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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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CONTINUING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

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ABSTRACT

Historically, present-day Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe have suffered from various types of social exclusion, discrimination, and caste oppression under the traditional caste system. In the field of education, they were not allowed to acquire the knowledge. In the economic sphere, they were not allowed to accumulate wealth and were compelled to work for three classes above them (Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya). In the social and cultural sphere, they were condemned to live a life of stigma and shame. In independent India caste-based disabilities and discrimination was abolished. Besides, many provisions (including the provision of reservation) were made in the constitution of India to bring their social, economic, and educational development at par with their High Caste counterparts. Consequently, their social, economic, and educational development have improved in the post-independence period. However, empirical evidence presented in the paper suggests that centuries-old caste prejudices were used as an instrument by the High Castes to preserve traditional social, economic, and educational gain. Thus, this paper enquires about social, economic, and educational loss to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and gain to High Castes at the cost of depriving them (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) from the same.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of caste based-discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe was recognised during the freedom struggle. After independence, many provisions were made in favour of these groups in the Constitution of India. Thus, due to constitutional provisions and interventions by the government in favour of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes, their social, economic, and educational development has improved in the post-independence period. For example, in 1961 literacy rate for Scheduled Castes was 10.27 percent, and in 2011 it increased to 66 percent. Social group disparity in literacy rate has also reduced from 17.64 percentage points in 1961 to 10 percentage points in 2011. Likewise, the proportion of rural Scheduled Castes population below the poverty line has reduced from 62.1 percent in 1993 to 31.5 percent in 2011. However, due to long historical deprivation, and widespread caste prejudice against them (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) wide disparities between them (Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes) and their non-Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes counterparts continue to exist in contemporary India. Although, all forms of caste-based discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were abolished, and declared as punishable offence under the Constitution of India. However, despite anti-discrimination constitutional provisions and government policies, informally caste-based

discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continues in contemporary India. In economic spheres, they faced restrictions to change their caste-based, poorly paid, and denigrating occupation, they were denied employment, were paid lower wages than paid to High Caste workers for identical work, and suffered from untouchability (Venkateswarlu, 1990, Khan, 1995, Action Aid, 2000, and Thorat, 2010, Thorat, Mahamallik and Sadana 2010 and Saket, 2019). Further, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe farmers faced restrictions in getting access to electricity, water, and markets which reduced productivity and income (Anderson, 2011 and Singh, 2010). In the field of education, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes children were required to sit separately in the classroom, behaviour of teachers with these students was discriminatory and terrorizing, behaviour of peer students was also not friendly, and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes faced social exclusion in cook and helper work in midday meal schemes of the government (Dreze and Goyal, 2003, Thorat and Lee, 2010, Desai et al. 2010, Namabissan, 2010). Although, village-level studies shed light on caste discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. However, to my knowledge, little effort has been made to study the relative gain of High Castes and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in social, economic, and educational spheres. Ambedkar (1979) has long back observed that "high-caste Hindus will continue to support caste system as long as it brings them gains in the social, economic and educational spheres" (Thorat and Newman, 2010).

Thus, an effort has been made in this paper to analyse the relative gain of High Castes and Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes in social, economic, and educational spheres. The paper is organised into five sections. Data sources and method is explained in section two. Section three describes the social, economic, and educational status of Shudra vis-à-vis High Castes under the traditional caste system. Section four presents empirical evidence on adverse inclusion, social exclusion, forced inclusion, and caste oppression of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes; and economic, educational, and social gain to High Castes in contemporary India. Section five concludes the discussion with policy suggestions.

Data sources, literature and method: Manu's code of law as quoted by Ambedkar in Vol. 3 in Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's Writing and Speeches, 1987 published by the government of Maharashtra is used to analyse the relative social, economic, and educational status of Shudra vis-à-vis High Castes under the traditional caste system. Village-level survey data collected in 2008 for my Ph.D. thesis are used to analyse caste-based social, economic, and educational discrimination and loss to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes; and gain to High Castes in the rural economy.

