

## The difference of Dalits (untouchables) among India, Nepal, Pakistan & Islamic teachings about caste system

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### Abstract

This paper presents an analytical study of Dalits/ untouchables among India, Nepal and Pakistan. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the difference among Dalits of these three countries. Furthermore, it presents some similarity of Dalits in India and Nepal areas. While Dalits of Pakistan are not called as Dalits but they are considered practically as untouchables. In Nepal and India, struggles and literature for Dalits' rights refers to the awareness regarding Dalits. While in Pakistan, the situation is found just like Indian and Nepal areas in behavior with the poor servants. But here neither struggle for their rights have been started practically nor literature has been written for their rights except one Hindu writer Prabhu Lal Satyani who wrote about achool (untouchable). This is because of a complex situation or dilemma about servants who are considered as untouchables. In short, it may be stated, still in the age of digital, many people who are not considered as human or some group of people are not treated just like humans. Presence of this type of humiliating situation is sorrowful and treating them with inhuman behavior is also improper by every civilized society. While Islamic teachings guide that being a human beings, all humans are equal besides their different status.

**Keywords:** Castes system, Lower level, Humiliation, Struggle, Islamic teachings.

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### Introduction

No doubt, in some societies, there may be such humans who are considered lower than human beings and treated in an improper way. In some societies, some are considered untouchables because of castes, while in some societies some are considered low because of their low level of living style. While in some societies, some are indulged in intoxicants so people try to keep them away from them because of their notorious activities and role. Besides these, there is another group of people about which many people have ideas just like Dalits and there are criminals or murderers but these are not considered cent per cent as Dalits because there are many people who want to keep relations with these criminals because of their personal

business or family clashes. But in every society, the attitude of people about these Dalits does not remain the same. Now it is better to discuss the objectives of study before presenting the literature review.

### **Objective of Study**

There are many objectives of study. Anyhow, some are presented as under:

- a-To know about the historical background of caste system in India;
- b- To know about the Dalits people of Indian areas;
- c-To know about struggles of Dalits community in Nepal against deprivation.
- d-To know about Dalits of Pakistan without using the term of Dalit.
- e-To know about writers who struggled for Dalits' rights.
- f- To differentiate among the Dalits of India, Nepal & Pakistan.
- g- To know about the Dalits of the Indian film industry.
- h- To know the reasons because of which some people are considered as untouchables.

Now review of literature about the Dalits is being presented in the given lines.

### **Literature Review**

There are many articles and research theses written about the Dalits in India and Nepal. But there is no literature available about Dalits in Pakistan by Pakistani Muslim authors except one Hindu writer Prabhu Lal Satyani who belongs to Hindu community and resides in Sindh. Besides these, many books have been written in Indian literature and in the literature of Nepal, about the Dalits, Some important are mentioned as under:

- 1- B.R.Ambedkar wrote book titled "Annihilation of caste";
- 2-Dasari Manohar wrote book titled," Critical writings of Dalit literature";
- 3- Om Prakash Valmiki wrote a book titled," An untouchable's life", translated by Arun, P. Mukharjee;
- 4- Sujatha Gigla wrote book titled," Ants among Elephants";
- 5-Kancha Illaurah wrote book titled,"Why I am not a Hindu";
- 6-Bama wrote a book titled" karukku" translation made by Lakshmi Holmstrom in 1992. It is an award winning book.
- 7-Urmila Pavara wrote a book titled, " The wave of my life", which was published by Columbia University press. This is the memoir of an untouchable caste woman in India. She is an excellent storyteller. Skillfully bringing her stories alive.

Besides, there are 36 Dalit writers who disrupted India's literary history from 1940 to onward. This may be stated that literature about Dalits is available in Indian society and it has been written in the society of Nepal. But in Pakistan, it has been observed to some extent that there is no Pakistani author who wrote about Dalits or about those people who are considered as untouchables. But only single author Prabhu Lal Hindu who wrote about Dalits of Pakistani society. These types of people are not called Dalits but they are treated just like Dalits and untouchables.

