
Atrocities Against Dalits With Special Reference In India

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Received: 12 Jan 2020, Accepted: 19 Jan 2020, Published on line: 30 Jan 2020

Abstract

Atrocities are specific forms of violence committed by a collectivity or individuals on the weaker sections in general and the scheduled castes 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 behaviour patterns of a group of an individual. But sociologically, this may have its roots in an unequally organized social structure which may be concretely visible in the various forms of social inequality.

Keywords- Atrocities Against Dalits With Special Reference In India, group of an individual.

Introduction

Since there are unequal institutional arrangements of both material and non-material goods and services, of social interactions and relations among the people in such structure, there are cases of violence and conflicts of one type or the other over having more access to available resources and opportunities. However in the unequal opportunity structure violence and conflicts are inevitable at certain state between a few privileged and the much larger number of under-privileged or non-privileged ones where former try to retain their privileges by emphasizing on maintaining the status quo and the latter strive for having a place there in.¹

Marxist scholars have stressed that asymmetric production relations are accountable for the inequality and dominance which exist in the caste system and that religion at the most can serve as legitimization of the system. In the case of Hinduism, the concepts of pollution and purity represent a very repressive and conservative ideology. Accordingly, due to Hinduism, caste is conceptualized as an usually oppressive case of class. In the left spectrum interpretation, the scheduled castes are studied as subordinate class order, that is because Karl Marx had contended that the ruling ideas of any epoch are the ideas of the ruling class. The dominance of the ideology of the dominant classes has a tremendous

isolating and disintegrating impact on the oppressed classes. The Brahmanical order tells the upper castes that they are pure and the dalits are not only impure, they also transmit impurity. They are despised by upper caste. This alter ideology of the high castes is taken over as an ego ideology by the scheduled caste members. Paulo Freire has argued that when a counter ideology begins to influence the oppressed, a rejection of the oppressor's image within his own consciousness will often in the immediate situation result in a rejection of a part of him or herself and create a fear of vacuum in meaning. In a transition period, such an experience might be as painful as believing oneself worthless and despised.²

Dumont, Leach, Bailey, Mckim Mariott, Ronald Inden, Milton Singer, Michael Moffat uphold the view that the caste system is a non-competitive system made up of non-antagonistic strata, which fulfil complementary functions. They strongly defend the position that caste system is basically characterized by reciprocal relations.

Edmund R. Leach writes, "the castes system is an organic system with each particular caste and sub-caste filling distinctive functional role. It is a system of labour division from which the element of competition among workers has been largely excluded... Economic interdependence is paramount in the caste system and it is also reciprocal as between the upper and the lower castes, since the former compete among themselves for the services of the latter."³

Dummont⁴ defines caste explicitly with reference to religious principles and argues that economic and political principles are encapsulated by the religious order. Michael Moffat⁵ also perceives the system intrinsic to the Dumontian argument of caste as a system of unity. Unlike conflict schools and the Marxist scholars, Dumontian school depicts the scheduled caste as a category which humbly accepts his low order as *fate-accompli*, irreversible, unchangeable, and as part of destiny – the Hindu Karma Order. The conflict and left spectrum scholars see caste order as at the elite's manipulation of the ideology of lower order and as consciousness which is changeable under specific conditions. They strongly criticize Brahmanical and Dumontian interpretation of caste.

Gerald Berreman writes, "my objection is not only that Dumont does injustice to his academic peers, but that he also does injustice to the people of India. Two thousand years of struggle to escape the oppression of their status by those in the caste system cannot be dismissed as the projection of socio-centric western scholars any more than the oppression which is justified by Sanskritic texts known only to the elites."⁶

Berreman⁷ strongly attacks Dumontian perspective that caste is based on reciprocity and the system assures subsistence to each proportionately to his status. Berreman is critical of this view and has written, “that is precisely what it does, it also assures life comforts, health, self-respect, food, shelter, learning, pleasure, security, education, legal redress, rewards in the next life, an all of the other necessary and valued things proportionately to status.” And that is exactly what exploitation is : providing for those at the top, proportionately to their status at the expense of those at the bottom. This in no way distinguishes inequality from exploitation. On the contrary, it identifies their common characteristics and the caste system in India and elsewhere epitomizes the relationship.

The attempts by dalits at upward mobility is met by resistance, conflict and violence, i.e. atrocities. There are more glaring evidences to show that the dalits do not accept the system as Dumontian Model of Unity presents it. In contemporary Indian scenario, particularly in the rural parts, there is an increasing number of incidents where scheduled castes have challenged the status-quo and order. In fact, the dalits are becoming more antagonistic to their deplorable position in the social order and with increase in their consciousness, the subaltern of the subaltern i.e. the dalits have started questioning the hegemony of the entrenched traditional social order, hence rise in the number of atrocities. Thus, atrocities are an act of oppression on the dalits as a vehicle for their suppression.

The caste struggle for political, economic and social right in India, symbolizes today an unfinished social and political movement of scheduled castes. The crux of the movement is to establish an egalitarian socio-economic political structure. The issues which remain unresolved are the burning subjection through which conflicts are precipitated.

1. Economic demands i.e. minimum wages, from the landlords under minimum wages Act through State Government.
2. Agricultural issues like land tilling, land distribution land belongs to these who till;
3. Camaflouged practices of untouchability.

The dalit movement has emerged as a movement for genuine emancipation, aligning with all social action groups engaged in a politics of transformation, mobilizing them all for a fundamental defeat of elitist social order, where it should seek a change with respect to the present economic definition of such transformation and ask for a fundamental socio-re-definition of the same. The dalit movement needs to provide new vanguard of social change. The Dalit must continue to hope and keep struggling

so that out of the myriad churning of the same enterprise, a relevant future can take shape. The dalit movement should be considered as part of that churning.⁸

The caste system and the future of dalits need serious attention. Their objective remains that they want genuine democratization of society so that they participate as ‘equals’ and not live like ‘unequals’. In sum, their struggle as interest group is to restore their place in the sun i.e. securing dalits as caste group as any other caste group and their treatment in society without any bias, prejudice or discrimination.

A true democratization of Indian society can best be judged when the Dalits become co-partners in the national mainstream.

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Keywords: Idealism. Policies, frustration parallelism, symbol