

## Rigidity of Caste System in India and the History of Religious Conversion: A Step Taken by the Sufferers in Order to Protect Their Self-Honour



**Dr. Sarita Sahay**

Former Academic Counsellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University, SIRD, Ranchi - 834005, Jharkhand, India

**ABSTRACT:** This article tries to explore and analyse the sensibility and rigidity of caste system which is embedded deep into people's psyche in India and has proved to be the stumbling block of social justice and human rights. The article also attempts to review the work of some of the scholars, which shows how opting for another religion gave the sufferers a chance of fair deal and opportunity to live with honour and self respect.

**KEY-WORDS:** caste system, social justice, human rights, self respect, people's psyche.

### INTRODUCTION

In Indian religious tradition, religious conversion has become a routine. In May 27, 2007 about fifty thousand low-caste Hindus and nomadic tribe people converted to Buddhism (Reuters 2007). To change one's religion is to change one's world because religion is just not an idea about supernatural. It constitutes a theory of the world, a way of constructing reality that seems uniquely real to those who experience it (Buckser and Glazier 2003). In this condition one can think that what could prompt an individual to choose new religion and go for an abrupt transformation. In hope of escaping the rigidity of the Hindu caste system and finding a life of dignity many people opts for another religion in India as claimed by those who convert. Though Indian constitution forbids caste discrimination, *Dalits* (low-caste/untouchable) are still often beaten or killed if they worship at a temple reserved for upper caste or if they dare to marry with upper caste girls (Das 1970). While Spectacular economic success and exposure to western culture have remoulded many social paradigms, the caste system has persisted especially in village.

Casteism in India has been equated with apartheid in South Africa, racialism in the U. S. A., ethnicism in Zaire and communalism in almost all the countries of the world, arising out a universal fall of humanity (Pannikar 1955). Besides other problems they pose danger to the security, the basic need for survival, of all men, women, and children in any society.

India is considered to be one of the most stratified of all known societies in human history with its unique and peculiar form of caste system ((Bugle 1958; Gould 1988; Hutton 1961; Leach 1960; Srinivas 1962). The 'unique' elements of the Indian caste system are its complexity, its relation to Hindu religious beliefs and rituals and the degrees to which the castes are cohesive and self-regulating group (Nanda 1987). The Hindu religious belief provides justification for the ordering and ranking of castes—serving to rationalize and stabilize the system (Howard 1986). This system is 'peculiar' in the sense that it is one of the greatest separating forces that have been used to divide human beings, mainly into two categories: 'Higher Castes' and 'Lower Castes'. This simple division is backed by certain religious sanctions, which yield to what social scientists term 'purity' and 'pollution' concepts. The division of the Hindu society into such groups was originally attributed to divine will (Aggarwal 1971; Bugle 1971; Weber 1958). Traditionally the lower castes are prohibited by the threat of supernatural punishment and by force, if necessary, from performing tasks not regarded as befitting to their caste status (Freed and Freed 1972; Gough 1971; Khare 1970; Mahar 1972; Sinha 1967). The religious sanctions made redress of the Indian caste system difficult even though it was challenged throughout the course of history. The intellectual moral as well as religious support that has been given to the caste system relentlessly violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948.

This caste system can be blamed for the continuation of many discriminative and unequal practices in the Indian society (Mishra 1975; Mishra 1979; Sachchidananda 1977; Vidyarthi and Mishra 1975).

This article tries to further explore and analyse the sensibility (rather, lack of it) and the rigidity of the institution of caste system, which has embedded deep into the people's psyche and has proved to be one of the major obstacles to practice the social justice and human rights. Besides, an attempt has also been made to review the work of some of the scholars, which shows how, as well as, up to what extent, opting for another religion has given the sufferers a fair deal to live with honour and self-respect.

## **Rigidity of Caste System in India and the History of Religious Conversion: A Step Taken by the Sufferers in Order to Protect Their Self-Honour**

### **INDIA: THE LAND OF CASTES**

The castes have been defined as hereditary endogamous groups with fixed traditional occupations, observing commensal prohibitions and social restrictions on interaction. It is believed that there are 3000 castes in the country. These castes are grouped as upper castes (Brahmin, Rajput, Baniya, and Kayastha), intermediate castes (Ahir, Sunar, and Kurmi) and lower castes (Dhobi and Nai). There are untouchable castes also (Bhangi and Raigar). These castes are linked with four *Varnas* (Brahmins, Kashtriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras) for determining the status in ritual hierarchy (Ahuja 1993).

