

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST DALITS AND SOCIAL WORK

INTERVENTIONS FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION IN KACHEEPURAM

DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Dalits continue to be oppressed and discriminated against in villages, in educational institutions, in the job market, and on the political battlefield, leaving them to struggle against the unjust practices of exclusion and exploitation. In such a situation Indian constitution assures justice, equality, liberty and fraternity so that they remain socially included in the mainstream of the society. The dalit youth have come to understand the human rights violations regarding owning land, violations regarding getting access to quality education, health, employment, violations with regard to gaining political power and even basic violations against human respect and dignity.

Though there has been more social awareness, political consciousness, developing strong self identity and respect still the challenges and struggles in emancipating dalits from the practice of untouchability and exclusion is rampant. Education, Employment, accessibility has paved way for upliftment and social inclusion but the social respect and dignity for dalits is still a challenge in every walk of life. In this paper the researcher had studied the human rights violations against dalits in Kancheepuram district in attaining social inclusion and suggests certain measures towards social inclusion based on empirical study.

KEYWORDS: Human Rights, Social Inclusion, Dalits

INTRODUCTION

India's 170 million of oppressed and marginalised sections of society (i.e. about 16.6 per cent of India's population, according to the 2011 Census) have for thousands of years remained neglected and ignored in the social milieu. Indian society is a marginalised society consisting of diverse groups of dalits, backward classes and women who have different socio economic characteristics and problems (Hans, 2013). Such a devastating situation reveals that dalits have experienced human rights violations for centuries and are striving to make a difference in establishing justice, equality and freedom. In reality The realistic experience of oppression, exploitation and exclusion of dalits is human rights violations in the society. They are vulnerable social group as they are subjugated to deprivation economically and socially, despised physically and psychologically and exploited politically and culturally.

According to Kannupillai (2010) the exploitation of dalits continue unabated even now for the following reasons:

- Landlessness
- Indebtedness and Economic dependency leading to bonded labour
- Lack of occupational monopoly – anyone can offer service of unskilled labour work.
- Lack of independent or alternative sources of income.
- Lack of unity among labourers due to caste division into sub castes
- Lack of residential accommodation, as some of labourers stay on land or field provided by land lord farmers.
- Poverty – no other job available for livelihood.
- Religion keeps dalits as only doing menial jobs and exploits them as casteless or as untouchables
- Political leaders exploiting the dalit youth for their hidden motives

Dalits have to be consciously aware of all the above means of violations, exploitation against dalits and have to face these challenges to overcome them so that there exists real social inclusion.

VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF DALITS IN INDIA

There are numerous violations on dalits that are brought to media through Human Rights organizations and social workers. On the other hand there are countless untold stories of violations and atrocities on Dalits who have been beaten, unlawfully detained, tortured, raped, killed and had their homes burned in caste violence. Human rights violation takes place in the form of women right violation, caste right violation and other types of violations. Rape, assault, molestation, brutal killing, abduction, dowry death are very important violations against Dalit women. Untouchability, ill-treatment, of temple entry, non entry to common places, filing of false case, cheating assault, robbery are some important violations against SC/ST people and terrorism kidnapping, custodial death, poverty, corruption, environmental problems are the other types of violations. There are violations based on socio, economic, political, cultural and psychological dimensions that need much attention in order to have realistic social inclusion.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Dalits are one of the most marginalized or excluded community in India. They are being subjugated by the upper caste Hindu in India for ages. To understand the Dalit questions in India, understanding of the Hindu social system is very important. The Hindu social system itself promotes social exclusion.

