



A Discussion on Specific Manifestation of Practices of Untouchability in Northern India after the Untouchability Abolishing Law Came into Force

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ABSTRACT

Our society struggled with temple prohibition, educational inequality, and access restrictions to public spaces like wells and water bodies for many years. Scheduled caste members are denied the same opportunities and privileges as other members of society because of the practice of untouchability. According to Article 17 of the Indian Constitution, untouchability is prohibited in all forms. Discrimination and oppression against untouchables in India marked a necessity for implementing the anti-untouchability law. An offense called "untouchability" carries legal repercussions. Parliament passed the Untouchability (Offenses) Act of 1955 under the Constitution's Article 35(a) (ii) and renamed in 1976 as The Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955. The amendment act has tightened the provisions to remove untouchability. Both fines and imprisonment were provisioned for the punishment of untouchability. Equality before the law, freedom of expression concerning religion and culture, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion are all part of India's civil rights. The Protection of the Civil Rights Act of 1955 defines civil rights. It imposes penalties for the practice of untouchability and for enforcing any disability resulting from or related to those rights, and vice versa. This Act eradicates the caste stigma in our society. After years of suffering, civil rights were finally implemented in India. At first, nothing changed, but as time went on, things started to change. People who were regarded as pollutants of our society now stand on an equal platform in accessing resources and opportunities. But the forms of untouchability practices change with time, which challenges the sufficiency of the existing anti-untouchability laws in India.

Keywords: Untouchability (Offenses) Act, 1955, Scheduled Caste, Civil Rights

Introduction: What is Untouchability?

Untouchability is a direct product of the caste system. In the Hindu caste system, the castes, called untouchables, were not to draw water from the same wells or use the pond/tank used by the higher castes. They were not allowed to enter some temples and suffered many other disabilities. It is a form of a social institution that legitimizes and enforces discriminatory, humiliating, exclusionary, and exploitative practices against people of certain castes. It refers to a social practice that looks down upon certain depressed classes solely on account of their birth and makes any discrimination against them on this ground. Their physical touch was considered to pollute others. Despite such things, untouchability is neither defined in the Indian Constitution nor any Act. Untouchability has been practiced for a highly long time. Untouchables frequently face inhuman treatment as a result of their lower caste status. Untouchability is present in nearly every sphere of life and is practiced in infinite forms. According to Article 17, as a fundamental right, "Untouchability" is abolished, and its practice in any form is forbidden and punishable.

Objective of Study

Indian society is a caste-based society. Untouchability is a blot in the Hindu caste system. Article 17 in the Indian constitution fully prohibited the practice of untouchability. The government passed the Untouchability (Offenses) Act of 1955 to stop untouchability practices. Nevertheless, the practice of untouchability is still in practice. Unfortunately, untouchability is neither defined in the Indian Constitution nor in any Act. The earlier Act covers the traditional forms of practice of untouchability. However, today, almost every society is digitized, modernized, and globalized in all aspects. Amid that, untouchability practices have also changed and taken new forms. Earlier legislation does not cover the new forms of practices of untouchability. This Study will highlight and discuss such new forms of untouchability and the sufficiency of the Untouchability (Offenses) Act of 1955.

Methodology

The study has used secondary data sources for analysis. This study is based on the contents of newspapers, journal articles, books, and website materials. This study has used the Open-ended discussion and observation method for a better understanding of new forms of untouchability practices.

Literature Review

The origins of caste and untouchability lie deep in India's ancient past. The evidence of these origins provided by the archaeological and literary sources now is, at best, circumstantial. The dominant view traces the origins of caste and untouchability to the Aryans and their ways of relating to the peoples of India with whom they came into contact. The Aryans, a set of related and highly self-conscious tribes sharing a common language and religion, began their invasions of India from the northwest around 1500 B.C. For centuries they remained in constant conflict with the indigenous peoples, whom they looked down upon as culturally inferior and shunned as ritually unclean. Once conquered by superior military technology, some of these peoples withdrew into regions unoccupied by the Aryans.