In the initial phases of human civilization, all societies were organized on the patterns of equality in the economic, political and social fields (Discochers 1993). The social stratification appears to have emerged recently relatively in human history. This conclusion is based on archaeological evidences and on the fact that a number of other cultural features associated with stratification relatively developed recently (Ember and Ember 1995).

Mantras of the Rig-Veda indicate that health, wealth, prosperity and power were the chief and almost sole factors concerning the Aryans, and to them the religion was a means of acquiring these elements. By the end of the Rig-Veda period, society was divided into four major classes. Religious sanction laid the foundation of this four-fold division which was looked on as fundamentals. The four classes or *Varnas* consisting of Priest (Brahmins), Warrior (Kashtriyas), Peasants (Vaisya) and Serf (Shudras) which were evolving throughout the period of the Rig-Veda have survived up to the present day (Basham 1967). With the passage of time these *Varnas* got divided as well as transformed into many castes and sub castes. To the present day the life of the lower orders is much more affected by the castes than by the *Varnas*. It is not by being a Vaisya or Shudras, which matters but by being an Ahir, Kayastha or Sunar, it matters. Almost invariably, cooperate feelings are associated with the caste group in all the regions, professions and religions in this country.

It is believed by some authors that during Pushyamitra Sunga's rule (187 B.C.) the Brahmins were given the higher status in the society (Rao 1989; Thaper 1988). Several inhuman and unethical laws were codified against the 'Shudras' and they were treated as untouchables. The term 'Scheduled Caste' was coined by the 'Simon Commission in 1935 which came to be used for the described as untouchables. According to Ambedkar (Ambedkar 1946), in early India, they were known as 'broken men' or 'out castes'. The British described them as 'depressed classes. In 1931 Census, they were classified as 'exterior caste'. Mahatma Gandhi (Gandhi 1954) designated that class as 'Harijans'—the children of God. The educated persons among the untouchable castes did not take to this nomenclature gladly as they thought that singling them out as the children of God merely was an attempt to make their conditions tolerable rather than destroy the system, which bred inequality (RoyBurman 1977). The Hindu scriptures treat them as the 'Chandals', the 'Unclean Castes', and the 'Exterior Castes' (Mishra 1979).

The caste system with its numerous variations of superordination and subordination, rites and rituals, social professions, vices and dogmas still exists in all the regions of India with different degree of rigidity.

### **CASTE SYSTEM: AN INSTRUMENT FOR PRACTICE OF DISCRIMINATION AND UNEQUALITY IN THE SOCIETY**

Although the caste system has been theoretically and judicially abolished by the constitution of India, its significance in the day to day life and its influence on the configuration of power structure in economic, political, social and cultural fields do not stand ruled out. The ancient '*Dharmashastra*' of the 'Hindus imposed a series of social, political, economic and religious restrictions on the lower caste making the untouchables completely dependent for their livelihood on those above them. As a result of which they have lived a life of physical degradation, insults and personal and social humiliation for a very long time. Of late as early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the untouchables had no access to public facilities such as wells, rivers, roads, schools, and market (Galanter 1984). They were compelled to tie an earthen pot around their neck so that their sputum should not fall on the earth and cause pollution to the others, to tie a broom-stick behind them so that their foot prints would be erased before others set their eyes on them (Dangle 1992). All these rigid conditions made the untouchables destitute, deprived and the most depressed section of the human society for ages.

It has been found that most of the controlling positions in economic, administration and cultural pursuits are monopolized by a few castes all over India. In fact, a few castes controlled the destiny of all the people of the country, leading to caste and regional tensions and social unrest. This unrest causes keep alive a bitter competitive struggle among the privileged groups as well as under privileged groups. This has a detrimental effect on the development of healthy national economy (Desai 1959; Meynard 1963; Singh 1993). Today the untouchables are socially frail, economically needy, and politically powerless.

As a chief architect of the Indian constitution Ambedkar worked hard for a new constitutional order based on equality and social justice. Ironically, however his dream has not materialized even after fifty years of the working of constitution. The various kinds of torture perpetrated today on the untouchables are its testimonials (Baisanry 1991).

