

A SUB ALTERN UNDERSTANDING OF SUB CASTE SYSTEM OR DEPENDENT COMMUNITY IN INDIA

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The intricate feature of caste system lies very much in India's social structures. It is spread and entangled with so many castes and following into sub castes. The diversity of this structure with different, divergent roles and entangled inter relationships poses many questions. The social structure is ever evolving giving scope to many questions. It is hard, and sometimes challenging to understand this kind of heteronormative societies of India and the style of living patterns of the communities of the Indian society. This pattern of caste with so many sub castes forms a multi-dimensional, mosaic structure. This multi dimensional feature leads to the unique kind of gradation, finally leading to interdependency. In this social structure it is observed that no single caste can be considered in isolation. The relationship between the traditional value systems and paradoxical social action of this system is not very easy to understand. To merge the old cultural social values with the new ever changing new society norms involves the structural continuity and at the same time structural change in these patterns. In the first place, it is not easy in its place. Understanding this intricate system with an outer perception of vertical 'caste system' with a superficial over study fails to understand the inclusive inner patterns, what we are discussing now as sub castes – their links with culture, and the western ideological study hastens to lead to the conclusions of the caste exclusivism. Here the conclusion comes in an idealistic suggestion to lower the caste barriers, without reaching to any proper working solution. This exuberant social system always posed an unanswering question to both Indian and western ideologies. A different and closer study of this caste – sub caste or patron caste and dependent caste should be made. It is not all that easy to make and accept the theorizations like 'institutionalized inequality' and similar ones. The study of caste and sub caste needs a deep exploration. It is also time to take up these studies to present the real, true Indian social structure without any inhibitions. In spite of the indignity and degradation, there are other coherent, cohesive qualities which make this structure a single, unique and rare one. Within this caste – sub caste pattern there lays close knit communities. They own artisans, artists, technologists' artisan producers and service providers to make up a society rich and vibrant in it.

It is apparent that each and every backward community patronizes a dependent community with its own distinctive style. For example, as observed in state of Andhra Pradesh, for thirty backward communities there are more than eighty dependent kulas are noticed. The word dependent also provides the broader view of their cohesive social living patterns. One kula is entwined with another dependent kula for the sake of convenient and secured social living. This sense of sharing is a dominant point of view of this social division aiming at 'life in harmony'.

Further, every dependent caste owns a musical instrument and an art form. Dakkali's own 'Kinnera', an musical instrument. This enormous bounteous and abundant culture is a rare and unique feature of any country. This enormity further widens with the inclusive eight dependent Kulas within the 'Madiga' community, they are Dakkali, Baidla, NukalaChandayyalu, Chindu, Pumba, Maashti, MadigaJangalu and Aasadulu. In turn, Dakkali community owns nearly forty sub-castes in Andhra Pradesh and three hundred or more throughout India. Their nomadic and semi-nomadic life styles made their census count always questionable.

This kind of cultural embedded pattern and living in social relations represent the point that Indian society cherishes a creative dialogue between its different cultures and visions. Every cultural form and composition and performance was invented and circulated and generated through the vibrant knowledge system of kula.

Indian caste system is quite larger one to regulate the society. Professions were divided amongst the kula. With the rapid flow of time the society faced very rapid and unimaginable changes. Professions were changed and slowly disappearing. Only and only kula remained. India, with its group of societies strives to sustain her unique qualities. A responsible profession is attached with kula, known as kulavritti, and also a cultural art form, most of the times the performance based art form, with a specific musical instrument, and for some kulas there are written documents dividing the areas to perform their art. One particular kula performed their art in that specified area to avoid the confusion and unwanted competition. This circle of kula-kulavritti, caste based profession rather vice-versa. This art tradition of kulas was diminished. The Indian cultural context cannot be imagined without the sense of these multiple singularities in inheritance with their communicating art and idiomatic articulations. The base for these art forms could either be properly understood by the western world or the inner Indian society. The result was that the western world propagated it according to their literary and cultural standards, and tried to judge these art forms and literatures, where the judging mould was unable to sustain with proliferating of these sections and the inner section of Indian society maintained the dreadful silence. Even though, these cultural art forms not only acknowledged differences from one another, but contained and enacted specificities of a kula to show up their open-endedness in even their self-differentiating qualities.