Social, Economic, and Educational status of Shudra vis-a-vis High Castes under the traditional caste system

Economic status of Shudra and High Castes: Manu's codes of law on occupation and wage to Shudra as quoted by Ambedkar in Vol. 3 in Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's Writing and Speeches, 1987 published by the government of Maharashtra are produced below;

- “One principal duty the supreme Ruler assigns to a Shudra; namely, to serve the three classes (Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya, without depreciating their worth).
- But let Shudra serve Brahmanas.
- If a Shudra unable to subsist by serving Brahmanas seeks a livelihood, he may serve Kshatriyas, or he may also seek to maintain himself by attending on a wealthy Vaishya.
- But let a Shudra serve Brahman, either for the sake of heaven or with a view to both this life and the next, for he who is called the servant of a Brahman thereby gains all his ends.
- They must allot to him (Shudra) out of their own family property a suitable maintenance, after considering his ability, his industry, and number of those whom he is bound to support.
- The remnants of food must be given to him, as well as old cloths, the refuse of their grain, and their old household furniture.” (Ambedkar 1987, Vol. 3 Pp. 41).

Manu was not fully confident that the above prescription on payment of wages for Shudra would ensure economic dependency of him (Shudra) on the above three caste groups and he (Shudra) will not be able to save any amount, after meeting consumption. Therefore, Manu further prohibited Shudra from acquiring wealth, so that the economic dependency of Shudra on three caste groups must be ensured. Manu's code on the prohibition of Shudra from accumulating wealth is produced below;

- “No collection of wealth must be made by a Shudra even though he be able to do it; for a Shudra who has acquired wealth gives pain to Brahmins.” (Ambedkar, 1987, Vol.3 Pp. 41).

Manu's codes of law on occupation and wage to High Castes: Manu's codes of law on occupation and wage to High Castes as quoted by Ambedkar in Vol. 3 in Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's Writing and Speeches, 1987 published by the government of Maharashtra are produced below;

- To the Brahmanas he (creator) assigned teaching and studying Veda.
- To the Kshatriya he (creator) commandedto study the Veda.
- To the Vaishya he (creator) commandedto study the Veda.
- Let such Brahmanas as are intent on the means of attaining the supreme godhead, and firm in their own duties, completely perform in order, the six following acts.
- Reading the Veda, the teaching others to read them, sacrificing, and assisting others to sacrifice, giving to the poor if themselves have enough, and accepting gifts from the virtuous if themselves are poor, are the six prescribed acts of the firstborn class.
- But, among those six acts of a Brahman three are his means of subsistence; assisting to sacrifice, teaching the Vedas and receiving gifts from a pure-handed giver.
- The Brahmin eats but his own food, wears but his own apparel, bestows but his own in alms; other mortals subsist through the benevolence of the Brahmana.
- Whatever exists in the world is the property of the Brahmana, on account of the excellence of his origin the Brahmana is, indeed, entitled to it all.” (Ambedkar, 1987, Vol. 3).

Thus, Manu assigned respectful occupation to High Castes—the right to receive gifts in distress and even the right to claim any property available in the world—.

Educational status of Shudra and High Castes: Manu's codes of law on education to Shudra and High Castes as quoted by Ambedkar in Vol. 3 in Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's Writing and Speeches, 1987 published by the government of Maharashtra are produced below;

- To the Brahmanas he (creator) assigned teaching and studying Veda.
- To the Kshatriya he (creator) commandedto study the Veda.
- To the Vaishya he (creator) commandedto study the Veda.
- He who shall acquire knowledge of the Veda without the assent of his preceptor, incurs the guilt of stealing the scripture, and shall sink to the region of torment.
- He (the twice born) must never read (the Veda) in the presence of the Shudra.
- Women have no business with the text of the Veda.
- A twice born man who has (improperly) divulged the Veda (i.e. to Shudra and women) (commits sin), atones for his offence, if he subsists a year on barley.
- If the Shudra intentionally listens for committing to memory the Veda, then his ears should be filled with (molten) lead and lac; if he utters the Veda, then his tongue should be cut off; if he has mastered the Veda his body should be cut to pieces.” (Ambedkar, 1987, Vol. 3).

Under Manu's code of law, three classes—Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaishya have the right to study the Vedas. Of these, the Brahmins alone have the right to teach the Vedas. But in the case of Shudra, he was not only denied the study of Vedas, he was also not allowed to hear it read. Thus, for Shudra, education was not only denied but taking education by the Shudra was also declared a punishable offence.

Social status of Shudra and High castes

Manu's codes of law on the social status of Shudra: Manu's codes of law on the social status of Shudra as quoted by Ambedkar in Vol. 3 in Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar's Writing and Speeches, 1987 published by the government of Maharashtra are produced below;

One could easily recognize Shudra just by asking his name, Manu prescribed that the names of Brahmin denote something auspicious,

Kshatriya—power, and Shudra—contemptible. Manu’s codes for keeping names of four caste groups are produced below;

- “Let (the first part of) a Brahman’s name (denote something) auspicious, a Kshatriya name connected with power, and a Vaishya name with wealth, but a Shudra’s (express something) contemptible.
- (The second part of) a Brahman’s name shall be a word implying happiness, of a Kshatriya (a word) implying protection, of a Vaishya (a term) expressive of thriving and of a Shudra’s (an expression) denoting a service.” (Ambedkar, 1987 Vol. 3 Pp. 122).