It is a bitter truth that as a part of its ancient culture, India has also inherited an ignoble and inhuman system of division of society in the name of caste and treats a significant number of people as out castes and untouchables. Even though a smaller section of them has become well to do under government patronage and has moved up economically and professionally, but

## **Rigidity of Caste System in India and the History of Religious Conversion: A Step Taken by the Sufferers in Order to Protect Their Self-Honour**

socially they remained downgraded and unaccepted. When lower castes people endeavour to rise up in the social scale, they are too often brutally crushed by the upper castes people. Their oppressors resort to mob-raids, murder and arson and even rape (Das 2004; Kumar 2000; Louis 2003).

Perpetuation of caste system is, in general, ensured by the upper castes holding self-assumed traditional belief in their superiority on one hand, and positions of power in the society on the other. They derive three main advantages from their position: economic gain, gain in prestige, and sexual gain (Ember and Ember 1995). Therefore these people have no scruples in continuing this system.

Mahatma Gandhi justified caste system for the efficiency of 'allotted' work. In fact, 'efficacy of socially allotted work' has been used as an argument for idealization and justification of the caste system in India. In reality, however, this allotted work is not carried out without some resentment.

The caste system has created inter caste conflicts and had brought rift between the higher and the untouchable castes (Ahuja 1993). In most villages, they continue to suffer residential segregation. Those who have changed their traditional occupation face less status disabilities. In some cases, however, they suffer because of conspicuousness of their hereditary identity (Sachchidananda 1977).

The caste system is one of the important impediments to development efforts. This system also creates factionalism problems (Dube 1988; Madan 1965; Singer 1959; Singh 1977). Any project that apparently, aids people of one caste is opposed by the people of several other castes who are jealous of the position of the beneficiary in the society. They wish to defend their own position at every one else's expense. Like caste factions, the inter-caste factions also act as barrier in social change (Bose 1944; Kapp 1963). Kapp has pointed out that the Hindu culture and the Hindu social organizations are determining factors in India's low rate of development. However, Milton Singer (Singer and Bernardcohn 1968) does not accept this viewpoint that the Hindu culture and caste system have had any dampening effect on India's development.

Dominance of some castes over others, exploitation of lower castes by higher castes, barriers in mobility and achievement of political power, competition for economic opportunities and acquisition of symbols of higher status are the results of practicing caste system (Beteille 1965; Ghurey 1969; Gould 1987; Srinivas 1952). This system also thwarts political unity (Bugle 1971) and is held responsible for low status of women (Ahuja 1993).

Caste system guides and mentally influences the people in entering into certain vocation (Sahay 1993; Sahay 2002) and thereby creates obstacles in the healthy economic development of the society, the age-old impact of caste system can also be gauged from their frequent occurrence in our folk-tales (Sahay 2000). Dependence of all the castes over some other can not be ignored in the performance of important rituals of life as well as death (Lourdusamy and Sahay 1996).

Low castes in India resist the status accorded to them with its concomitant disabilities and discrimination, and strive for higher accord status and its attendant advantages. Higher castes attempt to prevent such striving. In this conflict of interests lies the explosive potential of all the castes of the society (Berreman 1966).

The report of the National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been regularly pointing out an increase in the animosity against the scheduled castes. Many scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women become the victims of rape by upper caste men while working for them in fields, factories and houses. The scheduled caste men, on the other hand, are exploited by usurpation of their lands, payment of low wages and as bonded labourers (Report 1979). The increase in the number of crimes against the scheduled castes recorded by the police is also evidence. As regards the atrocities and murder against the scheduled castes, the incidence of Belchi village in Bihar in May 1977 can not be forgotten. Similar cases were reported in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh in between 1978 and 1992. Because of these atrocities, the cases of proselytization of Harijans into Islam and Christianity are also reported from time to time. Such conversion of religion was reported in city Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu (India) in February 1981 in which about 1,000 Harijans were converted into Islam (Ahuja 1993).

The caste system equates Indian tradition with Hinduism. Thus the Hinduism in general and the caste system in particular have held down 106.23 million (2001 Census) people at the bottom of the society in indescribable ignorance, dirt and degradation on the ground that they are so foul to be unfit for ordinary human intercourse. According to the orthodox theory, every man born among these people is a soul, which in former lives lived so viciously that this present degradation is the just punishment for his former sin. What sort of national danger this mass of crushed humanity is to India, one can realize readily. These people belong to many different races, and are found in every part of India, sometimes in small, sometimes in large groups. Their poverty is, in most cases, pitiable (Farquhar 1977). Caste system has made the basis of inequality in India both socio-cultural and psychological, and not entirely economical.