There has been increasing focus on social inclusion in view, not only of mitigating the impact of weakening social fabric and cohesion, but also of ensuring greater respect for the basic rights of individuals and groups. Emphasis on social exclusion therefore translates into a desire to enhance the inclusion of all individuals and groups into a pluralistic, just and cohesive society, particularly through equitable access to social services (health, education, housing, and employment), security and justice, as well as to other social benefits. This attempt to enhance inclusion is directed particularly at those groups that are most excluded from full social, cultural, economic and political participation: they include a wide array of groups ranging from national minorities, the unemployed, youth, women, immigrants, refugees and internally displaced populations, street children, remote rural communities, people living with HIV/AIDS, asylum seekers, people with

disabilities, to traveler families and to the elderly. The dalit youths are socially, economically, culturally and politically discriminated and have experienced human rights violations in the society who will become agents of change and transformation. So the researcher has decided to study the human rights violations against Social Inclusion of Dalits in Kancheepuram district.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Social Inclusion has emerged as a major concern both in academic and more importantly in policy discourses in recent decades to achieve broader objectives of social and redistributive justice. Increasing awareness and recognition of multiple forms of discrimination, inequality and deprivation which have been both the causes and effects of exclusion of different sections of the citizenry from the dominant processes and paradigms of 'growth and development' have resulted in envisaging fresh legislations, policy emphasis and institutional engagements to address the issue of inclusion for the deprived and excluded sections of the society.

Social inclusion is intended to create a 'society for all'. (Frazer and Marlier, 2013). It is an affirmative action that aims to empower the marginalized people too have a voice in decisions which affect their lives and that they enjoy equal access to markets, services, political, social and physical spaces. It refers to all efforts and policies to promote equality of opportunity to people from all circumstances and from all socially excluded categories. The circumstances and the categories of people mostly linked to social exclusion are therefore the circumstances and categories to be addressed by efforts to enhance inclusion. It is viewed as a part of key goals of social development.

OBJECTIVES

- To know about landlessness of the respondents
- To study the human rights violations regarding economic conditions of the respondents
- To assess the violations regarding employment and treatment in the workplace
- To study the human rights violations in education, health, access to public places and intercaste marriages
- To understand the aspect of social inclusion regarding dalit identity and social respect
- To suggest social work interventions for social inclusion as against human rights violations.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted Descriptive research design to study the human rights violations against rural dalit youth. The researcher chose Kancheepuram district as the field of study. The researcher used multi stage sampling for the study till choosing of the village in the Taluk. The researcher identified fifty respondents from ten villages in the district for the collection of data. The sampling size was taken as fifty for this study so the researcher chose five respondents from each village using purposive sampling. Only the dalit youth were chosen for the collection of data. The researcher used Interview schedule for the collection of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data, the researcher analysed the human rights violations on various aspects connected with landlessness, economic dependency, employment, education, identity and political exploitation.

Table 1: Landlessness

S. No	Having Own Land	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	16	32
2	No	34	68
	Total	50	100

Table 1 reveals the landlessness of the respondents. It is clear from the table that majority (68 percent) of the respondents expressed that they do not have land of their own and only 32 percent said that they own land. This reveals the pathetic condition of the dalits regarding their landlessness. The caste system is an economic order. It violates the human right to own land and prevents someone from owning land or receiving an education. It is a vicious cycle and an exploitative economic arrangement. Landowning patterns and being a high-caste member are co-terminous. Also there is a nexus between being lower-caste and landlessness. Caste is a tool to perpetuate exploitative economic arrangements and make the dalits to remain as merely agricultural labourers than land owners forcing them to be dependent on the upper castes forever.

Table 2: Debts

S. No	Debts in Amount	Frequency	Percent
1	BELOW RS.10000	10	20
2	10000-20000	7	14
3	20000-30000	12	24
4	30000-40000	6	12
5	ABOVE 40000	15	30
	Total	50	100

Table 2 indicates the distribution of their amount of debts. Thirty percent of the respondents have debts more than Rupees Forty thousands and 12 percent have debts ranging from 30000 to 40000. Only a bare minimum of 20 percent of the respondents have debts less than Rupees ten thousands. From this it is clear that indebtedness is a serious problem faced by dalits.

