



Caste & Patriarchy

INFORMATION FOLDER

matrimonials

Mumbai | Sunday, February 3, 2013

WANTED BRIDES

ABARWAL-BISA

PQM 4m cultured finly 4 Mglk
Garg Boy 6(5-4-1985,5:11PM
Jaipur. BE-IT, MBA-F
in Offshore Oil Service
Mumbai in Fin Sal
Ph: 0184-2200800, 0890
E: gargboy65@gmail.com

FOR 20'S

ABARWAL

SM for Singhal Btech mba boy
27/160. high salary. email:
bmaggarwal12@gmail.com

SEEKING b'ful m
fair handsome boy 29/175
BTech MBA(Top 10 col-
lege),Wrkg MNC Mumbai 12

KAYASTH boy 30/ 6' Hotel
Management Executive Chef
at Sydney, seeks B'ful,tall
wrkg girl from respected fam-
ily(age26to28yrs) No Dowry.
Garg boy 65@gmail.com

I want a girl with no
drinks if she wants she
can wear jeans in
house but while
stepping out of house
she should give
respect to our cast.

31/5'9" B.Tech, M.B.
US Based investme
Bank as a Dy. Direct
09589669626. Email
manjumishra148@gmail.com

DHRA Br. Boy, B.Te
puter Sci.)wkg in MN
a/10-8-1981/ Jyesta Sta
atsasa Gotra/6'(pref.5'
se, wkg girl/profl. degi
er). Cell: 09891251093

ANCE-FROM-VERY
tful, Tall Girls for Nev
ried, Handsome, W
ed. 39, 5'10", CA- Mumb
PA. GSB. Email BHP
abhu2002@yahoo.co.in

SPB, fair, 18 Dec 80, 5'7", N
Madhya, BE(CS), wrkg in

SAFAI KARMACHARI ANDOLAN

The Caste System: Divinely Ordained Inequalities

Origins of caste



The Manava - Dharma- Shastra also called the Manu smriti, is a code of laws for the Hindus written in Sanskrit between the second and first century BCE. It is said that Manu, the supreme brahman, the first man and the hindu law giver, codified the formation of the different castes by birth and ancestry. The four castes were created from different parts of his body. Brahmins from the mouth, Kshatriyas from the arms, Vysya from the thighs and Shudras from the feet, thus setting a social hierarchy.

When India became a republic and gave itself a constitution in 1950, the Government of India categorised the castes to deliver social justice for the historical injustice and discrimination faced by the shudras and Dalits due to the caste system. The Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vysyas are in the general category of FC, the Shudras are the Backward classes (OBCs and MBCs) and the Dalits are the Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes.



Ambedkar stated that the caste system is “a graded inequality. It is a hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one above the other”.

(Ambedkar, 1917)

CASTE IN INDIA'S INSTITUTIONS: 'The Division of Labourers'

Brahmins in the Supreme court of India: 16 of the 34 supreme court judges are brhamins; 13 of the 51 CJI are brahmins; the first judge from scheduled caste was appointed only in 1980, 30 years after India became a democratic republic of equality of all citizens.

Kshatriyas in the Presidents Bodyguard: Official Policy has limited recruitment to the President's Bodyguard to three castes even today, - Jat, Sikh and Rajput as descendants of the 'pure' Aryan races

Vaishyas and the Nation's wealth: 7 of the 10 richest Billionaires in India are from the Vaishya community. Majority of India's business and commerce is owned by the Vaishyas.

Shudras and the labour force participation: Majority of the unorganised labour force and traditional forms like weaving, carpentry, driving, etc are from BC and OBC, still struggling for political and socio-economic equality.

Dalits and 'unclean' occupations: 95% of persons working in sanitation, hospital mortuaries, labour in burial and cremation grounds are Dalits.



