Existence of cast-based discrimination in today's India- a contemporary analysis

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ABSTRACT:

Caste-based discrimination still affects India despite legal protections and social changes meant to ensure equality. Though open discrimination has lessened, systematic biases continue to affect educational possibilities, employment, and social mobility. This article looks at the challenges individuals still face in contemporary society, such as subtle exclusion, economic inequality, and social prejudices. It also evaluates how laws and policies support inclusiveness and assist to address caste-based discrimination. Though government has sought to alter society by implementing policies and legal frameworks, inequalities remain. An examination of these dynamics will help this paper to highlight the ongoing struggle for social equity and the evolving discourse on caste in contemporary India.

KEYWORDS: caste discrimination, social inequality, legal frame works, challenges, modern society

INTRODUCTION :

Historically, one of the main features of social differentiation among Indians has been the Indian Caste System, which classifies people by class, religion, area, tribe, gender, and language. Though all human societies have this or other kinds of differentiation, it becomes a problem when one or more of these dimensions overlap and become the only basis of systematic ranking and unequal access to valued resources such as wealth, income, power and prestige (Deshpande, 2010).

Originating in ancient times and continuing for centuries, the caste system traditionally split Indian society into four varnas: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Traditionally considered "untouchables," Dalits were given menial tasks.Legal system and protections do not stop us from seeing the caste-based discrimination. Marginalized individuals struggle in education, health care, job, and political representation. Discrimination is violence, exclusion, and financial deprivation. Though application is uneven, laws such the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and reservations help to foster equality. Continual inequities are

Studies of growing economic inequality, underrepresentation, and caste-based violence highlight ongoing inequities. Since Dalits are still among the most economically disadvantaged groups, it is absolutely vital that inclusive policies and legal protections be implemented right away to guarantee social justice. Bhati, 2024

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Redefining Caste-Based Hierarchies in Contemporary India

As various groups sought to raise their social standing by means of deliberate socio-cultural adaptations, the caste-based hierarchies in India have evolved with time. Historical instances, such as the upward mobility of the Shanan caste in Tamil Nadu, reveal how marginalized people have fought traditional caste based barriers. Traditionally, the Shanans were linked to the alcohol industry, which wanted to call themselves Kshatriyas by applying upper-caste criteria (Hardgrave, 1969).

The expansion of Dalit movements, the negative connotations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and the effect of policies reflecting unending efforts to rework caste-based identities. Urbanization and globalization have also provided favorable conditions for disadvantaged communities to question the traditional structures through education, media representation, and legal activism.

Caste in India has changed from historical causes to modern socio-economic systems. Although the reservation policies are meant to reduce inequalities, they really divide various castes, therefore increasing inequality for strong groups and limiting opportunities for poor communities (Pick and Dayaram, 2006).

Caste and Socioeconomic Inequalities in present day India

By negatively impacting opportunity access and resource distribution, this study illustrates how the caste system promotes economic disparity. It argues that these factors maintain a rigorous caste system generating a constant unequal (Bapuji and Chrispal, 2018).

The discussions on inclusiveness of various castes in the 2011 Census look at several perspectives on social stratification or segregation in India. Few studies argue that historical divisions along caste, tribe, and religion produce continuous caste-based inequalities (Gerth & Mills, 1946; Dumont, 1980). Some argue that over time, economic changes have blurred the lines between the caste-based occupational divisions producing more scopes (Gupta, 2000; Kapur et al., 2010).

Caste Discrimination in Political and Legal Systems

Wealth and power both influence the relationship between caste and politics. Every caste, via its origin stories, tends to show some kind of authoritative quality. The decline of village economy and the expansion of democracy have contributed to increasing rivalry among castes. This has both strengthened caste-based identities in modern society and blurred the lines between castes themselves (Gupta, 2005).

Another study examines how caste influences Indian politics over time by influencing elections, party strategic operations, and policy development. Often reinforcing divisions even after legal efforts to reduce Caste, it remains a major factor in political marshalling. Caste-based reservations correct the unfair historical treatment even as they may occasionally raise caste awareness in politics (Kothari, 1970).

CONCLUSION :

Caste still a deep-seated problem in Indian society forming socio-economic and political settings despite attempts at modernisation and legal reform. Historical attempts to alter caste identities, such those of the Shanan community in search of higher status, underline the continuing impact of caste-based hierarchies in the social structure. Modern India still sees significant economic inequality and instability as a result of caste. It also helps to define strategies and policies for elections. Although caste-based reservations help to correct injustices depending on different caste reality, they can occasionally reinforce caste identities in political circles. Caste and politics interact to reveal both empowerment and separation.

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