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OFFENCES COMMITTED ON THE MEMBERS OF SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES IN OUR INDIAN SOCIETY: AN UNACCEPTABLE CLASS

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ABSTRACT

Caste factor is a very dominant factor in our Indian society. The caste discrimination based on birth is a blot on the Indian society. Offences committed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are not a new phenomenon. They have to bear the brunt of physical, mental as well as emotional violence against them, which affects their status in the society at the large extent. The statistics of increasing crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are shocking, where they are subjected to various kinds of humiliation, harassment, discrimination etc. pertaining to civil, social, economic, political, cultural, and socio-religious domain etc. There are various reason which attribute to these offences i.e. caste system, untouchability, poverty, educational disparity, ritual purity, socio-economic condition and unawareness of law etc. As per Scheduled Tribes are concerned they face many problems and difficulties like geographical condition, economic problems, psychological factor, indebtedness, illiteracy, health problems etc. In today's scenario both the classes i.e. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are still suffering from various kinds of difficulties and very prone to offences due to their socio-economic status in the society.

Therefore, this paper is an attempt to find out the problems and difficulties, what are the reasons and factors related to the offences committed on these downtrodden classes i.e. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

KEYWORDS :psychological factor, indebtedness, illiteracy, health problems.



INTRODUCTION

The law of caste is the corner stone of Hinduism. The caste system in its early stages was quite elastic but in the course of time it gradually hardened into a rigid frame work based upon heredity. The caste system emerged in ancient India as unique and on the most rigid social systems ever developed in any part of the world. A caste was a social group consisting solely of persons born in it. Whole society was divided into four main castes. The four castes were precisely and clearly defined and rules pertaining of their lawful activities and functions dominated all social activities. The Hindu society clung on to iron cased beliefs and traditions, and the long established rituals and ceremonies.

Social stratification in India since

time immemorial gave rise to many problems, one of them was the regressive social system based on unequal social economic, Political and cultural status of the each strata in the social hierarchy. As my concern for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe, the most oppressed section in the Hindu social order dates back to around 600 B.C., when Buddhism questioned the validity of the hierarchical society of Hinduism but also nation of pollution attached to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe, purity attached to the Brahmins and supremacy of the latter over the former. The constitution has completely obliterated the caste system and has assured equality before law. But the caste system which has been put in the grave by the formers of the constitution is trying to raise its ugly head in various forms. Caste poses a serious threat to the secularism and as consequences to the integrity of the country. To Indian social system had for centuries perpetuated social injustices by the so called higher castes on the lower castes that had been systematically denied equal chance in the opportunities and facilities of the higher society.

The members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in the lowest rung of mankind, were not permitted to enjoy civil and political rights in the social system of India. The natives were subjugated in their own land by mighty power, literacy and knowledge. Exploiting the masses to serve their own interest by the dominant class was the main aim. The crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are increasing day by day due to socio-economic disparities in the society. The offences are still being committed on them. It is not new phenomenon rather they were subjected to various kinds of disabilities from time immemorial. As in Manu Samriti and other Shastra contain many provisions to award deterrent punishment to Shudras if they sighted Brahmins or violated caste rules and Manu's categorisation of punishments to the four Varna's in identical crimes. Thus, India has known one man's cruelty to another and humiliations and loss of human wrath and dignity because that human other was born in lowly caste.

Therefore, in this article an attempt has been made to find out or explore the problems, reasons or causes, factors related to offences committed on the members of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.

I. CASTE SYSTEM AMONG NON-HINDUS

The caste system in its most developed form is found in India, but the word is applied to similar hierarchically ranked groups in other societies. India's Muslims, Sikhs and Christians also have their own castes. There are also several caste systems among some Muslims in India. They are broadly divided into two castes, Ashraf and Ajlaf or oonchi jaat (high caste) and niche jaat (low caste). In addition to the Ashraf and Ajlaf Castes, there exist the Arzal under caste or the Dalit Muslims who are regarded by the Ashraf and the Ajlaf as ritually impure and are relegated to professions regarded "menial" such as scavenging and the carrying of night soil.