# **Rigidity of Caste System in India and the History of Religious Conversion: A Step Taken by the Sufferers in Order to Protect Their Self-Honour**

## **CASTE SYSTEM AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Human rights are those minimal rights which every individual must have by virtue of being a 'member of human family', irrespective of any other consideration. They are based on man kind's demand for a life which the inherent dignity of the human being will receive respect and consideration (Kang 1995).

We shall see below how practicing of caste system violates some of the article of Human Rights:

### **Article 1:**

*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and human rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*

Commonly prevalent attitude of inequality and contempt by the upper caste people towards those born in lower castes violates this article.

### **Article 2:**

*Every one is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other options, national or social origins, property, birth or other status.*

The categorization of status of people by caste, and in turn by birth, which is an integral part of the caste system and which has religious sanctions (from *Manusmriti* and the Bhagvad Gita) violates this article. The conception of hereditary occupation of caste system is exactly the opposite to the idea of open opportunities, free competition, increasing specialization and individual mobility with a dynamic industrial economy.

### **Article 5**

*No one shall be subjected to trouble or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*

'*Dhor Gawar Shudra Pasu Nari Sakal Tadana Ke Adhikari*' prescribed by Tulsidas in the Ram-Charitra Manas' often misguides the action of higher caste people, in violation of this.

### **Article 13 (1)**

*Every one has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.*

People belonging to scheduled castes who are forced to live in the outskirts of villages are deprived of the right mentioned above.

### **Article 16 (1)**

*Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and its dissolution.*

Practice of caste system brings about compulsion too of marriage within the caste, thereby denying the above right.

### **Article 18**

*Every one has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.*

Caste system ensures ownership and control of places of worship (temples) to be restricted to only the Brahmins. A lower caste Hindu can never become a priest.

### **Article 23 (1)**

*Every one has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable condition to work and to protection against unemployment.*

Caste based system of occupation and its prescription violates this rule.

### **Article 26 (1)**

*Every one has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.*

The practice of caste system has resulted in denial of opportunity of education to lower castes.

Openly and clearly, the caste system violates the UDHR. The caste system has erected impregnable walls among the group of human beings.

The caste system is not merely a division of labour but division of labourers. It is a hierarchy in which the division of labourers is graded one above the other. This division of labour is based on neither natural aptitude nor choice of the individual concerned (Ambedkar 1948; Rawat 2005; Singh and Gadkar 2004). It violets the rule that freedom, equality, and fraternity, are the very basis of human rights.

## **OPTING FOR ANOTHER RELIGION OR SECT: AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY**

The use of the term 'alternative strategy' implies that when direct strategies of change, without recourse to change of religion or sect, fail in achieving the desired objective of eradication of discriminatory and unequal practices in the society, change of religion or sect offer an alternative. As we find, use of this alternative or opting for another religion or sect has a very old history in this



## **Rigidity of Caste System in India and the History of Religious Conversion: A Step Taken by the Sufferers in Order to Protect Their Self-Honour**

country. In fact, that is in the root of the multitude of sects and sub-sects of the Hindu religion. The different, diverse and conflicting or contradictory system of beliefs, prevalent in the composite Hindu religion and philosophy, as it exists today, bear a testimony to this, often overlooked, fact. Beginning with the Vedic religion and practices, which also gave birth to the four *Varnas* and subsequently numerous castes and sub-castes, the advent of the Jainism, the Buddhism, the Atheism (Charvak philosophy), Bhakti-movement, and more recently, sects of Kabir, Raidas etc. were not academic exercises in the development or evolution of religion. These were vibrant and brave attempts, as well as instruments, of social changes. Every new sect or school of thought, which was founded, made a large population, belonging to then mainstream Hindu religion, opt for a change of religion or sect, with the motivation for this change being, more often than not, some discriminatory or unacceptable practices. That the founder of these religions and sects faced stiff resistance especially from the caretakers of the Hindu religion is well known.

Both the Buddhism and the Jainism (~500BC) offered respite the discrimination and inequality faced by the people of lower caste (Hardon 1968) and therefore attracted 'religious conversion'. These were the early examples of religious conversions in the true sense of term, since they involved certain rites and rituals at the time of entry into this religion, and prescribed conduct for day to day life associated with the different system of belief, as compared to the then Hindu religion. These conversions were opposed more because they set free the oppressed sections of society from the clutches of the caretakers of the then Hindu religion, who could not anymore exploit them. The Buddhism and the Jainism were about equality of all men by birth: a concept, totally unacceptable to Brahmins and other upper caste Hindus.