The above views are not considered as cent per cent accurate as about any issue other scholars may have different views or may have different opinions about that particular issue. And it is considered as the essence of research also.

### **Hypothesis of Research**

Dalits or untouchables personalities are considered and found in every country.

### **Limitation of Research**

This research is confined to three countries India, Nepal and Pakistan only.

### **Historical background of Caste System & Dalits**

According to historical point of view, it is stated that there are 3000 castes and 25000 sub castes in India.

The caste system, as it actually works in India, is called Jati. The term Jati appears in almost all Indian languages.(Editor, 2023). It is a fact that the caste system is found in all these three countries India, Nepal and Pakistan. But it is dominant in rural areas where people are familiar with castes and in setting up marriages, the caste system plays its important role.

According to one long held theory about the origins of South Asia's caste system, Aryans from Central Asia invaded South Asia & introduced the caste system. (Editor,2023). It is just the historical point of view or idea of historians about the caste system in the central Asian region. Because where Aryans did not go or did not introduce the caste system, caste system can be found. These are used for the identity of persons and on the basis of identity, the person's bravery or cowardness is considered.

Anyhow, in Hindus caste system of four categories is verified by many historians as it is also stated as:

"Dating back more than 3000 years, the caste system divides Hindus into four main categories- Brahmins, Kashatriyas, Vaishas and Shudras".(Editor,2021). Another scholar also stated that the caste system divides Hindus into four categories that are called based on one's actions in the present and in one's past life. (Editor, 2023). As phiren (2022), categorizes the four castes of Hindus as four professions also, these are:

The four castes are the Brahmins (priests, teachers),Kashatriyas(rulers, warriors), Vaishas(land owners, merchants) and Shudras(Servants). (Phiren, 2022). This is true physically and theocratically, in both parameters. But it is strange in this manner that for fixing religion just for some particular community and considering the other low level community to remain away from the religious rites and all sacred things of particular religion is an irrational act but this is imposed since many hundred years of the past.

As concerned Islamic history about the castes system, it is mentioned that castes system and tribes have been framed just for introduction. Therefore, identity of persons could be done easily among the nations and the tribes. But it must be kept in mind that all human beings are equal. No one is superior to the other. According to Islamic teachings, that person will be most respectable and honorable near God (Allah) who will be most pious among them. And whatever his caste is, whatever his color is, and whatever his age or gender is. If we all keep all these things, it will become clear that all humans are equal and human respect must be given equally among them. But unfortunately, this remains just theoretical, this is why in an Islamic societies, these types of inhuman things are found.

### **Literal meanings of Dalits**

The term Dalit means broken, oppressed or ground down. It has been used in India's northern areas since 1920's. (Seth, 2017) Sethi point of view is different from the Mukhar Gee point of

view regarding Dalits. By doing applicability, it may be stated that Seth's point of view and Mukherjee point of view are the same. The term Dalit was used since 1920 but in literature, it was used in 1958. Ghose informs about the reason of Dalit in the given lines.

The Dalit or "untouchable" is a government servant, the teacher in a state school, or a politician. Untouchability becomes his definition. (Sagarika Ghose, 2003).

Now we discuss the Dalit cases of India, Bungal and Pakistan. These are as under:

### **The case of India regarding Dalits**

It is an undeniable fact that in Indian society, still there are many people who are called as Dalits and also considered just like Dalits/untouchables.

Dalits considered to be the lowest in the hierarchical Indian Caste system and subjected to systematic oppression are a subaltern community who experience the trauma of persecution in ways that are unique due to the complex social, cultural, political and economic environment prevailing in India. (Suresh, 2017). Suresh argued that Dalits are considered as low level in castes system of India but in practice, they are considered also low.

