



AMBEDKARIAN PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND DISCRIMINATION

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Social exclusion is indeed especially French origin and used for French Society. The term is having meaning as excluded: Mentally and physically handicapped, suicidal people, aged individuals, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, multi-problems households, marginal, a social persons and other social misfits.

As it is championed and originated by the Europe, the concept of social exclusion is mainly concerned with problems in European countries. So the term includes people excluded from multiple forms of social exclusion in the European Society namely livelihood, secure and permanent employment, earnings, property, land, housing, minimal or prevailing consumption levels, education, skills, cultural capital, the welfare state, citizenship and legal equality, democratic experience and public goods etc.

Amartya Sen is right to some extent to point out that the world in which we are living is more unified today. The shared ideas would be amazing if socially useful notions developed in Europe would fail in Asia just because of their European origin. European understanding on social exclusion indeed makes a close connection between the ideas of poverty and social exclusion. Dealing with social exclusion Amartya Sen argues that poverty is the cause of social exclusion and capability deprivation.

Ambedkarian perspective of social exclusion provides new insight and contributes to our understanding of the nature of Indian society particularly that of caste system and its relation to social exclusion. It helps in identifying causes of social exclusion and discrimination in Indian society. Ambedkarian perspective studies the social exclusion and discrimination in relation with caste system. Caste system is a peculiar feature of Indian society. It makes a close connection between the idea of caste and social exclusion. According to Ambedkarian perspective, the idea of caste is as ‘capability deprivation’ and not poverty, since poverty is the outcome of caste system.

The Ambedkarian understanding of social exclusion means a person or community is being excluded from social relations due to inferior caste. Social exclusion is a state of a person or community disappearance in public with self-respect due to low caste born. Therefore, caste is the fundamental root of exclusion and discrimination. Ambedkarian interpretation does not recognize poverty as the cause of inequalities. It condemns socialist



contention that equalization of poverty is the only real reform. It believes that social reform is primary task for economic development.

Instead of reinterpreting the Indian History, Ambedkar tried to reconstruct the Indian society by abolishing discriminative social structures. Ambedkar, invalidates poverty based social exclusion and provides new theoretical social realities i.e. caste based discrimination. The Indian social inequalities are unique in its nature due to the presence of caste system. Caste is not a division of labour but labourers.

In context of the Indian society, social exclusion, which leads to discrimination, is nothing but caste system. Untouchability is the higher degree of social discrimination in the Indian society to discriminate weaker section of the society in the name of caste. It does not mean that caste system is only to do with untouchability. The base of the caste system is social discrimination of all communities except Brahmins. This paper is not an attempt to blame any community or religion. It is an assessment of Ambedkar's contribution in terms of social activities and intellectual stand on various issues related to the weaker section of the society.

Untouchability is one of the most effective and powerful practices prevalent in the Indian society. It excludes and segregates a specific section of the society, which is constitutionally known as Schedule Castes. Being victim of impurity and subsequently untouchability this section of the society having not only lowest ritual status but also lowest socio-economic status. They were associated with means of livelihood, which were less rewarding, and socially less valued. In order to improve social and economic status, it was impossible to get rid from untouchability. Ekalavya and Sambukh during Mahabharat and Ramayana period had to pay heavy price for challenging codes of conduct.

The Constitution of India has declared untouchability as an offence punishable by law, but the concept of untouchability has not defined. The Protection of Civil Right Act (PCRA) 1955 to deal with cases of untouchability failed to provide the definition of untouchability. Therefore, in the absence of clear definition it is difficult to decide whether the given acts constitute untouchability or not.

Hence, in the Indian context, understanding of the process of social exclusion purely based on income and economic factors would provide incomplete picture. For comprehensive understanding of the practice of social exclusion, it is necessary to analyze birth-based practices like untouchability and other form of social exclusion. Birth based forms of social exclusion may be perceived as a precondition for worth bases exclusion and marginalization.

The lowest socio-economic condition and marginalization is the result of social exclusion and neglect the untouchables. Their economic condition was pitiable not simply because they were born in a poor family but it was because of their ritual backwardness. They had very limited and restricted right to accumulate assets and property.



Ambedkar's life is full of social struggle against the existing discriminations that aimed to keep weaker section of the society socially deprived forever. Thus, Ambedkar fought through his whole life to ensure the educational and economic development of the downtrodden. He fought against discriminative social system called as caste system. Caste system is just like a social cancer. He exposed the drawback of the caste system by his writing the '**Annihilation of Caste**'. Some of the constitutional provisions which aimed at positive discrimination are:-

Article 17: Abolition of “untouchability” and making its practice in any form a punishable offence.

Article 46: Promotion of educational and economic interests.

Article 16 & 335: Preferential treatment in matters of employment in public services.

Article 330 & 332: Reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha, Rajy Sabha and State Assemblies.