Annihilation of Buddhism, mass conversion of Buddhists back to Hinduism, and integration of both the Buddhism and the Jainism into the Hindu religion and philosophy, destroyed one of the basic tents of these religions, namely 'equality of men by birth' at the social level and established once again the hierarchy of caste.

The Atheism, independent of the Buddhism and the Jainism also developed separately with several sects and sub-sects in India (Thaper 1988). Headed by the famous materialistic philosopher Charvaka the movement revolted against the slave-system, caste-exploitation and existence of God (Barlov 1984). Ajit Keshkambalin was another important exponent of this sect. These men did not believe in the survival of any soul after death, and most importantly, believed in the 'quality of men by birth'. They offered an 'alternative religion'.

The mass-appeal of the Bhakti-cult developed by Alwars and Nayanars in 600 AD in south India lied in the philosophy which had no consideration for caste or creed and offered a religion which did not distinguish men on the basis of their origin of birth. Again in the medieval period the most of the poets, singers and saints of the Bhakti-cults challenged the *Varna* system. Namdev (1270-1350 A.D.), Chokamela (13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> century), Kabir (1398-1498 A.D.), Raidas (a contemporary to Kabir), Tukaram (1608 A. D.), all of them opposed the caste system.

However, with the Buddhism being an exception, the process of proselytization was never on an organized scale. Only some of the so called lower castes willingly embraced another religion, attracted by their democratic structure and fraternal approach.

The spread of the Islam during Muslim rules, and that of the Christianity, hundred of years ago, in one of the Indian states Kerala, the nearby areas, and Goa, are not being included for analysis in this article for lack of details from 'the perspective' which forms the theme of this article. But a note worthy feature of both these religions is 'equality of men by birth'.

In the recent times, we find two important organized efforts of proselytization: the first being those by the Christian missionaries after the arrival of The British in India and the second by Ambedkar, Phule and others. We shall examine these two in some details:

During British rule certain remarkable changes in the lives of all the castes took place. It was during this time that old power and prerogatives were abolished; old occupations and learning were rendered obsolete or marginal; new opportunities for gain and advancement were introduced; power and access to it were distributed. It was on this background that India went through a reform movement (Galanter 1984). The spread of western system of education, the so many inventions of the west, not designed for use in a society divided into watertight compartments, growing national sentiments, and the intensive propaganda of enlightened leaders brought about definite changes in the society.

Against this backdrop whatever success the Christian missionaries have achieved in proselytization should come as a surprise to us. But it does not surprise us especially in the light of the second organized effort that by Ambedkar, Phule and others, undertaken after India became Independent: it just shows that the caste-based discriminatory and unequal practices prevalent in the Hindu society refuse to die.

The Christian missionaries introduced a number of welfare measure among the so far neglected and exploited communities in India (Dhan 1967; Sahay 1976; Sandhavar 1973; Sen 1960) and thus improved their social and economic conditions (Corringe 2005; Sahay 1975; Seenarine 2004). Evangelization was supported by various welfare schemes for the coverts. Opening of schools, dispensaries, hospitals, orphanages, vocational Centres, and other measures for eradicating the miseries and providing material redress went almost side by side (Elvin 1960; O'Malley 1938; Singh 1944; Thomas and Taylor 1965). For the people facing discrimination because of their birth in lower castes of the Hindu religion, and the adoption of the

## **Rigidity of Caste System in India and the History of Religious Conversion: A Step Taken by the Sufferers in Order to Protect Their Self-Honour**

Christianity just meant an option to live with a sense of dignity. They and their posterity were at once free from the shame of being born as scheduled castes or primitive tribes. The economic upliftment was associated with emotional and psychological healing too.

