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ECONOMY AND CASTE IN INDIA

Dr. M. VADIVEL

Assistant Professor of Economics, Erode College of Law, Erode.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the relationship between the modern Indian economy and the caste structure. Economic inequality in the distribution of wealth and income is a result of caste-related differences in education, employment, and asset ownership in Indian society. It clarifies the intricate caste system that shapes the structure and issues of Indian economic growth. The study examines the ways in which institutions and socio-cultural norms uphold caste systems. However, Dalit and Adivasi communities' viewpoints on legal issues and benefits were widely condemned. In the Indian setting, economic issues and legal remedies for depression were examined. Last but not least, modern India upholds the social justice and inclusive citizenship outlined in the Constitution while eliminating disparities across communities.

Keywords: Baanan, Paraiyan, Thudiyar and Kadamban, Jhathi, Saathi.

INTRODUCTION:

The caste system in India dates back more than 5000 years. Caste which means “purity” refers to a state of racial, linguistic and social purity in which a group of people feel united and distinct. People in India define certain rules and philosophies for caste identity; however

these are still debatable because they lack a clear foundation. The caste system is exclusive to Indian society. Lower-ranking castes in India are discriminated against by the caste system, which limits their access to capital and stifles their ability to start their own business. Economic development is eventually hampered by

the substantial macroeconomic costs imposed by this societal norm.

HISTORY AND CASTE

The Indian system was divided into four groups, according to Vedic literature: Brahmins, Kshatriyars, Vaishnavas, and Sutas. People were divided solely on the basis of Varna according to the caste system's principles. People pushed on committing to their own jobs and occupations that existed in society, and they hurried to adopt the Varna system. People have been obliged to identify with and pursue their own occupation only because of their birth. It was forbidden to perform another person's duties. They chose their surnames to support their identities. The upper caste, particularly the Brahmins, codified virtual customs. The people were brutally punished and cut off from the society they named Avarnas if they refused to embrace these customs and institutions.

Individuals were relocated to locations that were distinct from those inhabited by members of the upper caste. These customs were highly prevalent throughout the nation and required rigorous adherence to religious beliefs. Only non-Brahmin people worshipped deities. Brahmins organized virtual rituals; only Sanskrit was regarded as a sacred language in temples. Only Brahmins created genuine

chanting techniques, and Sanskrit was one language that played a significant role in virtual rituals. Some practices and omens were absolutely forbidden, while others followed rituals. According to Vedic propaganda, those who followed and worshipped their own divinity were punished harshly.

According to Purananuru, there are only three clans or "Gulams" in Tamil epic literature: Baanan, Paraiyan, Thudiyan and Kadamban. Tamil literature contained no proof of the Caste system. The word "Jhathi" which comes from Sanskrit was used to refer to caste or "Saathi" in Tamil. Still, the Tamil people strictly adhere to the Hindu religious code, which teaches Indians that they are Hindus and that they reside in a Hindu nation or Rashtra.

CASTE SYSTEM VIEW

Throughout his life, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was also impacted by this kind of incident. During the British era, he wrote about the history and characteristics of the caste system in India. Ambedkar had highlighted the origins of caste in society and its effects on the social lives of common people, particularly Dalits. He has emphasized that caste discrimination is more harmful than racial prejudice, which is still practiced in America and England. He felt safe and free to study and visit

classrooms as a regular student and scholar while he was studying in Europe.

LABOR AND CASTE MARKET

Dalit and Adivasi populations are overrepresented in casual and informal employment in rural economies, including manual scavenging, construction, domestic work, and agricultural wage labour. According to data from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) in 2017, most Dalit and Adivasi workers were in the most recent tier of the occupational hierarchy, with little opportunity for advancement. In addition to denying workers essential components like social security benefits, legal redress, and labour consultancy rights, as well as the ability to create negotiating associations, informal work is typically characterized by insecurity over income, benefits, and legally sanctioned employment.

CASTE-SPECIFIC DISTORTIONS' MACROECONOMIC COSTS

The output per worker rises by 5.6% when companies owned by lower-ranked castes have borrowing capacities comparable to those of their higher-ranked caste counterparts. Cross-caste ARPK differences vanish to zero and the overall dispersion in ARPK significantly decreases at the intensive margin due to the reallocation of capital from

unproductive firms owned by higher-ranked castes to more productive firms owned by lower-ranked castes, which increases the allocative efficiency of capital in the economy. TFP increases by 3.1% as a result of these modifications. Because entrepreneurship is comparatively more profitable when borrowing limitations are less constraining, the easing of borrowing constraints at the intensive margin encourages the introduction of additional businesses owned by lower-ranked castes. Additionally, the surge of businesses raises the need for labour and money. This enhancement raises TFP by an additional 2.5%.

ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES WITH THE CASTE SYSTEM

The caste system is a major factor in administrative and decision-making processes in Indian culture. Furthermore, employment prospects for Dalits and the impoverished were determined by members of higher castes. People are hired by different organizations and institutions throughout the nation based on their caste. Who will perform what kind of work will be decided by hierarchy. Here, caste is the only determining element. A servant will always be a servant and a manager will always be a manager. Carpenters and washer men should only perform the tasks for which they are qualified. In this way,

all Indian workers are required to abide by the terms and conditions.

The golden theory of economics in society demonstrates that the wealthiest become richer and the disadvantaged get poorer. In India, impoverished individuals, especially Dalits, enjoy a wide range of career options. Colony, Cheri, or Kuppam are the names given to Dalit settlements that are isolated from the broader category and are simply designated in a distinctive way. In the sake of caste, upper caste Hindus have been torturing Dalits in their own communities and workplaces. Dalits are paid poorly by upper caste Hindus, who also brutally exploit their labour force. The impoverished are mercilessly beaten and slapped by upper caste Hindus, both men and women, according to individuals who have inquired about this. They will occasionally be killed as a result of this kind of occurrence. The entire village of Dalits' homes was set on fire.

Upper caste members forcibly grabbed the lands of Dalits. For instance, the British government gave punchami lands in Tamil Nadu to Dalits who were downtrodden and referred to as "Paraiyas" so they could subsist. However, Hindus from higher castes took the Dalits' lands and have never returned. Even courts ordered the return of depressed people to their land, but sadly, they did not give them a single acre. Additionally, the Tamilnadu

government was unable to apprehend and turn over the Dalits. Because the landowners of punchami lands were politicians from higher castes, they ceased using their influence and authority to carry out this kind of action. The majority of Dalits lacked literacy and had no idea how to reclaim their own territory. Political party leaders arrived and took control of Tamilnadu, but they did not yet give the oppressed people their land. Other members of the upper caste occupied and preserved property and wealth.

In the name of caste, upper caste communities use political power to force Dalits to abide by laws and regulations. Dalits continued to be mistreated and mistreated in the twenty-first century for a number of reasons that lacked humanity. They were forbidden from openly using and consuming public commodities, and they were unable to visit temples and other places of worship. Violence and conflicts against Dalits increased significantly more quickly than in the past. Dalit women and girls were mercilessly raped across the nation. Violence and conflicts against Dalits increased significantly more quickly than in the past. Every second, members of the majority Hindu caste mercilessly rape Dalit women and girls across the nation and discard their bodies on the streets.

India's economy suffers greatly from the caste system because a large

portion of the population and society are essentially members of the caste system's basic component, which is their original identity. The marriage system and family structure are distinctive to society. Women who don't have a job or occupation also identify with the caste system. The caste system has not advanced much, but it also ignores the growth of the people's communities. The caste system establishes social norms around marriage. They do not unite through marriage or wed other members of the community. The pair will be cut off from any caste- maintained customs and rituals if they are members of separate communities or castes. Additionally, they may occasionally be murdered by members of their own family, a practice known as "honour killing." Because upper caste Hindus are glad to carry out honour killings and are proud to do it for caste bride, honour killing is still practiced in society.

ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES

The caste system has traditionally hindered the community's economic growth since it prioritizes obedience. People from the same caste will perform the occupation. One economic activity that contributes to economic development is consumption. In India, caste also determines a person's consumption habits, including whether they consume

vegetarian or non-vegetarian food as well as other goods and services. The majority of folks won't eat what they want. The type of goods produced will also be determined by production, and consumption is not inherently favoured. The Indian economy's progress in production is constantly threatened by the caste system, which makes it difficult to manufacture, consume, exchange, and distribute goods. Without caste admission no man could evolve all industrial processes and activities. Some people are prohibited from pursuing other occupations, such as farmers, carpenters, weavers, and others. Only Hindus from higher castes were given land and income, and work was assigned based on the caste system's or caste patterns' priorities. Dalits should still be prohibited from entering workshops, agricultural fields, and industrial areas. The only thing that prevents them from going about their daily lives is the fact that it is strictly forbidden for them to participate in the industrial process throughout.

Even now, the majority of businesses intentionally create profiles to determine the applicants' caste or category. They selected the more difficult professions for those from lower castes and offered appropriate opportunities to those from higher castes. For instance, we select a corporation that will assign white caller

employment to applicants from higher castes. Even when their educational background and skill set are the same, lower caste members would be assigned to unclean vocations like office cleaning.

REGARDING ELEMENTS OF CONSUMPTION

Because they wish to purchase and use those goods and services, only one specific community prefers to engage in consuming. People are prohibited from engaging in all of these consumption activities because the owner of the business makes the decision and is aware of the community. They fear that future Dalits may acquire aptitude and abilities; hence they will not permit Dalits to engage in business or industrial activities.

