



## Universality of untouchable : A Review

Amardeep Singh, amardeepsingh1101@gmail.com

### Abstract

India has played the most significant role in the promotion of the cause of human rights and is the greatest champion of human rights in the Third World. India has not only incorporated an elaborate Bill of Rights in her constitution but efforts have been made to translate these into reality. This was necessary too as, is proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 'a man comes into this world through no fault of his own, since he has no option of choosing the caste, class and the family of his birth, since he is a joint inheritor of the accumulations of the past and since these accumulations are more than sufficient to satisfy the claims that are made on his behalf, it follows that every man, without distinction of race or colour is entitled to all human rights, including the right to... dignified life.' In a country like India whose constitution makes provisions not only of human rights but their protection also, human rights of delit. Its and untouchables are still in a sorry state. In no other part of the world has so much injustice and systematic discrimination been done to a particular group of people for thousands of years as has been done in India with Dalits and untouchables. The basis of injustice or discrimination is not religion or language but 'caste' over which a person has no control. More than 50 years have elapsed since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations and the Indian constitution was enacted. In all these years a democratic country like India has done little to enforce the rights of Dalits and untouchables. In spite of many idealistic provisions in the basic law of the land human rights of these people are violated time and again and only a few of them get reported.

ISSN 2454-308X



**Key words:** Universality, untouchable, Dalits, Human etc.

### Introduction

The word 'dalit' literally means poor and oppressed people. But it has acquired a new cultural context which implies, 'those who have been broken down by those above them in a deliberate, systematic and active way. The term basically refers to ex untouchables and we will confine ourselves to this interpretation. Dalits in modern India the brunt of a long broken legacy of the deepest social degradation. They usually are at the bottom of almost every parameter relating to economic well being or quality of life. The distinct burden that only



they bear, among all underprivileged groups in India, is the degradation of a centuries-old tradition of untouchability. The practise of untouchability we mean the avoidance of physical contact with persons and things because of popular social beliefs and practices. No doubt India has a rich and glorious cultural legacy to be proud of but still more important fact is that nowhere in the world can be found the extent of discrimination perpetuated by one group against the other as it is found in the case of low caste untouchables (by the high caste Hindus) in India. Caste system is a unique feature of India life. It is believed that originally there were only four castes, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisayas and Shudras, and this classification was on the basis of one's profession not birth. But over the past thousands of years these four castes have been sub-divided into thousands of castes and sub-castes, and now the basis of classification is 'birth' rather than 'profession'. There have been many empirical studies which make it clear that the practice of untouchability is still an important component of Indian society and is in a complex, dynamic situation of flux and transition. Though from the public life, especially in urban areas, this practice has almost been eradicated but in rural areas 'Dalits' still find only a very restricted entry to temples, drinking water resources and other public places. Dalits who have adopted other professions than the traditional ones are in a better position as compared to those who still have to practice traditional occupations such as scavenging and tanning.

### **Social Justice**

The concept of social justice is primarily based on the idea that all men are equal in society without distinction of religion, race, caste, colour or creed. The Indian constitution inscribed justice as the first promise of the republic, which means that the state power will execute the pledge of justice in favour of the millions who constitute the republic. Social justice is people's justice, where the tyranny of power is transformed into the democracy of social good. The constitution of India proclaims in its preamble the objective of achieving for all its citizens, 'Justice, Social, Economic and Political', and 'equality of status and opportunity'. All the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy elucidate the constitutional concept of social justice for India. Basically, social justice is concerned with the claims of the underprivileged sections of the society, who have been deprived of their rights, freedoms and opportunities of development because of a defective social system. The Indian constitution is first and foremost a social document and a majority of its provisions are either directly aimed at furthering the goals of social revolution or attempt to foster the revolution by establishing



the conditions necessary for its achievement and the core of the commitment to social revolution is in parts III and IV.

## Conclusion

The provisions of the constitution must be read as a whole to find out the true meaning and the spirit of the constitution which was enacted to ensure justice-social, economic and political-to each and every citizen of India. It should be, further, borne in mind that the founding fathers attached great importance to the dignity of the individual and were keen to promote fraternity so as to ensure unity and integrity of the nation. Anything done to drive a wedge between two sections of the society, either on the basis of caste, creed or religion or economic classification such as rich and poor would put undue strain on fraternity and may endanger unity of the nation. For building up a welfare state, the welfare of each and every section of the society must be kept in view. Parties may differ on how common good can be better achieved under the constitution, but their object must be common good and not the good of any particular class or section of society even though it constitutes a majority

## References

- [1] S. Subramaniam, Human Rights: International Challenges, Manas, New Delhi, 1997, vol. I, p. 4.
- [2] Charanjit Singh, M.R. Garg and Naveen Sharma, 'Concept of Human Rights and the Indian Constitution', in B.P. Singh Sehgal, ed., Human Rights in India: Problems and Prospects, Deep and Deep, New Delhi, 1,995, p. 290.
- [3] Vijay K. Gupta, Perspectives on Human Rights, Vikas, New Delhi, p. 81.
- [4] Abdul Rahim P. Vijapur, ed., Essays on International Human Rights, p. 118.
- [5] Vijay K., Gupta, op. cit., p. 194
- [6] Gokulesh Sharma, Human Rights and Social Justice, Deep and Deep, New Delhi, 1997, p. 396.
- [7] Ibid. p. 403.
- [8] Minerva Mills Ltd. Vs. Union of India, A.I.R., 1980, S.C., 1789.
- [9] Gokulesh Sharma, op. cit., p. 397