Next we examine the second important organized efforts of religious conversion: those by Ambedkar, Phule, Ramabai, Tarabaisinde who rejected the Hinduism and chose Buddhism for themselves and the oppressed sections of the society which were suffering under the dominance of Brahmanic cult for so many centuries (Kosambi 1992; Shinde 1992). Phule felt the need to establish a religious alternative. He attacked the Hinduism at every point, challenging its legitimacy and questioning its existence. To him the Hinduism is superstition, a bag of tricks, a weapon of domination (Phule 1991). Understanding the evil and pernicious effects of the caste system on the certain section of society Ambedkar said, 'caste is the monster that crosses your path. You can not have political reform; you can not have economy unless you kill this monster'. He also felt that good things of this earth do not fall from heaven. Every progress has its bill to cost and only those who pay for it will have that progress (in 'Ambedkar and Social Justice'). He and thousands of his followers embraced the Buddhism, which he felt was purely scientific and free from caste-discrimination.

The above examples show clearly and elaborately that change of religion has always constituted an alternative strategy for eradication of discriminatory and unequal practices in the Indian society. It may be wrong to believe that change of religion will continue to be an option of respite for those facing discriminatory situations. It is true that the caste stigma is so strong in Indian society that in spite of their adaptation of new identity and desire to become an ideal group, the converts often carry the label of their original caste (Ram 1988). Caste-group exists among Muslims (Basham 1967; Kessing 1958), Christian (Clarke 1998; Samuel 1999; Tharamangalam 1966), Mahar Buddhists (Issac 1965) and Sikhs (Basham 1967).

### **CONCLUSION**

Every human being, given favourable conditions, is capable of developing unlimited powers of intellect and will, and those conditions have not yet been created for those who need them the most. Lower caste communities are extremely heterogeneous groups divided into hundreds of castes and sub-castes. They are spread all over India. Despite the differences in language, religious practices and life-style they share one thing in common: they all suffer from oppression based on caste inequalities. The problems of many discriminating practices in the name of caste are linked to cultural, religious, economic and social aspect. It is a deep and complex problem and mere legal measures can not provide solution. Although the Indian constitution is not based on the laws of Manu and Bhagwad Geeta, and has abolished untouchability (the Untouchability Offences Act passed in 1955 followed by the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act in 1976) the effects of caste discrimination continue. With the upper caste people having all the powers in their hands, the low caste communities are continuing to be subordinated. These communities have opted for other religions as an alternative strategy to overcome their problems in the past, and this may continue in future if the society as a whole does not give up discriminatory and unequal practices in the name of caste.

### **REFERENCES**

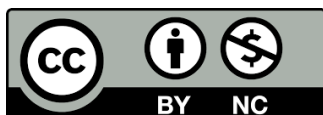
- 1) Aggarwal, P. 1971 Caste, Religion and Power: An Indian Case Study. New Delhi: Shriram Centre For International Relation.
- 2) Ahuja, Ram 1993 Indian Social System. New Delhi: Rawat Publication.
- 3) Ambedkar, B. R. 1946 Who Were The Sudras? Bombay: Thacker & Co.
- 4) — 1948 The Untouchables. New Delhi: Amrit Book & Co.
- 5) Baisantry, D. K. 1991 Ambedkar; Total Revolution. New Delhi: Segment Book Distributors.
- 6) Barlov, V. 1984 Indian Philosophy In Modern time. Moscow: Progressive Publishers.
- 7) Basham, A. L. 1967 The Wonder That Was India. Calcutta: Rupa & Co.
- 8) Berreman, Gerlad D. 1966 Castes In Cross-culture Perspective. Berkeley: Berkeley.
- 9) Beteille, Andre 1965 Caste, Class & Power. Berkeley: California Press.
- 10) Bose, P. N. 1944 History Of Hindu civilization. London: Oxford University Press.
- 11) Buckser, Andrew, and Stephen D. Glazier 2003 The Anthropology Of Religious Conversion. INC: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- 12) Bugle, C. 1958 The Essence & the Reality of The Caste System. Contribution To Indian sociology 2(2).
- 13) — 1971 Essay On Caste System. New York: Cambridge Press.
- 14) Clarke, S. 1998 Dalits & Christianity. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- 15) Corringe, Hugo 2005 Untouchable Citizens. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- 16) Dangle, Arjun 1992 Poisoned Breed. Bombay: Orient Longman.
- 17) Das, K. C. 2004 Indian Dalits Voices, Visions & Politics. New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House.

