

ROLE OF DALIT LEADERS IN THE LIVES OF LOWER CASTE PEOPLE TO SIGNIFY POLITICAL IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

Dalit leaders played an important influence in the lives of the lower caste population. They have given Dalits (oppressed) a meaningful political identity and motivated them in the social transformation collective movement. This essay examines three main conceptually interconnected and disputed components, Dalit leadership, collective pride and socioeconomic mobility, and analyses the emerging categories. The current work is attended by highly educated Dalits who draw their inspiration and pride in the leadership of Ambedkar and believe in the significance of the group movement in social transformation. After seeing the Dalit movements' prolonged efforts in different parts of the country to bring about radical changes in the structure and processes of society, a political agenda emerged from the dalit Movement in Uttar Pradesh (UP), assuming that state is an important means of bringing about social change.

Keywords: *Dalit leadership, collective pride, social class mobility, social change, India*

INTRODUCTION

The Indian social system is a caste system with a genuine relationship with the socio-economic or labour market (e.g., Vaid, 2014). The caste definition is mainly related to the heritage of employment because to its restricted causal explanation, which leaves little space to cross the border between involuntary identification. Contemporary discussions on castes in India have been shown by two elements of identities: first, castes as colonial categories, and second, castes as subjectivities as supported in the phänomenology of humiliation and historical contexts. The Dalit movement in India has its origins in the reform movement Bhakti. For many centuries, the Bhakti movement has flourished in enclaves throughout the nation. The Bhakti movement was a mixture of different saints and social reformers who pursued their ideals through their writings, folk culture and faith in one heavenly force, and was not an organised organisation. The Bhakti movement was anti-caste, anti-elites, pro-women, pro-poor and anti-Sanskrit, claiming that true Godly love was enough to solve societal ills.

India became independent, but the Dalits could not enjoy a life of dignity and equality. It is this concept of equality that inspired the start of the Dalit movement in India as a reaction against ancient injustices perpetrated against them. The Dalit movement is a fight against the social hegemony - the cultural hegemony of the higher castes. It is a mass movement that seeks justice via discourses, literary works, plays, songs, cultural organisations and all the others. It may thus be considered a movement headed by Dalits in order to achieve equality with all the other castes in Hindu society. The Dalit Movement's primary aim was to create a society based on social equality

in India. However, the constitutional identity does not represent the full picture. The actual image is something other, which is represented in the four volumes, including Debrahmanising History, Poisoned Bread, The Prisons We Broke and Dalit Visions.

In the following it becomes apparent that transformation in the Indian Christian community is consistent with this later tendency. At the theoretical level it has been believed that this type of identity politics is regressive and an impediment to progressive political coalitions that should stress class awareness if they have anything to do with identification. Indian society is extremely diverse and complicated. It is therefore unbelievable that loyalty to the identities of regions, religions and castes remains strong. In such conditions, socialist groups have been difficult to establish significant class-based political coalitions. Some Indian authors, such as Ram Manohar Lohia, have artistically reacted to this complexity and explored how these identities might be utilised for a progressive kind of political mobilisation. The Dalit Christians example shows how identity changes and how identity politics may help to progressive politics in India. As many common Indian Christians have grown conscious of their "dalit" identity, their lack of love has fueled the Indian Christian Churches into an unparalleled degree of political action.

DALIT LEADERSHIP

Liberate and Aspire

The changes in the notion that caste borders are limited have maybe reduced the intensity of the caste with competent Dalit leadership. Few answers from the participants, however, revealed their indifference for the present leaders but showed their admiration for Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram as their role model which aspired them to transcend the social psychological borders of slavery with the positive social and political identity:

G: We now have endless leaders, but they have no characteristics of leadership. Leader should make you feel free; leader should strike your ages-long awareness. That was done by Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram. It's all about electoral leadership nowadays. Therefore, I have no dumb leaders' hopes.

S3: I don't see any hope and don't draw inspiration from them, leader in the sense of the present political leader. Nevertheless, Ambedkar continues to aspire to me in my life if you want to speak about a political ideology then sure.