In contrast, others were incorporated as separate and inferior castes within an Aryan-dominated society. In post-Rigvedic literature, there are more frequent references to primitive forest dwellers kept on the fringes-of Aryan society in the conquered regions. Among these were the Chandalas. Although the Chandalas were severely stigmatized in the later Vedic age, it was only in the period between 600 B.C. and A.D. 200 that untouchability appeared as such. In the Dharmasutras and Kautilya's Arthashastra, the Chandalas are treated as Untouchable, and the "mixed-caste theory" of the origins of untouchability is enunciated. To be an Untouchable in the Indian caste system is to be very low and partially excluded from an elaborately hierarchical social order. Untouchables are persons of a discrete set of low castes excluded on account of their extreme collective impurity from particular relations with higher beings, both human and divine. They make up about 16 percent of the Indian population and number about 138 million. They have been called by various names, such as "Untouchable," "Harijans" (a glorified term coined by Narasimha Mehta and adopted and popularized by Mahatma Gandhi), "Exterior Castes" (used by J. H. Hutton), "Depressed Class" (used by British officials), "Outcastes" and "Pariahs" (undoubtedly derived from the Tamil word para or parai, the drum. In more ancient times, the terms "Mlechha," "Chandala" (used by Manu), "Panchama" (the fifth class), "Avarna" (i.e., outside the four varnas), "Nishada," "Palkasa," "Antyaja," and "Atishudra" were used. The term "Scheduled Castes" appeared for the first time in April 1935, when the British government issued the Government of India (Scheduled Caste) Order specifying certain castes, races, and tribes as Scheduled Castes. Prior to that, these population groups were generally known as Depressed Classes. The term "Dalit" was first used in journalistic writings in 1931.

J. H. Hutton, an eminent anthropologist and author of one of the best books on caste, *Caste in India* (1963), locates the origins of caste and untouchability. In his opinion, untouchability is the consequence of ritual impurity. The origin of the position of the exterior castes is partly racial, partly religious, and partly a matter of social custom. There can be a little doubt, but the idea of untouchability originates in taboo. Another eminent anthropologist Von Furer Haimendorf believes that untouchability is an urban development resulting from an unclean and ritually impure occupation. Once untouchability had developed in urban or semi-urban settlements, its gradual spread to the villages was inevitable. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar wrote in his book *The Untouchables* (1948) that untouchability is novel. The distinction between the Hindus and Untouchables, in its original form before the advent of untouchability, was between "tribesmen" and "broken men" from alien tribes. It is the broken men who subsequently came to be treated as Untouchable. Stephen Fuchs believes that no single cause can explain untouchability, which is deeply rooted in Indian history (Michael, 1999).

Though Gandhi was an admirer of the caste system, on the issue of the practice of untouchability, he directed the Hindu caste system that there should be no hierarchy between castes, that all castes should be considered equal and that the avarna castes, the Ati-Shudras, should be brought into the varna system. However, Ambedkar believed that the outcastes were the by-product of the caste system. There will be outcastes as long as there are castes. Nothing can emancipate the outcaste except the destruction of the caste system (Ambedkar, 2014).

Gandhi's attitude towards the practice of untouchability is contained in his autobiography. He consistently opposed untouchability. When his wife refused to clear the chamber pot of his Christian clerk born of untouchable parents, he told her that he would not stand this nonsense in his house; he caught her by the hand and dragged her to the gate, intending to push her out. Gandhi never practiced untouchability in any form. In South Africa, untouchable friends came to his place, lived, and fed with him.

Gandhi also highlighted a different kind of untouchability related to menses that is generally practiced among many orthodox Hindu communities. Where, the women are treated as untouchable during their monthly period. During this time, they are not allowed to enter places of worship or even the kitchen. Also, their physical touch is considered to be polluting. He suggested that it is neither obligatory nor necessary to practice such restrictions (Kolge, 2018). The widespread practice of untouchability continues to deprive individuals and communities of access to resources, educational opportunities, employment, and other avenues of advancement. Many caste Hindus still do not allow members of Dalit communities to enter their homes, particularly the kitchen, and will not permit their children to marry into these communities. In most rural areas, separate drinking water sources are maintained, away from those used by caste Hindus. Dalits are expected to reside in separate colonies at some distance from Hindu caste settlements. In many parts of South India, even today, teashops keep separate sets of cups to be used only by Dalits. The government of independent India abolished untouchability and caste-based discrimination in 1947, declaring them cognizable offenses (for which offenders could be arrested without a court warrant), and instituted an affirmative action program for federal and state employment. Nonetheless, practices of exclusion manifest themselves today more violently than ever before. Untouchability has survived the constitutional changes made immediately after independence by combining economic and social discrimination (Rawat, 2011). After more than 75 years of Independence, Indian Untouchables have progressed a long way. However, true enough, the vast majority of

them remain poor. However, when we look at the practice of untouchability today, it indicates that they traveled from Untouchables to Scheduled Caste. Scheduled Caste is a derived term from Untouchables.