## Rigidity of Caste System in India and the History of Religious Conversion: A Step Taken by the Sufferers in Order to Protect Their Self-Honour

- 18) Das, M. S. 1970 An Exploratory Study Of Touchable-Untouchable Inter-Caste Marriage In India. *Indian Journal Of Sociology* 1(2):130 to 138.
- 19) Desai, A. R. 1959 *Rural Sociology*. Bombay: Vora & Co.
- 20) Dhan, O. R. 1967 *These Are My Tribes Men; The Oraon Of Ranchi* Ranchi: Ranchi Press.
- 21) Discocchers, J. 1993 *Methods Of social analysis*. Bangalore: C. S. Publication.
- 22) Dube, S. C. 1988 *Modernization & Development*. New Delhi: Vistaar Publication.
- 23) Elvin, V. 1960 *Nagaland*. Shillong: Research Department.
- 24) Ember, R. C., and M. Ember 1995 *Anthropology*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall Of India.
- 25) Farquhar, J. N. 1977 *Modern Religious Movements In India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Mohanlal Publisher Pvt. Ltd.
- 26) Freed, S., and R. Freed 1972 *Some Attitude Towards Caste in a North Indian Village*. *Journal Of Social Science* 15(2):1-17.
- 27) Galanter, Mark 1984 *Competing Equalities*. London: Oxford University Press.
- 28) Gandhi, M. K. 1954 *The Removal Of Untouchability*. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House.
- 29) Ghurey, G. S. 1969 *Caste & Race In India*
- 30) Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- 31) Gough, K. 1971 *Caste In A Tanjore Village*. In *Aspects Of Caste In India*. E. Leach, ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- 32) Gould, Harold 1987 *The Hindu Caste System*. New Delhi: Chankya Publication.
- 33) — 1988 *Caste Adaptation In Modernizing Indian Society*. New Delhi Chankya Publication.
- 34) Hardon, J.A 1968 *religion Of The world*. New York: Doubleday Image Book.
- 35) Howard, C. M. 1986 *Contemporary Cultural Anthropology*. Boston: Little Brown & Company.
- 36) Hutton, J. H. 1961 *Caste In India: Its Nature, Function & Origin*. Bombay: Oxford University Press.
- 37) Issac, H. R. 1965 *India's Ex-Untouchable*. New York: The John Day Company.
- 38) Kang, S. S. 1995 *Forward Note*. In *Human Rights In India: Implementation & Violation*. G.S. Bajwa, ed. New Delhi: Anmol Publication.
- 39) Kapp, William 1963 *Hindu Culture*. In *Economic Development & Economic Planning In India*.
- 40) Kessing, M. F. 1958 *Cultural Anthropology: The Science Of custom*. New York: Rinehart.
- 41) Khare, S. 1970 *The Changing Brahamins: Association & Elites Among The Kanya-Kubja Of North India*. Chicago: University Of Chicago press.
- 42) Kosambi, Meera 1992 *India response To Christianity, Church & Colonialism, Case Of Pandita Ramabai*. In *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. October.
- 43) Kumar, Raj 2000 *Dalit Culture: A Perspective From Below*. *Social Action* 1(50).
- 44) Leach, Edmond 1960 *Aspects Of Castes In South India, Ceylon & North- West Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 45) Louis, Prakash 2003 *The Political Sociology Of Dalit Assertion*. New Delhi
- 46) Gyan Publishing House.
- 47) Lourdasamy, S., and Sarita Sahay 1996 *The Mythological story Of Gayasura & The Performance Of Sraddha-Yajna In Gaya: Beliefs & Behaviour Patterns Of Hindus*. *Folklore & Popular Religion* 1(1):197-203.
- 48) Madan, T. N. 1965 *Family & Kinship*. Bombay Asia Publishing House.
- 49) Mahar, J. M. 1972 *The Untouchable In Contemporary India*. Tucson: University Of Arizona Press.
- 50) Meynand, J. 1963 *Social Change & Economic Development: UNESCO Publication*.
- 51) Mishra, Nararyan 1975 *Some Aspects of Dusadh Of Darbhanga*. *Indian Journal Of Social Research* 28(2).
- 52) Mishra, Narayan 1979 *Studies On The Scheduled Castes In Bihar*. In *Growth & Development Of Anthropology in Bihar*. L.P. Vidyarthi, ed. New Delhi: Classical Publication.
- 53) Nanda, Serena 1987 *Cultural Anthropology*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- 54) O'Malley, L. S. S. 1938 *Bihar District Gazetteer*. Patna: Govt. Of Bihar.
- 55) Pannikar, K. M. 1955 *Hindu society At Cross Road*. Bombay: Asia Publication.
- 56) Phule, J. 1991 *Untouchables*. In *Collected Works Of Mahatma Jotu Rao Phule*
- 57) P.G. Patil, ed. Pp. 39-40. Bombay: Government Of Maharashtra.
- 58) Ram, Nandu 1988 *The Mobile scheduled Castes: The Rise Of New Middle Class*. New Delhi: Hindustan Publishing House.
- 59) Rao, R. S 1989 *Caste System In India: Myth & Reality*. New Delhi India Publisher.
- 60) Rawat, G. S. 2005 *The Status Of Dalit & Human Right In India*. New Delhi: Sumit Enterprises.
- 61) Report 1979 *The Community On Untouchability*. New Delhi: Department Of social Welfare, Government Of India.