Manu was not fully confident that the above prescription would ensure that all Shudra have contemptible names. Therefore, to ensure contemptible names for all Shudra, he (Manu) further instructed that Shudra should not have high-sounding names. Manu’s code on the prohibition of high-sounding names for Shudra is produced below;

- “Shudra must not have the comfort of a high-sounding name. He must be contemptible both in fact and in name.” (Ambedkar 1987, Vol. 3 Pp. 122)

- A Brahmana, coming into existence, is born as the highest on earth, the lord of all created beings, for the protection of the treasury of the Law.
- The Brahmin eats but his own food, wears but his own apparel, bestows but his own in alms; other mortals subsist through the benevolence of the Brahmana.
- Let the king, after rising early in the morning, worship Brahmanas who are well versed in the three-fold sacred science and learned (in polity), and follow their advice.” (Ambedkar 1987, Vol. 3).

Thus, under the traditional caste system, Shudra was fully deprived of education (acquiring knowledge) and accumulating wealth. In social and cultural spheres, they were socially excluded and condemned to live a life of contempt and shame.

Economic, Educational, and Social loss to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribes, and benefits to High Castes

Economic loss to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribe in rural economy: Survey data collected for the Ph.D. thesis is used to analysedifferent forms of adverse inclusion, social exclusion, and

Table 1. Social group and caste wise distribution of households and persons, Tinduhata, 2008

Social groups	Castes	Households	Persons		
			Male	Female	Total
SC	All	105 (37)	247 (52)	224 (48)	471 (35.)
	Chamar	49 (17)	112 (51)	107 (49)	219 (16)
	Kumhar	22 (8)	55 (58)	39 (42)	94 (7)
	Bediya	16 (6)	36 (44)	45 (56)	81 (6)
	Kotwar	10 (3)	24 (57)	18 (43)	42 (3)
	Kori	8 (3)	20 (57)	15 (43)	35 (3)
ST	Kol	20 (7)	49 (48)	53 (52)	102 (8)
OBC	All	117 (41)	279 (52)	263 (48)	542 (40)
	Lodhi	44 (15)	96 (48)	103 (52)	199 (15)
	Kushwaha	41 (14)	98 (56)	77 (44)	175 (13)
	Dhobi	9 (3)	23 (58)	17 (42)	40 (3)
	Loni	7 (2.5)	30 (56)	24 (44)	54 (4)
	Yadav	4 (1.4)	11 (41)	16 (59)	27 (2)
	Vishwakarma	4 (1.4)	8 (50)	8 (50)	16 (1)
	Darjee	1 (0.4)	2 (40)	3 (60)	5 (0.4)
	Nai (Barber)	2 (0.7)	3 (43)	4 (57)	7 (0.5)
	Kahar (Dheemar)	2 (0.7)	4 (36)	7 (64)	11 (0.8)
	Kacher	3 (1)	4 (50)	4 (50)	8 (0.6)
HCH	All	43 (15)	124 (54)	104 (46)	228 (17)
	Brahmin	41 (14)	114 (53)	101 (47)	215 (16)
	Baniya (Gupta)	2 (0.7)	10 (77)	3 (23)	13 (1)
All Social groups	All castes	285 (100)	699 (52)	644 (48)	1343 (100)

Source: Survey data. Note: Data in parenthesis show the percentage of respective value.

Manu’s codes of law regarding social status of High Castes: Manu’s codes of law regarding the social status of High Castes as quoted by Ambedkar in Vol. 3 in Dr.Baba Saheb Ambedkar's Writing andSpeeches, 1987 published by the government of Maharashtra are produced below;

- On account of his pre-eminence, on account of the superiority of his origin, on account of his observance of (particular) restrictive rules, and on account of his particular sanctification the Brahmanas is the Lord of (all) Varnas.
- As the Brahmana sprang from (Prajapati’s i.e. Gods) mouth, as he was first-born, and as he possesses the Veda, he is by right of the lord of this whole creation.
- For the self-existent (Svayambhu i.e. God) having performed austerities, produced him first from his own mouth, in order that offerings might be conveyed to the Gods and manes and that this universe might be preserved.
- Of created beings the most excellent are said to be those which are animated; of the animated, those who subsist by intelligence; of the intelligent; mankind; and of men, the Brahmanas.
- The very birth of a brahmana is an eternal incarnation of the sacred Law (Veda); for he is born to (fulfill) the sacred law, and becomes one with Brahman (God).