In the village of Alangkulam, located in the Pasumpom Muthurama Linga District of Tamil Nadu, the two main castes of the village are the Pallars and the Valaiyars. The Pallar is officially recorded as a Scheduled Caste; the State recognizes them as an untouchable caste. On the contrary, the Valaiyars is a caste whose ritual and economic status is very close to that of the Pallars; yet, the Valaiyars have not been classified as a Scheduled Caste, and, therefore, we could say that it is not an untouchable caste. Most Pallars are agricultural laborers, but the Valaiyars are hunters and eat cheap food, such as rats or frogs. The Valaiyars are not superior to the Pallars in untouchability in purely ritual terms. The Pallars had to fulfill the slave tasks, whereas the Valaiyars were probably less dependent upon the high castes. As for the dress, the food, the religious practices, or other cultural items, there are only a few elements that would allow us to distinguish a Valaiyar from a Pallar. However, the practice of untouchability is higher for the Pallars. Today's "Untouchables" are very different from their forefathers (Deliège, 2002). Moreover, today they are commonly known as scheduled. It could be understood that the scheduled caste sticker has become the basis for practicing untouchability. Today's trend has become like this if asked, "What surname do you write? Does it come under scheduled castes? Replies come, Yes, I am Scheduled Caste, or No, I am OBC, etc."

Physically and ritually polluted jobs like cremation and handling dead bodies, removal and skinning of dead animals, removal and cleaning of human bodily fluids and excreta (manual scavenging), and basket weaving. Such specific types of jobs are still primarily linked to caste identities. Post-Independence, as a direct consequence of legislative provisions and affirmative action policies, such as reservation, many untouchables no longer pursue traditional occupations. However, many untouchables (Dalits) still perform menial jobs traditionally considered 'polluting' or defiling. Although untouchability has been constitutionally banned since the passage of the Anti-untouchability Act of 1955, it continues in certain forms, not only in private social interactions but also in the public sector. In private social life, most of those involved in garbage collection and disposal, as well as the cleaning of public places belong to these communities. They are also engaged in cleaning dry latrines.

A few years ago, The Indian railways, with 8,000 railway stations and 172,000 toilets, employed more than 3,00,000 manual scavengers on a contract basis to clean the railway tracks and the toilets. This practice has been termed illegal under the Indian law. Notwithstanding the order from the Indian Supreme Court directing the railways to stop this practice, the latter is yet to implement their decision to install modern toilets at stations. A sample survey conducted by the Safai Karamchari Andolan in 12 central states of India found the existence of 32,874 dry latrines. This survey also profiled 6709 manual scavengers (Thorat and Joshi, 2015).

Important Provisions of Untouchability (Offenses) Act, 1955

Untouchability is outlawed and prohibited under Article 17 of the Indian Constitution. Any disability imposed due to untouchability is illegal and will be punished accordingly. Per Article 35 (a) (ii) of the Indian Constitution, the Untouchability (Offenses) Act, 1955, was passed by Parliament. This act has various sections which deal with many provisions. Section 2 of the act clearly defines the various terms like- a hotel, place, *place of public entertainment*, *place of public worship*, *shop*, and *what others are included in these terms*. Section 3 provisions the punishment for whoever enforces **religious disabilities upon anyone based on** "untouchability." Such enforcing activities will be considered an offense and punishable by up to six months in jail or a fine. Section 4 provisions the punishment for whoever enforces **social disabilities upon anyone based on** "untouchability." Whoever imposes any social restrictions on anyone shall be punished by a fine of up to 500 rupees, a term of imprisonment of up to six months, or a combination of the two. Section 5 provisions the punishment for refusing to admit persons to a hospital, dispensary, educational facility, or hostel connected to one of these facilities based on "untouchability." Whoever refuses shall be punished by a fine of up to 500 rupees, a term of imprisonment of up to six months, or a combination of the two. Per section 6 of the Act, Whoever refuses to sell any goods or refuses to provide any services to anyone based on "untouchability" at the same time, location, and under the same terms and conditions that such goods are sold, or services are provided to other persons in the ordinary course of business shall be subject to a punishment of imprisonment that may last up to six months, a fine that may last up to five hundred rupees, or both.