National leadership after Ambedkar was found to be in the social impact of leaders such as Mayawati in terms of identity management and the creation of a sense of ourselves (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow 2011). The issue, however, is: Are these current Dalit leaders powerful and creative among the Dalits? Or was the Dalit identity on the brink of fluidity, where Dalit leaders could not be a caste member of restricted caste groups? For example, are the Dalit leaders who represent them politically? Then why Mayawati lost the election and why did the confidence

change? There was a publication stating that Young Dalits desire employment, computers and a better life. She has so far offered her people dignity but will also have to bring growth.

Educated Dalits also appear to believe in their own endeavours and appreciate their individuality, displaying their achievements because of their personal effectiveness. Some people voiced their views on independence and trust during the leadership crisis:

Y: Sometimes I had no role model and that made me feel more autonomous and confident. Role models are limiting and have a limited understanding of reality.

G: I've got no role model but I've got aspirations. Dream not to be like someone but to do something where my heart resides.

Creating Hope and Energize for Collective Participation

The overwhelming effect in historical context of caste-based humiliation has led to the creation of a collective and empathetic awareness of disadvantaging people at group level, identifying with one's leader and turning to the collective self-esteem as a group and collective action. One of the participants refused to identify himself with any leader in Dalit, but felt that leadership was important in group participation:

Y: No I don't identify with a Dalit leader, but I think good leadership may make you feel optimistic for the future and can make collective involvement more energetic.

Although the fight is not just at the individual level, it is also group mobility with an intentional effort to take part in collective action in all areas that historically discriminate against the Dalit. Certain arguments lie under the class-caste connection and argue for semantic equivalence. The class symbol for the caste was assessed in many sources to support the justifications for the SC and other backward classes reservations (OBCs). Since OBCs were based on caste-based Mandal Commission classification in 1990, as opposed to OBCs classified by the Kelkar Commission in 1953 (see Srinivas 1996; Shah 2017), numerous instances discriminated against Dalits in spite of their group based pride. One of them is Uttar Pradesh, India, with the greatest degree of government insensitivity and Dalit atrocities. The atrocities are so flagrant and subtle that they are now part of the everyday lives of Dalits. Uniform education, untouchability and the modesty of the Dalit women were common occurrences among the high-caste-dominant areas (Sooryamoorthy, 2008). However, it was not apparent how often the happenings occurred in an urban environment where prejudice is not so blatant in deeds but more broadly disguised as representation in schools, academia, government positions and socially significant organisations. "The history of discrimination, exploitation and legitimate claims, which underpins a contemporary, built Dalit identity in the low-caste groups," says Kaviraj (1997). (p. 9). This common past and communal memory is not just a psychological exaggeration but a social memory activity (e.g., Billig, 1997). The presence of a community leader who can demonstrate the importance and strength of these characteristics may assist to muddle the Community's caste border. As one of the students wrote:

S1: Community leadership has a major role in modelling its community men. I believe nobody can envision his development without leadership imagination.

Charismatic and Entrepreneur of Identity

Among demonstrating the way to self-rest and offering a challenge to Brahmanism the leadership of Ambedkar is having a mixed impact in the lower strata (see Beteille, 2007). Guru (2009) highlighted questions regarding the history of tyranny which in shape and structure was humiliating. But, combined with collective effort to maintain and increase one's collective self-esteem, the communal memory of humiliation is conjectured as the form of collective pride. Sullivan (2007) highlighted to the leader's role, whose person and leadership efforts contributed to the sense of group pride. Some research, such as Tracy, Shariff and Cheng (2010), has shown that orgy has an adaptive function in achieving, maintaining and communicating social status. However, how this applies to the always humiliated, historically oppressed minority is a subject of dispute. From the viewpoint of social identity (Tajfel & Turner 1979), we may conclude that leadership (see Haslam et al. 2011; see also Hogg 2001) can transcend the humiliation into communal pride by collectively striving for social, political and economic rights. One speaker emphasized the importance of Ambedkar as a Dalit leader, who mobilized with truth, pride and claims the undervalued identity of the lower caste. Ambedkar's role as a leader applied not only to the lower caste but also to the other caste liberation that would inspire further development and social change: P: BR Ambedkar. Not just because he was Dalits' most charismatic leader. This is mainly because he fought against the flow to advance an alternative policy and viewpoint he struggled steadfastly for throughout his life. He was not a traditionalist who accepted the predecessors' arguments. For instance, although Ambedkar regarded Jotiba Phule as his Guru and dubbed him the "Most Great Shudra of Modern India," he never embraced Phule's understanding of politics and history. He was brave enough to affirm his own opinion while still becoming one of the most recognized leaders.