Caste among the Muslims in India owes itself directly to Hindu influences" but it has been reinforced by the justification offered for the idea of birth and descent as criteria of status in Islamic law. Therefore, it is clear that caste exist as a basis of social relations among (Indian Muslim), but its form has been greatly weakened and modified and it differs from the Hindu caste model in certain details. In some part of India, the Christians are stratified by sect, location, and the castes of their predecessors presently in India, more than 70% of Christians are Dalit, but the higher caste Christians and (30% by estimates) control 90% of the churches administrative jobs. Out of the 156 bishops, only 6 are from lower castes. Converts to Christianity have retained the old caste practices. In particular, Dalit Christians are regarded as an under caste by upper caste Christian clergy and nuns and are discriminated against in society.

Sachar Committee Report of 2008 pointed out that Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of India are not limited to the religion of Hinduism. The 61st nationwide survey organization found that almost nine tenths of Buddhist and one third of the Sikhs in India belonged to the notified Scheduled Castes of the constitution and one third of the Christians belonged to the notified Scheduled Tribes of the constitution. Statistics is given in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Caste System among Non-Hindus

Religion	Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribes
Buddhism	89.50%	7.40%
Christianity	9.00%	32.80%
Sikhism	30.70%	0.90%
Hinduism	22.20%	9.10%
Zoroastrianism	-	15.90%
Jainism	-	2.60%
Islam	0.80%	0.50%

II. CASTE OUTSIDE INDIA

Historian and scholars have often debated the question whether the caste system did not prevail in other countries besides India. Herodotus speaks of the seven general classes of the population in Egypt—priest, fighting men, herdsmen, swineherds, tradesmen, interpreters and navigators. Egyptian might not eat bread with the Hebrews. Incidentally, strong ties of kinship and clan were notable feature of Greek society also at certain period.

Hegel long ago pointed out that superficially the system of classes in medieval Europe resembled castes. The clergy, the nobility, the burghers and the serfs and proletariat formed groups not unlike the four Hindu Varnas. Class cleavage created class pride, which was signified by confining marriages to those within a group. Even now there is a royal caste in Europe, and the marriage of royalty to the commoner is resented by the class. In countries in which there is supposed to be no privilege, pride of belonging to a few families descended from original immigrants makes a close endogamous group in the United States of America. We have in the half-bloods of Spanish America groups that correspond to the mixed castes of Hindu Smritis. Connubium and commensality are not criteria exclusively found in Indian caste. It has been so in other countries and also in ancient times. In ancient Iran the four fold grouping into atharva (priest), rathestha (warrior), vastrya-fsuyant (“head of the family”), and huiti (manual worker) corresponds to the fourfold grouping of the Indian people into Brahmana, Ksatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. The resemblance goes further. As in India, the first three groups of old Iran constituted a higher division, marked from the lower (comprising the body of manual workers) by a ceremony of initiation and investiture with the sacred thread.

In today’s scenario the caste discrimination has a similar structure in many countries and that the caste system is not unique for India. Martin Macwan, a leading activist in the NCDHR means that caste discrimination also exists in Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh and in similar form in Japan, parts of Africa.

III OFFENCES AGAINST SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

The Indian social system had for centuries perpetuated social injustices by the social called

higher caste on the lower castes. The caste system with its barbarous inequalities, penalties, and disabilities, particularly toward the harijans, is the natural offspring of the varnashram dharma. If despite the atrocious discrimination and degradation which is inherent in this institution it has survived through the centuries, it is not just because it gave the social structure a certain degree of stability and security but because it more or less truthfully reflected the historical reality legitimized and sanctified by combination of scriptural injunction mythology & ritual. There is a painful truth which newspaper headlines scream truth which newspaper headlines scream day-after-day, it is that growing violence. Atrocities, abuses and excesses by the 'high' on the 'low' then were endemic with little or no threat of relation from those who were subjected to humiliations & harassments. This type of violence had them proliferated in varying degrees in all part of the country & victims had little or no option than suffering silently.

i) Meaning of Atrocity

In common parlance, the terms "atrocity" denotes an act of extreme heinous cruelty. The word 'atrocity' is used in India in relation to the Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribe etc. who are subjected to violence and brutalities especially in the rural areas by the upper caste Hindus. A recent study by the Bureau of Police Research and Development, Union Ministry of Home Affairs has defined 'atrocity' as "In order to constitute atrocity, there must be an element of cruelty, brutality or wickedness in the commission of a particular offence, it should have the background of having been committed with a view to teach a lesson to the Harijans".