Concerning its background, it is stated as the word Dalits adopted by the untouchables of India but encompasses all victims of trauma and the term Dalits literature was first used in 1958. (Mukherjee Sipra, 2016) But this does not mean that before 1958, the Dalit was not being used. Actually in literature, it was used in 1958, while in society, it was used already before this, therefore the writers used it in literature.

In ancient India, the dominant Hindu society was stratified into various castes organized around their occupations; though at the bottom of the pyramid and those who fell outside the caste system were severely oppressed and consigned to the margins of society. Dalits or untouchables as they were previously called, are the people who fall outside of the caste system. (Suresh, 2017)

A major event in Indian and Dalit history is the dispute between Ambedkar & Gandhi on some key matters:

Ambedkar was one in a long line of Dalit activists. Gandhi thought the caste system was a wonderful system of organization and he believed that untouchability was a mere distortion of Hinduism which could gradually be removed through social reforms and education. (Suresh,2017) Hinduism is divided into four main categories in which Shudras are considered to serve the others. Anyhow in Hinduism, being a Hindu, their writers are writing for Dalits' rights just like Nepali writers who not only used literature for awareness and for their rights but they struggled practically at government level so that policy measures and projection must be adopted for Dalits' rights. As a result of their literature shown in the film industry and in other media, some Dalits actors are working with other top level actors and actresses. This means that to some extent, struggle for Dalits' rights have been made and its results have shown. This is why the Dalits are being selected as actors and their literature is not quiet.

Besides this, the people who use intoxicants, wine, Merijona, Heroine, Hasheesh & etc. People try to avoid these types of persons who are involved with intoxicants. And try to keep separate utensils and pots used by these people. From these sometimes, some belong to respectable and wealthy families but the company of bad people make them just like their fellows. These are also considered just like the Dalits.

As far as the justice system in India, here poor are considered as helpless while for the rich and for relatives of VIPs, protocol is provided whether they are criminal or murderer. This means financial status has an influence in every place. This is why high level posts and high level jobs are fixed for the high level people.

### **The case of Nepal regarding Dalits**

In Nepal, the caste system is characterized as a form of discrimination where Dalits are considered as a lower caste & untouchables. Dalits communities who are believed to be impure & polluted. (Thapa,2015). It is sorrowful that Dalits are considered impure because of poverty and low graded caste which is also a violation of human rights. Considered low because income level or on the base of grade level is not known as it is also found in many countries where the term of Dalits (achoot) is not being used just like Pakistan and many Islamic countries.

Social status of Dalits in Nepal is divided into different categories. There is socio economic gap between Dalits & non- Dalits. It is a fact that for gaining sustainable development, the gap between the Non-Dalits and the Dalits must be minimized. Otherwise we can create a welfare and developed state. It is stated that if the gap between the Dalits and the non Dalits is higher, then a long period will be required to develop this particular society. While the gap between the Dalits and the non-Dalits is lower, this type of society will develop soon as compared to the other.

Dalit access to justice in Nepal seems very poor due to low level of awareness about fundamental citizen rights.(Thapa,2015) It is Thapa's point of view who stated that justice is still not being done in Nepal regarding Dalits cases.

Even Dalits are restricted to use the public properties like water resources, school, community forests etc.

Dalit struggle refers to the socio-political movement of Dalit people to demolish caste based discrimination in Nepal. Dalit struggle started since 1946 in Nepal against their human rights and citizen rights. (Thapa,2015) From Thapa's points, it may be clear that practical struggle was started in Nepal first than literacy works. While in India literacy works were started for Dalits' rights rather than the struggle. This means in Nepal, people are more emotional than the people of Indian one.

Dalit literature was initially a form of protest and resistance against the everyday humiliations that Dalits as individuals and as a community had to face. (Suresh, 2017). After this, the struggle for Dalits ' rights started which prevailed in every corner of the country.