It may therefore further contribute to promoting social mobility and equal society (Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2005; see also Jogdand & Sinha, 2015). The most effective method to escape this caste-based humiliation is to find refuge in the hands of more socially and economically valuable groups. This, however, was also viewed as a communal fight that seems to have transcended the oppressed identity into collective pride, a kind of conscious feeling that goes beyond self-esteem, and drives people to success and liberation.

Visionary and Socially Committed

Through collective fight and genuine leadership the Dalits that were lower status groups have gained their political identity. The leader's position is essential in that it energises and gives the members purpose and respect. It was seen that Ambedkar and his followers disputed the prevailing system for their ascriptive identity and established a more meaningful and respected identity that promoted their humiliated identity to greater independence. This attempt also took place via the educational accomplishment and affiliation with education to transcend the borders

of the caste. This is seen in the reactions of the participants on their choice for leader: G: A person who understands the history and society as well as freedom of expression of the individual. An someone who can inspire others in their own language. And who can provide the liberal casteless society a vision.

P: One who is open to opposing viewpoints. One who is dedicated to social issues, academically prepared and morally brave.

The aforementioned replies revealed two major leadership characteristics, claimed by the Dalit respondents. First, someone who knows people's history and culture, and second, may be imaginative, intellectual, moral, honest and dedicated to the community in a genuine manner, removing caste hierarchy from the mind. But the paradox is the caste hierarchy entrenched in mental thinking and attitude that gives its member a feeling of belonging to some degree. Two participants discussed this contradiction in the following quote: S3: I think one who can be empathic to the lives of another person, nice and honest in his or her job. And be brave above all to take the stand that challenges the current hierarchical and dominating system.

Y: I don't believe the 'kind' is going to determine who my leader is going to be. Leaders will come through a leading process that involves people, moral endurance and reflection as a person.

The fight against the Brahmannic mythology (see Deliege, 2009) imposed on the lower castes creates strong divisions and must be undermined by active education and the development of a feeling of criticism among instructors and students. As Tajfel and Turner (1979) considered that pride is an integral aspect of social identification, this study aims at exploring the relation between collective pride in belonging to a group which, through the assistance of leaders, work collectively to transcend its oppressed limits by achieving education and developing an educational identity.

Dalit Women-Forced into Prostitution

While Dalit women share common sex discrimination issues with their upper caste colleagues, they also have unique challenges for them. Dalit women suffer the hardest, suffering three kinds of oppression - caste, class and gender. Dalit women are now the victims of many kinds of superstition, having very low levels of education and alphabenism, high reliance on salaries, discrimination in employment and pay, a large concentration of unskilled, low-paid, and dangerous manual occupations, violence and sexual exploitation. Dalit women's very situation is rooted in the Vedic era. They have to work as maids or tied workers, who suffer sexual harassment from the higher caste man, or convert society into prostitutes. Bhimrao Shirwale has examined the true face of the Brahmanism in the tale Livelihood which still exists now. The tale shows how a poor Dalit girl was forced to sell her body to satisfy her hunger. Her beauty was the biggest obstacle of her life that made men stare at her with lustful eyes. This is not the only example. All Dalit females are familiar with such things. Women are the foundation of any civilization and the whole community may be controlled if women are controlled.