ii) Kinds of Atrocities

There are various kinds of atrocities which are following as:

(a) Atrocities pertaining to Civil Right

Civil right are defined those legal right as retained by citizens and protected by the government. The incidence of atrocities which can be categorized under civil right violations, are fundamental in nature. In their efforts to emancipate themselves from caste oppression, Scheduled Castes exercise basic right such as celebrating cultural occasions, shopping at common markets requesting a cup of tea, protesting violence against fellow Scheduled Castes petitioning against the oppressive caste system and atrocities, sitting on land owned by the land owners, eating freed from CPRs (denial of access to public roads) providing protection to harassed women leading protest marches against social evils etc.

(b) Atrocities pertaining to Social Right

Social right includes the freedom to do anything without hurting other members of the society. It is but evident that since the citizens of India is guaranteed equality of right & the Scheduled Castes are no exception to the general. They sometime demand equality of treatment (asking to be served in cups of water or tea meant for higher castes); the right to development & access of entertainment, oneself be able to assists their caste identify (mobilizing Scheduled Castes for empowerment) etc. Such assertions of social right are again met with oppressive & discriminatory resistance from higher caste.

(c) Atrocities pertaining to Economic Right

Economic rights are basically tied to the issue of land & its ownership. There economic status with regard to land is limited to marginal ownership, lease, and working on land in the capacity of low paid and highly-over worked labours. Higher caste Hindus commonly feel that Scheduled Castes do not have right over land & that their rights are limited to serving the land owning higher castes by tiling their land.

(d) Atrocities pertaining to Political Right

Political right can be defined as legal claims by citizen to participation in democratic governance and be treated fairly. Political rights include the right to vote, petition, assemble, seek public office etc.

Though adequate provisions have been made for ensuring active participations of Scheduled Castes in political fair at the village, district, state & national level, still Scheduled Castes are not recognized on par with other with political field. There are several cases of Scheduled Castes not being allowed to cast their votes for several decades after independence. The constitution guarantees one person, one vote but in reality Scheduled Castes are considered as second class citizens.

Therefore the nature of atrocities invoke, denial of right to vote & elect, removal and non-inclusion of names of Scheduled Castes community members from voting rolls, discrimination by panchayats, attack and murder of emerging Scheduled Castes leaders, political discrimination, intimidation & beating of Scheduled Castes community members, arson, rape, murder & naked parading of Scheduled Castes women, to name a few.

(e) Atrocities pertaining to Culture Right

Culture rights are defined as the right to enjoy & develop culture life & identity. Whenever Scheduled Castes assets their culture right to such as playing the dappa (drum), marrying outside their caste, falling in love with a higher caste member or vice versa, making efforts towards better livelihood opportunities, celebrating festivals, using animals like horses for functions such as marriages and exercising livelihood opportunities by skinning dead animals they face intense opposition from the higher caste.

(f) Atrocities pertaining to Gender

Women's rights can defined as socio-economic, political legal and sexual right for women equal to those of men. Scheduled Castes women walking alone on the village roads are often subjected to extreme physical personal violations such as outrage of modesty. In some cases they are paraded naked in front of the village and there by subjected to years of fear, psychosis and trauma. They are also victims of forced prostitution including religious prostitution in the form of Devdasi system. These women are also doubly discrimination against, first from the outside, because they belongs from Scheduled Castes community, and then from within the community because they are women.

(g) Atrocities pertaining to Socio-religious-domain

The socio-religious disabilities imposed on Scheduled Castes with sanctity of religion texts were most prominent human right violations of Scheduled Castes during the pre-Independences period. However, the discrimination in the field of socio-religious practices still exist and in fact has results into rapes and killing of Scheduled Castes The human right violations against Scheduled Castes in the socio-religious domain emerges because of two reasons first they decline to perform their traditionally assigned work and secondly that Scheduled Castes claim to perform certain socio-religious rituals and practices which have been the monopoly of the caste Hindus. The violation of social and religious right basically emanates from the motion of purity and pollution.