In a country where citizens are deprived of basic human rights for a continuous period of time. There is danger of civil war or danger of arousing crimes. There are many causes of civil war. Some are as under: landlessness, intergroup inequality, economic and social vulnerabilities. This is a fact that in a society where justice is not provided to everyone. The means tyranny and unfamiliar situ

### **The case of Pakistan regarding Dalits**

As concerned with the case of Pakistan about Dalits, here Dalits are considered on the basis of financial & religious position. And in different regions of Pakistan, Dalits are not called by name but by different castes and the persons having low level of financial assets or resources or status, all these are not treated well and they are called with different names which resemble inferior.

In Pakistan, landlords, peers/saints and Syeds are considered as having a high level of status especially in many village areas. In these areas, saints and murshad can touch even their women while these women cannot use the pots of these mushad/saints.

Besides this, drinking and eating pots of house servants are kept separately from other pots of the household. The hypocrisy is that male or female servants wash pots with their hands. But for using their pots they are kept separately. Similarly in many houses, servants prepare breakfast and lunch or dinner for them but for servants' use, pots are kept separately from pots of households.

Prabhu Lal Satyani (2005) argued that the caste system of Hinduism affected followers of Islam, Sikhism, Christianity and even the followers of Buddhism due to residing near to areas of Hinduism. So he describes that Dalits (achoot) are found in Pakistan and treated just like Indian Dalits. Anyhow the difference of Pakistani Dalits is that these are not called Dalits(achoot) but they are treated just like achoot/ untouchables.

In my point of view, Prabhu Lal's point of view refers to the situation of Sindh rural areas rather than all Pakistan.

In Pakistan, persons are treated according to their financial status. Similarly honor and protocol has been given to persons according to their financial position or level of grades.

And in many areas of Pakistan, Christians are recruited for cleaning and sweeping works. Therefore, they may be considered as Dalits but called as Dalits. If these people want water to drink, the glasses and pots are kept separately from mixing up with daily use pots.

Hussain (2019) argues that a brief description of local use of Syed, Shah, Pir Gee, Syed Parasti( Syedism) regulates the complex of identities.

In Pakistan, Pir Parasti (Syedism) and qabr /Maqbara prasti is also at top level especially in village areas and where tenants are under control of big landlord, as in Tribal areas of Balochistan, KPK and many areas of Sindh province, poor workers and labor who works in their fields, they not only physically touch their feet and knees when meet but they consider them just like lord to these landlord. This is why Prabhu Lal Satyani pointed out about Pakistani achoot (Dalits) about which Pakistani Muslim authors' pens are quiet to describe. This silence refers and puts a question mark about Pakistani authors' efficiency about writing for rights who are being neglected.

Consideration of Dalits or untouchables in an Islamic society, make it clear that they are just Muslims of name only, as they have not practiced upon the Islamic teachings and they are not spending their lives according to their faith and religion. And they are not true Muslim and not the non Muslim but they are in between both Muslim and Non Muslim.

As concerned the justice system in Pakistan especially for the poor class and for low grade people. Word justice may be imagined from this, in courts of Pakistan, e-stamp paper issued by Govt license holders has been sold at double price. And every one is bound to purchase one

hundred rupees e-stamp paper at two hundred or three hundred rupees. In what way these courts will provide justice which is unable to maintain basic just measures for price of e-stamp paper.

Besides this, doors of courts are closed within the time of working hours for the poor and low graded people but for high level and gentry class the doors of courts of Pakistan are opened at midnight time for providing them justice to high level class. This means word justice is not only used for the rich but word justice is also exploited in the name of justice whenever used for the poor.