The Hindu religious institution was utilised as a tool to exploit and silence the Dalit women. It was thus that the renowned "Devadasi ritual" was established, which allowed the non-brahmin women to serve the Brahmin priests in the name of the divine servant. In fact, this service was physical service. In other words, the ladies were harassed and assaulted sexually. The only difference is that women have taken such sexual harassment as a way of serving God. If God truly exists and is regarded equal to everyone, then how can God force one group quiet after such a loss of dignity, for His own benefit. It is claimed that Draupadi, who was to be raped by Duryodhana, was clothed by Lord Krishna in a saree of endless length. If so, then how can God Himself make regulations (as the Brahmins have claimed, the Vedas and Smritis are the invention of God) to clothe the Dalit females in the Devdasi system. Dalit women are confronted by atrocities by males of all four varnae whose fundamental sexual nature is sexual. If the ladies are unmarried and family free, then this is the greatest chance. Because they would travel to the higher caste merely in quest of employment. When assigned as a house maid, they must not only labour for themselves, but also satisfy the appointer's sexual needs. If they refuse, they're kicked out. Finally, they would find no means to survive and start selling their bodies and become prostitutes of all sectors of society. This is how Dalit women become society's prostitutes.

Dalit Movement-The Struggle of the Submerged Communities

The Dalit groups in India have started their campaign in India with their fundamental demand for equality because they fight against inequality in society as they strongly believe in the 'Telequality' concept. The Dalits are driven by cruel and inhumane acts to protest against the caste hierarchy system in India, which has separated Indian society on the basis of caste, class and sex. On the post-independence era, the Dalit movement gained strength and is based in the Vedic period. The conflict between Shraman and Brahman was and then the Mukti movement. The Mukti movement was headed by very impoverished Dalits who opposed the saint - poets of that period. The Dalits started to discover the principles of equality and liberty with the advent of western language and the influence of Christian missionaries, thereby starting the Dalit movement in the contemporary era. When combined with reason, the dissatisfied Dalit minds started a battle against the horrors of Brahmanism. Educated Dalit, who eventually started to speak about the issues of the poor and the exploitation and humiliation of higher castes, Dalits attempted to convey the need for change in society to the other uneducated brothers without any reluctance. A lot of authors and journalists were born in the Dalit Movement. There has arisen a new set of intellectuals among the Dalit community. Through their work, several authors made people aware of the exploitation of the privileged part of society. The Dalit Panther Movement started in Maharashtra in the 1970s. The main reason in the development of Dalit Panthars was the persecution and fear under which the oppressed Dalits continued to live in rural areas. Inspired by the Black Movement, the Dalit Panthers were established to spearhead the movement by a group of educated Mahars. Without the Dalit Literary Struggle, the Dalit movement cannot be understood.

Dalit Literary Movement

At a period when communication was not available to assist the Dalits, pen was the only option. Media and publications were all controlled by the Brahmins, the dominant class. Since the Brahmines would never let Dalits to speak since this is a danger to their own existence, the Dalits started their own magazine and began to convey their own experiences. Their pen did not use ink, but blood, their own wounds - they are essentially mental, with physical reflexes. Dalit literature, the Dalit awareness literature, first developed during the Mukti movement. Later, when the Dalit Panthers were formed, a series of Dalit poems and tales started to emerge portraying the sufferings of the Dalits, rooted in the rule and law of Vedas and Smritis. All of these literatures have claimed that the Dalit Movement opposes not only the Brahmines but all the individuals who use them, and they may be the Brahmines or even the Dalits. Dalit authors wrote new revolutionary songs, poetry, tales, memoirs. All their emotions broke out in the form of texts. Writing is not only writing, but it reflects one's constant struggle against evil. It looked as though the whole Dalit community found room for their thousand-year quiet. The writings that each of her words had the power to draw blood were so effective. The songs were performed in each hamlet, the poem and the whole community read additional texts. Educated Dalit and the intellectuals began speaking without any reluctance about the issues of the poor and of the exploitation and humiliation of the Upper Castes. Dalits attempted to convey the necessary transformation in society to other uneducated friars. Dalit literature tries not to generate hate but to make Dalits' pitiful position conscious of the past and the future generation. It is not caste literature but is linked in a democratic social movement with the Dalit struggle in order to achieve economic socio-change.