(h) Severe kind of Atrocity

The fore most duty of the police is to prevent the omission of offences against deprived classes. Police is the protector, guardian & custodian of law. But if protectors instead of protecting them commit itself atrocities on them, then the position of atrocities becomes grave. Many in stances illustrate the point that it is not only the common upper castes people that involves in such in same acts but even the police who are supposed to protect the citizens, themselves attacked and commit atrocities on these Scheduled Castes.

iii) Reasons of Offences

(a) Caste System

One of main reason for commission of offences against Scheduled Castes is caste system or caste Hierarchy. Caste always has been a powerful potential and actual weapon in keeping the people

divided and weak. The system of caste embracing the principles of graded inequality and rooted in chaturvarna is deeply integrated in the consciousness of Hindu collectivity. So a four-fold division of society into Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishys and Shudra varnas, representing a hierarchy marked by differing material and spiritual privileges. Several centuries of uninterrupted and ritualistic adherence to the values of caste by the people, and nurturing of these values by the social religious, cultural and political systems, left the untouchables victims of oppressive inequalities. They had no choice but to accept the internalized norms as natural, legitimate God given. These two factors make the caste system rigid which help us perpetuation of caste system. Ultimately, various types of castes disabilities, namely no twice born ceremony i.e. Upnayana, no temple entry, no education, ex-communication, social boycott, caste hatred, no right over water and property, originated from the caste system.

(b) Poverty and Socio-Economic Disparity

In our country, most of the untouchables are below the poverty line or Scheduled Castes are poorest among poor. Poverty is a product of lack opportunity. It is a condition where poor people feel that equality and legal right are enjoyed by the privileged class only. The poverty forces children to labour and it implies denial of opportunity of education and other process of development. A large chunk of population among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are under nourished and suffer from a lack of essential vitamins and minerals in their body and many die from malnutrition or related disease. The majority of those suffering from hunger and mall nutrition are small holders or landless people. The incidence of poverty among them is very high due to landless and lack of employment. Therefore, the incidence of poverty among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is very high due to landlessness and lack of employment.

(c) Educational disparity

Education is a must for the development of individual personality and contribution to the development and wellbeing of the society. Education plays a crucial role in overall development of an individual. The socio religious groups in India get access to education in a differential manner. The access to education was the prerogative of certain section and this same was denied to some other sections in the society. They got the right to acquire education very late and this suggests of the disparities in terms of educational attainment of different communities. Even today access to education of certain section in India, particularly the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes are systematically deprived due to various reasons. According to NSS 2004-2005, illiteracy among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was 67.20% and 61.09% respectively in rural areas.

(d) Ritual purity

There is a hierarchical grading of castes based on the notion of ritual purity. The higher castes are believed to purer and less polluted the lower castes are less pure and more polluted. Her purity or the lack of it has no direct relation to physical purity. Ritual purity drives from the ideology of caste that human beings are born into a high or low caste in accordance with karmic law. Castes place restrictions on commensalism between members of different castes. These restrictions relate to eating and drinking. Social interactions between castes are restricted. They are permitted only during occupational transactions. An upper caste businessmen or land holder have not interacted with other who may be of low rank. Castes are usually associated with traditional occupations. For example, Brahmins, Rajputs, Baniyas, Ahirs of North India were associated with particular occupations likewise, in South India castes were either specialized in occupations or were associated with them. And the same views were expressed by Louise Dumont regarding features of caste i.e. there are four features of a caste system. (a) Hierarchy, (b) commensality, (c) restriction on marriage, (d) hereditary occupation concept of pure and impure occupation.

(e) Caste and Untouchability

The caste system in a rigid form in Indian society with untouchability is a peculiar feature of Hindu social system which developed on the basis of pursuing parental work as a means of livelihood. The victims of untouchability suffered a lot due to the inequality and discrimination, the form of untouchability was used by Sridhar V. Ketkar in a foot note to his study of the caste in 1906; Freedman viewed untouchables as “Stigmatized from birth was spiritually defiling therefore potential polluters of clean high caste people lived for centuries in segregated hamlet and villages. Today, most untouchables do not perform the work that is polluting mark of their caste they are still being treated as permanently polluted by the high caste Hindus. Under the traditional social laws of Hindu society they could not use public places and provisions such as ponds, pools, parks, well etc. They were debarred from Hindu temple place of worship and from using roads, vehicles, terries, schools republic convenience. With all the above said disabilities life has been miserable for untouchables.