It is a fact that only that country will gain development in which it struggles to provide facilities to lower and the majority classes. For this, policies of concessions, rebates and subsidies will be adopted. To solve the hiking of prices of goods and services and solve the dearness problem also provides comfort to the lower and the poor classes. Whoever will adopt such policies, the development will go with them and in this way the gap between the rich and the poor will be decreased. This decreasing difference also refers to the good situation between the rich and the poor. Presently India, such policies are being adopted by which the difference of the poor and the rich could be minimized while in Pakistan, the situation is so bad that poor are dying just to get 10 kg sack/packet of flour after standing many hours in lines. While policymakers are happy that they provide a free sack in the period of dearness. As concerned the ruling authorities of Pakistan, they are busy degrading the opposition parties while opposition parties are busy degrading government authorities and also the policies of ruling authorities without knowing its results and advantages.

In a country where no one gives attention to the poor and lower grade people are ignored, how can they expect from them the words of praise.

In the world, policies are framed to decrease the difference between the rich and the poor. While policies of Pakistan notify that here policies are framed to increase the difference of the rich and the poor. For example, in Pakistan poor and lower class people pay their utility bills of electricity, gas, water, and also telephone with their own earnings which are already low. While the rich people and the gazetted officers and ministers who have a high level of income and plenty of assets, they can not pay their bills but the payments of their bills are paid by the government. Besides this, they have facilities of transport with fuel and driver, all expenses are paid by the government. In which way the difference between the rich and the poor can be minimized in the presence of such policies. As after an apparent analysis, it becomes clear that purpose of policies in Pakistan is to Increase the difference or keep the difference wider among the rich and the poor class.

### **Theme of Islamic teachings about castes system**

As the Holy Quran is the main first basic source of Muslims for guidance, in chapter Al- Hujrat, it has been commanded that " we made castes and tribes among human beings just for introduction." In another verse of chapter, it has been ordained that no one has superiority over the other. As near God, the most respectable person is that who is most pious among human beings.

As the Holy prophet' s Sunnah is the second basic source of Muslims for guidance, from it, no one example can be put forward in which the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) preferred one person over the other because of the caste system. If castes were preferred then Bilal Habshi can not

gain the status of Moazzan and treasurer of maal-e-ghanimat because of black color and being a Habshi. It may be quoted that the Holy prophet declared also in the last sermon, no one has superiority over the other because of caste, creed and color. As all belong to Adam (A.S.) and Adam was made with clay.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In a nutshell, it may be stated on the basis of study that Dalits (Achoot) or untouchables are found in every country but behavior and treatment are different in every country. But similarity to some extent is present, that is inhuman behavior, oppressed and keep them separate from Dalits. It is stated that the level and standard of values do not remain the same. As with the passage of time, within the region and the outside of the region, men are not treated as equal to all. Similarly the Dalits are called in India and Bungal to the lower level of castes. But the case of Pakistan is quite different and technical. As in Pakistan, there is no literature or particular writers that stand for poor sections who are considered as the lower level in the society. Besides this, the availability Dalit literature in different languages in India and Nipal indicates that in these societies, work and struggle for Dalits' rights has been started. In all three countries (India, Nepal & Pakistan), oppressed, helplessness, anger and living from hand to mouth, miserable conditions may be found ignoring the difference of culture and the considerations.

It is the duty of the rich and the elite class of every country that they must cooperate with the poor, needy and lower class without disgracing and degrading them because they are also human being. It is sorrowful to point out, In every budget of every country, no policy or measures adopted by any Government for the poor people (male or female) who works in the houses of the rich people. This is why they and their offspring remain hand to mouth. It has to say in sorrowful that giving respect because of financial status or job status or because of cause system is just worldly matter which has no connection with the Islamic teachings.

### **Recommendations**

Some important recommendations are presented as under:

- 1- All men and women have equal human rights being a human so they should be treated equally.
- 2- No caste is superior or inferior as castes and tribes are just for identity.
- 3- We should behave with servants as we like for ourselves.
- 4- There is a need for a framework for uplift of the people having low level financial status or low grade jobs if we want to make our country as developed. So the gap will have to be minimized between Dalits and non Dalits/ the rich and the poor class.
- 5- At government level, such policies must be projected so that the difference between the elite class and the lower class must be decreased.

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