forced inclusion against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe; to study economic, educational, and social loss to them in the rural economy. Economic, educational, and social gain to High Castes is also analysed. Of the total 285 households in the study village, 105 (37%) households and 117 (41%) households belonged to Scheduled Castes and Other backward castes respectively. 43 (15%) households and 20 (7%) households belonged to High Castes (Brahmin) and Scheduled Tribe respectively. Among Scheduled Castes— Chamar, Kumhar and Bediya castes were numerically dominant. Among other backward castes—the Lodhi, Kushwaha, and Loni castes were numerically dominant. There was only one caste— Kol and Brahmin caste—among Scheduled Tribe and High Caste respectively (Table-1). Usually, employers belonging to OBC castes and Brahmin castes used to employ their own caste workers due to caste sympathy and comfort of loyalty with own caste workers, and used to offer employment to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers either in peak time when they did not get sufficient labour in their own caste, or for certain hard and risky work (like for threshing of wheat and gram) and for tasks that carried low wages (such as weeding of paddy).

Adverse inclusion of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe workers in the labour market: Adverse inclusion is a situation where persons belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe, and some OBC

castes are included, but with adverse terms and conditions against them. Adverse inclusion may bring similar disadvantageous outcomes (for those who are included), as social exclusion and forced inclusion does (Sen, 2000). It is important to note that the concept of adverse inclusion—advocated by Sen (2000), is similar to the concept of caste discrimination which is recently been used by several economists in India to analyse relatively higher poverty and deprivation among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Thorat, 2001, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2016; Deshpande and Sharma, 2016; Deshpande and Weisskopf, 2014; Deshpande and Spears, 2016; Jodhka, 2007, 2016, 2017). Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers those were employed by High Caste employers, suffered from denial of wage (non-payment of wage), partial denial of wage, delay in wage payment and practice of untouchability in wage payment.

Denial (non-payment) of wages: It refers to a situation where Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe wage workers were initially offered wage for their labour, but, due to caste prejudice against them, employers belonging to OBC castes and High Caste Hindus, after completion of work, didnot pay wage at all (Box-1).

Box-1 Denial of wage to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers

More than 70 per cent (122 out of 174) workers of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe social group reported incidents of non-payment of wages during the reference year. Two case studies, one each related to agriculture and non-agricultural tasks, are described below to show the nature of caste oppression of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers in payment of wages for their labour.

Case study- 1

In 2007, about 100 workers belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe (51 workers of Chamar, 24 of Kol, 18 of Bediya and 7 workers of Kumhar Castes) worked for 10 days for Bahubali Thakur (name changed), for breaking and cutting stones. Of the 100 workers, 20 were women. The employer offered Rs. 60 per day for men and Rs. 45 per day for women. After completion of work, employer declined to pay any amount. When aggrieved labourers said—we will make a complaint against you with the police—the employer became furious and said that “*you lower caste people, if you do not want to live in this village, you can complaint against me.*” Hence, to avoid further harassment and physical torture, the workers chose not to complain anywhere and kept mum on the issue of non-payment of wages for their labour. They collectively suffered from Rs. 57000 (48000 for men and 9000 for women) of income loss.

Case study- 2

Faguna Kol (name changed) along with 20 workers, (10 workers of Kol, 5 of Chamar and 5 workers of Bediya castes) worked for Tinku Maharaj Shukla (name changed) for harvesting wheat in 2007. It was piece-rated work and employer offered 540 Kilograms of wheat for this work. Workers waited for wages until threshing of paddy. However, after threshing, employer (Mr. Tinku Maharaj Shukla) said that “*the grain produced was insufficient to pay wages*” and therefore, did not pay anything either in kind or money for their labour.

It refers to a situation where Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe wage workers get a part of their wage, and some part of their wage is denied, due to caste prejudice against them, by the employers belonging to OBC castes and High Caste Hindus (Box-2).

Box- 2 Partial denial of wage and nature of adverse inclusion against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers

More than 90 per cent (157 out of 174) workers belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe social groups reported incidents of partial denial of wages during the reference year. Two case studies are produced below which depicts nature of adverse inclusion against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers in Tindhata.