Collective Pride: The Role of Leader

The majority of Dalits, along with poverty and the lack of formal education, are experiencing both psychological threats and humiliation. However, some study has shown pride in the community, the culture (Zelliot, 2001) and the development of genuine leaders have brought optimism for social change and the collective movement. These collective movements included all classes and represented the group-based social change efforts. One approach is to identify the educational areas in which neoliberal politics and systems of higher values are dominant resulting to the absence of equitable representation of the voice of the Dalit pupils. The job of colleges and other educational systems is imperatively to emphasize the accomplishments of Dalits, which may be inspiring both at the social level and on the level of Dalits. The pride in the Dalit Group member's accomplishment was often utilized figuratively as faith, hope, dignity, identity and satisfaction. These analogies indicate the good possibilities for freedom in the future. This depiction of one's life as a group member who has been deprived of fundamental rights throughout history shows the circumstances required for social mobility.

Identification with Dalit Movements for Social Change

Concepts of pride derived from group membership for future social mobility embedded in various tokens such as the development of educational achievement, political identity, the recognition of

past achievements, and culture can be some of the main characteristics of social mobility, such as cultural mobility, social mobility and how they differ from sanscritism. Without criticism, cultural mobility among the lower castes people is a process in which they accept the ideas, rituals and practices of upper caste groups in order to improve their economic position. Sanskriticity and modernity cannot be linked because we observe that modernity has given it the ability to reject the upper caste culture of oppression, allowing it to believe the significance of its existence, to take part in certain and to reject another form of its cultural practice. Some of the untouchables' degrading cultural practises were more the consequence of the repressive Upper Caste for scavenging work than of choice. This leads to dehumanization and under-humanization in history and has no regard for oneself and pride. This was rejected by the prominent Dalits as part of the culture. One of the participants rejected through the lens of Sanskritization the idea of social class mobility of Dalits:

S2: This is a Sanskritization process that enhances the identity of Dalits to a high degree inside the system. So my reply is no.

Other habits like as singing, courage, folk music, literature and innovations, however, were preserved. Removing the memories of pride due to tyranny and untouchability means that all strata of Indian society are totally excluded. The significance of Dalits' political identity and constitutional classification was part of a social movement that asserted its identity and re-enacted respect and the fight for equality in society. For instance, Ambedkar's leadership allowed individuals from Mahara to choose not to eat baggage, to do other degrading occupations and to aspire to be educated and confident. One participant voiced contempt for his socioeconomic group yet he very much connected with the social movements of Dalit struggling for rights and dignity:

Y: I don't recognize my social group (i.e. caste). But I sympathies with the Dalit liberation and dignity struggle. I believe that the leadership of Dalit (post-Ambedkar) did not provide any prospect for collective humiliation. Instead, the leadership of Dalit (or its failure) may have been part of the feeling of shame.

But he was strongly associated with the Dalit struggle for Dalit's dignity and pride. It was also observed that the post-Ambedkar period raised communal shame. The leadership of Ambedkar generated a feeling of dignity among the socially disadvantaged. Although the decision by the Dalit to be on the brink of social class mobility was tough, somewhere it indicates the steady increase in their awareness throughout the nation, which offers powerful social dominance opposition.

Identification with the Authentic Leaders

The negotiation of the meaning of one's life relies on leaders as well as the force of ambition and the commitment of the collective movement to defend its own rights in national and international forums. Are dignity and communal pride sufficient to emerge from poverty? Here is the method to

address humiliation by inspiring the leader who stands for his own identity. One Dalit participant describes this here:

S1: Dr. Ambedkar was our hero. I read his autobiography and Dr. Ambedkar's life provided me immediate motivation to dream of a better life, and improve the underprivileged people anytime I find myself in difficulty. Kanshi Ram, the Dalit leader, was also my influence. I met him three times with the assistance of my dad, who was a party leader. I still believe that community leadership plays an important role in anticipating people's desire to make society better and better.

Research indicates that modelling ambition and inspiration have an extremely significant role in collective self-efficacy that leads to future success. For Dalits the function of group pride is essential in reviving the interest in one's respectable existence. The Dalits may be an excellent awareness project, from a humiliating viewpoint, but for liberation, it is essential that the collective action and drive come from collective pride. Collective pride is not a static psychological group internalization but appears to be an integral element of the phase of discourse in which identity may be constructed and reconstructed in daily speeches and professional contacts, such seminars, conferences, protests, forums and online blogs. Dalits collective pride is a major emotional phenomenon that is rooted in both the modern and historical spheres. Although Dalit is a political identity in which individuals identify with this political awareness, it is equally essential to highlight that there are numerous socioeconomic classifications under the tent of Dalit identity. These social categorizations are related to our cultural connection and membership to the social category. There are numerous castes (>2,000) under the Constitutional category of planned castes with a variety of cultural and social experiences, for example. The unifying thread which connects all these castes is nevertheless the humiliation and prejudice of upper caste value systems.