Section 7 has the provision of punishment for those whoever prevent, molests, harasses, irritates, obstructs, causes, or attempts to obstruct any person in the exercise of any such right or molests, harasses, irritates, causes, or attempts to obstruct any person because that person has exercised any such right, encourages or incites any individual, group, or the general public to engage in any form of "untouchability" through spoken or written words, signs, visible representations, or other means, whoever refuses to grant any right or privilege to anyone who is a member of untouchable's community. When a person is convicted of an offense under section 6 and holds a license of any profession, trade, calling, or employment concerning which the offense is committed. Section 8 directs that the license be canceled or suspended for such period as the court of law may deem fit. Section 9 directs the Government for suspension or resumption of the whole or any portion of the grant when the manager or trustee of a place of public worship receiving a grant of land or money from the Government is found guilty under this Act, and such conviction is not reversed or quashed in any appeal or revision. It is also punishable per section 10 if anyone aids an offense against this Act. Anyone who has previously been found guilty of violating this Act or aiding in committing such a violation, according to section 11, will face a fine and an imprisonment sentence for each subsequent conviction. Section 12 allows the court to presume, unless the contrary is proved, that any act constituting an offense under this Act was committed based on "Untouchability" when it involves a member of a Scheduled Caste as defined in Clause (24) of Article 366 of the Constitution. Section 13 limits the jurisdiction of the civil courts. No civil court shall entertain, continue, pass, or execute any decree or order, in whole or in part, for the claim at issue in the suit or proceeding. The court cannot recognize any custom or usage that imposes a disability on a person based on "untouchability" when deciding a case or carrying out a decree or order. Section 14 says that if a company commits an offense under this Act, the then in charge person of that company will be subject to legal action and punishment as appropriate. If a company reserves an offense under this Act with the knowledge or consent of a director, manager, secretary, or other

officers, that director, manager, secretary, or other officers shall also be deemed to have committed the offense. They shall be subject to legal action and punishment as appropriate. Despite any provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (5 of 1898), according to section 15, every violation of this Act shall be a cognizable offense, and each of these offenses may be compoundable with the court's approval

Some Popular Practices of Untouchability after the Law came into force

- When Sri Babuji, Jagjivan Ram, the Deputy Prime Minister of Free India, unveiled the statue of Swami Sampuranand in Varanasi in February 1978, it was thought to have been defiled and was ceremoniously cleansed with water brought from the Ganges with all religious fervour.
- When serving food to Chief Minister Shri Jagannath Pahadia at a dinner hosted by the Speaker of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, the Speaker's wife trembled because she believed the food had been contaminated.
- The bride's father, whose annual income is less than a month's salary for the boy's manager, hasn't celebrated the marriage, visited her home, or even allowed her to go there for the past ten years. The boy is the highly educated and financially successful son of a Central Minister.
- On October 30, 1978, a Sweeper Dalit woman who was fighting for her life was refused admission by the doctor at the government hospital in Monger. (See p. 67 of Dr. Khosla's book, The Myth and Reality of the Protection of Civil Rights Law.)
- A Dalit judge in the High Court of North India was unable to find housing and was consequently transferred to another location where he now resides.
- In the homes of judges from the Dalit or other backward classes, a judge from a south Indian high court has not even touched the water.
- Even in Delhi, the nation's capital, the Dalit officer was forced to leave the rented home in 1991 due to the untouchability practise (vide 21st report of SC & ST Commission, p. 165).

Statistics of Untouchability (Offenses) Act, 1955

No doubt the penal provisions in the present Act have been made more stringent but what is needed is the expeditious disposal of such cases. Our experience with the previous Act has not been happy. From 1955 to 1976, as many as **22,470** cases under the Untouchability Act were registered of which **19,893** were taken to court, out of which **3,402** were compounded, **3,288** acquitted and **6,178** offenders were convicted. Since the cases were allowed to hang on for a long time in the courts and Scheduled Caste persons were subjected to various kinds of pressurisation, many of the cases were either lost or compounded. The highest number of registered cases and convictions were reported from Tamil Nadu, where in 1973-74 alone there were **1,633** cases brought to court, of which **1,121** cases ended in convictions.

- According to the data provided in '**Crime in India 2015**', a report of National Crime Record Bureau, the cases registered under the Protection of Civil Rights Act have shown a decline of 74.2% over the 2005 level, an increase of 19.9% over the average quinquennial years (2010 - 2014) and an increase of 1.7% over the year 2014 (115 cases). Bihar reported 63.2% (74 out of 117 cases) of total such cases in the country during 2015. A total of 13 cases under the Protection of Civil Rights Act were registered in these 53 mega cities during the year 2015 showing an increase of 62.5% in comparison to the previous year (8 cases). Pune (10 cases with rate of 0.2%) recorded highest cases registered during the year 2015.
- A total of 106 cases under this Act were registered during 2015. Maximum cases under this Act were reported in Bihar (74 cases) followed by Karnataka (11 cases), Maharashtra (9 cases), Himachal Pradesh (3 cases) and Odisha & Delhi UT (2 cases each) during 2015.
- According to the data provided in '**Crime in India 2020**', a report of National Crime Record Bureau-