Education play very important role in the processes of development. DrAmbedkar was a great Champion of Universal Education. He considered education as most powerful agent for bringing about desired changes in the society and it is a prerequisite for organized effort for launching any social movement in the modern times. For him education was an instrument to liberate the masses from illiteracy, ignorance and superstitious and thus enable them to fight against all form of injustice, exploitation and oppression. Therefore, he gave the highest priority to education in his struggle for the liberation of dalits from the age-old oppressive character of the caste ridden Indian society.

Although he started educational institutions through voluntary effort and organizations but he strongly believed that educational institutions should under the control of State. It is the responsibility of the State to provide education to the citizens in the country.

Being the main architect of the Indian Constitution DrAmbedkar impose the responsibility of providing education to all citizens irrespective of caste and gender on government. The Father of the Constitution of India decided that education should be available free of charge and that attendance in schools should be compulsory for all children up to the age of 14 years as incorporated in **Article 45** of the Directive Principles of State policy.

The provision in **Article 45** of the Directive principles of State policy reinforces **Article 24**, which reads, “No child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory mine or engaged in any hazardous employment. The Constitution also directs that children cannot be abused or forced to work and to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength” through article 39(e) and (f).”

Keeping in mind the need to combat the educational disadvantage of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes along with other disadvantaged sections of society in the past, special emphasis was given to their needs in article 46. This article makes a commitment to protect these groups from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. All the above provision



indicates a clear commitment to giving Indian children in this freedom and dignity and recognizing their essential contribution to building a democratic nation.

Basic education continues to remain a privilege enjoyed by some and there is tremendous variation among the social groups. Universal primary schooling is still a distant goal, particularly for females amongst the socially disadvantaged groups, ie the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other backward castes and Muslim in remote rural areas and urban slums. Therefore, a firm commitment to the widespread and equitable provision of basic education is the first requirement of rapid progress in eradicating educational deprivation in India. Low levels of education in India reflect both the low duration of schooling for children who are enrolled at some stage and a large proportion of children are never enrolled at all.

This is not the only story of India, but the scarce resources are also spent disproportionately as more on higher education and less on primary education. The result of such spending is that, those who are already educated they get more benefits of government's expenditure policy on education and those who are disadvantaged people they are affected adversely. Therefore, it is clear that, relatively well to do class get better advantages of government's expenditure policy on education than disadvantaged classes.

There has been a significant increase in overall literacy rates and school participation rates across the country since the early 1990s. Gender and social disparities have also declined with an overall increase in school attendance. This is confirmed by the data from Census report 2011. A number of factors have contributed to the rising enrollment rate including the introduction of mid-days meals, opening of alternate schools, promoting the participation of Parent Teacher Associations and massive enrolment drives. A constitutional amendment was passed in 2002 making free and compulsory education a fundamental right for children aged 6-14 years. The national and state governments continue to deliver the programme *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, which aims to achieve universal elementary education.

While enrolment and attendance in primary school has increased, the quality of education remains a major concern. The poor quality of education is reflected in the continuing low level of completion rates of primary school. Disparities in primary education can be seen between children from different castes, economic group, sex, rural and urban, certain characteristics of households and between the different regions in India. These different forms of deprivation do not work in isolation. The most disadvantaged children would suffer from multiple forms of exclusion and disadvantages, including for example being SC, girls, poor, living in a poor and/or remote location, etc.

Let us discuss the role and relevance of Mid days Meals programme, on one hand the enrolment rate in the primary school has been increased tremendously due to this programme but on the other hand the quality of the education has been deteriorated. The single agenda of the primary school is, it opens in the morning on the name of Mid days Meals and closed evening on the same. In real sense, this programme is not educating them but making Sakshar, so that they can write their name only. It seems to be a big conspiracy to stop

deprived communities from the education. Due to lack of proper education the percentage of drop out children increasing day by day.

I have attended three days National Seminar in Guwahati organized by Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi. Delivering a lecture on the topic '**India 2020: A Vision for the New Millennium**' Professor Shreekantan said that we are getting standard education in several good institutions. Discussing in the open session I argued that no doubt we have reputed IIMs and IITs but the question is to whom you are providing standard education. We have two groups in the society Have and Have-Nots. On the one hand, 60% children belonging to Have-Nots are bound to get education in the Primary Schools where the quality of education is too bad and on the other hand, 20% children belonging to the Have are getting standard education in the Public Schools. It is obvious that there is discrimination in the education system. Ultimately, discrimination in the society. How you can justify equal education and opportunity to all?

Dr. Ambedkar believed that if you want to destroy any society just give all luxurious facilities but don't give education. On the other hand if you want to develop any society don't give anything but give the education. He believed that education is the surest warranty of social change. Development and empowerment of socially deprived communities is a commitment enshrined in the Constitution, and education is the most effective instrument of social empowerment.

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