Table 3: Reasons for Debts

S. No	Reasons for Debts	Frequency	Percent
1	Family Functions	10	20
2	Education of Children	10	20
3	Household Items	1	2
4	Housing Purpose	7	14
5	Medical Reasons	6	12
6	All of The Above	16	32
	Total	50	100

Table 3 reveals the reasons for debts. Majority of the respondents (32 Percent) said that they get debts for various reasons like family functions, education of children, medical reasons etc. Twenty percent of respondents have agreed that they receive debts for family functions and education of children respectively. Fourteen percent have said that they get for construction of house and 12 percent said that they get for medical reasons. It is to be noted that all of them get debts for some reason or the other.

Table 4: Getting Debts

S. No	Getting Debts From	Frequency	Percent
1	Money Lenders	28	56
2	Banks	6	12
3	Friends	16	32
	Total	50	100

Table 4 reveals that majority (56 Percent) of the respondents have said that they receive debts from money lenders and 32 percent of the respondents get from their own friends and only minimum of 12 percent respondents get from the bank. This shows that they depend more on money lenders than the bank. “The atrocities against the Dalits are not the result of a single cause but are caused by a host of factors such as land disputes, traditional low status, illiteracy, poverty, low wages, unremunerative forced labor, indebtedness, resistance to the upper castes, resistance by Dalits to social boycott, use of public facilities and so on.”(Gochhayat, 2013)

Table 5: Employment

S. No	Employment	Frequency	Percent
1	Private Company	22	44
2	Government	1	2
3	Coolie	15	30
4	Self Employed	2	4
5	Student	10	20
	Total	50	100

Table 5 shows the level of employment of the respondents. Majority (44 percent) of the respondents work in Private companies, 30 percent work as coolies in different jobs, 20 percent are students and only two percent of the respondents have government employment. This reveals the denial of employment in government jobs inspite of reservation policies of the government.

Table 6: Equal Opportunities

S. No	Equal Opportunities in Work Place	Frequency	Percent
1	Highly Dissatisfied	5	10
2	Dissatisfied	10	20
3	Neutral	4	8
4	Satisfied	22	44
5	Highly Satisfied	9	18
	Total	50	100

Table 6 reveals the facts about equal opportunities in work place. It is found that a vast majority (44 percent) are satisfied with opportunities provided in the work place 20 percent are highly satisfied regarding equal opportunities. On the other hand, 20 percent are dissatisfied and another 10 percent are highly dissatisfied regarding the equal opportunities given in the work place. Denial of equal opportunities is a human right violation against dalits.

Table 7: Satisfaction in Work Place

S. No	Satisfaction in Work Place	Frequency	Percent
1	Highly Dissatisfied	1	2
2	Dissatisfied	6	12
3	Neutral	15	30
4	Satisfied	21	42
5	Highly Satisfied	7	14
	Total	50	100

Table 7 reveals about the satisfaction in work place. A majority (42 Percent) of the respondents reveal that they are satisfied about the conditions and treatment in work place and 30 percent of them are neutral in their opinion regarding the satisfaction in work place. The mixed response of satisfaction indicates that there are human rights violations within the work place.

Table 8: Education

S. No	Education	Frequency	Percent
1	Middle	5	10
2	High School	5	10
3	Hr. Secondary	8	16
4	Diploma	8	16
5	Degree	24	48
	Total	50	100

Table 8 reveals the educational level of the respondents. A vast majority (48 percent) of the respondents have done their degree and 16 percent have done their diploma while ten percent each had only completed middle and high school. This shows that there has been a considerable growth in education level of the respondents over the years.

