

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar's Thoughts on Caste system in India.

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INTRODUCTION:

The caste system in India created such a society which had untouchables, unapproachable and unshadowables. Moreover Hindu society had in its fold various criminal tribes as well as several primitive tribes. In addition to the four classes of chaturvarnya, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar recognized fifth class under the Hindu social fold, which was outside chaturvarnya, which includes the Criminal tribes, Aborigine and Untouchables.

Caste is a Portuguese-derived English word; its early use is described in the famous British colonial Hobson-Jobson dictionary. The Imperial Gazetteer finds it difficult task to explain the theory of caste. And it could be even more complex in practice: notice how the Imperial Gazetteer struggles to described the caste situation in the Gangetic plains. Here's the Imperial Gazetteer's list of the most important castes throughout British India. Here we are concerned chiefly with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's own vicus. Babasaheb made it clear in the 'An Annihilation of the Caste' that he takes the Laws of Manu to be the single most authoritative source of information about the religious origin of caste, and about the rules governing it.

The Laws of Manu explains that in the beginning of the universe the great abstract principle of Brahman created all things, including the four Varnas: "for the sake of the prosperity of the world, he caused the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Shudra to proceed from his mouth, his thighs, and his feet....but in order to protect this universe he, the most resplendent one, assigned separate (duties and) occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet." At the top of his fourfold system is the Brahmin: " As the Brahmin sprang from mouth, as he was first-born, and he possesses the Veda, he is by right the lord of his whole creation. At the bottom is the Shudra: one occupation only the lord prescribed to the Shudra: to serve meekly even these castes (Varnas)." Above all the contrast between the two extremes of the hierarchy is made clear: "but a Shudra, whether bought or unbought, he (a Brahmin) may compel to do servile work; for he was created by the self existence (svyambhu) to be the slave of a Brahmin.

Outside the system entirely were the 'slaves': "All those tribes in this world, which are excluded from those born from the mouth, the arms, the thighs, and the feet (of Brahmin), are called Dasyus, whether they speak the language of the Mlechchhas (barbarians) or that of the Aryans.' Among these outside the system are groups produced by illicit unions among the different Varnas, who "shall subsist by occupations reprehended by the twice born (the three upper Varnas ". Among there occupations are "catching and killing animals, living in holes", "working in leather", "carrying out corpses who have no relatives," "and executing criminals."

These impure groups are to live in remote, wild areas or "near well known trees and burial grounds". "There dresses shall be the garments of the dead, they shall eat their food from broken dishes, black iron shall be their ornaments, and they must always wander from place to place." "A man who fulfils a religious duty, shall not seek intercourse with them; their transactions shall be among themselves, and their marriages with their equals", "Their food shall be given to them by others (than an Aryan giver) in a broken dish: at night they shall not walk about in villages and in towns."

To what extent were these ancient scriptural injunctions actually carried out? Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar prescribed in Annihilation of Caste, a great deal of information about his view of the system as he saw it in operation, and about the hundreds of the smaller caste and sub-castes that existed within the four large Varna groups- and about the role of the untouchables, who occupied the despised, ritually impure sub-basement of the system.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To focus on the views of Dr. Ambedkar's on the Indian caste system.
- To focus on Indian caste system, Hindu religion and its impact on the Indian society.
- To study of Dr. Ambedkar's contribution in Social era with special reference to caste system in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

- For the completion of the present research paper, the secondary data collection and its evaluation method has been used for which the books and magazines and newspapers published by the government and private institutes have been referred to.

THE SOCIAL HISTORICAL THEORY:

The social historical theory explains the creation of the Varnas, jats and of the untouchables. According to this theory, the caste system began with the arrival of the Aryans in India. The Aryans arrived in India around 1500 BC. The fair skinned Aryans arrived in India from South Europe and North Asia. Before the Aryans there were other communities in India of other origin. Among them Negrito, Mongoloid, Astroloid and Dravidian... The Negrito have physical features similar to the people of Africa. The Mongoloid have Chinese features. The Astroloids have features similar to the aboriginals of Australis. The Dravidian originates from the Mediterranean and they were the largest community in India. When the Aryans arrived in India their main contact was disregarded the local cultures. They began conquering and taking control over regions over North India and at the same time pushed the local people southwards or towards the jungles and mountains in North India.