(f) Self-awakening among Scheduled Castes

Atrocities are committed whenever the Scheduled Castes try to assert their rights as human beings or as citizens of India, or protest against oppression. This sort of the awakening, to some extent, taught Scheduled Castes to live with human dignity. The two crucial elements for a life with human dignity are personal liberty and adequate means of livelihood. The Scheduled Castes started claiming their legal right. This resulted into land disputes demand of minimum wages, free from bondage of bonded labour and demand of political right. Their developed animosity between dominant class and Scheduled Castes and ultimately resulted into commission of atrocities on Scheduled Castes.

(g) Unawareness of Law and requirement of political determination

Majorities of persons of Scheduled Castes are illiterate and consequently ignorant about present law enacted for their welfare. Likewise to the position of persons who usually commit atrocities on Scheduled Castes, they are ignorant about the provisions of the act and due to ignorance victims of atrocities in most cases do not lodge police report. Therefore the problem of atrocities on them did continue till today, more rampant in rural areas.

Lack of political will is also considered as one of the reasons for commission of atrocities on Scheduled Castes. The commissioners, commissions and National Commissions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have made several recommendations to prevent atrocities on Scheduled Castes but most of them recommendation were never acted upon. At though the Act was enacted in the year 1989 was made and notified only in the year 1995. This delay is considered, as lack of political will to enforce the Act Vigorously.

iv) Difficulties of the Tribes

India has a substantial tribal population. The Scheduled Tribes populations remain subject to exploitation and under privilege, despite a plethora of ameliorative measures. The tribes in the context of modern Indian society, signifies a group of primitive people living in the hills and forests having own language and a culture. Obviously, there is wide variation in the social organization and intuition of the tribes from the general people of India. They are economically and socially backward community. The tribal societies in India particularly till the attainment of independence remained comparatively isolated from the main stream of national life. Tribal's face many problems and difficulties with resulted into different kinds of offences and exploitation committed against them by the non-tribal's. Such difficulties are listed below:

(a) Geographical condition or problem of integration

The foremost problem is that of the peculiar geographical conditions which have so circumstanced the development of means of transport and communication that intra and inter

regional mobility and contact remains either restricted or negligible. Actually, the problem of the aboriginal and hill tribes lies not in their isolation but their contacts with the main body of the community where their geographical position keeps them beyond the reach of the outside world, as in such environment they are happy and independent; but in the places, now all too many, where they are in constant contact with more educated people, they are degraded, timid and exploited.

(b) Economic Problems

Economically the tribal people are far less developed than the non-tribal people of India. Many of them possess land; those who do, get so little yield out of it that they cannot maintain their families for the whole year. Allied to the problem of agriculture is that of forest. Many of them are forest dwellers. Alienation of forest right has led to the weakening of their economic structure and political upheavals. Ironically some of the co-operative societies which are formed to safeguard their interest are themselves exploiting them. Still the tribals throughout the country continue to be alienated from their agricultural lands and forests. Traders, money lenders continue to squeeze their share of food from the tribals. Added to their economic deterioration the influx of non-tribal population into tribal areas in search of land and resources increased by many folds. For the government both central and state, development has become a critical and for political parties a vote catching device rather than a meaningful effort after understanding the real problems of these communities. However, the choice of road which any tribal society will take is hardly ever left to the tribesmen themselves but is imposed on them by external circumstances outside their own control.

(c) Psychological factor

Geographical problem which is attributed to the financial problem of the tribals always impedes the development which again gives rise to the psychological problem. No doubt, tribals are innocent & easy to influence in either way. Financial as well as psychological problems are also foremost problems among them. Sometimes tribal people cannot make both ends meet, resources are there but its utilization & mobilization are meagre. Therefore, they have accepted the life as such and this sort of psychological factor is dominant in governing of their life.

(d) Poverty and Indebtedness

Majority tribes live below the poverty line. The tribes follow many simple occupations based on simple technology say primitive methods. Most of the occupations fall into the primary occupations such as hunting gathering and agriculture. The technology they use for these purposes belong to the most primitive kind. Hence, their per capita income is very meagre much lesser than the Indian average. Most of them live much below the poverty and are in debt in the hands of local money lenders and zamindars. In order to repay the debt they often mortgage or sell their land to the money lenders. Indebtedness is almost inevitable since heavy interest is to be paid to these money lenders.