Characteristics of caste system

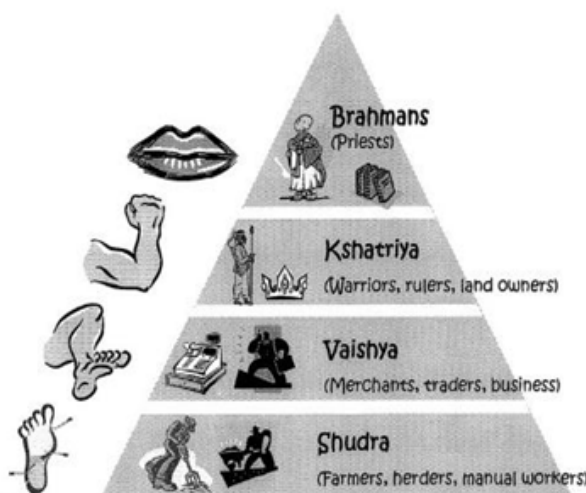
Work By Descent Discrimination

Caste determines the occupation by birth. Only a Brahmin can be a priest, a Kshatriya can be a soldier, a vysya can be a trader, a shudra must be a servant. The Dalits are outcaste and must do all unclean work of cleaning human excreta, dead bodies and animal carcasses. So even today in the 21st century, only Brahmins are priests in temples and only dalits are engaged as manual scavengers. Brahmins dominate the judiciary, knowledge and information domain. The police and army are dominated by the Kshatriyas. The Trade, commerce and finance sector are dominated by the Vysyas. The shudras are a majority in the wage labour in all service sectors like transport,

agriculture, health etc.

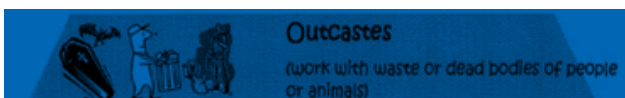
The caste based occupations of cleaning latrines, sewerage work, sweeping, garbage disposal, leather work, mortuary work, cremation and burial are dominated by persons from particular scheduled caste communities of Balmikis, chamars, mehtars, chura, doms in the north and madiga, arudadiyar, chakkliyar, kaatunaicker, koravar, relli and yanadi in the south.

"Work and descent" is the UN's term for caste discrimination, a form of discrimination based on inherited status, including occupation, family, community, or social origin, which is prohibited under international human rights law.



The Caste System In India

The caste system has determined that Sanitation work is unclean and the person who engages in sanitation as polluting. Sanitation work is the most visible form of work by descent discrimination of the caste system. In the name of sanitation, the worst inhuman atrocity of manual scavenging is prevalent. All 100% of persons engaged in sanitation work and affected by the atrocity of manual scavenging are dalits. 90% are dalit women



Untouchability

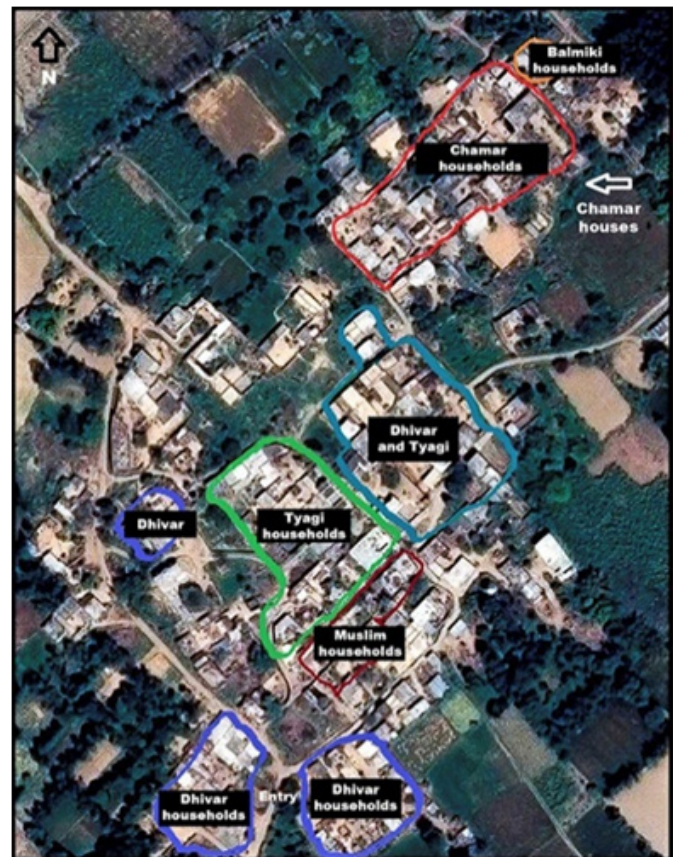
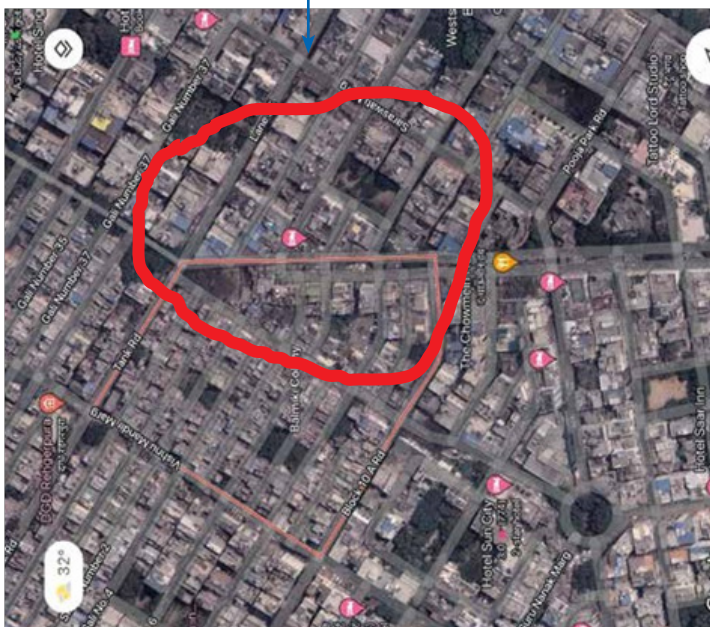
is the most present and prevalent characteristic of caste.