ORGANIZATIONS OF ARYANS:

The Aryans organized among themselves in three groups. The first group was of the warriors and they were called Rajayana, later they changed their name Rajayana to Kshatriya. The second group was of the priests and they were called Brahmins. These two groups struggled politically for leadership among the Aryans. In this struggle the Brahmins got to be the leaders of the Aryan society. The third group was of the farmers and craftsmen and they were called Vaisia. The Aryans who conquered and took control over parts of the North India subdued the locals and made them their servants. In this process the Vaisians who were the farmers and the craftsmen became the landlords and the businessmen of the society and the locals became the peasants and the craftsmen of the society.

In order to secure their status the Aryans resolved some social and religious rules which allowed only them to be the priests, warriors and the businessmen of the society. For example take Maharashtra. Maharashtra is in west India. This region is known by this name for hundreds of years. Many think that the meaning of the name Maharashtra is in its great name, Great Land. But there are some who claim that the name, Maharashtra, is derived from the Jat called Mahar who are considered to be the original people of this region. In the caste hierarchy the dark skinned Mahars were outcast. The skin color was an important factor in the caste system. The meaning of the word 'Varna' is not class or status but skin color.

Between the outcast and the three Aryan Varnas there is the Shudra Varna who were the simple workers of the society. The Shudras consisted of the communities. One community was of the locals who were subdued by the Aryans and the other were the descendants of Aryans with locals. In Hindu religious stories there are many wars between the good Aryans and the dark skinned demons and devils. The different Gods also have dark skinned slaves. There are stories of demon women trying to seduce good Aryan men in deceptive ways. There were also marriages between Aryan heroes and demon women. Many believe that these incidences really occurred in which, the Gods and the positive heroes were people of Aryan origin. And the demons, the devils and the dark skinned slaves were in fact. The original residence of India whom the Aryans coined as monsters, devil, demon and slaves.

INHERITED CASTE SYSTEM:

As in most of the societies of the world, so in India, the son inherited his father's profession. And so in India there developed families, who professed the same family profession for generation in which, the son continued his father's profession. Later on as these families became larger, they were seen as communities or as they are called in Indian language, Jat. Different families who professed the same profession developed social relations between them and organized as a common community, meaning Jat.

Later on the Aryans who created the caste system added to their system non-Aryans. Different Jats who professed different professions were integrated in different Varnas according to their profession. Most of the communities that were in India before the arrival of the Aryans were integrated in the Shudra Varna or were made out caste depending on the professions of these communities. Communities who professed non-polluting jobs were integrated in Shudra Varna. And the communities who professed polluting professions were made out caste.

Manu enumerated a fresh idea of the Purushasukta as a part of divine injunction. Manu said, "for the prosperity of the world, He (the creature) from his mouth, arms thighs and feet created the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra". Moreover Manu has emphasized that "Veda is the only and ultimate sanction for Dharma".

But according to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar; it was Manu who invented the social ideal of chaturvarnya contained in Purushasukta with a degree of divinity and infallibility, which it did not have earlier. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has summarized the chaturvarnya society as follows:

- A. Society should be divided into four class-
 1. Brahmins
 2. Kshatriya
 3. Vaishya
 4. Shudra
 - B. There cannot be social equality among these four classes. They must be bound together by the rule of graded inequality. They must be bound together by the rule of graded inequality.
 - C. The four classes should observe a division of occupation. Brahmin should be learning and teaching and the performance of religious ceremonies. The occupations of Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudra should be fighting, trade and services to the three superior classes respectively. These occupations assigned to different classes should be exclusive to each.
 - D. The right of education is given to the Brahmins, Kshatriya and Vaishyas. The Shudras and Women have no right to education.
 - E. A man's life is divided into four stages, Brahmacharya, Grahasthashram, Vanaprasthashram and Sanyasa. But the benefits of these stages were open only to the male members of the three superior classes. The first and fourth, were not open to the Shudras and Women.
- Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar analysed the Purushasukta as follows:
- A. Real was elevated to the dignity of an ideal;
 - B. An attempt was made to give reality to the ideal by invoking the sanction of law;
 - C. The Purushasukta not only regarded class composition as natural and ideal, but also regarded it as sacred and divine;
 - D. The purushasukta made the division of society into four classes as a matter of dogma; and
 - E. The purushasukta had an official gradation of society laid down, fixed and permanent, with an ascending scale of reverence and descending scale of contempt.

Therefore, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar criticised the ideal of Chaturvarnya as enunciated by the Purushasukta on the grounds that-

1. It preached a class composed society as its ideal.
2. It converted the de-facto state of affairs into a de-jure connotation of an ideal society.
3. It gave the de-facto state of class composition a legal effect by accepting it as a de-jure connotation of an ideal society.
4. It accepted the class composition as an ideal and also sacred and divine.
5. It made the four classes a matter of dogma.
6. It accepted the graded inequality among the four classes.

According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the attempt of Purushasukta to realize the ideal was a kind of political jugglery, the like of which was not to be found in any book of religion. Almost all the Hindu books are replete with the concept of Dharma. Both Manu and Yajnavalkya, a learned Hindu seer, refer to Dharma as compulsory duties and obligation of the different Varnas. The concept of Dharma as has been included in the Varnashramdharma has brought ruination to concept of social solidarity.

As mentioned in Hindu Dharma, the disabilities thrust upon Shudras were-

1. The Shudras were denied initiation the study of the Vedas: and the kindling of sacred fire.
2. A Shudra was to take the last place in the social order.
3. The Shudra was impure and therefore, no sacred act should be done within his sight and within his hearing.
4. The Shudra is not to be respected in the same way as the other classes
5. The life of Shudra has no value and anybody may kill him without having to pay compensation at all if any compensation is paid, it should be of small value as compared with that of the upper three classes.
6. The Shudra must not acquire knowledge and it is a sin and a crime to give him education.
7. A Shudra must not acquire property. A Brahmin can take his property at his pleasure.
8. A Shudra cannot hold office under the state.
9. The duty and salvation of Shudra lies in his serving the higher classes.
10. The higher-class should not inter-marry with the Shudra. They can, however, keep shudra women as concubines. But if the Shudras touches the women of higher classes, he will be liable to dire punishment.
11. The Shudra is born in servility and must be kept in servility forever.

CONCLUSION

Dr. babasaheb Ambedkar has concluded the following possible results of the reorganization of society based on Chaturvarnya and Caste-

- A. The caste has ruined the Hindus.
- B. The reorganization of the Hindu society on basis of Chaturvarnya is impossible because the Varnyaavastha is like a leaky pot or like a man running at the nose. It is incapable of sustaining itself by its own virtue and an inherent tendency to degenerate into caste system unless there is legal sanction behind it which can be enforced against every one trespassing passing
- C. The reorganization of Hindu society on the basis of Chaturvarnya is harmful because the effect of the varnavyavastha is to degrade the masses by denying the opportunity to acquire knowledge and emasculate them by denying them the right to be armed.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar wanted that the Hindu Society must be reorganized on a religious basis which would recognize the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. He wanted to give a new doctrinal basis to Hindu society, a basis that mentioned above. The values of democracy, he said, should find fulfillment in the everyday life of the Hindu society. Such a change, he believed, is necessary if India is to catch up with the advanced countries of the west.

He also proved that Chaturvarnya was a political creation as added later on to the Vedas by Brahmin class. As he remarked that this Chaturvarnya with its old labels is utterly repellent and my whole being rebels against it.

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