Table 9: Drop Outs in Schools

S. No	Drop Outs In Schools	Frequency	Percent
1	Strogly Disagree	13	26
2	Disagree	7	14
3	Moderate	16	32
4	Agree	12	24
5	Strongly Agree	2	4
	Total	50	100

Table 9 reveals level of drop outs in the schools. A majority (32 Percent) accept that the drop outs in schools are moderate. While Twenty six percent strongly disagree that there are drop outs in schools Twenty four percent agree that there are drop outs and a minimum of four percent strongly agree that there are drop outs in schools. This brings out the fact that there are drop outs from schools. "Education provides individuals with the means to increase their income and to engage in economic activities. Most of the schemes which the government of India launched for their educational inclusion fell short of what was proposed and recommended by High Level Committees/ Commissions as well as were not implemented effectively." (Salam, 2014) It indicates that the lack of implementation of schemes is a human rights violation against dalits.

Table 10: Access to Public Places

S. No	Accessibility	Frequency	Percent
1	Highly Dissatisfied	2	4
2	Dissatisfied	10	20
3	Neutral	10	20
4	Satisfied	8	16
5	Highly Satisfied	20	40
	Total	50	100

Table 10 brings out the satisfaction regarding their accessibility to Public places. Majority (40 percent) of the respondents said that they are highly satisfied regarding accessibility to Public places. Twenty percent of the respondents are neutral and another twenty percent are dissatisfied regarding their accessibility to public places. This shows that there is accessibility but still need to be improved for dalits to feel included.

There are still public places not easily accessed by dalits especially in rural places.

Table 11: Place of Treatment for Health

S. No	Place Of Treatment	Frequency	Percent
1	Govt Hospitals	36	72
2	Private	14	28
	Total	50	100

Table 11 depicts place of treatment for health. It is vivid from the table that a vast majority of 72 percent chooses government hospitals for treatment as their economic background is poor to go to private hospitals and only 28 percent of them choose private hospitals. This shows that dalits use Government hospitals more than private hospitals but quality treatment is denied to them in the Government hospitals leading to human rights violations of health care.

Table 12: Self Identity

S. No	Self Identity	Frequency	Percent
1	Highly Dissatisfied	6	12
2	Dissatisfied	1	2
3	Neutral	21	42
4	Satisfied	10	20
5	Highly Satisfied	12	24
	Total	50	100

Table 12 brings out the satisfaction level of their self identity. Majority (42 Percent) of the respondents say that they are neutral regarding their satisfaction level of their identity. Twenty four percent are highly satisfied and twenty percent are satisfied regarding their identity. Only 12 percent are highly dissatisfied with their identity. This shows that there are various opinions regarding their satisfaction level of their dalit identity ranging from highly dissatisfied to highly satisfied that creates crisis in understanding their own identity.

Table 13: Social Respect

S. No	Social Respect	Frequency	Percent
1	Much Lower	3	6
2	Slightly Lower	31	62
3	About The Same	4	8
4	Higher	10	20
5	Much Higher	2	4
	Total	50	100

Table 13 reveals the range of satisfaction level of their social respect. A large majority (62 Percent) said that the social respect experienced is slightly lower than the average and only 4 percent accepted that it is much higher. Six percent of the respondents expressed that it is much lower. This reveals the fact that dalits do not enjoy social respect from others considerably due to the caste discrimination and untouchability. Still their social respect is at stake. This is the basic human rights violation against them in not giving due social respect as human persons, as guaranteed by the constitution.

Table 14: Accepting Intercaste Marriage

S. No	Intercaste Marriage	Frequency	Percent
1	Strogly Disagree	6	12
2	Disagree	11	22
3	Moderate	7	14
4	Agree	23	46
5	Strogly Agree	3	6
	Total	50	100

Table 14 reveals the fact about Level of acceptance of intercaste marriage of the respondents. While a vast majority (46 percent) agree for the intercaste marriage and 6 percent strongly agree there are 22 percent who disagree and another 12 percent strongly disagree. There are 14 percent who are moderate in accepting inter caste marriages. This shows that majority agree for intercaste marriage and others disagree due to fear of problems from upper castes, honour killings etc.