Segregation of habitats: Every caste group lives in separate and segregated habitats. The segregation is very visible in rural areas where the dominant castes live in areas of their choice, the dalits are forced to live outside the main village and in the periphery. In urban areas the dalits live in segregated colonies, slums or bastis near garbage dumping sites. The settlements of the dalits have names either of the caste or the occupation like balmiki (caste

name) basti or bangi (means scavenger)/sweeper colony. The settlements of the dalits are stigmatized and stereotyped as being dirty, polluting and criminal.

In both rural and urban areas, the houses of Dalits are segregated and isolated with bad roads, open drains, lacking water and sanitation, schools and health care.

A segregated safai karmachari balmiki basti in Delhi



A satellite map showing segregation by caste



It exists in our habitats, where we eat, where we worship, where we study, where we work.

Ritual purity and pollution:

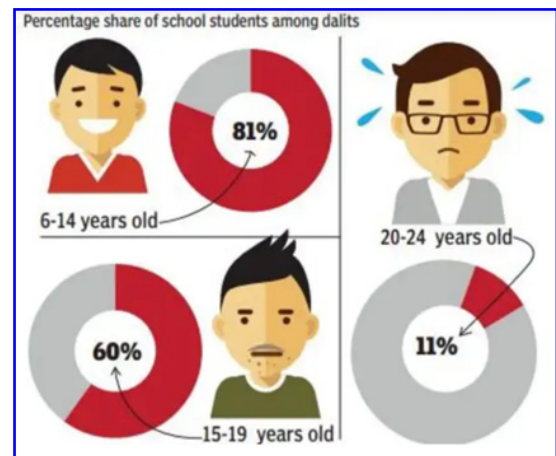
The castes are ranked according to ritual purity. Untouchability is practiced to preserve the purity of the castes above from the pollution of the castes below. This is done by avoiding interchange of food and water, physical touch and occupation. Everything in nature is graded from most pure to impure including rivers, animals, birds, vegetables, flowers and meat. Menstruation, birth and death are considered to be most polluting.



