

# Human Rights for All

Edited by

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## CASTEISM, SOCIAL SECURITY AND VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Dr. Desh Raj Sirswal

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*"Slavery does not merely mean a legalised form of subjection. It means a state of society in which some men are forced to accept from others the purposes which control their conduct."*

— Dr.B.R.Ambedkar

The consciousness of social security comes to a man when he feels that he is getting his basic rights. Human Rights are related to those rights which are related to man's life, freedom, equality and self-esteem, are established by Indian constitution or universal declaration of human rights and implemented by Indian judiciary system. In other words, "Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status."<sup>1</sup> We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. But when we come to the present conditions of Indian society, it is painful to say we find lots of discrimination and violations of human rights is a common problem. In this paper it is an attempt is made to describe that casteism cause social insecurity and is a form of violation of human rights.

The contemporary leaders and thinkers of India, since its independence thought that with economic development and by the promotion of education, the problems of casteism and untouchability were declined in the society, but their thinking was wrong as there was not this type of change occurred here. Caste related violence and hate crimes in India have occurred despite the gradual reduction of casteism in the country. According to the report by Human Rights Watch, "Dalits and indigenous peoples (known as Scheduled Tribes or adivasis) continue to face discrimination, exclusion, and acts of communal violence. Laws and policies adopted by the Indian government provide a strong basis for protection, but are not being faithfully implemented by local authorities."<sup>2</sup> Now casteism gets a new face of politics and become a complicated aspect of Indian society. Since we have not started any social movement and it become the main cause of prejudices, anti social thinking, customs and affects the social life of a man too.<sup>3</sup> we can find a good explanation of these issues in contemporary Dalit Literature.

Scheduled Caste or Dalit or Shudra, whatever name is given, the nature of their problems are basically social. We cannot eradicate any social problem through political, administrative and economic policies. Central Government of Indian established my departments to think and work on the problems of Dalits or the oppressed to find out basic causes and solution. Since

independence, a great amount wasted on these schemes but the result come with zero effect and the problems are living as it is.<sup>4</sup> By these schemes only a few persons were obliged, first those who are related to any political or administrative person or have some influential background. The needy is being destroyed by the same problems and till now far from the benefits of all these welfare schemes. All these create a social insecurity among these classes and a gap between human to human. Differences in status are traditionally justified by the religious doctrine of karma, a belief that one's place in life is determined by one's deeds in previous lifetimes. A lack of formal education or training, as well as discrimination that effectively bars them from many forms of employment, and the nonenforcement of protective legislation, perpetuates caste-based employment and keeps its hereditary nature alive.

The main objective of The Scheduled Caste/Trobe (Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989) was to secure SC/STs from the violation of so-called upper classes. Free legal facilities available for this purpose. The punished person can have a punishment of six months to five years jail with economic punishment and also special courts are available for the needy. But these types of facilities become useless when a real case occurred and the policy of dominance by political or economical means implemented by the so-called upper caste. The judiciary systems and all the concept of a welfare state become waste whenever they come to the light. The root cause of this is lack of political and administrative will for justice and when we can find caste-discrimination as root cause of all these and inhuman role of so-called upper-caste dominance in politics and government.<sup>5</sup>

On the world map it is also of a serious concern, "Discriminatory and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of a vast global population has been justified on the basis of caste. In much of Asia and parts of Africa, caste is the basis for the definition and exclusion of distinct population groups by reason of their descent. Over 250 million people worldwide continue to suffer under what is often a hidden apartheid of segregation, modern-day slavery, and other extreme forms of discrimination, exploitation, and violence. Caste imposes enormous obstacles to their full attainment of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights." <sup>6</sup>

