

Violation of Rights in Theory and Practice: Dalit Experiences in India

Dr. T.V. Krishnan*, Dr. P. K. Pokker¹

¹*Former Head and Professor, Senior Research Fellow, Indian Council of Philosophical Research*

Abstract: Each and every society upholds a social consciousness reciprocal with the prevailing dominant social culture. The social developments of mankind transformed the classes and castes to institutionalized religion. These institutionalized machinery of faith redefines the human relations and rights in accordance with the dominant group's interest. The governing class joins hand together with these institutionalized religions and make use of it as a means to secure their authority. The socio-religious philosophy of the ruling class wipes out the various social relations and human rights and reign over other parallel thoughts. By using religious textual interpretation they bracket out 'other' and women from the mainstream.

The Brahminic version of the Hindu philosophy denied the basic rights to the masses and slaughtered the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity from the social sphere and make use of the common peoples as slaves to secure the power and leisure. The caste discriminations of Hindus degenerated the society as a whole. Ambedkar, Ayyankali, EVR and such others revealed the nature of discriminations and fought against it. Despite the Indian independence the Indian civil society remained in shackles of śāstra's and continued the violations of rights of the Dalits. The article focuses on the way in which the Hindu Sastras and texts supported the caste hegemony and the denial of human rights for hundreds of years.

Keywords-philosophy, rights, religion, Hindu, Ambedkar, class-consciousness.

I. PREFACE

The social achievements of humanity caused transformations in social relations, these social makeovers stimulates the social consciousness which worked in society as a tool to regulate and leads the individual relations and social institutions. The dominant class influences these changes and hijacked the public interest with their class interest, as a result the social progress is shackled by these groups and generates a hyper-real social order with class/caste domination in common sphere. These class orientations generate a moral order which restricted the natural rights and triggered closed socio-economic relations within civilization.

II. RELIGION AND HEGEMONY

Along with social achievements there arise Institutionalized social structures like religions, administrative systems in society. They implement the norms to formulate centralization of power and wealth in certain authority. The

prevailing class joint hands with these institutionalized religions and exploit it as means to succeed the society. These new Socio-religious philosophy pulls down the natural rights into the bottom and succeeded to domain the masses and formulate an autonomous formation which deteriorates the natural ability and rights of humankind. Gradually the subjugated one was bracketed out from the popular sphere along with their equal status in social public sphere.

III. CASTE HIERARCHY AND RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

In India the Hindu religion dominates the social sphere and structured it accordance the upper caste interest. The Hindu ideology succeeded to segregate the people into castes, as inventors of the whole system the Brahmin intellectuals placed themselves into the superior positions of society and victorious to generate order of hierarchy accords the scripts. The socio-political structure of Hinduism the varnashramadharma shows up the people's gradation of job and their statuses in the society; "This division dated from the ancient north Indian society of about 1, 200 to 1,000 B.C. In that society as in later periods, Brahmins were the priests, law givers, scholars, and literati; Kshatriyas the rulers and warriors; Vaishyas the traders, peasants, and artisans; Sudras the servile manual workers; and Chandalas, later called Panchamas, members of the population who lived outside the villages and had been conquered, or not yet conquered, by the invading Aryans".¹ They succeeded to constitute a hyper-real socio philosophy which denotes the higher castes Hindu social interests. In Indian social order traditional intellectuals considers the happiness of the dominant ones and bracketed the effort and pain of other, they formed moral code which sustained the pleasure of dominate ones. These hedonistic philosophies eliminate the equality of individuals which they enjoyed in the earlier times.

Every religion or social order had its law-giver and Manu is the law-giver of Hinduism who structured the Indian social system on bases of Varna. His ideology denies the fundamentals to masses especially the knowledge. In Hindus the right to attain knowledge was rested in the peoples who perform upanaya –wearing the sacred thread and Hindu texts denied the practicing of upanaya to shudras and others. By denying upanaya to mass Manu monopolized the power of knowledge and educational techniques in caste Hindus. Manu

stipulates the brutal punishments for the violators, by implementing these laws he intent to create an illiterate mass of personnel to serve the higher castes. "If the Shudra intentionally listens for committing to memory the Veda, then his ears should be filled with (molten) lead and lac; if he utters the Veda, then his tongue should be cut off; if he has mastered the Veda his body should be cut to pieces."² Social reformer Jotirao Phule point out that; "they did not want the shudras to ever realise how they had been tricked. So they strictly prohibited education of the shudras and made strict rules about this in their books like *Manusamhita*. Keeping the shudras illiterate also enables them to male whatever changes in their books they wanted to suit their interest."³