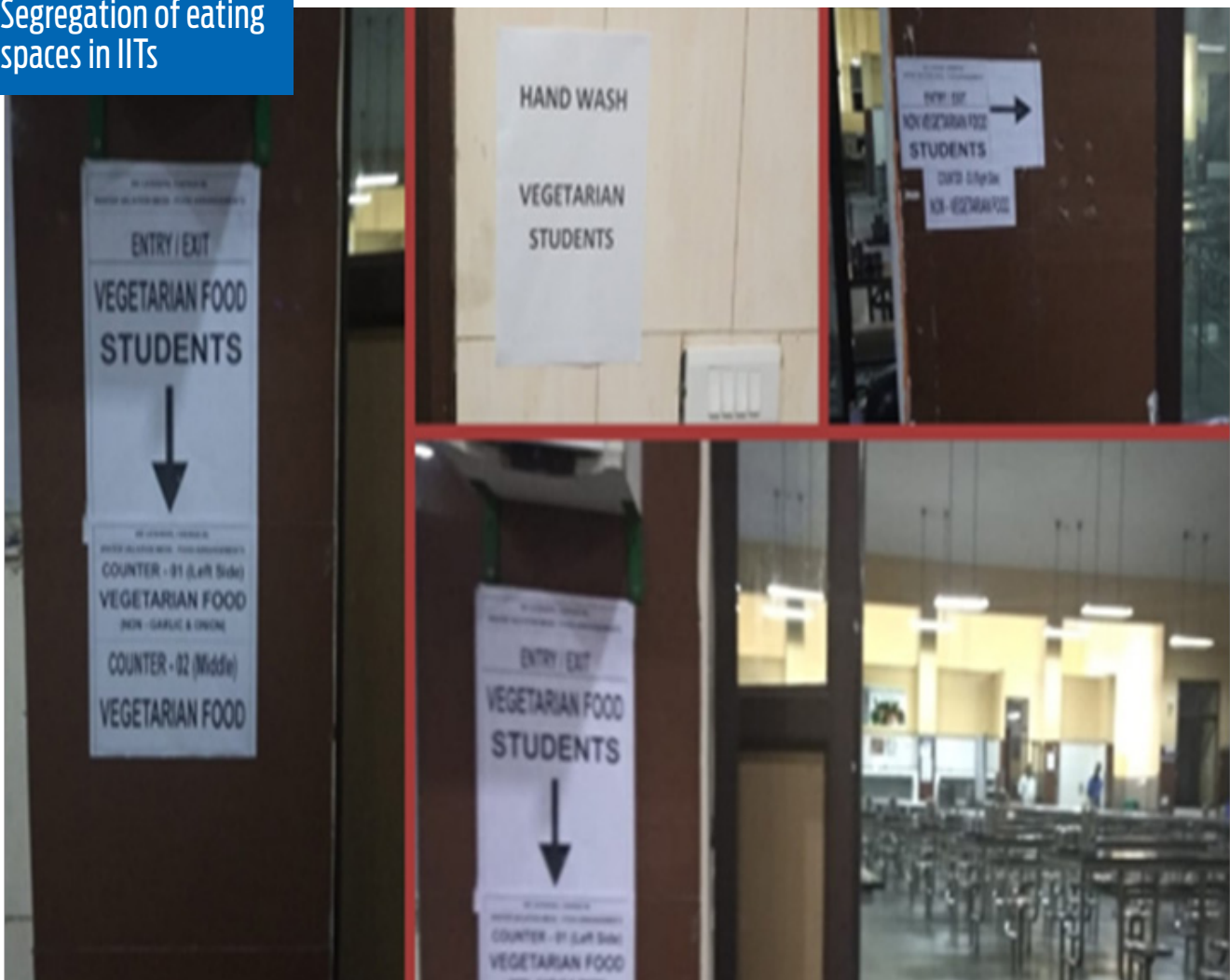
Caste and Untouchability in Education

The caste system has historically and traditionally prohibited dalits and shudras to engage in any education or knowledge building activity and enforced this prohibition with very severe and violent punishments like cutting off the ears and tongue for hearing and speaking knowledge. It is only after India became a democratic republic in the last 75 years that Dalits began to enter in schools for the first time.

Enrol and dropout, education is a one-way street for dalit



Segregation of eating spaces in IITs



Daily scenes of untouchability



Illustration and drawings by kids showing their daily experience of being untouchable in a village in India. These are simple and honest illustration of how at every step, in schools, while taking water, while eating people of lower castes are oppressed.

Social Prohibitions and Restrictions



Endogamy: Inter caste marriage is prohibited in the caste system. The so called upper caste communities torture and murder dalit youth for marrying out of their caste and even call it honor killing.

Inter-dining is prohibited. The 'upper' caste people will not eat food cooked by dalits and will not use the same vessels that are touched by the dalits for cooking, eating or drinking.

Denied wealth and property: Dalits are prohibited from owning wealth. There are violent backlashes if dalits show signs of wealth like riding horses, wearing expensive or quality clothes and gold and silver jewelry and even wearing footwear.

Denial of social dignity:

- ❖ Dalits are not allowed to sit on chairs or higher level to any upper caste person. A sanitation worker especially a manual scavenger is never offered a seat and will be penalized if they are seen sitting on a chair.
- ❖ In rural areas dalits are prohibited from walking through upper caste streets. They can only walk on these streets after

removing their footwear.

- ❖ Derogatory names are used to refer to dalits.

Occupation restrictions: Even if educated a youth from a community engaged in manual scavenging will never be offered a job other than a sanitary worker. Most educated youth from manual scavenging community are forced into sanitation work as employment. All the persons engaged in manual scavenging or handling of dead bodies and animal carcasses are dalits.

Prohibition in food: Even in food and dietary habits dalits are stereotyped as polluting and impure. Dalits eat beef. But the caste system has declared beef and any meat eating to be unclean and those who eat beef and meat as polluting.

Discrimination even in death: Dalits are prohibited by caste communities to take out funeral processions in public spaces used by upper caste communities. The burial and cremation grounds for dalits are segregated and separate.