Now, with some efforts, the serious academecia tries to create a cultural and critical base for these art forms and communities. Prof. JayadheerTirumalRao, Former Director, Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Centre, Hyderabad and Emeritus Professor, Telugu University way back in 1990's referred to these communities as 'Cultural Communities'¹ with his relentless efforts in this area for more than thirty years. He recognizes these cultures as "Prime Cultures or Primelores", because they are beyond all the literary canons like parallel and alternative literatures.

For this presentation, focus is laid mainly on Dakkali community. To observe and examine this underlying structure as a whole will lead to many new angles. Either the Indian or western modernized, sanitized and homogenized theories extended their vision beyond the four layered or linear caste structure, but there lies the sub caste Dakkali, below the line of caste and social structure. Below the four layered caste pattern there lie this sub caste Dakkali, without reaching to the fathoms of this dimension, any study on Indian caste system would be one sided and lopsided. Dakkali art and culture, intermingled, with their life styles and comes to rescue their identity.

The studies could not reach them. More than a caste identity it proved and remained as a derogatory abuse to them. The social status made Dakkali community an untouchable to

untouchable. As designated this sub caste should be fed by their patron community. As in its thorough bad translation into English, 'Bikshavritti' as 'begging', Dakkali's respectful begging was reduced to derogatory begging, making them 'Arthivaru'; when this change has been taking place the Dakkali were unaware of what was going on around them. Not only their terminology was changed but also the superficial ideologies kept them aside. Studies paid no attention to this deliberate change. Dakkali vitality, their art and culture were unacknowledged before a decade for a full-fledged study of Indian caste system; it becomes obligatory to know about the formation and function of this sub caste, Dakkali. It is to be examined. The stark realities around this community with all its rigidity and its dependency should also be studied with many sides and dimensions.

This kulapurana highlights the unfull filled, unintegratedness of their identity. This book shapes up as a tool, not as an answer or cure. It generates and provokes so many questions and questions so many ideologies. The book and art form rather present Dakkali Guru. If, these un answered questions are attempted to get an answer, not only the art and culture of Dakkali community will take a new dimension, even their social identity would also get an answer. The art form 'Jamba puranam', from a sacred narrative would transform to a more realistic format. Research must touch these conflicts and paradoxes. The related cultural background of Dakkali would help the research to look into their identity through the cultural angle. Their life and identity through the art and culture and text should be analyzed. The surface, direct caste system or pattern could not unravel the multidimensions of the Dakkali or the sub caste communities. The Seer poets like Vemana and Veebrahman and their texts similar to their identities should be taken up.

Then emerges the needed dimension of caste pattern to understand it the way it is operated in the society. It should be viewed from the angles of Dakkali identity. The intense cultural expression should be made as bridge to compensate the gaps in between. There are other so many similar sub castes lying there with Dakkali, waiting for answers. The overt seeming caste ladder is much and much deeper to bear all these vibrant systems. The ladder even through goes up overtly, it is situated deep down into these subcaste layers. It is proper to understand the stand and range of these patterns. Village social structures are limited to the mere political SC and ST reservations and sub caste ranges. But Dakkali and other rare sub castes should be understood separately.

It is not idealistic or illusionary, if, this paper proposes to redefine and redesign the social order based on these lines. It is time to view the social structure from Dakkali view point and to know what would be their reaction towards the understanding of society about their identity all these years. It is time to understand them from their own point of view. The pyramid structure of caste hierarchy should be reverted to anti pyramid structure to provide the real expression of the oppressed. The perspectives should reach the apartheid and oppressed.

If viewed from this point, the complicated and conflicted Indian caste hierarchy and social structure would provide new social perspectives to the studies and also to the harmonious living.

Works Cited:

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