The ranking of castes from high to low, from pure to impure, from Brahman to Untouchable, makes the inhuman tradition marginalize the lower strata of the people. "Untouchables were considered so impure that they ought not to live in the village at all, and even to this day some families from the higher castes balk at allowing Untouchables to enter their houses. In temple festivals and other public events throughout India, such rankings are also reiterated spatially."⁴ Number of people maintaining boundaries between the pure and the impure, including between pure and impure castes, these boundaries are manifest in all sorts of ways, particularly through concern about sharing physical substances.

The vast majority of Untouchables have been born, lived, and died in the midst of discrimination. Untouchables suffer innumerable humiliations in daily life. They are not allowed to attend school, no access to health care, restrictions to use the public road and common market and even their shadows also considered impure, prevented them from temple entry denies the public well and other common water resources and shops, tea shops provided separate cups for untouchables. The use of palanquin and adoption of the respectable outfit are also denied to them. The hair dresser would not tend their hair the washer man would not wash their cloth, and the shopkeeper would not supply them with food.

The majority of lower castes suffered a lot in the name of ritual purity. The public streets are forbidden to them, which obstruct their life mobility; the public spheres like market also were denied to them. Similarly the backward communities like Eezhavas, Asaris, Vaniyars, weavers were not supposed to walk on the road. So they are unable to sustain their needs, the educational institutions also closed against as considered slaves, they forced to settle nearby fields and marsh lands and insists to keep distances from upper caste, and it is varied to each lower caste according to their grade. "The agricultural labour force like pulayars were considered as slave class: they were bought and sold along with land and considered to be mere instruments of production".⁵

The Untouchables of Tamil Nadu were called themselves as Adi Dravidias or original Dravidians "they lived in separate hamlets or ghettos called Cheris set in paddy

fields."⁶ Majority of untouchables as parayars and pallars like pulayars in Kerala also belong to agricultural slaves. The parayars embodied with special duties like burying the dead animals, guarded burial grounds and watcher in the paddy fields. As they deal with dead animals, Brahmins considered them as most polluted and used to deny the interactions in public sphere. The public streets were also forbidden to them and they had also no freedom to enter the temples and even denied the use of public well.

IV. SPECIALIZED INTELLECTUALS

Despite the Brahmin domination and right violations in every aspect of daily life, the emergence of the intellectuals from untouchables could not be altogether prevented. In different parts of India they began to acquire new status in society because they are different from the traditional upper caste or are organic intellectuals. Intellectuals like Ayyankali, EVR, and Ambedkar and many others proposed and acted for restructuring the Indian Brahmanical ideology into humanistic one and wanted to demolish the unethical norms and gradation of the people. Who were encountered the social inequalities all over their life and succeed to regain the common sphere. Their achievements shaken the traditional intellectual philosophy and generates new enthusiasm for subalterns to stand against the oppressions and exploitations.

4.1 Ayyankali

Ayyankali the revolutionary arise from Kerala agro slave community he fights against the social inequality and caste discrimination. His thoughts are based on natural rights and humanistic philosophy which emphasis on equality of being to possess and enjoy the necessary aspects of worthily life. He challenged the social discriminations of Kerala social order; "In 1893, Ayyankali he brought villuvandi and whitebullocks use the proper fabric which not allowed to used by the pulayan or other untouchable castes and he rides the bullock cart in Public Street which is considered as the privilege of upper castes and used to denote their supremacy over lower caste one."⁷ by this brave move Ayyankali proclaim his fight against the Hindu order and asserts the freedom of movements in public streets