Brahminical Patriarchy

“Caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy have together helped build a Brahmanical social order in ancient India. This Brahminical social structure is Brahminical patriarchy”
(uma chakravarthi.1993)



The brahmin male at the top of the caste hierarchy is the absolute beneficiary of the caste system. The manusmriti's duties and functions for the different castes has allowed only the brahmin men the duty and function to study and teach the vedas and make offerings to the Gods. Having established the brahmin male supremacy in this manner, the absolute beneficiaries of the caste system, maintained the social structure of inequalities between persons of different castes, through their interpretations of the vedas and establishing a way of life based on social and economic inequalities. This has gone on for thousands of years. This unscientific and irrational system maintained for thousands of years even in this time with such advanced science and technology was only made possible with (1) endogamy and dehumanising the woman, (2) occupational hierarchy, (3) notions of purity and pollution and inherent superiority and inferiority and (4) violence and terror as means of control.

“The foundation of Brahminical Patriarchy lay in the collective subordination of women and lower-castes so that upper-caste men could control both wealth and labour. This

control was ensured through a number of texts that were written by men, where women were instructed to be obedient and chaste, in return for which they would be venerated. Women, along with lower-caste men, were also kept away from material wealth and resources, which made them dependent on upper-caste men. In this manner, by strictly controlling reproduction, upper-caste men could retain their social dominance for generations. (uma chakravarthi.1993)

“Manu emphasizes four things in his “laws concerning women”: she has to be dependent always, she must worship and obey her husband, she has to be devoted to her deceased husband, and any kind of ‘non-virtuous’ behaviour done by a woman will not be tolerated. Manu’s treatment of Shudras and women clearly shows how severely the Brahmins were troubled with the Shudras and women attaining adequate social status solely based on their knowledge, courage, and capability”

(Sainaz Farzana Kazi).

The Building Blocks of Brahminical Patriarchy

(uma chakravarthi. 1993)

Patrilineal succession: The practice through which only the male descendants inherit wealth and social status within a caste.

Marriage: An institution which enables upper caste men to control the reproductive capacity of women so lower-caste men cannot have sexual access to these women.

Restricted female mobility: The structures which keep women within the domestic sphere.

Gender hierarchy: The unequal relationship between men and women that results in the subordination of women.

Female Sexuality and Reproductive Labour: The means by which to produce children to retain familial hold over resources. Work associated with reproduction is, bearing children, raising children, and allied tasks within the household— that is performed by women to ensure patrilineal succession.

Merit: The spiritual favour/karma one earns by “controlling” one’s wife by whatever means necessary and maintaining the caste status-quo.

Lower-caste Manual Labour: Manual labour, especially “polluting” labour, that is only done by lower castes on a socially

mandated hereditary basis. This keeps them away from both reproductive and material resources.

Ritual/Caste purity: An elevated spiritual state of being that is achieved as a reward for following social norms (these norms oppress women and lower-caste people).

Women’s economic dependence: The effect of restricting women to the domestic sphere, where their labour is not recognised or paid, and can be controlled.

Force: Violence that is actively authorised and recommended in texts to control women who are deemed to have an essentially “lascivious” nature.

Female Purity (Streedharma): The idea that women should strive to be desirable, which actually ensures women’s participation in their own subordination.

Social Respectability: The idea that adhering to certain caste and gender norms will help maintain one’s place in society.

Caste hierarchy: The unequal relationship between different caste groups as per the Varna system, because of which wealth and resources remain concentrated with the upper-castes.

Ambedkar's Counter to Brahminical Patriarchy: **The Hindu Code Bill**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar introduced the Hindu Code Bill on 11th April 1947. It was referred to a select committee on 9th April 1948 and debated for four years. Dr. Ambedkar felt that the Government and the party in power i.e. Congress were not

eager to clear the Hindu Code Bill and resigned on 27th September 1951 to the Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru but continued to participate in the Parliamentary debates till 10th October 1951 on the request of the Prime Minister.





Significance of the Hindu Code Bill:

“No law passed by the Indian Legislature in the past or likely to be passed in the future can be compared to it (Hindu Code) in point of its significance. To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex which is the soul of Hindu society, untouched and to go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap. This is the significance I attached to the Hindu Code”. —Dr. Ambedkar on ‘Hindu Code

