



'An Sociological Analysis of the Causes of the Emergence of untouchability towards 'Dom' Caste during Medieval Times of India'

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Abstract: *From ancient times in the society of India there were not any examples of untouchability by birth. P. V. Kane in his creation 'The History of Dharmshastras' mentions that there was a kind of untouchability, not by birth and not for permanent but it was impermanent and was based on several temporary conditions as- menstruation, funeral, doing any filthy work etc. These all situation were only till the time, until the person could not purify him. But after the prescribed purification the person could be no more untouchable. By the account presented by the historian Ram Sharan Sharma in his book 'Shudron ka Prachin Itihas', Sometimes the birth based untouchability was attached with the 'Chandal' but it was actually not a caste and it was certainly not a 'Dom'. Same is discussed by Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar in his book 'Untouchables : Who and Why' that no one in India was by birth an untouchable but certain circumstances during history made them as those suffered for many centuries.*

Key Words: Untouchability, Dharmshastras, Impermanent, Temporary, Purification, Itihas.

Then why and how the by birth untouchability emerged in India and how this kind of untouchability attached with the 'Dom' caste which was not as untouchable in the times of ancient India and just before the 12th century AD, just before the invasions from Arabs, Persians and Turks.

A Sociological analysis is given below on this important topic.

The Nature of Untouchability in the Society of Ancient India and the 'Dom' Caste:

When we see in the far past of the construction of Indian society, we find that the motives of inequality and un-touchability are not available on this ancient level. Prof P V Kane, Prof G. S. Ghurye and even Prof RamSharan Sharma like scholars analysed this very elaborately and established that fact that the by birth untouchability as a caste was not available in ancient Indian society.

Actually there was a kind of untouchability of different nature and it was related to all people of the society and not only with any particular segment.

The actual nature of untouchability in
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ancient India- During ancient times untouchability could be towards anyone, related to specific condition but it was not for lifelong and it could be re-achieve normal status of equality to others by removal of the cause, which cause was responsible to produce the untouchability towards anyone.

The conditions given below could make any one as untouchable for few seconds or for few minutes or for few hours or months, years etc but whenever the person could remove the cause of this kind of temporary untouchability the untouchability towards the person could automatically removed.

Major conditions of the temporarily untouchability during ancient times - Without thinking of the caste any person, who could become temporarily untouchable during ancient times of Indian society if the person could have the causes of untouchability.

Prof P. V. Kane in his famous book 'History of DharmShastra', traced that the untouchability could be associate with anyone if the person have these disabilities given below-

1- The people ,who are indulged to do sins.



Then until the people did not leave their habits, those become untouchable. But when those could leave their habits, those could come in the mainstream of society.

2- The people who followed different schools of Sanatan Dharma, often treated by opponent people of other schools as untouchables but it was also not by birth because if someone could leave their school and joined the school of others then those could be touchable for the members of the new school.

3- If a person of high class family was being oriented to the professions of lower dignity then the person could be untouchable of the higher class until the person did not leave the profession of rather than lower dignity.

4- The touch to a woman who is during the days of menstruation.

This kind of untouchability was also only till then until the women could not cross the period of menstruation and could not take bath after this.

5- If a woman delivers a child then for six days she could be untouchable.

6- If people joined a funeral of a dead body then until the funeral related rituals could not be performed till then the people will remain untouchable.

7- The people who are residing in the prohibited areas could be untouchable, until the people did not leave the restricted places for living.

8- The people who kill animals, birds, fishes etc were also considered as untouchables until the people could not leave these kind of killings of innocent creatures but when those leave this kind of cruelty then those could be considered as normal people and could re-achieve their dignity-full status in society.

These were the conditions for converting a person as untouchable but this was actually a temporary phase, which could be removed after the removal of the actual cause, which cause was generated it.

By this account we can realize that any

caste, which was considered as untouchable during medieval times was actually not an untouchable during ancient times.

Same was about 'Dom' caste and 'Dom' caste was not an untouchable caste till 12th century C.E. Prof G. S. Ghurye in his book, 'Caste and Class in India' is asserting by the example of the wedding of the Rajpoot King 'Chakrawarman' of Kashmir and the 'Dom' bride 'Hansi' that there was not any kind of untouchability towards 'Dom' till 12th century CE. Almost same was said by the renowned historian 'Prof Ram Sharan Sharma' in his famous book, 'Shudron ka Prachin Itihas', that the 'Dom' caste was not treated as an untouchable caste till the 12th century CE.

The Possible Causes of the association of the Untouchability with few Castes including 'Dom'

: We discussed above that during ancient India there was not any birth based untouchability and all kinds of untouchabilities were temporary and could be removed after following after certain and prescribed path. But why and how 'Dom' become a birth based untouchable caste during medieval era of the history of India ?

What can be the actual causes to convert this caste as an untouchable caste ?

And how the temporary untouchability transformed as the permanent untouchability ?