"In 1898 Ayyankali and his men walk out the public road towards Aralummudu market place one of the prohibited areas for Dalits. On the way and at Chaliyar Street they face and engaged a fight between Hindu caste people and lead to riots known as chaliyar riots".⁸ This act inspired the Dalits to break the wicked social and moral norms of Brahmanic order. Ayyankali realised the importance of education and decided to fight for it, he seems education as a means to acquire worthily life and he attempts to open a separate schools for Dalit children "in 1904, three years before the establishment of the *sadhu Jana paripalana sangam*, Ayyankali had attempt to start a separate school for Dalits at Venganoor but the school was burnt down by the caste – Hindus on the first day itself."⁹

In 1907 he founded *sadhu Jana paripalanasangam* a common platform for all depressed castes to arise their voice against caste discrimination and secure their rights and places in public sphere. By forming an organisation for all depressed castes he creates a unity among the different marginalised castes and turns it into mass movements for equality and his voice turn to the voice of marginalised ones of the society. The Sabha stands against inequalities and social discrimination. Ayyankali advocates for economic developments of Dalits rather than spiritual one, its headquarters established at Venganoor. Ayyankali gave importance to acquire the educational rights for Dalits, beside the upper caste people always tries and victories to denied education to the oppressed ones. The majority of Hindu reforms also stand against the Dalits education rights they considered it as astonishing and unnecessary.

For make use of 1910th government sanctioned educational rights to Dalits he used his castes laborer power as means to attain the educational right and declare for the strike which became first organise agricultural strike in the history of Kerala. for his call the pulayas the paddy field labourers give up their works the strike leads to decline in food production and economic aspects of the upper castes they try to use other means to overcome the crisis, but quick's movement from Sabha fails those acts. The movement ended with an agreement between Dalits landlords and government. It promises the increase in wages and insures the educational rights of Dalits. The pact opened the schools for Dalits children, but the upper castes children retaliate it with boycotting class, and fill the vacancies with upper caste children and restrict the Dalit admissions

He ruled out the existing norms which graded human into class and restricted them within the pre proposed circle of life codes. The common code denies the proper dress code for Dalit men/women they allow to use limited clothes and their clothes and ornaments depicts their castes and social statues. "Most importantly they were not allowed to wear any clothing above the waist and below the knees and this rule applied to both men and women. Moreover, the women, they had to wear a sort of bead called *kallayum* Malayam."¹⁰ Along with these beads they also wear the iron earring called *kunkku* all these ornaments illustrate the subordination of the caste to others. As an effect of Ayyankali Pulaya women abandoned those degraded ornaments the upper castes came out with protest and insist pulayars to remain in the Brahmin socio-moral circle. As a result in 1915 the Pulaya women started use wearing blouses. In 1911 Ayyankali became representative of Sabha in *srinoolampuraja Sabha* and asks for more opportunities in educational field and able to attain admission with *Ezhavas* in all schools. For wipe out the economic backwardness he persuaded the government to assign land to agricultural labours like pulayars and make sure the unskilled jobs of government sector to Dalits.

4.2 E.V.Ramaswamy Naicker

E.V.Ramaswamy Naicker formed his norms on rationalism and assert that the one who fell into the dogmas of religions will lose himself in others ideology "God and faith are the direct enemies of reason because anyone enslaved by god and fate has nothing of his own."¹¹ on these assumptions he formed the anti-Brahmin movements in Tamil Nadu. He gave preferences for social reforms and uplift of the marginalized people and stand against the system of *Varnashrama dharma* thus negates the hegemonic structure of Indian social order. He depicts the developments of Hindu religion that "Hinduism began with the Vedic religion and transformed over time as the Aryan religion, the Brahmin religion, and finally as the Hindu religion."¹² Through experiences he realised the inhumanity of its ideology and unworthy characteristic of saints and priests and decided to fight against the irrational *brhamism* and stood for the untouchable. In 1928 he remarked that "Hinduism is a fake fortress built upon the false principle of granting heaven to one after death. Congress is fake fortress built on the false principle of granting freedom when one lives."¹³ He quit from congress on the disagreements on the notion of untouchables uplifts and their social statues.

In 1952 he formed the *Suyamariyatiyakkam* self-respect movement aims to promote rational thinking, self-respect and self-confidence of the untouchables and enable them to enjoy the social and political freedom. He replaced the religion with reason and tries to uplift the Dravidian dignity, denies the mythology of Hinduism and recommend for the destruction of Brahmanical cultural heritage and its dominance over the society. He advocates for the detritions of the time old institutions such caste, religion, princely order and zamindari system and eradication of the evils of untouchability, inequality distinctions based upon status and sex. He advocates to demolition of Aryans and Hindi imperialism of politics, education and other important aspects of life and stand for the equal opportunities for all.