(e) Education or Illiteracy

The problem of education also has to be given ample consideration. The literacy among the tribal people is 8.55% as compared to 24% in India as a whole. Educationally the tribal population has different levels of development but overall the formal education has made very little impact on their education. But in the subsequent years the reservation policy had made some changes. There are many reasons for low level of education among the tribal people.

The difficulty in educating tribal children is poverty of tribal families. Extreme poverty compels tribal children to help their parents in gainful work even from very early age of 10 years. Naturally they can't attend the school. The cultural isolation of tribals is another factor that hampers their education

most of them are culturally isolated from non-tribal. They are suspicious of non-tribal teachers. Non-tribal teacher on their part, treat them with as art of contempt towards their manners, dress etc. The curriculum is not related to tribal life etc. language is another barrier that comes in the way of educating tribals.

(f) Health Problems

The condition of health and sanitation of the tribal people is not what it should be. In many parts of India tribal population suffers from chronic infections and contagious disease out of which water borne diseases are life threatening. They also suffer from deficiency diseases. The Himalayan tribes suffer from goiter due to lack of iodine. Leprosy and tuberculosis are also common among them. Malnutrition leads to physical ailments and disorder like night blindness, dental caries, anemia, gum bleeding etc. Consumption of stagnant water leads to stomach disorders. Environmental diseases like malaria are very common especially among persons rehabilitated near dams and canals.

(g) Cultural Problems

Due to contact with other cultures, the tribal culture is undergoing a revolutionary change. Due to influence of Christian missionaries the problem of bilingualism has developed which led to indifference towards tribal language. The tribal people are imitating western culture in different aspects of their social life and leaving their own culture. It has led to degeneration of tribal life and tribal arts. People, especially the trading and business communities colonization process which resulted in an increasing denial of ownership overland and forests which once belonged to them, eviction and displacement of tribals people from their lands, consequent land alienation. Since tribal land used for shifting cultivation has been taken away from them. The loss of their land, lowering their prestige and self-confidence. Apart from adversely affecting the condition of the forest dwellers, the national forest polity has not been successful in protecting the eco system. According to an estimate, 50% of the total land area in India is seriously affected by water and erosion. The displacement of fertile soil is estimated to be around 6,000 million tons a year, thus depriving the country of a vast amount of total plant nutrients.

Therefore, it may be concluded that the main causes of offences committed on the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are land disputes, alienation of tribal land, bonded labour, indebtedness, and money payment of minimum wages.

v) Offences committed on these classes

A survey by the Tokyo based International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR) has pointed that in India, on an average, two Scheduled Castes are assaulted every hour, three Scheduled Castes women raped every day and two Scheduled Castes are murdered and two Scheduled Castes houses are burnt down every day. This is happening to a community that forms 19.18 percent in India's population. Meaning that one in about every five Indians is a Scheduled Caste. It is crude fact that despite constitutional safeguards and legislative measures taken to protect Scheduled Castes from social discrimination and social injustices, educational and welfare measures, higher castes have committed the worst types of atrocities and indignities on them in various part of the country. These atrocities have been reported to be more in evidence from 1968 onwards.

In 2001 a total numbers of 13,113 cases were reported across the country. The year 2004 has witnessed an increase of 2.41% in crime against Scheduled Castes as 26,252 cases reported in 2003 have increased to 26,887 cases in 2004. The crime was committed in all heads i.e. Murder, Hurt, Rape, Kidnapping, Robbery, Dacoity, and Arson in Indian Penal Code and also in Protection of Civil Right Act 1955 and The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989. As per crime statistics of India, every 18 minutes a crime is committed against them, (3 rapes, 11 assaults and 13