National Human Rights Commission, New Delhi makes continuous attempts to address various Human Rights issue related to child labour, women problems, health, HIV/AIDS etc. NHRC did following work on Dalit issues including atrocities perpetrated on them: "Deeply concerned by the discrimination and other human rights violation faced by the Scheduled Castes, the NHRC has taken several initiatives to ameliorate their situation and protect their rights. They include the redressing of individual complaints; constitution of a Dalit Cell in 2003 headed by a Member of the Commission with the aim to monitor implementation of programmes; research studies on the socio-economic conditions of the Musahars, and the political and cultural status of dalit women in Haryana; and the preparation of a handbook on discrimination in order to sensitize teachers. The Commission requested Shri K.B. Saxena, IAS (Retd.), to conduct a study on the atrocities against the Scheduled Castes, which has been completed. The Commission proposes to mount an appropriate campaign in this regard."<sup>7</sup> But NHRC studies become waist when they come close to the real situations and where its duties are concerned. The SC/STs are living in social insecurity although they are living in a welfare state.

Several policies were made and many commissions were established but the reality is without change. Most of the misshappenings become the case of SC/ST Act not of Human Rights issues because of incompetent judiciary system and fake policies made by the government. Caste-discrimination is the root cause of all these activities. And since independence there is not a single case of social awareness programme conducted by any political party or government of so called democratic and secular India.<sup>8</sup>

The problem of casteism should be treated as a human right issue and also discuss it with a universal outlook, so that it can have the same parameter as other human rights issues has. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar will be remembered for all time to come as the architect of the Indian Constitution, especially for the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles chapters which, aim at eradicating "all injustice and tyranny" and ushering in social democracy and social equality. He was however, disappointed that the dominating section of our society did not rise to the occasion and did not water the plants that he had planted. Our political rulers have failed to understand Dr. Ambedkar and his vision. It is now for human rights groups and grassroot activists to make social democracy and equality a way of life in the absence of which political democracy will always stand on a shaky foundation. "To translate into action the cherished dream of Dr. Ambedkar in an honest manner requires strong commitment, honest approach and effective implementation of the constitutional mandates upholding the ethos of secularism and eschewing ulterior considerations, narrow party politics, deep-rooted prejudices based on historical events and the so-called religious bigotry."<sup>9</sup> As B.R. Ambedkar says: "Men are mortal. So are ideas. An idea needs propagation as much as a plant needs watering. Both will otherwise wither and die."<sup>9</sup> It is should be our concern to propagate the ideas of social change and social justice to secure the lives of our fellow being and they should be treated as human beings and not torture on the name caste, colour, creed and nationality etc.

Human Rights Defenders are working since then we have not the concept of human rights in our life. They are working on a range of issues including caste discrimination, domestic violence, social justice, women issues, child abuse and trade attack from both the state and other interests. But the problem is here to consider that those who are discussing or working on the Human Rights issues, are being tortured by the false cases and sometime they also murdered as we are continually receive these types of news from media. Their social security, freedom also suppressed by the authorities. The government imposed increases administrative restrictions on human rights organizations. By all this the first step to fight for justice interrupted and the real conception of justice become only theoretical interpretation. It is a good point to consider that for a good society and for a just nation, we should think upon all these issues so that we can live in such a place where we can realise the sense of freedom, equality and brotherhood. For all this we need to think seriously upon caste issues, human rights, terrorism, child and women issues, only then we can have a fruitful outlook for social problems. Universal peace presupposes social justice, equality, fraternity and love for humanity. Unfortunately, human selfishness and ego overwhelm the human mind causing destructive and dangerous consequences to peaceful existence of humans.

In the end, we can say that have the option to choose a better world. Why not we think to work for our fellow beings and deal these issues with a rational systematic manner. It is a reality

that India is going through a difficult time of regionalism, communalism, religious fundamentalism, caste prejudices and gender discrimination and these evils are deeply rooted in our society. Then the wording of J.N.Mohanty guide us in a philosophical manner:

“A person is a subject, an ego and a self. Without being a subject, without having the possibility of that reflective loneliness which is the destiny of an ego, and without enjoying that social and historical identity which belongs to a self, a person would not be a person. But a person is more than any of these.”<sup>11</sup>

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