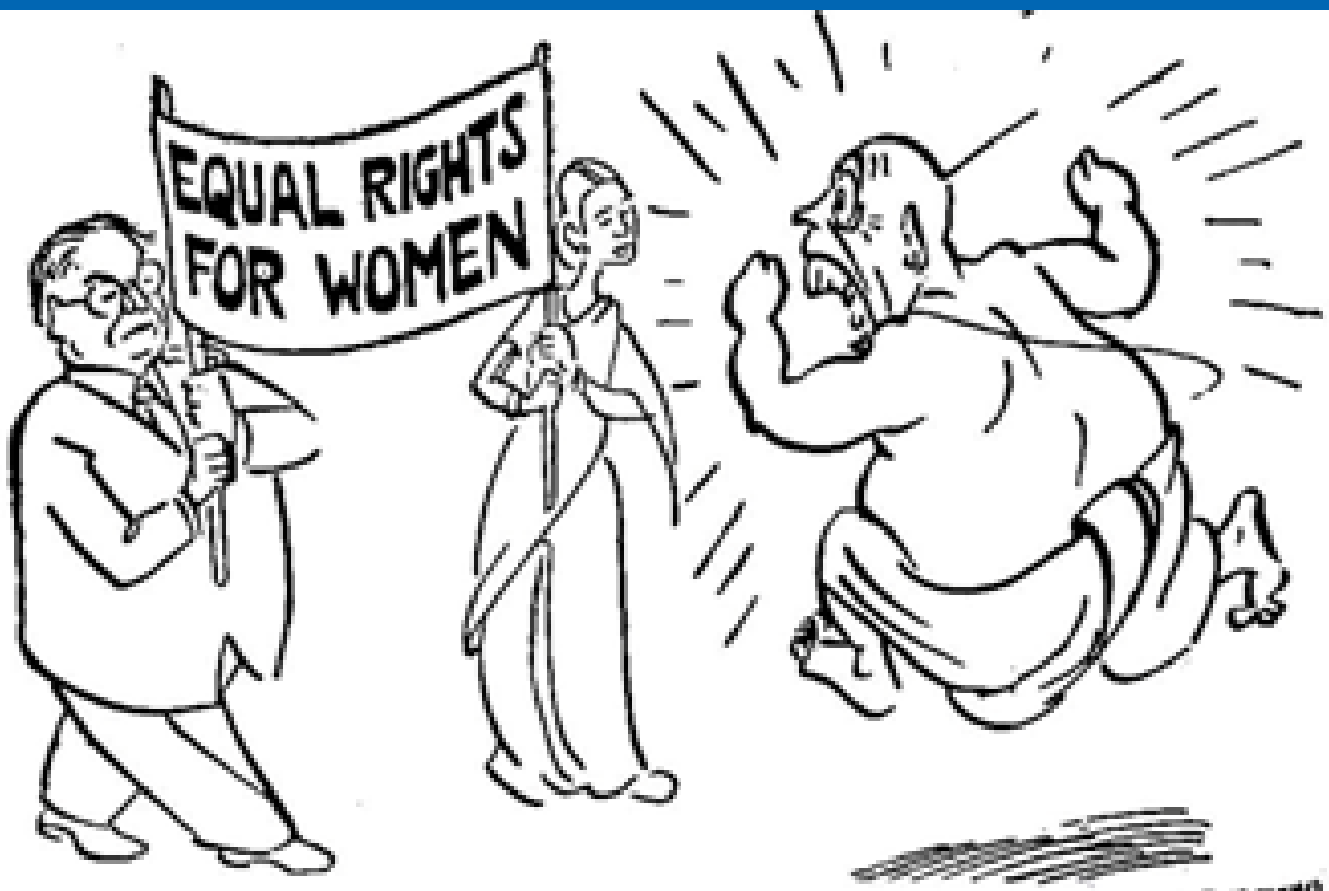
Ambedkar highlighted the link between caste based oppression and gender based oppression in the Hindu Code bill. The bill challenged the main elements of Brahminical patriarchy.

Challenged Endogamy: The bill promoted civil marriages to make inter caste marriages legal and valid. It eliminated the condition of declaring caste identity for marriage and adoption. It gave the right of divorce to both parties and provided for the wife to claim maintenance and live separately.

Challenged polygamy: A man cannot have another wife while the first wife was still living. At that time polygamy was practiced on the premise that a man must have a son and so can marry



Cartoon in 1950 about the Hindu Code Bill depicting Ambedkar supporting women's equality and the opposition from Brahminical patriarchal society



another woman if the wife cannot bear a son.

Challenged discrimination of female heirs and provided for equal share in the fathers property if he died intestate. Her right to inherit property is declared to be absolute and not dependent on circumstances of being rich, poor, married or unmarried.

Challenged the right of the husband family to claim the dowry of the widows with the law that a widows property and dowry must be held in trust for her to claim when she reaches 18 years of age.

Ambedkar's gender sensitive and progressive outlook received a severe back lash from the feudal, casteist and fundamental parliamentarians

of that day. The bill threatened the very core of Brahminical status quo of a rigid code of conduct that upheld slavery, hierarchy and inequality of the worst kind. The bill attacked the Brahminical patriarchal system at its very core – caste restrictions in marriages, oppression and control of women using religion that denied freedom for women from an oppressive marriage, polygamy and poverty. Many parliamentarians raised objections and often with misogynist remarks. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India argued that his wife would never support the divorce clause and it was only 'over- educated' women who favoured the Bill (Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. IV)

BRAHMINICAL PATRIARCHY AND SAFAI KARMACHARI WOMEN

Even today, only Brahmins are priests and only dalits are manual scavengers. While Brahmins dominate the judiciary and the academic, the Dalit women dominate the work force of cleaning public latrines, sewers and streets. These are the two extremes of the Brahminical patriarchal system.

