

Equality inbreeds Inequality: Past & Present

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Abstract: Debate on Equality is going on since ancient times. In India, after more than six decades of independence still reservation policy on the basis of ST, SC, OBC. Despite the constitutional guarantee of equality before the law and equal protection of the laws there remain inequality based on sex, and caste and category. In this paper inequality based on sex, economy, and education is focused.

Keywords: Equality, cast

I. INTRODUCTION

Equality means that each individual should get equal right, equal chance, equal economic and political status, equality in laws and education. According to Andre Beteille Equality and inequality are not merely subjects of scholarly interest, they are also matters of everyday concern. There are inequality between nations, classes, castes and gender. On the one side, people try to find reasons for the inequalities that exist and on the other hand argue the existing inequalities are arbitrary (Beteille, 1983). Equality and inequality are matters of fundamental importance. In India, after more than six decades of independence still reservation policy on the basis of ST, SC, OBC is going on. Are the all people titled in these cases are really backward and need reservation still? 'Patidar Andolan' in Gujarat and 'Jaat Andolan' in Hariyana demands answer from the social, educational and political thinkers.

Debate on Equality is going on since ancient times. Here inequality with respect to caste and status of women, economic and education is discussed.

II. Caste as a system of Inequality

It is well known that in ancient period Varna system was privileged in Hindu society. Cosmological explanation occurs in Rigveda. The Hymn says that the Brahmin came from the mouth, the Kshatriya from the arms, the Vaishya from the thighs, and the Shudra from the feet of "Supreme Pursha." In the Dharma Shashtra period (200 B.C.) the classification of the Varnas into a rigid socio-legal order was found. Some writers attribute to Manu the transformation of a social order into legal order. Manu states that a woman is never fit for independence because her father protects her in childhood, her husband in youth and her sons in old age. The Aitareya Brahmins says the wife is indeed friend, a daughter is distress, and the son is light in the highest heaven. A feature of inequality based on sex was that women suffered greater disabilities. In earlier time Brahmin girl was legally permitted to marry only a Brahmin male. Divorce was not recognized under the Shastras. This rule was observed among the first three Varnas. But among the Sudras divorce was generally recognized on the basis of custom. The low status of women was further exemplified by the prevalence of 'Sati pratha' in some part of India.

III. Status of Women

India got freedom in 1947. The constitution in the year 1950 marks a watershed in the progress towards equality. Despite the constitutional guarantee of equality before the law and equal protection of the laws there remain inequality based on sex. Inequality in law exists not only on the basis of sex, but also among women themselves depending upon their religion. The position of women under Hindu law and then their position under the Muslim, Christian law are different.

- In 1955-56 parliament enacted four laws to remove the unequal status of women under Hindu law.
 - The Hindu Marriage Act

- The Hindu Adoption and maintenance act 1956
- The Hindu minority and guardianship act 1956
- The Hindu succession act 1956

The Hindu marriage Act introduced monogamy as rule for men as well as women.

- The position of women under Muslim law is characterized by inequality. Monogamy is the rule for Muslim wife. The husband is entitled to have four wives at a time.

Therefore, Ramesh Shayar says,

“Ak Desh Main Do Kanoon,
Ye Kesi Lokshahi Hae?
Ye Kaisa Rajkaran Hae,
Chro Taraf Tabahi Hae”

In India, before independence, less emphasis was given to the women education. They used to remain in the four walls. But after freedom of the country steps have been taken by the Government of India for the women's equality. The Government of India is committed to bring about basic change in the status of women through Education. The major schemes for empowerment of women are as under:

- Mahila Samakhya started in 1989
- Free Boarding and hostel facilities for girl students
- Free travelling pass for rural female students
- More reservation in government services as well as political status.

1. Economic Inequality

Economists deal with three interrelated kinds of inequality i.e. Inequality in the size distribution of wealth, earnings, incomes. In general they deal with inequality of earnings among the individual and inequality of incomes and wealth among families. Caste system and poverty play greatest role in it. Much of the available evidence suggests that some of the basic inequalities in the distribution of power in country side are embedded in structures of caste and class. In rural India, in general power has been the preserve of dominant caste. The politicization of the horizons in modern India had its origins in the backward classes' movement. The policy of protective discrimination was seen including the reservation seats. It is true that backward classes require special opportunities in order to take their rightful place in the society, but at least the legal disabilities from which from which they have suffered for centuries have now been removed.

2. Education and Inequality

Durkheim pointed that “Education is only the image and reflection of society.” Equality of educational opportunities means that each individual should get equal chance in education without any extraneous considerations based on race, religion, caste, social origin, economic status, and geographical residence. Therefore, equality of educational opportunity referred as EEO (equal educational opportunity). The concept of EEO has passed through at least four stages, namely;

- Equal Access
- Equal Input
- Equal Outcomes
- Social Action

After independence the University Education Commission stated that education is a universal right. Inequality in access to education and educational facilities manifests itself in a number of ways. In detailed state and district wise account of how schools in U.S.A. differ, Christopher Jencks identified substantial inequality in inputs and expenditure. The state spent more on the rich child and the white child than poor and black child. It is useful to examine similar differences in India. Thus school brings little influence to bear on children's achievement. So inequality

- Inequality imposed on children by home, neighborhood and poor environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of the school.
- Sources of inequality of educational opportunity because of cultural influences around the home.
- The higher the social class of other students, the higher the achievement of any group of students.

IV. CONCLUSION

The policy of protective discrimination including the reservation of seats is turned into evil. It has created artificial inequality between men and women, caste and caste and between rich and poor people. Middle class population suffers a lot in terms of opportunity, employment and income. From the sociological point of view, the test of equality will lie neither in the structure of ideal values nor in distribution of material sources.

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