## Rigidity of Caste System in India and the History of Religious Conversion: A Step Taken by the Sufferers in Order to Protect Their Self-Honour

- 62) Reuters 2007 Indian Low-caste Hindus, Nomads Convert en Masse. Bombay: Monday 28 May, 2007, 11.05 AM
- 63) RoyBurman, B. K. 1977 The problems Of Untouchables. R. Thaper, ed. New Delhi: Tribe, Caste & Religion In India.
- 64) Sachchidananda 1977 The Harijan Elite. Faridabad: Thomson Press.
- 65) Sahay, K. N. 1975 Christianity As An agency Of Tribal Welfare In India. *In Applied anthropology In India*. L.P. Vidyarthi, ed. New Delhi Kitab Mahal.
- 66) —1976 Under The Shadow Of Cross. Calcutta: ISRAA.
- 67) Sahay, Sarita 1993 Job-Motivation & Job-Preference Of Working Women In Different White Collar Jobs At Ranchi. *Bulletin Of Bihar Tribal Welfare Research Institute* 32(1):39-48.
- 68) — 2000 Folktales Of Bihar: An Anthropological Perspective. *Folklore* 13, <http://haldjas.folklore.ee>.
- 69) —2002 Tribal Women In The New Profile: Anmol Publications, New Delhi.
- 70) Samuel, J. 1999 Religion International. London: Oxford.
- 71) Sandhavar, A. N. 1973 The Methods Of Christian Conversion Among The Tribals: The Korwa Of Palamu. *Journal Of Social Research* 16(1):87-92.
- 72) Seenarine, Moses 2004 Education & Empowerment Among Dalit (Untouchable) Women Of India. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- 73) Sen, Jyoti 1960 Missionaries Activities In Chotanagpur. *Journal of Social Research* 3(2):128-131.
- 74) Shinde, Tarabai 1992 Stri Purush Tulna (in Hindi). Nagpur: Asok Publication.
- 75) Singer, Milton 1959 Traditional India: Structure & Change. Philadelphia.
- 76) Singer, Milton, and Bernardcohn 1968 Structure & Change In Indian Society. Chicago.
- 77) Singh, I. 1944 The Gondwana & The Gonds. Lucknow: Lucknow Press.
- 78) Singh, Ramgopal, and Ravindra D. Gadkar 2004 Restoration Of Human Rights & Dignity To Dalits. New Delhi: Manak Publication.
- 79) Singh, Y. 1977 Social Stratification & social Change In India. New Delhi: Classical Publication.
- 80) — 1993 Modernization of Indian Tradition. Jaipur: Rawat Publication.
- 81) Sinha, S. 1967 Caste In India: Its Essential Pattern Of Socio-Cultural Integration. *In Caste & Race*. A.R.J. Knight, ed. Boston: Little Brown.
- 82) Srinivas, M. N. 1952 Religion & Society Among The Coorgs Of South India. Bombay: Oxford University Press.
- 83) — 1962 Caste In Modern India & Other Essays. Bombay: Media Publishers.
- 84) Thaper, Romilla 1988 Bharat Ka Itihas (in Hindi). New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan Pvt. Ltd.
- 85) Tharamangalam, J. 1966 Caste Among Christian In India. *In Castes: Its Twentieth Century Avatar*. M.N. Srinivas, ed. New Delhi: Viking.
- 86) Thomas, M. N., and R. W. Taylor 1965 Tribal Awakening. Bangalore.
- 87) Vidyarthi, L. P., and N. Mishra 1975 Harijan Today. New Delhi: Classical Publication.
- 88) Weber, M. 1958 The Religion Of India: The Sociology Of Hinduism & Buddhism. New York: Free Press.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.