The Safai karmachari women are bearing the multiple oppressions of class, caste, gender and occupation. They are the worst affected victims of the Brahminical social order with its norms of purity and pollution. Caste and gender based intergenerational denial of access to education, property, wealth and decent economic engagement has resulted in poverty and exclusion, situating safai karmachari women at the very lowest in the social order and

absolutely excluded from schemes for social and economic development.

Safai Karmachari Andolan conducted a study on menstrual experiences (2024) with 379 safai karmachari women. It has very clearly highlighted that Brahminical patriarchy has increased the untouchability of the already 'untouchable' safai karmachari women.

- 70% said that they were in the scavenging work because of their caste and gender.
- 90% stated that there were significant changes once they started bleeding. The changes were in terms of the clothes they wore, food habits, playing, going to school, interacting with male members both within and outside the family, increased domestic chores.

Reasons	% responded "Yes"
To control and keep women in inferior and submissive position	71
To maintain superior status for men	67
To ensure marriage and pregnancy happens only as arranged by the family and community	61
Women are responsible for the honor of family and community and must be guided by such restrictions	60

- The majority of the respondents – 75%- say that once a female attains puberty, she is seen as an adult who is responsible for the honour of the family and clan.
- The majority of the respondents felt that restrictions were in place to control women and keep them submissive and to ensure endogamy. Restrictions are seen as necessary to preserve the honour of the family and community, and prevent intercaste love and marriages which are seen as impediments to maintaining caste purity. Majority agreed that menstrual restrictions were to keep women in submissive position and to maintain the superior status of men.

A large majority of safai karmachari women highlighted menstrual restrictions such as not being allowed to enter kitchen in one's home,

places of worship, eating separately, being segregated from others, are the same as untouchability and caste restrictions. 74% respondents agreed that menstruating women of all castes and all Dalits experience the same untouchability, stigma and exclusion.

The majority women stated that the restrictions had no scientific basis and were largely superstitions. They also recognized that the restrictions were a means to exert control over women's bodies. By dictating a new way of life from the day of the first period which includes limited interaction with males, women are prevented from meeting men from other castes. This stems from a fierce commitment to endogamy without which caste purity cannot be maintained. Women are seen as the repositories of the honour of a community. A woman who "strays" from the community brings shame to the whole community and is often cast

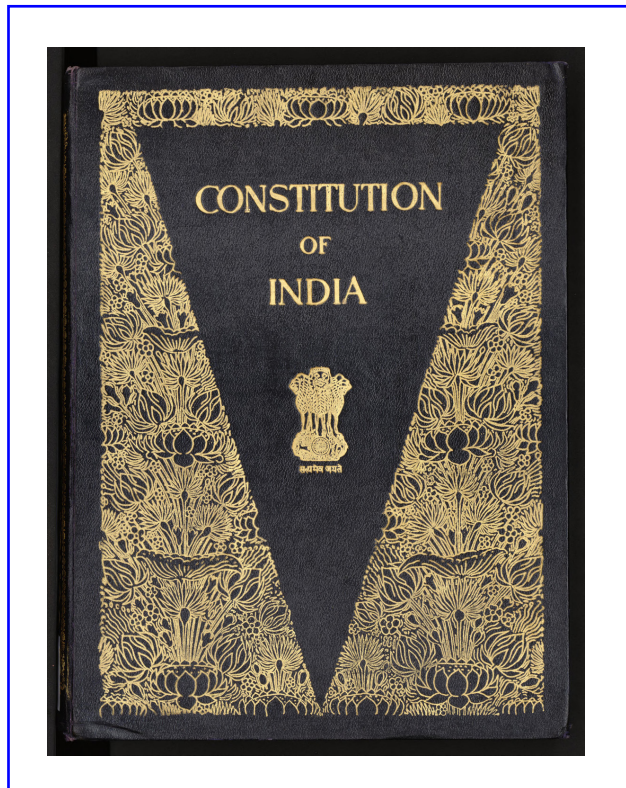
Dalits face Inequality and untouchability everywhere and everyday	81%
Dalits cannot go inside all temples/ church/ mosque and touch the idol of the God	75%
Dalits cannot enter into the kitchen and pooja rooms of the other caste people	70%
In place of work, upper caste people give food to Dalits in different plates	66%
Dalits cannot use the same toilet, bathroom as upper caste in private spaces	69%
Dalit men are not allowed to marry an upper caste woman	69%



