

Discrimination and caste systems



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Indian Society is full of caste discrimination. In spite of several anti caste discrimination laws and provisions, violations are regular than exceptions. Due to its alarmity, world over and particularly India, even UN is making efforts to combat caste discrimination practices still faced by untouchables of India and elsewhere. India is even failing to uphold existing laws against caste discriminations and violations of human rights of untouchables are rampant. They are segregated in all walks of life and compelled to live in degrading conditions and are abused on all counts by upper castes people.

Violence against them results in all kinds of inhuman atrocities, rapes and murders. Caste discrimination is considered as hidden apartheid in India. Even after 60 years of independence Dalits are prevented from entering temples. Dalits were beaten up on 15th October, 2009 while trying to enter temple in Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, a shameful caste discrimination. There are several provisions, Acts, Articles in constitution of India against caste discrimination.

Article 15 of Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of caste besides discrimination on grounds of religion, race, sex or place of birth and envisages equality before law (Article 14). Also equality of opportunity in public employment (Article 16) is enshrined. Anti caste discriminatory provisions are also incorporated in Article 17 by abolition of untouchability. Also right against exploitation (Article 23 and 24) is there to ensure prohibition of caste discrimination. As such right to equality is provided under Articles 14 to 18 of the Indian Constitution.

SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 prohibits atrocities and thus caste discrimination based on caste. Indian Civil Rights Act 1955 is meant to

ensure equal civil rights to all the citizens of India. Uniform Civil Code (Article 44) in the Constitution of India is also directed to prevent discrimination based on caste. However, all these rights and provisions against caste discrimination are not observed in practice and caste discrimination is rampant in Indian society. Discrimination continues to exist due to ignorance, prejudice and fallacious doctrines which try to justify inequality.

Such doctrines are used to defend slavery and discrimination on various grounds including caste systems throughout history and even in modern era. Despite provisions of legal measures, presence and the continuation of antagonistic socio economic and religious and cultural element makes the enforcement of human rights and prevention of caste discrimination difficult. We have laws to tackle the issue of caste discrimination, but we have faltered on implementation part. Due to this violations of human rights are seen in everyday affairs, everywhere and caste is in fact the root cause of these human rights violations in India.