He recommends for inter-communal marriage and self-respect marriage without any Brahmin priests and rituals. Self-Respect Movement had target religion in general and particularly the Brahmanical tradition, its symbol came under attack. He focused to criticize the central sacred books of Hindus *Manusmriti*, *Ramayana* and *BagavadGita*. He asserts that "if there is no *Varnashrama dharma* there is no ground to talk about Hindu religion."¹⁴ On a number of occasions, the *Manusmriti* was burned, certain characters in the *Puranas* were changed, and for instance *Ravana* in the *Valmiki's Ramayana* was held up as the hero and be an ideal of good Dravidian conduct. *Rama* was seen as a wicked and unjust Aryan.

E.V.R and his fellows organized demonstrations and dramas in large scale to eradicate the practice of untouchability caste system he applauded for the destruction of the Vedic sacred texts and epics and other sacred Hindu texts, for him it's the possible way for demolition of untouchability. Despite

any other movement's large number of untouchables and women took part in it.

For obliterate the fundamental superstitions of Hinduism he propagate mass campaign where he rationally questioned the religious notions of superstitions. In 1927 one of such act passes number of resolutions which are considered a revolutionary. One called the members to refuse money for the construction of temples or for the employment of priests or intermediaries. Another condemned Varnashrama dharma and arbitrary division of society and the other one secure the rights of women in society. Through publications like *kudiyarasu*, *puratchi* he spread his messages against the degradation of the Dravidians. He realise the importance of politicalisation of the notions and joined janata party and become its president. In 1944 he restructured it into Dravidakazhagam with the slogan for separate dravidanadu. His movements generate new awakening for untouchables others and it gained large number followers in every sphere.

Despite all other movements the women participated in self-respect act in large scale. The new method scale down the marriage expenditure, instead of rituals they usually sing and transform a place for interactions among members. As the result of these movements Brahmins lost their supremacy and positions in Tamil public sphere. The majority of people came out from the dogmatic chamber of spirituality to reality and demarks the dogmas and rites of Brahmanism. Legislation enacted for the welfare of the depressed class and self-respect marriage became legal in 1967 which provide equal status for women in society and minimize the expenditure of marriage. The party stands for renovate the Dravidian culture and its values, forms of life. It pushes out the Brahmins from political sphere and Dravidians captured the commanding heights of politics.

4.3 Ambedkar

Ambedkar evaluated caste in a different way, for him the essence of caste is intrinsic in the practice of endogamy the absence of intermarriage. The practice of endogamy creates a barrier among the people and destroyed the harmonious culture of Indian social sphere. Which creates new mode of relationship restrains the individual liberty and rationality and instigated him to remain in the caste walls. Accompanied with the norms the caste system grabs and destroyed the individuality and categorized the social attributes like food dress rituals and relations to the others to their consensuses. For Ambedkar the humanity fall into caste system and adhere the practice of endogamy and other rituals of the Brahmins, and intent to stand apart from the common social sphere "Caste in India means an artificial chopping off of the population into fixed and definite units, each one prevented from fusing into another through the custom of endogamy. Thus the conclusion is inevitable that Endogamy is the only characteristic that is peculiar to caste"¹⁵

After failed his mission to reform the Hindu society into humanistic norm he initiate to create an individual consciousness among the Dalits. He makes use the round table conference as means to claim the sovereign identity of Indian subalterns groups. Where he proclaimed the Dalits as an independent entity with equal rights and status like Sikhs and Muslims and therefore he demands separate electorates for Dalits, through this moves he marked the identity of the marginalized in political sphere as an influential one to determine the political scenarios. This move wild mode of energy to subaltern groups to asserts their place in Indian political sphere. Ambedkar advocates for democracy and considered it as a means to ascertain appropriate place in public sphere. For him, democracy is a mode of associate living appropriate not only in the political sphere, but also in the socio-economic spheres of life. It's a man centered one, which assure his rights for better life. He asserts that the political democracy will collapse in the absence of social and economic democracy.

