Corporation (SCDCs) and Special Component Plans(SCP).

Unfortunately, these schemes are always under political manipulation by the exploitative classes and therefore have not produced the desired results. Indeed, there is also a huge number of NGOs operating across India doing impressive work facilitating empowerment of the marginalised communities.

I endorse the recommendations in the paper submitted by DSN entitled 'Dalits and International Development Aid' some time ago and also recommendation of the DELHI DECLARATION 2003 adopted at a conference held in New Delhi on 19-20 February, 2003.

I also endorse the Bhopal Declaration adopted at a Conference held in Madhya Pradesh on 12-13 January, 2002.

All these conferences have highlighted the need for Dalit empowerment, Dalit Human Rights, Leadership training, Advocacy etc.

I think the time is right for there to be an international funding agency run by Dalits for Dalits which guarantees accountability and transparency so that Dalit Issues are effectively addressed.

On the domestic front, it is time that the hatred and prejudice perpetuated by Caste in Britain is brought within the purview of British law to accurately reflect the emerging cultural ethnography of Britain. Casteism as a form of prejudice and discrimination must be placed on par with Racism so that it is rooted out from British society.

I appeal to all those participating today to work towards this end.

Thank you for your time.

Census of India 2001

Basic Population Data

(India, States & Union territories)

T 00-005: Total Population, Population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and their proportions to the total population

State Code	India/State/Ut	Population			Proportion of SC population	Proportion of ST population
		Total Population	Scheduled Castes (SC) Population	Scheduled Tribes (ST) Population		
	India®	1,028,610,328	166,635,700	84,326,240	16.2	8.2
01	Jammu & Kashmir	10,143,700	770,155	1,105,979	7.6	10.9
02	Himachal Pradesh	6,077,900	1,502,170	244,587	24.7	4.0
03	Punjab	24,358,999	7,028,723	-	28.9	0.0
04	Chandigarh	900,635	157,597	-	17.5	0.0
05	Uttaranchal	8,489,349	1,517,186	256,129	17.9	3.0
06	Haryana	21,144,564	4,091,110	-	19.3	0.0
07	Delhi	13,850,507	2,343,255	-	16.9	0.0
08	Rajasthan	56,507,188	9,694,462	7,097,706	17.2	12.6
09	Uttar Pradesh	166,197,921	35,148,377	107,963	21.1	0.1
10	Bihar	82,998,509	13,048,608	758,351	15.7	0.9
11	Sikkim	540,851	27,165	111,405	5.0	20.6
12	Arunachal Pradesh	1,097,968	6,188	705,158	0.6	64.2
13	Nagaland	1,990,036	-	1,774,026	0.0	89.1
14	Manipur®	2,166,788	60,037	741,141	2.8	34.2
15	Mizoram	888,573	272	839,310	0.0	94.5
16	Tripura	3,199,203	555,724	993,426	17.4	31.1
17	Meghalaya	2,318,822	11,139	1,992,862	0.5	85.9
18	Assam	26,655,528	1,825,949	3,308,570	6.9	12.4
19	West Bengal	80,176,197	18,452,555	4,406,794	23.0	5.5
20	Jharkhand	26,945,829	3,189,320	7,087,068	11.8	26.3
21	Orissa	36,804,660	6,082,063	8,145,081	16.5	22.1
22	Chhattisgarh	20,833,803	2,418,722	6,616,596	11.6	31.8
23	Madhya Pradesh	60,348,023	9,155,177	12,233,474	15.2	20.3
24	Gujarat	50,671,017	3,592,715	7,481,160	7.1	14.8
25	Daman & Diu	158,204	4,838	13,997	3.1	8.8
26	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	220,490	4,104	137,225	1.9	62.2
27	Maharashtra	96,878,627	9,881,656	8,577,276	10.2	8.9
28	Andhra Pradesh	76,210,007	12,339,496	5,024,104	16.2	6.6
29	Karnataka	52,850,562	8,563,930	3,463,986	16.2	6.6
30	Goa	1,347,668	23,791	566	1.8	0.0
31	Lakshadweep	60,650	-	57,321	0.0	94.5
32	Kerala	31,841,374	3,123,941	364,189	9.8	1.1
33	Tamil Nadu	62,405,679	11,857,504	651,321	19.0	1.0
34	Pondicherry	974,345	157,771	-	16.2	0.0
35	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	356,152	-	29,469	0.0	8.3