Table 15: Exploitation and Humiliation of Political Parties

S. No	Exploitation by Political Parties	Frequency	Percent
1	Strogly Disagree	1	2
2	Disagree	7	14
3	Moderate	0	0
4	Agree	15	30
5	Strogly Agree	27	54
	Total	50	100

It is vivid from the Table 15 that 84 percent of the respondents have claimed that dalits were only exploited by the political parties. This is the sad reality of the role of dalits in Indian politics. Even the political parties who form the government in both central and state do not bother to address the issues of dalits in their power. They justify that there are no violations saying that there exist “large number of special laws for Scheduled Castes banning discrimination, punishing atrocities, and reserving educational, employment, and political opportunities. Finally, the government maintained that caste is a uniquely Indian social institution and therefore an internal matter, not subject to outside oversight” (Bob, 2006)

SUGGESTIONS

The Social work interventions are suggested by the researcher based on the data collected from the rural dalit youth in Kancheepuram district.

- In this research it is clear from the data that 68 percent of the respondents do not own land. landlessness is a serious concern and an acute problem for the dalits to be included in the mainstream of the society. Hence it is the need of the hour that redistribution of the land under ‘Land to the tiller’ concept be made into a reality. Equity in the distribution of wealth and resources is another critical element of inclusive societies.(Desa, 2009)
- A majority 66 percent of the respondents have debts more than Rs. 20000 and among them 30 percent have more than Rs. 40000 as debts. A vast majority 60 percent of the respondents get debts from money lenders who charge higher interest and only 12 percent get from banks. Hence the researcher suggests that the Government should enhance the loan facilities in the banks for lower interest and grant monetary benefits through self help groups be made possible for the rural dalit youth.

- In this study it is highly shocking to find that only 2 percent of the respondents are engaged in government employment and a vast majority (44 percent) of them is employed in private companies where job is not guaranteed. Hence the researcher suggests that more employment opportunities be created for rural dalits in government sector.
- A majority 72 percent of the respondents choose government hospitals for treatment. Hence the researcher suggests that the best and quality treatment be given in the government hospitals and especially in primary health centres where dalits have easy accessibility.
- The study reveals that 42 percent are neutral in their opinion regarding self identity while 22 percent are strongly dissatisfied while 24 percent are strongly satisfied driving home the distorted self identity of dalit youth. The researcher suggests training programmes for the dalit youth to enhance ones cultural identity and for others to accept dalit identity and accept them, respect them and treat them with dignity. A vast majority 62 percent said that feel that the social respect is slightly lower in society is an evident that the society need to criticize their own ideology and attitude to other persons in the society.
- Regarding Inter caste marriage, 46 percent of them agree for intercaste marriage. The Government should ensure safety, protection and security for their living. There should be special grants, schemes and allowances for the inter caste marriages. Honor killing has to be punished severely through legal provisions.

CONCLUSIONS

The Indian reality is basically based on caste hierarchical and oppressive structure that has taken a root in the psyche of Indians. As science and technology improves, the understanding of humanity must also grow along with it. In reality it is not explicit rather the respect and dignity for humans is deteriorating. All kinds of discrimination, exploitation and deprivation continue to pave way for exclusion of the vulnerable and weaker sections of the society. At this juncture the study of rural dalit youth – the issues, challenges towards social inclusion helps us to understand where we stand regarding inclusion and what need to be done for progress.

“The policy of economic empowerment is essentially directed towards improving the ownership of assets like agricultural land, capital for business, entrepreneurial skills and education. These measures are supposed to enhance the capacity of groups historically subjected to discrimination to develop businesses of their own and enhance their employability in industries and in occupations that pay well.” (Thorat, 2007) Enhancing the level of education, employment, economic conditions, accessibility to public places, self identity and social respect, the social workers have to frame policies and legal provisions for a permanent social transformation where justice, equality and dignity of dalits become the priority.

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