Act	2018	2019	2020
The Protection of Civil Rights Act against Schedule Caste	254	13	26
The Protection of Civil Rights Act against Schedule Tribe	3	3	2
Total Crime Rate (in %)	0.1	0.00	0.00

Table- 1

Untouchability: Nowadays

The traditional forms of the practice of untouchability are rarely seen because, in today's time, forms of untouchability have also become modern. In the smart city Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, Dalit students, who come to prepare for competitive examinations and get higher education, often face untouchability when looking for a room or accommodation. The landlord asks these students which caste they belong; if they tell the scheduled caste, he denies room/ accommodation. Such Scheduled Castes students only have to find the landlord of Scheduled Caste, so they have to waste time searching for suitable rooms/accommodation for months.

Today, every society is digitally lashed with all the online facilities. A person could order food too online. A delivery boy would deliver the food within the allocated or demanded time by the customers. However, a Scheduled caste delivery boy sometimes gets in trouble in a Hindu caste society. In

Lucknow, a Zomato delivery boy has accused the upper caste customer of not taking food delivery, beating him, and spitting on his face for being a Dalit only. The Zomato food delivery company did not consider the whole incident (Now, 2022).

The Scheduled caste's women, who wash up utensils, ask for maid work in other houses. Generally, they are asked about their caste in 9 out of 10 houses when they mention their caste as Scheduled Caste. People refused them such work only for being Dalit women.

Segregation is another way of practicing untouchability. Through that, upper castes segregate themselves away from Scheduled Castes. [Caste discrimination](#) happened in the [Mid Day Meal Scheme](#) in the Government Primary School of Vanpurwa in Gaderi gram panchayat of Amethi district of Uttar Pradesh, where children were segregated during the lunch hour. The principal segregated Dalit children from the upper-caste students. In this school, the principal used the Dalit children without any reason. Another case of the practice of untouchability with Dalit children in a Government Primary School in the Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh came to light during the mid-day meal scheme, Dalit children were kept separate from the children of other upper castes, and they were fed on leaf plates. In contrast, the rest of the children of other upper castes were fed on steel plates (Jafri, 2021).

Kanya puja is performed on the eighth and ninth day of Navaratri. It involves worshiping nine young girls, representing the nine forms of Goddess Durga. When a Dalit woman devotee performs the "kanya puja" by calling nine young girls to her home, it is sporadic for her to get them. Neighbors and the other people of the society forbade their daughters to go to the Dalit woman's home.

When Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Jayanti is celebrated on the 14th of April, at some places, a stall is set up to distribute Prasad after worshipping Baba Saheb. But when Prasad is distributed, hardly any person from a caste other than Scheduled Castes goes to collect Prasad. People of other castes discuss among themselves who should take the food of Dalits in the crowd of Dalits.

In prestigious universities, Dalit student groups or student organizations invite almost all professors from all departments of the university to come to the program organized on the 14th of April for Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti. All the professors who came to the program had to bow down to Baba Saheb on this day by offering flowers, and after that, they had to say two words about Baba Saheb. But on this day, only those professors who belong to Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes attend the program. Most of the other caste professors do not come at all by making one or the other excuse.

Discussion

The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and the University of Maryland jointly conducted a panel survey Indian Human Development Survey-II, in 2011-12. For the first time, the survey asked direct questions on caste and the practice of untouchability. This survey presented the responses to questions on untouchability to the households.