There is a broad sharing between the lower caste peoples between the very expression and sense of insult and discrimination, but it is also necessary to recognise that these feelings transgress positive emotions when collectively handled in terms of achievement and the achievement of political, social and constitutional rights. This metaphysics of collectivity is both ontological and epistemic in terms of the concrete and visible product of the social transformation. Discriminated castes in all spheres, such as culture, education, social, and politics have a unique cultural relation from which they have cause to be proud, such as Saint Ravidas and Chokhamela, who are known as saints by Dalits and other social reformers in the other Castes. Because the Indian culture simply does not consider caste structure as a universal element, while it is a significant foundation that better explains other dependent variables, it is necessary to take seriously the creation of micro identity based on cultural practises in social interaction. The removal of one's lives and cultural traditions, particularly of the lower caste and Dalits, has enabled one to become conscious of one's entitlement to be on an equal footing with all others. Folklore and tales often testify to instances where individuals from the marginalized group underline the action of courage, scholarship, holiness and leadership from members of the group who held the group aloft and made them proud. But such discourses, folklore stories and tales received no recognition and no significance in the literature and historical records. The desire to be a respected member of society

may directly be linked to the resurgence of pride and connection to the fight of individuals and groups to overcome the barrier of educational, social and professional stereotypes. A educated Dalit participant who connects with the personality and accomplishment of Ambedkar and who generates optimism in education and other areas to reaffirm and highlight their identity, states:

P: I don't believe it's feeling like pride that I associate with my social group. However, Ambedkar's personality, accomplishment and policy have always inspired me to look critically about myself, my life, my thoughts, and my potential social contribution.

Some of the reports said B. R. Ambedkar is a Dalit pride figure. This is shown in the numbers of movements by the Dalits, such as the public place for awareness and information on the history of the Dalit battle and its leader, education and excellence, singing, proud march, excellence in competition, sport, romantic ties (marrying from the higher caste), etc. The recent disintegration of B. R. Ambedkar, a monument that represents Dalit's leadership, respect and pride of fight, reveals the company's unacceptability to Dalits in many fields. "The Ambedkar sculptures represent Dalit existence, respect for themselves and optimism for a brighter future in villages and cities across India. The removal of his monument is an assault on Dalits' self-respect and a danger to their future," says D. Shyam Babu, fellow at the Rajiv Gandhi Research Institute (Ghosh, 2006).

CONCLUSION

Dalit Movement, the social movement aiming at social transformation that has replaced an ancient Indian hierarchical society, founded on the democratic ideal of freedom, equality and social justice, has started a long time ago and has been strong in the 1970s. One explanation for this, as Uma Chakraborty pointed out, is that academics pay little attention. Books about the Dalit Movement are produced but they are not real books and the Brahmin elite are taken into account. Nobody wants to face the powerful. In addition, people's brains are brahmanized through hegemony. Another important problem, however, is that the movement does not include members from all Dalit groups. In Maharashtra, for example, the Mahars controlled the movement. Other Dalit groups such as the Mangs, Chamars, did not actively participate in the movement. As Kamble said, the Mangs and Chamars had their customary tasks and could manage their food somehow. But the Mahars had no customary obligation to protest. Many additional problems have now arisen. The Dalits who gained power became the Brahmins' dolls. Many of them prefer to emulate the Brahmin change their surnames and thus their identities. You are disgusted to be labelled Dalits who make you discriminate against your own kith and kins. The Dalit Movement is against brahmanism rather than Brahmins. It should be emphasised. The choice taken by many Indian Christians not to engage too closely with politics of secularism but to identify with the Dalit struggle is important. It shows that while identification has become a major way to mobilise politics, it doesn't always result in a limited communalization of politics related to BJP religious nationalism.

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