

CASTE AND VIOLENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

Dr. Shweta B. Choudhare,

Dept. of Hindi, MES Arts, Commerce & Science College, Sonai,
Newasa, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India
ORCID No. 0000-0002-3019-7567

Abstract:

Violence is certainly not a sudden reaction that took imminently. Many times We experience violence only through physical activity. But psychologically, the primal form of violence can be seen as in the form of emotion and it could be experienced in a specific part of the brain. While taking shape, violence gets dimensions and development with many issues like gender, class, caste, and religion. Being a social animal, man interprets every socio-religious rule according to his nature. The behavior against the things which according to him if do not fit into the social or religious framework then it leads to violence. Whether the violence appears in direct or indirect form. The attempt to maintain Ruling power and control over society by using physical-ideological and social power continues even today. That raises questions related to caste and social hierarchy. So to seek the truth honestly and without any prejudiced thoughts and to express that truth without any fear or oppression, is a religion of science called knowledge.

Keyword: Maharashtra, Shahu-Phule-Ambedkar, Non-Brahmin Movement, *Dalit – Daliterra* (Untouchable – Touchable, *Due to*), Peshwa, Manusmriti

Article :

Maharashtra, is one of the progressive states in India, not only in the social sphere but also due to the progress made in various fields, the country's economic steps are turning towards Maharashtra on a large scale. Many social movements started in this land. Maharashtra, which is considered the land of saints and heroes of social reformers, and freedom fighters, has maintained its uniqueness like other provinces due to its customs and traditions. The intellectual thinking of Chhatrapati Rajashri Shahu Maharaj, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule & Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, etc. has laid the foundation of Maharashtra's ideology.

There are two classes of revolutionaries are to be seen in the society, the first of which revolts against the existing unjust system and wants to destroy it, but does not know how to bring about a new system. The second class rebelled against the system due to their vision and created a new system. Mahatma Phule also tried to give an alternative to the exploitative system. Phule tried to give an alternative religion to society through the book “*Sarvajanik Satya Dharma*”, which carefully observed that the observance of religious practices would not lead to economic exploitation of the poor. The movement started by Mahatma Phule through *Satya Shodhak Samaj* was named the Non-Brahmin movement by Rajaramshastri Bhagwat.

The non-Brahmin movement has shown the freedom and existence of all the common people not only in Maharashtra but to the whole country. Despite this, the issue of caste in Maharashtra, which is on the threshold of the 21st century, has always been a key issue from society to politics. The big issues in politics revolve around one element of 'caste'. Here the politics of 'caste' defeated the good mind. So what will be the position of the lower class and women there?

With the spread of education in modern times, vocational education has reached rural areas just as fast. Many young people left villages for education and employment and moved to cities. In the wake of the new idea, many inter-caste marriages began to take place in an urban environment (a culture of non-interference in each other's lives). Here young people from all walks of life started learning, working together, and embracing new modern ideas. People of two different castes and religions started getting married. Although Inter-caste marriage has succeeded in breaking the vicious circle of traditional thinking, the question remains, how much

did Dalits and women get the right to live or love? Attempts are being made by various social organizations and at the government, level to break the deadlock between women on the issue of the right to love and the 'right to equality' which are frequently discussed in society.

In modern times, the issue of 'caste and the right to love' may be not taken into consideration when designing programs and policies such as women's empowerment, which emphasize individual freedom. Although the term Love, inter-caste marriage Such incidents are not easily accepted in rural areas as compared to urban areas. It is equally true that when such an event occurs, there is a parallel system made by casteism to easy suppression. Now the bitterness between the upper class and the Dalits is being felt outside the rural areas as well as in the urban areas. Society should try to take stock of all this.

It is a social fact that culture survives, even if the race disappears. According to the Archaeological, even if a culture carrier is defeated by another race, the first culture does not perish. But even in modern times, caste-religion hatred is seen in many noble societies. But for those who take up arms for the protection of the race or for bloodshed for fear of destroying the culture, for those who pollute the minds of the society by shedding blood, the degree of ignorant will be small. Today, there are people in society who are proud of the sanctity of their race, clan, and blood purification and believe that my caste, religion is my whole race and the sanctity of my race is the sanctity of my entire caste religion. The burden of so-called sacred honor and chastity is placed on the heads of women and society calls masculinity an ornament. Today, in rural areas, women are beaten by their so-called 'owners', husbands, to earn their respect as guardians of tradition. By raising the issue of 'caste', the leaders of the society, however, are seen opposing women's rights, love, and love marriage in the name of protecting the caste framework. *Khap Panchayats* in Maharashtra, their working methods, wrong methods of imposing fines, and the accidents that result from this are now commonplace. Out of sheer ignorance, hybrids or caste hybrids are prohibited and there is support for such incidents as honor killing.