murdered) every week 5 of their homes or possessions burnt and 6 persons kidnapped or abducted. Offences are not only confined to Scheduled Castes but it is also committed against the members of Scheduled Tribes. The number of crimes committed against Scheduled Tribes was 4,306 in 1992, 3,652 in 1993 and 5,019 in 1994. Indigenous people suffered discrimination and harassment as were deprived of their land and subjected to torture and to arbitrary arrest. A total number of 5,535 cases against Scheduled Tribes were reported in the country as compared to 5,889 cases in 2003. A more recent analysis by the (NCST) indicate a significant increase in the number of atrocities against tribal people in the central tribal belt of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, which has witnessed rapid rise of the Maoist movement. The figures of crimes increased from 2,021 in 2001 to 3,012 in 2002, and to 2,553 in 2003 and 2,343 in 2004. Twenty three years after the law, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes girls are being raped day after day and only 30% cases against these classes are registered under the Prevention of Atrocities Act, the rest under IPC. Between 1995 and 2010 5.58 lakh cases of atrocities registered in police stations. Of these, 4.71 lakh involved Scheduled Castes and 86,386 involved Scheduled Tribes. 1.5 crore Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes affected by these crimes and conviction rate under the Act 30%, 80% of all cases under trial.

The discrimination is not only confined with the low profile Scheduled Castes but also includes the high profile Scheduled Castes. Such as on 28 Sep 2014 in Patna, Bihar Chief Minister Jeet Ram Manjhi alleged on Sunday that a temple in Madhubani was washed after his visit.

vi) Annual reports of National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The reports of the National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have every year reflected an increase in the number of crimes against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The following Table outlines the trend of cognizable crimes committed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India from years 1998 to 2002..

Table 1: Table showing the total number of offences committed on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from years 1992 to 2002 in India

Year	Cognizable crime	Crime against		Total percentage
		SC	ST	
1992	1678	18.3	4.2	22.5
1993	1630	24.9	4.3	28.6
1994	1635	33.9	33.0	38.9
1995	1696	31.4	5.5	38.5
1996	1709	27.9	4.7	36.4
1997	1720	25.6	4.3	32.6
1998	1779	25.1	4.4	29.9
1999	1764	25.6	4.3	29.5
2000	1771	25.1	4.4	29.6
2001	1769	33.5	6.2	29.7
2002	1783	33.5	6.8	40.3

Source- Annual reports of National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The above figure shows the increase in numbers of offences committed on these downtrodden classes. The highest number of crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are reported in Uttar Pradesh and followed by Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra

vii) Annual reports of Ministry of Home Affairs on offences committed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The Annual reports of Ministry of Home Affairs i.e. (2004-2005), (2005-2006), (2006-2007), (2007-2008), (2008-2009), (2009-2010), (2010-2011), (2011-2012), (2012-2013), (2013-2014), (2014-2015) regarding the offences committed on the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have reflected an increase in the number of crimes committed against these classes every year. The following Table outlines the offences committed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India from years 2002 to 2013.

Table 2: Table showing the total number of offences committed on the Members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes From years 2002 to 2013 in India

Year	Offences Against	
	SCs	STs
2002	33507	6774
2003	26252	5889
2004	25914	5534
2005	26127	5713
2006	27070	5791
2007	30013	5532
2008	33615	5582
2009	33594	5425
2010	32712	5885
2011	33719	5756
2012	33655	5922
2013	39408	6793
2014	40300	6826

Source- Annual reports of Ministry of Home Affairs

The above figures shows the condition of these classes have not changed much in previous years. The figures reflected by the records indicating that every year the numbers of offences committed on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are on increase. The numbers of offences committed against the Scheduled Castes in 2012 were 33,655 and against Scheduled Tribes were 5,922 and the numbers of offences committed against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in 2013 were 39,408 and 6,793, which means the 5,753 crimes against Scheduled Castes and 871 crimes against Scheduled Tribes were increased during 2013 to 2014.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, these episodes create stressed environment in the society. These events are like a drop in ocean reminding us about the gravity of the problem. Offences committed on the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are not only disadvantageous to his body but physical, mental,

socio-economic and psychological status also. It is also apparent that this sort of impression gives essence of insecurity in the mind of harassed ones and also his caste fellows. These sorts of instances cause terror and fear among all in the similar situated classes. Until and unless this crisis is undertaken and resolved carefully, effectually and speedily, the various individuals living in our civilization cannot live in tranquility and serenity. The problems of committing offences against these classes and its following consequences have not only crumbled the Indian society but also nation as a whole.

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