

Social Justice and Castes Discrimination: Experiences of Scheduled Castes Students in India

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Abstract : In Indian History, the Dalits (Scheduled Castes) were exploited with caste, since the Vedic Age (1500 BCE). They were deprived of many rights in the society and their education was also restricted by the upper castes since the introduction of the Law of Manu (1500 BCE). The Dalits were treated as lower castes (Sudras and Ati-Sudra) in the society. Occupation of these caste groups were attached to some low profile and menial occupation. Whereas, the upper caste (Brahmins) declared themselves as the top most caste groups who chose the occupation of priests and had the supreme right to education. During those days occupation was not decided by the caliber of a person rather, it was decided by the upper caste Brahmins and kept on transferring from one generation to another generation. At this juncture of the society, the upper caste people oppressed and suppressed the lower caste people endlessly. To get rid of these social problems the emancipator and the charismatic leader (Prophet for the lower caste communities), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar appeared in the scene of Indian unjust society. Restlessly he fought against the caste oppression, social dogmas and tyranny on the basis of caste. Finally, he succeeded to affirm statutory safeguards for the oppressed and depressed or lower caste communities. Today these communities are scheduled as Scheduled Castes to access social justice for their upliftment and development. Through the liberty, equality and fraternity, he established social justice for the first time in the Indian history with the implementation of Indian Constitution on 26th January 1950. Since then the social justice has been accessed through the Constitution and Indian Republics. However, even after sixty five years of the Indian Republic and Constitutional safeguards the Scheduled Castes (SCs) are suffering many problems in the phases of their life. Even if there are special provisions made by the state aimed to meet the challenges of the weaker sections, they are still deprived of access to it, which is true especially for the Dalits or SCs. Many of the people of these communities are still not accessing education and particularly, higher education. Those who are managing to access the education have been facing many challenges in their educational premises as well as in their social life. This paper tries to find out the problem of discrimination in educational and societal level. Secondly, this paper aims to know the relation between the discrimination and access to social justice for the SCs in the educational institution and society. It also enquires the experiences of SCs who faced discrimination in their educational and social life. This study is based on the both quantitative and qualitative methods. Both of which were interpreted through the data triangulation method in mixed methodology approach. In this paper, it is found that the SCs are struggling with injustice in their social and educational spheres. Starting from their primary level to higher education, they were discriminated in curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Keywords : social justice, discrimination, caste, scheduled castes, education

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