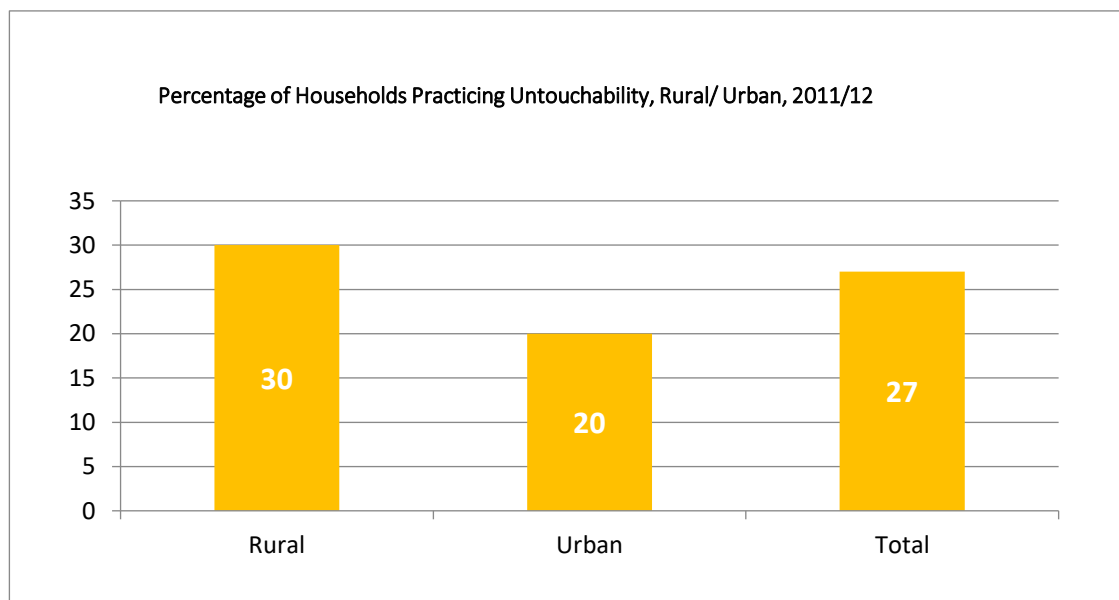


Figure-1

In figure-1, according to the survey, 30% of households reported practicing untouchability in rural areas, while in urban areas, the corresponding figure was lower at 20%. These findings highlight that either the practice of untouchability is genuinely more prevalent in rural areas as opposed to urban areas or that the rural respondents are comfortable about sharing their behavioral information with the interviewers, both of which point towards the existence of a more traditional and conservative mindset among the rural population as compared to their urban counterparts.

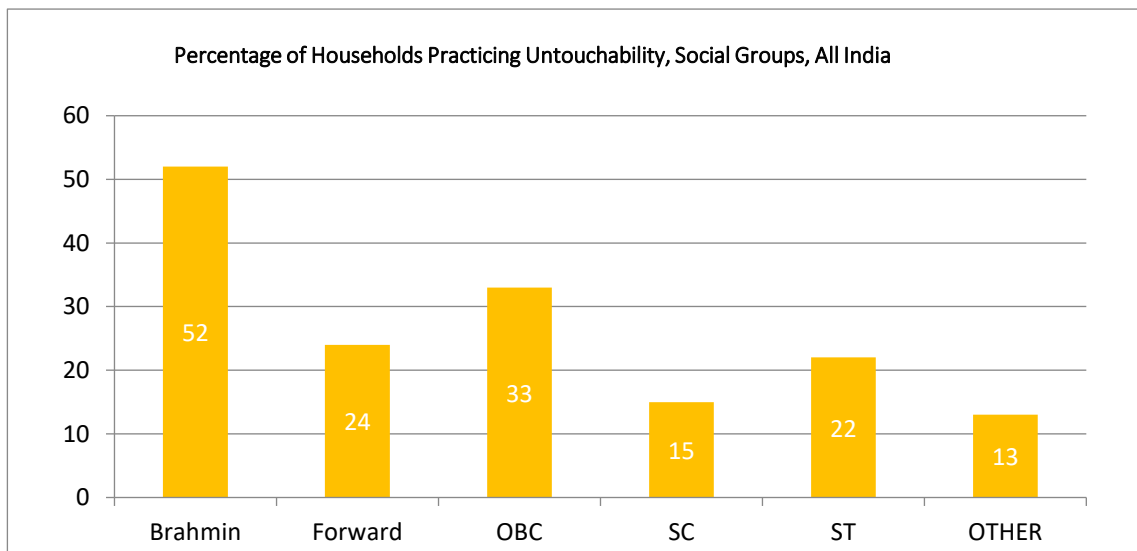


Figure-2

From the figure-2, the largest share of those practicing untouchability among these groups belongs to Brahmins, with 52 % accepting that they follow this practice. Interestingly, we find that the OBCs (33%) and not the forward castes (24%) account for the second largest share of those adhering to this practice. Interestingly, we also find that 22% of the SCs and 15% of the STs admit to following this practice. As mentioned earlier, there are numerous castes within each broad varna category, and amongst the SCs, who constitute the fifth varna or, more precisely, the avarnas (that is, those falling outside the four-fold classification), there are several sub-castes in Scheduled Castes too, which are also placed hierarchically concerning each other. These could be the higher sub-castes in SCs practicing untouchability against the lower sub-castes of SCs, particularly those occupied as cleaners, sweepers, and others engaged in similar occupations.