V. POLITICS AND CONTINUING ATROCITIES

Even after sixty-six years of independence and the constitutional safeguard Dalits of India still struggles to overcome the statues of Middle Ages. The prevailing governments and political parties neglecting these struggles of Dalits and Adivasis, Which broke out to ensure the fundamental rights and place in civil society. In the meantime the atrocities against the Dalits and others continuing with the help of political personal and civil society, the Indian civil society remained in the bounds of Hindu religious philosophy and considering the Dalits and others as inhuman. As a result the right violations against Dalits cover up from the common sphere.

The large number of Dalits and Adivasis remind without any property thus the civil society shackled their progresses, even practicing the land reforms in Kerala large number of Dalits remind landless and homeless the dominant right and left political parties neglected these problems. As a result of political propaganda the Dalits in Kerala lost their Dalit consciousness and became objects to fulfill the political objectives of parties. This subjugation towards parties turned them as political slaves with limited consciousness about their existence and opportunities. Even without any dominant political and civil support there arise social movements such as Muthanga (2003) and chengara land struggle to seize the rights, a large number of Dalits participates took part in these movements. In Muthanga the Adivasis demands for cultivate land to satisfy their need of sustenance the struggle end up in state atrocity and caused for five homicides by government and civil society. In chengara large number of Dalits and Dalit christens from Kerala jointly demand appropriate amount of land for living and they occupied government leased rubber plantation and demand for its ownership. Along with the civil society the government led by the Indian Marxists and their labour unions ignore and turn against the movements they retaliate against the picketers. Thirumaavalavan writes about

the social sphere of Tamil Nadu, where the Hindu morals overruled the constitutional law of India and push backs the so-called outcasts or Dalits to the backyards of Indian Independence by expelling from the Democratic practices and denied the sovereign rights of Indian citizens to those communities. "They prohibited Dalits from walking on the streets, from using the village outskirts for grazing animals and from buying provisions from the shops."¹⁶ by use of their dominance they ruled the governing system and make use the physical apertures and bureaucracy to keep out the Dalits from the Democratic system; "They laid down the precondition that none of the Dalits should file nomination paper if they violated, they would be killed."¹⁷

VI. RIGHTS THROUGH POLITICAL IDENTITY

The struggles like Muthanga, chengara and existence of caste walls of Tamilnadu and Made Snana of Karnataka the uncivilized practices insists for an alternative standpoint with a genuine consciousness which armed the Dalits to fight against the cultural dominations of hindutva. These practices and its justifications creates an falls consciousness among the Dalits who were backward in education and other basic instincts of life because unequal distribution of social attributes .. In Indian hemisphere the political parties working as a subdivision of Hinduism, propagates the interests caste Hindus. As a result the basic needs of the marginalized peoples where bracketed out from the political sphere. This ideological warfare of civil society insists to create a parallel subaltern consciousness's equipped with a standpoint for individuals to understand his socio-economic positions in Indian civil society. The consciousness which will emerge through intermarriages within Dalits, the effective instrument which Ambedkar suggest for eradicate the Hindu caste system; the effective practicing of intermarriage creates a harmony among Dalits to overcome the caste divisions and enmity. Subaltern consciousness empowers them to retaliate and create an independent existence and political organization to fulfill their rights and needs as humans. These self-consciousness will restore political identity within Dalits like other minorities such as Muslims and christens, who make use of their political vote as means for attain the communal goals,

which is a necessary in Indian politics where the caste ideology ruling the governmental strategies.

VII. CONCLUSION

The ongoing revote or agitations are cause rooted on the Indian social structure which is still formulates and depended on the Hindu śāstra's and texts. The Indian political parties like BJP and other Hindu organizations propagating the immoral laws of ancient hindutva as Indian culture. In the plight of Dalit atrocities the dangerous silence from the civil society must be scrutinized and restricted it with Ambedkarian socio-economic democracy. The principle which envisaging an alternative social order to transform the traditional society with equal socio sphere and eradicates the upper hands of metaphysical nonsense of religious texts. For attain these goal the subjugated class must evoke from the dogmatism of caste hierarchy and its morals which will happens only through retrieving the consciousness along with pre democracy.

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