

**UNTANGLING THREADS: ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS, CONSEQUENCES, OF
CASTE-ORIENTED BIASES IN EMPLOYMENT IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA**

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ABSTRACT

Economic structure is a crucial way through which one can recognize the nature and characteristics of existing society within the territorial area. Several scholars have argued that India has a fixed order of categorisation of occupational distribution, which is directly associated with the caste system. The practice of a particular occupation in a particular community and transfer from one generation to another was very much evident in India, and the discrimination in the context of employment opportunities was traced by various scholars in the literature. Nevertheless, the established system of Indian society, in particular the Indian economic structure, is keeping its discriminatory characteristics in modern times. However, it has detrimental impacts that negatively affect the country as a whole in the arena of mobility, economic growth, and so on, which leads to a path of inequality. The study tries to convey the idea of caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities in India, where it entangled the idea of the article with challenges and consequences faced by disadvantaged groups in society through the available literature. The study also gives a few potential suggestions to tackle or solve the problem related to caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities.

Key-words: Employment opportunities, Caste, Indian Social System, Discrimination, Dalits, Caste-biases.

INTRODUCTION

Caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities is a pervasive problem in contemporary India (Nagar, 2023). Despite constitutional provisions and affirmative action programs, individuals from lower castes continue to face discrimination in the job market, both in the private and public sectors (Jodhka, 2017). This not only violates human rights but also hinders the country's economic growth and development (Knight, 2010). The lack of diversity in the workforce and the perpetuation of social hierarchy make it difficult for individuals from lower castes to access better employment opportunities and improve their socio-economic status (Mosse, 2020). This article examines the challenges and consequences of caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities in contemporary India and suggests possible solutions to address this issue

BACKGROUND

India is a diverse country with a complex social structure. Caste is a fundamental aspect of Indian society, which divides people into hierarchical groups based on birth (Vaid, 2014). The caste system has been in existence for centuries and has been a significant source of discrimination and inequality (Desai, 2011). The Indian Constitution recognizes the importance of eliminating caste-based discrimination and provides several provisions to ensure equal opportunities for all citizens of India. Article 15 of the Indian Constitution discourages and demotivates individual(s) for any kind of discrimination on the grounds of birth, sex, race, colour, religion, region, caste, culture, or creed (Bhatia, 2016). Article 16 provides equal employment opportunities for all citizens of India, bound by the established law of the Indian constitution. The affirmative action programs, such as reservations in educational institutions and public sector jobs for individuals from lower castes, are also guaranteed by the constitution of India (Malik, 2022). Despite these constitutional provisions and affirmative action programs, caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities persists in

contemporary India. Individuals from lower castes continue to face discrimination in various forms, such as denial of employment, lower wages, and limited career growth opportunities.

Problems in Caste-Based Discrimination of Employment Opportunities

The persistence of caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities poses several challenges for individuals from lower castes and the country as a whole. It inherited the traditional pattern of occupation practice in Indian society. Therefore, one can infer that challenge patterns are also inherited by culture and individual(s). Firstly, caste-based discrimination hinders social mobility and perpetuates social inequality. Individuals from lower castes face limited access to better employment opportunities, which makes it difficult for them to improve their socio-economic status. This perpetuates the social hierarchy and reinforces the dominance of upper castes in society (Soundararajan, 2023). Secondly, caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities hinders economic growth and development. Discrimination leads to a lack of diversity in the workforce, which limits innovation and creativity. This, in turn, hinders productivity and competitiveness, negatively impacting the country's economy (Sabharwal, 2020). Thirdly, caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities violates human rights (Bhimraj, 2020). Discrimination denies individuals from lower castes equal opportunities to pursue their chosen careers and improve their socio-economic status. This violates their right to equal treatment and opportunity, which is a fundamental human right.

consequences of caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities

The consequences of caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities are far-reaching and have a significant impact on individuals from lower castes and the country as a whole (Deshingkar, 2006). Individuals from lower castes face limited access to better employment opportunities, which perpetuates social inequality and hinders their social mobility. This limits their ability to improve their socio-economic status and leads to a cycle of poverty (Piff, 2018). Caste-based discrimination also hinders economic growth and development. The lack of diversity in the workforce limits innovation and creativity, which hinders productivity and competitiveness. This affects the nation's economy and makes it challenging for it to compete on the international stage (Bob, 2007). Caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities also violates human rights. Discrimination denies individuals from lower castes equal opportunities to pursue their chosen careers and improve their socio-economic status. This violates their right to equal treatment and opportunity, which is a fundamental human right.

Suggestions/ Solutions for Eradication of Caste Biases in Employment

Several solutions can be implemented to address caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities. Firstly, there is a need to increase awareness about the negative consequences of caste-based discrimination. This may be accomplished by educating the public by organizing awareness programs that will shift attitudes and beliefs about people from lower castes (Kumar, (2022)). Secondly, there is a need to strengthen affirmative action programs such as reservations in educational institutions and public sector jobs. This can help provide equal opportunities for individuals from lower castes and increase their representation in the workforce. Thirdly, there is a need to enforce existing laws and regulations that prohibit caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities. This can be achieved through strict enforcement mechanisms and penalties for violators (Chauhan, 2008). Fourthly, there is a need to promote diversity in the workforce. This may be accomplished through the enforcement of laws which advocate recruiting individuals from diverse backgrounds, including lower castes.

CONCLUSION

Caste-based discrimination in employment opportunities is a persistent problem in contemporary India. Despite constitutional provisions and affirmative action programs, individuals from lower castes continue to face discrimination in the job market, both in the private and public sectors. This not only violates human rights but also hinders the country's economic growth and development. The lack of diversity in the workforce and the perpetuation of social hierarchy make it difficult for individuals from lower castes to access better employment opportunities and improve their socio-economic status. To address this issue, there is a need to increase awareness about the negative consequences of caste-based discrimination, strengthen affirmative action programs, enforce existing laws and regulations, and promote diversity in the workforce.

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