Does Any Member of Your Household Practice Untouchability?

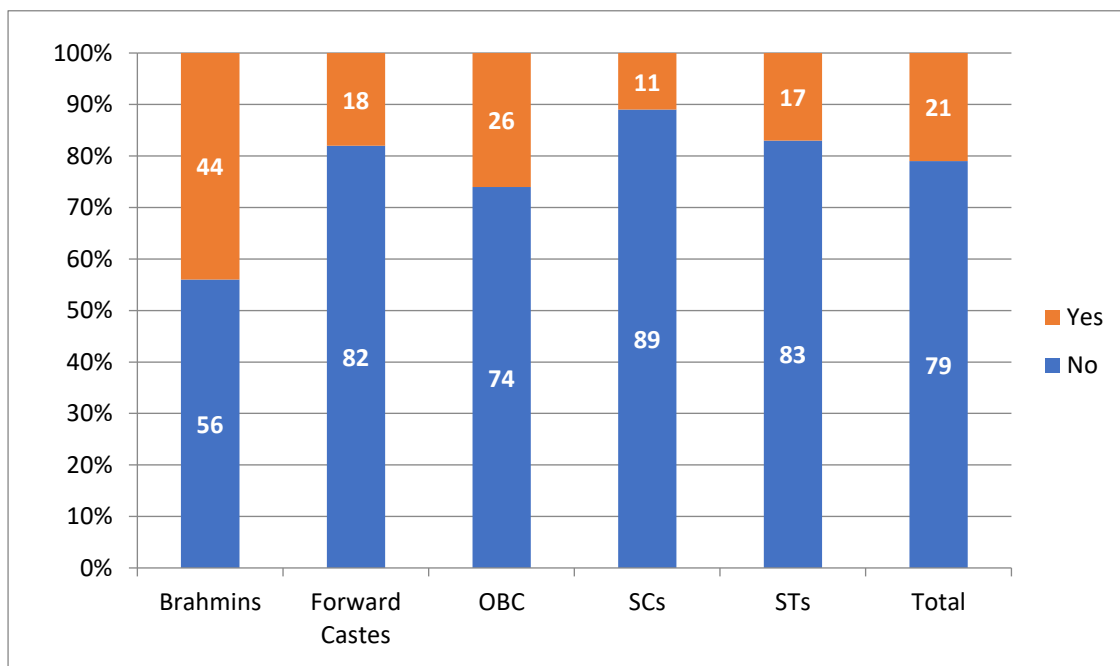


Figure-3

An alternate and more credible explanation could be that the SCs, who have been treated as untouchables for probably more than 10,000 years, have internalized the idea to such an extent that when asked if any member of their family practices untouchability, their natural response is to agree as they are bound by religious law, which stipulates that they must adhere to certain social norms of behavior. It can be seen from the figure-3 that 44 % of Brahmins, 18% of the Forward Castes, and 26% of the OBCs agree to practice untouchability by any member of the household. However, there are two exciting facts firstly, 11 % of the SCs, and secondly, 17% of the STs also agree to practice untouchability. These households belong to the somewhat

higher sub-castes within the SCs, which discriminate against their counterparts from the lower sub-castes, possibly in an attempt to emulate high-caste behavior (Thorat and Joshi, 2015).

Undoubtedly, the practice of untouchability has already been controlled to a great extent. Education, migration, and globalization have played an essential role in this. However, untouchability is now taking a new form. As a result, its reporting, which was earlier, has been reduced further. The government's mechanism of reporting and registering cases takes work. There needs to be a proper implementation body and officer at the ground level. Suppose untouchability is practiced with someone. He usually finds it easier to report it to the State Police. However, the Police take it as a routine incident, and in most cases, the Police do not even register the untouchability case. Otherwise, the Police try to suppress the victim by taking bribes from the accused. It is also often seen that those with whom untouchability is practiced are not educated and unaware of their rights and lie silently; as a result, such incidents never get reported. Then where is justice? However, the State has taken the responsibility for scheduled castes to be treated as equals everywhere. The State is responsible for stopping the untouchability with the untouchables, i.e., SCs and STs. However, the State has prepared the law to prohibit the practices of untouchability and many times strengthened the law by making it strict. However, as society and people become modernized, untouchable practices also take new forms.