Source: Primary Census Abstract : Census of India 2001

Note: ® - Excludes Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur

Table 1 All India-Crimes against Dalits-1992 to 2000

Types of cases	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total
Murder	616	510	546	571	543	513	516	506	526	4847
Rape	849	798	992	873	949	1037	923	1000	1083	8504
Kidnapping & Abduction	213	246	251	276	281	243	253	228	268	2259
Dacoity	81	102	78	70	90	58	49	36	38	602
Robbery	265	197	259	218	213	162	150	109	108	1681
Arson	406	369	533	500	464	389	346	337	290	3634
Hurt			4542	4544	4585	3860	3809	3241	3497	28078
PCR Act	2900	2531	1731	1528	1417	1216	724	678	672	13397
POA Act	NA	NA	14938	13925	9620	8070	7443	7301	7386	68683
Others	19592	20220	10038	10492	13278	12396	11425	11657	11587	120685
Total	24922	24973	33908	32997	31440	27944	25638	25093	25455	252370

Source: Crime in India, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, 1994-2000

Anulomas:

Father	Mother	Name of the Progeny
Brahmin	Kshatriya	Murdhavastika
Brahmin	Vaishya	Ambashtha
Brahmin	Shudra	Nishada
Kshatriya	Vaishya	Mahishya
Kshatriya	Shudra	Urga
Vaishya	Shudra	Karana

Pratilomas:

Father	Mother	Name of the Progeny
Shudra	Brahmin	Chandala
Shudra	Kshatriya	Kshattar
Shudra	Vaishya	Ayogava
Vaishya	Brahmin	Suta
Vaishya	Kshatriya	Vaidehaka
Kshatriya	Vaishya	Magadha

The Form of the certificate to be produced by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes candidates applying for appointment to posts under the Government of India

This is to certify that Shri/Shrimati/Mumari* _____
 son/daughter* of _____ of village/Town* _____ in District/ Division*
 Shri _____ of State/Union Territory* _____ belongs to
 the _____ **Caste/Tribe* which is recognised as a Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe***
 Under :-

The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950* The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950*

The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951* The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Union Territories) Order, 1951*

[as amended by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956, the Bombay Recognition Act, 1960, the Punjab Recognition Act, 1966, the State of Himachal Pradesh Act, 1970 and the North Eastern Areas (Recognition) Act, 1971 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders, (Amendment) Act, 1976]

_____ The Constitution (Jammu & Kashmir Scheduled Castes Order, 1956*

The Constitution (Andaman and Nicobar Islands)Scheduled Tribes Order, 1959* as amended by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 1976*

The Constitution (Dadra and Nagar Haveli) Scheduled Castes Order, 1962 The Constitution (Dadra and Nagar Haveli) Scheduled Tribes, Order, 1962*

The Constitution (Pondicherry) Scheduled Castes Orders, 1964*

The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Uttar Pradesh) Order, 1967*

The Constitution (Goa, Daman and Diu) Scheduled Castes Order, 1968*

The Constitution (Goa, Daman and Diu) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1968*

The Constitution (Nagaland) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1970*

The Constitution (Sikkim) Scheduled Castes Order, 1978*

The Constitution (Sikkim) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1978*

2. Shri/Shrimati/Kmuari* _____ and/or his/her* family, reside(s) in village/town* _____ of* _____ District/Division* of the State/Union Territory* of _____.

Signature _____

** Designation _____

(with seal of Office)

State/Union Territory**

Place _____

Date _____

*Please delete the words which are not applicable.

Note : The term "ordinarily reside(s) used here will have the same meaning as in Section 20 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.**

****Officers competent to issue Caste/Tribe certificates :**

- i. **District Magistrate/Additional District Magistrate/Collector/Deputy Commission/Additional Deputy Commissioner/Deputy Collector/Ist Class Stipendiary Magistrate/City Magistrate/Sub-Divisional Magistrate/Taluka Magistrate/Executive Magistrate/Extra Assistant Commissioner.**
- ii. **(not below the rank of Ist class Stipendary Magistrate)**
- iii. **Chief Presidency Magistrate/Additional Chief Presidency Magistrate/Presidency Magistrate.**
- iv. **Revenue Officers not below the rank of Tehsildar.**
- v. **Sub-Divisional Officer of the area where the candidate and/ or his family normally reside(s).**
- vi. **Administrator/Secretary to Administrator/Development Officer(Lakshdweep).**