out from the family and community. In extreme cases, she is even killed for sullyng the family honour - honour killing. While a relationship between a male from a dominant caste and a woman from a caste lower on the caste hierarchy may be tolerated, the relationship between a dominant caste woman and dalit male is considered to be abhorrent. “Honour killings are deeply rooted in the caste-based, Brahmanical, and patriarchal norms of societal organisation and kinship India. Castes are essentially ‘endogamous’

social groups, and the ‘Brahmanical code of Conduct’ decides for every individual and social group falling within its ‘fold’ their position, location, occupation, as well as rules pertaining to romantic relationships and marriage. The unique interplay of patriarchy and Brahmanism has created the social grids for all the members of society to follow, the breach of which is dealt with very harshly, which can vary from disagreement and ex-communication, to harassment, including extreme forms of violence such as rape and murder.”¹

¹ Sharma, K and Clouthary, M. How continuous caste based “honour” killings in India prove that mere love is not enough. *Feminism in India*. (2022) <https://feminisminindia.com/2022/05/25/how-continuous-caste-based-honour-killings-in-india-prove-that-mere-love-is-not-enough/>



THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Fundamental Rights And Duties For Women And Dalits

Article 14 Equality before law embodies the general principles of equality before law and equal protection of laws.

Article 15. Prohibition from discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth

Article 16. Equality of Opportunity provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

Article 17: Abolition Of Untouchability— “Untouchability” is

abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of “Untouchability” shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 39 requires the State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39(a)]; and equal pay for equal work for both men and women [Article 39(d)].

Article 39A directs the State to promote justice, on the basis of equal opportunity and to promote free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

Article 42 directs the State to make provision for securing justice and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

ARTICLE 46: Promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Weaker sections— The State shall promote with special care the educational

and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 51A (e) enjoins upon every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Reservation of seats for Women in Panchayats and Municipalities

Article 243 D (3) and Article 243 T(3) provide for reservation of not less than one third of total number of seats in Panchayats and Municipalities for women to be allotted by rotation to different Constituencies.

Article 243 D(4) T(4) provides that not less than one third of the total number of officers of chairperson in the Panchayat and Municipalities at each level to be reserved for women.

ARTICLE 330: Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People

ARTICLE 332: Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States

Special Legislations

Women And Dalit Rights

To uphold the Constitutional mandate, the state has enacted various legislative measures intended to ensure equal rights, to counter social discrimination and various forms of violence and atrocities and to provide support services especially to working women.

Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954:

This act provides a legal framework for interfaith and intercaste marriages, allowing individuals to solemnize their marriage through a civil contract, without requiring religious formalities.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005): This act provides legal protection for women against all forms of domestic violence, empowering them to seek legal redress.

The Dowry Prohibition Act (1961):

This law prohibits the giving and taking of dowry, making it a punishable offense.

The Equal Remuneration Act (1976):

This act ensures that women receive equal pay for equal work, prohibiting discrimination based on gender in matters of wages.

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention)

Act, 1956: This act aims to prevent and punish trafficking of women and children.

The Commission of Sati (Prevention)

Act, 1987: This act criminalizes the practice of Sati, a form of female ritualistic violence.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage

Act, 2006: This act prohibits child marriage, a practice that violates the rights of women and girls.

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act,

1983: This act amended the Indian Penal Code to include provisions for sexual harassment and other crimes against women.



The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1986: This act ensures that women workers have the same rights and protections as men in factories.

Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986: This act prohibits the indecent representation of women in media and other forms of communication.

The Legal Services Authorities Act: This act provides for free legal aid to women who cannot afford legal representation.

The PoSH Act: This act, also known as the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition

and Redressal) Act, 2013, addresses workplace harassment and provides a mechanism for redressal.

The Maternity Benefit Act: This act ensures that women employees are entitled to paid maternity leave.

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2018

The "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013" (MS Act, 2013) prohibits manual scavenging, mandates rehabilitation, and penalizes violations, coming into effect on December 6, 2013.

without equality, there can be no liberty, fraternity or democracy.
Without erasing the word 'masculinity' there can be no freedom for women.
without annihilating the caste system, there can be no democracy.

AMBEDKAR



सफाई कर्मचारी आंदोलन

36 / 13, ग्राउंड फ्लोर, ईस्ट पटेल नगर, नई दिल्ली ☎: 011-25863166

🌐 www.safaikarmachariandolan.org

✉ skandolan@gmail.com