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# Discrimination and its Issues in India

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**ABSTRACT:** Twenty percent of the world's population relies heavily on caste as a predictor of success, although it is seldom addressed in debates of global development strategy. The Sustainable Development Goals and other international accords are being reevaluated to include measures to combat caste-based discrimination and inequality. Despite being widely rejected in favour of treating caste as a relic of the past and a source of historical disadvantage that could be addressed by affirmative action, caste remains crucial in the modern Indian economy as a system of advantage and discrimination. We analyse recent works from the fields of anthropology, economics, history, and politics to better comprehend the ways in which caste influences social and economic development. The effects of caste on economic disparity in rural areas, cities, and the business world after deregulation are examined. The degradation and revival of caste by contemporary economic and political factors has far-reaching effects on people's quality of life, as do the inequalities it exacerbates in terms of wealth and education. Everyone suffers when caste systems are upheld. Social rank disparity allows privileged groups to monopolise opportunities while disadvantaged groups risk violence and humiliation, which is why caste exists in today's free market era. To include caste in global development strategy, new approaches are required to fight market and non-market discrimination and reduce obstacles, especially in the informal and private sector.

**KEYWORD:** Indian Caste Inequality Discrimination Economic development Policy

## I. INTRODUCTION

With "leave nobody behind" as its rallying cry, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to ensure that all people may fully participate in economic and social life. To elaborate, "all" in the above statement refers to people of "all ages, genders, abilities, races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, socioeconomic, and other backgrounds" (SDG 10.2). This book does not address the topic of caste. Human rights organizations believe that 20-25% of the world's population is subject to discrimination based on caste (or 'work and ancestry,' the UN euphemism for such systems of hereditary status), with the vast majority of those affected residing in South Asian nations and related diasporas. Discrimination based on caste/work and ancestry is illegal according to international human rights legislation, although it is seldom brought up during intergovernmental meetings like those on the SDGs. Should we consider caste problems to be a factor in world poverty and inequality? Is there evidence that a person's social status affects their ability to advance in their chosen field, and if yes, how does this operate in practice? Caste is seldom discussed in public, unlike topics such as age, nationality, and religion. Due to the enormity of the problem, the impact of caste on economic processes and policy in India will be evaluated here. Caste is only one of several social elements (including class, gender, and religion) that contribute to India's distinctive pattern of poverty (Shah et al., 2018). This analysis, on the other hand, is focused on empirical and analytical research that seeks to establish the "grammar of caste" (Deshpande, 2017) that leads to the persistent gaps in India's educational and labour markets (and by extension elsewhere). The "higher" castes now own a disproportionate share of the country's capital resources (land, buildings, finance, etc.), while the "lower" castes contribute mostly via wage work. 2 According to B.R. Ambedkar, a political leader of the Dalit people, this is a system of "graded inequality," in which the return on variables like greater education or capital assets decreases as we travel down the hierarchy, while the number of people in poverty grows. By combining occupational, educational, and economic disparities into a Caste Growth Index, Deshpande (2017, 93) shows that greater money or quicker development across India's diverse states does not reduce the severity of caste inequality. Still today in India, one's birth caste determines much of their social status.

## II. CASTE IN INDIAN SOCIAL POLICY

Caste is fundamental to Indian policy and affirmative action, hence the assertion that it plays minimal part in development policy talks needs elaboration. We believe that the present approach to caste in social policy is fundamentally flawed because it either thinks that market-led progress has destroyed caste or treats caste as a societal illness needing (in principle) temporary "special remedies" (see Waughray, 2010, 336-37) The government was



reluctant to blame caste for poverty and inequality, and there was no provision for social classifications employed by the colonial administration in India's national censuses after independence (Dirks, 2001, Jaffrelot, 2006).

### **III. CASTE AS POLITICS**

Poverty's "economization" suggests a "culturalization" of caste, while caste's "enclosure" inside religion/culture, history, and the nation isolates it from development (Natrajan, 2011). The reason for this is that Hirschman was primarily concerned in material and economic "interests" in development (1997). As of 2011, 52% of the population, or 3,743 unique jatis or castes, were eligible for these privileges, while before only the Scheduled Castes received the benefits of affirmative action in the form of set quotas or "reservations" in public sector employment and higher education. The contentious concept that caste may be utilised as an indication of social and economic disadvantage motivated the so-called Mandal Commission to argue for this change (rather than just an effect of Hindu untouchability). Despite this, a mountain of evidence demonstrates that caste became a focal point of political conflict rather than a new government focus on caste in economic interactions (Jaffrelot, 2006, Jayal, 2015). The upper castes protested fiercely when the "untouchables" were allowed to enter reservations. 8 This safeguard elevated "OBCs" from a generic administrative category to a politically significant constituency. Jaffrelot's (2003) description of the rise of caste-based parties in India's northern regions as an example of a "quiet revolution." To reanimate caste (Sheth, 1999), electoral politics creates new higher-order clusters, fosters the creation of new myths, and allows leaders to articulate their perceived interests via caste identification..

### **IV. VILLAGE ETHNOGRAPHY: CASTE HIERARCHY AND STATUS MOBILITY**

Scholars believe that caste is best understood as the product of several phenomena, some of which have been there for a very long time and have fused in various ways throughout the course of history. Due to the increasing economic and military activities, systems of administration, and taxation under British authority, Peninsular India became more "caste-like" in the early modern period, starting in the late seventeenth century (Bayly, 2001).. Revisionist history is currently a part of the Hindu nationalist criticism of caste, which centres on the question of whether or not the British "created" the caste system or the concept of caste.

### **V. DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION**

Education was seen as a critical weapon for bringing about social and economic reform, fostering justice, individual mobility, and national unity in India because of the stratified and fragmented condition of Indian society before to independence. The importance of education in the framework of planned development was emphasised as a means to increase general literacy and foster the growth of specialised expertise. However, there was an inherent bias toward financing higher education under development strategies that favoured high-tech, urban-based firms operating in an uncontested environment. Even though it's crucial, basic schooling seldom gets the attention it deserves in our culture (Dhesi, 1986). However, helping disadvantaged groups get access to resources is unlikely to provide positive results if it fails to account for those groups' inability to really make use of the opportunities they are afforded. Some of the many reasons these populations lag behind include poverty, a high opportunity cost of learning, a lack of relevance of education to their immediate labour demands, inadequate educational facilities, and the biases of instructors. Contemporary research across a variety of literatures on caste and development has produced arguments for include caste in foreign policy alongside gender and race.

### **VI. CONCLUSION**

There is compelling reason to take caste as seriously in foreign policy as other traits like gender and ethnicity that impact access to resources in light of recent research that cross numerous disciplines of study on caste and development. The research done on caste in India has broad implications for other South Asian countries and their diasporas. But policymakers shouldn't lose sight of caste's distinctive traits, such as its own forms of occupational ranking, exclusion and enclosure, network effects, graded inequality, and stigmatisation, just because caste is entwined with other identity consequences (gender, class). While the total number of poor in India is decreasing, the proportion of Dalits and Adivasis, and especially women, is increasing.





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