Casteism in the high class seems to be more closely related to his sense of triumph in history. Victory in Maharashtra can be seen in the context of some concepts related to culture and Shiva-era history. Without going too far back in history, In the 16th century, the state established by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Maharashtra was called Swaraj or Maratha Empire. To establish this Swaraj 'Marathas' made a significant contribution. At that time 'Maratha' included 18 *Pagadjati* means different 18 castes and tribes (called in old Marathi as *Alutedar-Balutedar*), today Maratha is considered an independent caste. At the same time, the period of Brahman rule in Maharashtra started from the Peshwa period in the 17th century. The so-called upper castes repeatedly insulted the lower castes as untouchables. In company rule, there is an incident, where The 800 soldiers of lower cast known as the Mahar Regiment, joined the war on the side of the company. They faced 28000 Peshwa-led soldiers. To commemorate this victory, the company erected a victory pillar. Every year thousands of people of lower caste visit this place to pay homage to the heroism of their ancestors. On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of this victory, the Dalits who visited the Victory Pillar on January 1, 2018, clashed with the upper castes and riots broke out. The Bhima-Koregeon incident proves that The thread of honor and disgrace is now wrapped around the single element of 'caste' in the society of Maharashtra. Many serious incidents like this are happening.

Today Dalits and other lower castes are seen as an image of losers. By giving evidence of the Vedic period and the political equations changed during the Peshwa period, in which the caste system was given priority, by giving examples from the past every time, no one has forgotten the inferior social treatment of the lower castes, their existence as slaves, oppression, slavery imposed on others by ego and all efforts to get the title of 'winner'. Violence against Dalits in Maharashtra is not new. After the 2006 *Khairlanji* massacre case, which refers to the murders of four Scheduled Caste citizens by villagers of *Khairlanji* on 29 September 2006; in the North region of Maharashtra Sonai Triple Murder case occurred in sonai village in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district in 2013 over an inter-caste love affair, Nitin Aage Murder Case, Nitin a Class X student, was killed in April

2014 at Kharda village in Ahmednagar district over his purported love affair with an upper-caste girl allegedly by her relatives; Kopardi Rape and Murder case, where A 15 year old girl from upper class community was gangraped and murdered by three [Dalit](#) men in the village Kopardi, in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra; Shrirampur's Dipak Barde Murder case due to inter-religious marriage, the Western region's Bhima- Koregaon case, Marathawada region's Vijapur, Beed cities honor killing Cases and many more case based on cast, raised lots of questions in front of justice.

More than 160 million people in India, who are considered Dalit or Untouchable, *Harijan* or ST- SC categories are assaulted every day, every hour. As we enter the 75th year of our independence, we feel that we have forgotten our constitution, its policy guidelines, rights, and duties. Therefore, we must burn the words of *Manusmriti* which oppose the principle of equality. Instead, those who oppose the principle of equality are seen backing those who burn the Constitution. So, even if we get freedom, it is true that the age of such evil thinking is more than the age of freedom for centuries. The sentiments for Dalit and Daliterra in the upper caste society are so entrenched that its complete eradication is not possible shortly. While the state approach in dealing with Dalit protests may not change, the changing context in which Dalits are successful in bringing their issues center stage has the potential to bring out new possibilities but the question remains, what about Humanity?

Reference:

1. NaliniPandit- "Caste &Class in Maharashtra" – Economic and Political Weekly Vol. 14, No. 7/8, Annual Number: Class and Caste in India (Feb., 1979), pp. 425-
2. Hillary Mayell - India's "Untouchables" Face Violence, Discrimination, National Geographic – June 3, 2003
3. Kumar Ketkar – "Maratha protest shows Maharashtra is no better than casteist Bihar or Uttar Pradesh",The Print – June 25, 2023
4. Dr. Giuseppe Scuto- "Caste Violence in Contemporary India"- <http://www.indianet.nl/pdf/CasteViolenceInContemporaryIndia.pdf>
5. A K Biswas – "Is India the Most Dangerous Place for Dalit Women?" - 15 February 2013, Mainstream Weekly