Where are the 'Mahattar' segment of ancient Indian society ? :

Till the 12th century CE, the institution of 'Mahattar' was mentioned as a very important institution. The Mahattar was actually the village head and it was the connecting tool between system of the monarch and village society of then India. But now just after the 12th century CE means after the invasion by Arabs, Iranians, and Turks we find the institute of 'Mahattar' is suddenly disappeared, while the presence of 'Dom' as an untouchable caste is appearing during this phase with the name of 'Mehattar'. Then of course the question is rising that, 'after the defeat of Indians, does the village head 'Mahattar' were converted as the untouchable.



'Mehatar' by force and by torture ?

It seems very natural because the very popular ideom- " Maar Maar ke Bhangi Bana Dunga" is indicating that the conversion as a Bhangi (Bhangi is the another name of Dom caste) is not a natural happening but it is based on tortures.

The Claim of a 'Royal Position': The Hindi novelist 'Amrit Lal Nagar' in his famous novel, 'Nachyo Bahut Gopal' and 'Dev Datt Sharma Chaturvedi' in his research work, 'Patit Prabhakar : Mehtar Jati ka Itihaas' and W. Crook with reference of Sir H M Elliot in his edited creation, 'The Landmarks in Indian Anthropology' are presenting a lot of data of the claim by the people of ' Dom' caste and by presenting the account of the clans and the gotras of Rajputs and of the Doms and claiming that the Doms are actually those defeated Rajputs who never accepted the slavery of the invaders and as a result of this revolt forever, those punished by deprivation of property, power and of dignity and the other people from the Hindu society, who tried to make compromise with these invaders were seduced by these invaders to neglect and to torture these real heroes of Indian society, who were never ready to accept the slavery and even to discard the association with the 'Vaaraah Poojan' .

The factor of 'Vaaraah Poojan' and of the association with 'Vaaraah':

The answer of these important questions are available in the tradition of the invaders came from Arab, Iran, Turkey etc and which invaders were actually pig haters while the people of India were the worshiper of Vaaraah (wild boar) as the third incarnation of Naaraayan. In the shape the Vaaraah is very similar to pig and the castes which are treated as untouchables are very associated with pig till now, while the other castes means the so called untouchable castes of Hindu society had been left the worshipping of the Vaarah as the incarnation of Narayan , while till the 12th century CE those were very fond for 'Vaarah Poojan' from ancient times. In the Walmiki Ramayan we find that when Sita was in the Ashok Watika in Lanka then one day Sita is

worshipping Waaraah Bhagwaan with the mantra given below-

" Jalaugh Magna Sachraachraa Dharaa,
Wikshaan Kotya-akhil Wishwa Murtina,
Samudrhritha Yen Waaraah Rupina,
Sa Me Swayambhubhagwan Prasadatu."

Alogwith this there are availability of several more mantras , idols and temples related to 'Vaaraah Bhagwaan' which are the proofs that in the society of India the worship of 'Vaaraah Bhagwaan' was same popular as the worship of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Buddha etc.

Then very important question is that when and why the the other castes except untouchable castes left the tradition of the worship of 'Waaraah Bhagwaan' ?

And why the all untouchable castes are clearly associated with 'Vaarah' till now ?

Conclusion : When we trying to find the answers of the questions mentioned above and when we try to correlate all these circumstances and the available facts then we can easily draw the formulation that the 'Mahattars' of till the 12th century CE who were in the direct fight with the invaders and who were the crystal clear enemies of the Arab, Turk, Iranian invading people.

We know about the forever rivalry between the Indian Hero Maharaja Suhel Deo who killed in a war to the close relative of Mahmood Gaznawi and we know about the never surrendered Heroes of India in the leadership of Prithwiraj Chauhaan and same was with many many other heroes of India who were never surrendered and many of them were killed but many were survived and being tortured by invaders.

Many among them were the people who played in the independent India as a 'Mahattar' and after the defeat of Indian forces those were tortured and treated as slaves with no rights of property, poer or of dignity.

The other people of India who were in the greed of property, and power were ready to make compromises and left many of their cultural



traditions like 'Vaaraah Poojan' and even those were non-sensitive to respect the real heroes of India but those made a association with invaders and willingly or without willingly but played against these real heroes, to whom the invaders were treating very badly and depriving them in all dimensions.

In this situation those Indian heroes were not ready to discard the 'Vaaraah Poojan' and of the association with 'Vaarah' (pig) and so the Vaaraah hater Arabs, Iranians and Turks tried to convince other Hindus to avoid and to disrespect as untouchables to these real heroes of India and who were the real enemies of the invaders from Arab, Iran and Turkey etc.

During this age of darkness the majority of the people of India could not show their well known intellect and indulged with the conspiracy by invaders against the real heroes of India and were used for the accomplishment of the conspiracy by invaders to make the real heroes of India as the untouchables by birth. These are the real circumstances' for this kind of untouchability by birth and which is not an attribute of the real Indian society of ancient India.....Thanks.

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