Moreover, the earlier laws must be revised to cover the new forms of such practices. There is the rule of law in India. The major drawback is the slow action of Bureaucrats and the absence of political will create such a situation that they consider untouchability a regular incident. Collecting evidence related to untouchability practices takes work and so practical. Even if a person reports such an incident, the investigating officer considers it an everyday occurrence unless evidence is produced before him. One more thing, if the practices of untouchability are reported to non-SC/ST investigating officers, they rarely resolve it seriously. Corruption is also a significant hindrance factor in curbing untouchability.

Conclusion

India is a country of caste diversity and caste based discrimination has been going on here for centuries. Untouchability is also a disgusting form of this caste discrimination. The mindset prevalent amongst the upper castes is that people belonging to the lower castes are physically and/or ritually unclean, and therefore, they should not be allowed to enter the kitchen (a sacred and clean place) or use the utensils that the household members use for consuming food.

The lower hindu-caste domestic workers employed in homes are usually allowed to mop or swipe the floor or clean the bathrooms but not allowed to cook food or wash the kitchen utensils. It has also been found that many, if not all, the workers performing such tasks, belong to the lower hindu castes. This practice is an example of the notion of 'purity and pollution' (Dumont 1966). In the twentieth century, no law was made to abolish it before the independence of the country, but after independence, Article 17 and Article 35 were added to abolish it in the Indian Constitution, filled with the spirit of freedom, equality and fraternity. But even then untouchability did not end, after that in 1955 the Indian Parliament had to enact The Untouchability Offenses Act, which was later amended in 1976 to strengthen it further. After the enactment of the law, the open untouchability in practice seemed to have ended to an extent, but even after 1976, incidents related to untouchability continued to come to the fore, due to which it seemed that the states needed to do more work in the direction of stopping it. Unlike the forms of untouchability which have been tried to be included in this law, today new forms of untouchability are being seen in the third decade of the 21st century. In the era of proliferation of digital world, where food is also being ordered online, incidents of refusal to take food packets from the hands of Schedule Caste Zomato delivery boys in Lucknow Capital and segregation of upper caste school children from lower castes school children in MDM point towards the end of untouchability. There is still a need for the states to work in a better way. Films are considered a mirror of our society. If films like 'Jai Bhim' based on untouchability are being made by the film industry in India in today's era, it indicates that both the state and society need to think and do better than ever in the direction of stopping untouchability.

Abolition of Untouchability Article 17 has now been kept as a fundamental right in the Constitution of India. After making the law and its implementation, there was a considerable reduction in the general practice of untouchability in village-village, but at that time the practice of untouchability by the people of some urban society and higher educated class continues to challenge the effect of this law. With the rapid development of the society, it is also taking a new form and at the same time the practice of untouchability is also taking a new form, which is also posing new challenges before the 1955 Act.

Suggestion for Eradication of Untouchability Practices

- The Spread of education among the untouchables is the best to eradicate the untouchability. Moreover, the Government should arrange general and technical education among the SCs students. Special inducements in the form of scholarships, free hostel accommodation, books, and stationery should also be provided to them.
- All economic facilities should be provided to the untouchables to remove their economic backwardness early to eradicate untouchability.
- The untouchables mostly live in the worst type of slums, and they are segregated from the residential areas of the higher castes. Bad housing conditions not only affect their health but also affect their morality. Therefore, the untouchables should be given ample housing facilities to develop their living conditions.
- To improve the untouchables' standard of living, the Government should provide as many employment facilities as possible.

- The untouchables, at present, are primarily engaged in various dirty occupations. One engaged in a dirty occupation appears unclean to others. It also affects their personality. Therefore, efforts should be made at all levels to emancipate them from dirty occupations as far as possible.
- The caste system is the root cause of the origin of untouchability. In Indian society, The complete abolition of the caste system is very difficult. However, to eradicate untouchability, the Hindu caste system should be liberalized and have some changes as needed in society. The greatest need is to remove the wrong notions about the Caste System.
- Public awareness is necessary to abolish this problem. The Government and other social organizations should relentlessly direct propaganda against this evil so that the feelings of untouchability find no place in people's minds.
- The Anti-Untouchability Laws must be enforced strictly. The enforcement machinery should also be very effective. Enforcement officers must be impartial while investigating the matter of practices of untouchability.
- Anti-untouchability laws should be effectively reviewed by the State and National Commission for Scheduled Castes/Tribes occasionally. Efforts should be made to incorporate new untouchability practices in the earlier anti-untouchability law. The amount of penalty for practicing untouchability should be increased occasionally in the Anti-untouchability laws.

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