Ambedkar challenges the caste system's justification based on the division of labour by critically analyzing it. According to him, caste is a division of workers rather than just a division of labour, which results in inefficiency, job aversion, and forced employment. Famously, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar described caste as an "enclosed class." He contended in his groundbreaking book *Annihilation of Caste* that the caste system was a crippling division of labourers that hindered social mobility and promoted pervasive social fragmentation rather than just a natural division of labour.

INDIAN SOCIETY'S CASTE SYSTEM PROBLEMS

For a variety of causes, caste also caused suffering for laypeople.

1. Laymen shouldn't maintain relationships with other people
2. The average person should abide by the laws and norms that are in place in society.
3. Since they belong to a different caste, their neighbour is not related to them.
4. Even wealthy individuals suffered because of the caste system.
5. Choosing the bride and groom in a dispersed caste system makes marriage difficult.
6. No one will fall in love and get married.
7. Each community or caste has its own deity worship and rituals.
8. Caste is a distinct identity that lasts from birth to death.
9. It is totally forbidden to have children with a spouse or partner from a different caste.
10. Only caste members, not friends, participate in funeral customs

DIFFICULTIES IN INDIA'S CASTE SYSTEM ERADICATION:

The caste system has existed in Indian civilization for about 5000 years. Time, lifestyle, and culture are all evolving, but the caste system is also evolving with increasingly severe discrimination, which is the ultimate technique to keep people

apart in every manner. In India, the caste system worsens the misallocation of resources and results in large economic losses that are important on a macro level. Enhancing lower-ranked castes' access to financing would encourage savings and wealth development as well as the growth of their productive businesses. As a result, there would be a greater demand for labour and a rise in employment. In India, where labour markets are divided along caste lines and 75% of workers in a company are from the same caste as the owner, this is especially pertinent **(Goraya 2023)**. Therefore, lower-ranking caste households' entrepreneurial restrictions must also be loosened in order to improve their labour market performance. Determining the precise causes of the low credit distribution to lower-ranked castes would be a crucial next step in light of the study's findings.

The following obstacles must be overcome in order to end the caste system in Indian society:

1. Indian society has long recognized the caste system.
2. Caste continues to influence people's beliefs, behaviours, and mindsets
3. Every guy has his own caste identity.
4. Changing one's caste requires parental consent.

5. Caste interacts with wealth, kinship, marriage, and god Constitutional and Legislative Framework

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, which punishes caste-based violence and systemic oppression, and the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, which criminalizes untouchability, are the main laws that guarantee fundamental equality in the Indian constitution.

Article 15 of the Indian Constitution forbids the State from discriminating on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. This is just one of the many egregious reasons why India has taken legal action to confront and eliminate the effects of the caste system. Additionally, it gives the State the authority to create special policies for the advancement of

socially and educationally disadvantaged groups, such as Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs).

Equal opportunity in public employment is guaranteed by Article 16 of the Indian Constitution. It permits the State to create reservations for any underrepresented group of citizens in the services. Furthermore, the Indian Constitution's Article 17 outlaws the practice of untouchability and states that enforcing any impairment resulting from it is illegal.

The Indian Constitution's Article 46 mandates that the State safeguard the economic and educational interests of the weaker segments of society, especially SCs and STs, from exploitation and social injustice. Reservation policies were also implemented, such as legislative quotas, which guarantee historically underrepresented groups proportionate participation in government employment, higher education, local Panchayats, municipalities, and legislative assemblies. The Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955, which was first passed as the Untouchability (Offences) Act, is the Indian constitution's anti-discrimination and atrocity laws. It stipulates severe penalties for preaching or engaging in untouchability. This includes restricting people access to stores and eateries based on caste, prohibiting them from accessing public facilities like rivers and wells, or prohibiting them from entering places of worship. Additionally, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 was created to stop crimes against members of SC/ST communities. In particular, it makes it illegal to impose social or economic boycotts, force people to consume inedible or obscene items, or defile sacred things. For prompt trials, it requires the establishment of special

courts. Amendments, such as the 2015 amendment that included safeguards to protect witnesses and victims, have strengthened this act even more.

Articles 338 and 338A of the Constitution established the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) for the benefit of oppressed people. These statutory bodies examine into particular complaints about the denial of rights and oversee all issues pertaining to the protections afforded to SCs and STs.

CONCLUSION

Numerous plans and initiatives have been revealed by the Indian government. Through the appropriate execution of works, the programs aim to support and elevate the nation's schedule tribes and caste. Unfortunately, though, relatively few people now profit from government initiatives. This is dubious because Dalits are only given jobs by Hindus from higher castes who are managers, administrative officers, or in positions of authority. Without receiving any pay, they will send dollars home. As a result, those in this low group only earn the minimum wage or salary when they work for organizations and businesses.

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