

EMPOWERMENT OF DALITS HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE A STUDY IN TAMIL NADU:ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Atrocities are a specific form of violence committed by a collectivity or individual on the weaker sections in general and the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in particular, in different parts of the country. Such violence manifests both in the social and physical forms. From the psychological point of view, it may be part of an aggressive personality and behavior patterns of a group or an individual, but sociologically this may have its roots in an equally organized social structure which may be concretely visible in the various forms of social inequality. In such a social structure, since there are unequal institutional arrangements of both material and non-material goods and relations among the people in such social structure, there are cases of violence and conflicts of one type or the other over having more access to the available resources and opportunities which of course are in short supply this does not rule out completely the possibility of a smooth acceleration of competition among the different sections of people for the same. The commission found an alarming increase in crimes against SCs (an 8% rise between 1981 and 1986) especially murder and rape. It observed a link between atrocities, both of caste prejudice and untouchables and political and economic issues regarding land, wages, indebtedness, bondage, etc. Disputes related to land were identified as the single most important cause, including disputes regarding implementation of land reforms, and allotment of cultivate land and house sites other conflicts centered on every of a good cooperation raised by Dalits, use of community land etc. likewise, any attempt by Dalit agricultural laborers to agitate for reasonable wages were usually met with violence at the hands of the landowning classes.

Keywords: Untouchable, Dalits, SCs, Atrocities, Crime Records Bureau, Caste, CERD

More than 160 million people in India are considered “Untouchable” - people tainted by their birth into a caste system that deems them impure, less than human. Human rights abuses against these people, known as Dalits, are legion. A random sampling of headlines in mainstream Indian newspapers tells their story: Dalit boy beaten to death for plucking flowers, Dalit tortured by cops for three days, Dalit who paraded naked in Bihar, Dalit killed in lock-up at Kurnool 7 Dalits burnt alive in caste clash, 5 Dalits lynched in Haryana Dalit woman gang-raped, paraded naked, Police egged on mob to lynch Dalits.

Statistics compiled by India's National Crime Records Bureau indicate that in the year 2000, the last year for which are available, 25,455 crimes were committed against Dalits. Every hour two Dalits are assaulted; every day three Dalit women are raped, two Dalits are murdered, and two Dalit homes are torched. No one believes these numbers are anywhere close to the reality of crimes committed against Dalits, because the police, village councils, and government officials often support the caste, which is based on the religious teachings of Hinduism, many crimes go unreported due to fear of reprisal, intimidation by police, inability to pay bribes demanded by police, or simply the knowledge that the police will do nothing.

In response to the Committee's request that the Government of India submit information on issues pertaining to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, India's

periodic report states that “Caste” cannot be equated with ‘race’ or covered under ‘descent’ under Article 1 of the Convention.” As a result of this position, the periodic report contains no information on Dalits in India and the state Party provides that “As a matter of courtesy to the members of the Committee, if it so desires, the Government of India would be happy to provide information relating to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to them though not as a reporting obligation under CERD.

The Government of India has not refrained from committing and supporting discriminatory acts against Dalits, and has failed to implement measures to end caste discrimination. India has failed to encourage integration movements and has not provided for the development and protection of Dalits, who as a result remain an extremely marginalized social group.

Dalits, including those arrested for minor offenses, are often held in custody for long periods of time, occasionally at distant and isolated locations to avoid publicity, where they are frequently deprived of food and water, subjected to verbal abuse and humiliation, severe beatings, sexual perversities and demeaning acts. Often the injuries inflicted can prove fatal. To cover up custodial deaths, police often claim that the person was killed trying to escape or that he or she died of natural causes. Dalits who survive the torture often end up permanently disabled and suffer social ostracism, as well as psychological and emotional trauma.

Need for the study

Social discrimination is a problem identified due to untouchability practice maintained by upper caste people. In the upper caste family function the dalits are not permitted. In village functions the first preference is given to upper caste people. Social problems are experienced by dalit people in view of untouchability practices in rural areas. The important social problems for discrimination and inequality affected dalits. Attempts have been made by Governments through acts of law to fulfill the constitutional obligation of providing production to dalits and to abolish untouchability. Though amply the Govt. of India to uplift the status of dalits formulates number of welfare activities and there is still selective inclusion of dalits in the society. There are several studies that highlighted the kind of caste problems, land holding land distribution economic development of dalits. Indebtedness, dalit movement that prevail in India. It appears that there are only a few attempts made to investigate their problems therefore this study makes modest attempt to fulfill the gap.

Objectives:

1. To describe the socio - economic condition of the dalits.
2. To examine the causes and consequences of discrimination faced by dalits.
3. To bring out suggestion and remedies for resolving social problems affecting dalits.

Research design:

The present study has undertaken in Anna Nagar in Tirupur which comes under Palangarai Panchayat in Tirupur District. The investigator has used simple random sampling techniques to select respondents for the study. Accordingly 50 respondents were selected out of 250 scheduled caste people in Anna Nagar. Survey Method as well as Descriptive study methods was used in this study. A structured interview schedule was the tool used in the present study for the purpose of collection of primary data from the selected head of households of Arunthathiyar community. Primary data were collected from selected

respondents by means of personal Interview Schedule. Secondary data was collected from published sources like books, Journals, Reports and News-paper, etc., the primary data collected from the respondents are statistically processed and tabulated simple percentage is used to analyze the data in order to obtain result.

Findings

- Majority (72%) of the Dalit respondents were males.
- Majority (60%) of the respondents were found to be in the age group of 30-40 years.
- Majority (46%) of the respondents were living in pucca houses.
- Majority (82%) of the respondents did not have their own land.
- Majority (50%) of the respondents were illiterate.
- Members of Dalit Community are unable to participate in village social life.
- The marginalized community is faced with problems like untouchability, unemployment, harassment in place of work.
- The programmes of empowerment are not fully reaching the Dalit Community.
- The process of empowerment remains incomplete in the study area.

Suggestions

- The inclusive growth model of planned and directed social change, economic growth with equitable and distributive social justice show the possible way for effective empowerment of dalits in contemporary society.
- Creating awareness among dalit is must about their rights.
- Promote NGOs to work for development of the dalit people and to solve the problem.
- The National Commission for SC/ST should investigate rigorously and bring to book the culprits.
- Social legislations enacted to protect the rights of marginalized should be implemented in its letter and spirit.

Conclusion

The present study has made an attempt to evaluate “A Study on Empowerment of Dalits in Tamilnadu: Human Rights Perspective” They are called as Dravidians; they are the original inhabitants of the TamilNadu. But they are living under poverty and low socio-economic status the face lot of problems in society. The Government of India creates various commissions for the dalit people. But it deviated from its goals and objectives. The problem of unemployment, literacy and caste discrimination are main reasons for the low socio-economic status of dalit and problem of Dalit through bringing attitudinal changes among dalit, the self- respect self- esteem of them could be archived and that may reduce the prevalence of low socio economic status and discrimination against in India.

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