Case study-1

In 2007, 16 workers of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe (5 workers of Chamar, 10 workers of Kol, and 1 worker of Bediya castes) worked for Jan Nayak Shukla (name changed) for digging well. Of the total 16 workers, 4 were women. The employer offered Rs. 50 per day per person for men and Rs. 40 per day per person for women for this

work. All 16 workers worked for two months to complete the assigned task of digging the well and lining it. The total wage amount for two months of work was Rs. 45600. However, after completion of the work, employer paid only Rs. 25000, and refused to pay the remaining amount (Rs. 20600).

Case study-2

Kaluram Chamar (name changed) worked along with his wife for Gulabdhhar Lodhi (name changed) for making a boundary wall in their house premises. They had agreed to work for Rs. 60 per day wage for Kaluram Chamar and Rs. 40 per day wage for his wife. They worked for five days to complete the task. After completion of work, employer paid them only Rs. 300 and refused to pay the remaining amount (i. e. Rs. 200).

Besides, complete denial and partial denial of wage, to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers, payment of wage was also delayed, and same day or next day payment (after completion of work) was rare incident.

Therefore, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe workers, although were included in labour market; however, suffered from four types of caste oppressions in labour market in payment of wages for their labour. First, they were denied payment (either in cash or kind) for their labour by the OBC castes and High Caste Hindu employers. Secondly, they were denied partial wage for their labour. These two findings—non-payment of wage and partial denial of wage to scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribe workers are unique findings—of this paper. Given the hostile social relations between Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribe and OBC castes and High Caste Hindu in rural villages, non-payment and partial payment of wage for their labour seems logical. Further, under traditional caste system, which prevailed for many centuries in India, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe were denied minimum wages. Manu’s codes on payment of wage to Shudra are produced below; Ambedkar quotes,

- “They (three caste groups) must allot to him (Shudra) out of their own family property a suitable maintenance, after considering his ability, his industry, and number of those whom he is bound to support.”
- “The remnants of food must be given to him, as well as old cloths, the refuse of their grain, and their old household furniture.” (Ambedkar 1987, Pp. 41).

The incidents of non-payment of wages and partial denial of wages indicates that wage amount received by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers was not related to working days/ hour spent on work. It was arbitrarily decided by the Other Backward Castes and High Caste Hindu employers, which was very low. This, oppressive behaviour of Other Backward Castes and High Caste Hindu employers towards Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers in payment of wages matches with the principles of Manusmriti that denied minimum wage to Shudra (Ambedkar, 1987, Pp. 41). The caste oppression of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers in terms of their engagement in low paying and high-risk employment is similar to earlier work of Venkateswarlu (1990) and Khan (1995). Likewise, inordinate delay in payment of wages for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers matches with earlier work of Thorat, Mahamallik and Sabharwal (2010) on the subject.

Social exclusion of Scheduled Castes from certain occupation and caste discrimination against their business: Individuals belonging to Scheduled Castes did not suffer only from non-payment and partial denial of wages for their labour. Among those who started small businesses, further became victims of ‘social exclusion’ in selling of certain consumer goods to High Caste Hindus customers. Two examples of this are provided in the case studies discussed in Box-3.

Box-3

Case study on caste discrimination against Scheduled Castes grocery shop owner

Mr Sampat Kori (name changed) owned grocery shop nearby Brahmins locality in Tinduhata. He was selling consumer goods and all other daily use items. The shop owner reported that High Caste Hindu buyers belonging to Brahmin caste did not buy certain items like Laddu, salt and Ghee (clarified butter) from him. Further, if they purchase certain items (which they perceive that contact of scheduled caste does not pollute the items), customer from Brahmin and Lodhi caste initially, took goods on credit and latter refused to pay for it. The shop owner narrated that at the time of purchasing goods, they said that "I will pay in 2-4 days or within a week, I am not a thief," and after securing goods on credit they even avoid to come to my shop. He reported that within a year (from May, 2007 to April, 2008) Brahmin and Lodhi caste customers together, took goods worth of Rs. 45000 on credit and they paid only about Rs. 10000. The remaining Rs. 35000 they did not pay till May-June 2008. When he asked money from Brahmin customers they said "you have become Sahukar (moneylender) in our village and had come to ask money from us, what you think— are we indebted to you?" They abused and further threatened that "do not come to my house again for money." Therefore, he lost Rs. 35000 in a year, as High Caste customers (mostly belonging to Brahmin and Lodhi caste) refused to pay for goods which they initially purchased on credit.

Social exclusion faced by a Teashop owner belonging to Chamar caste: In 2007, one person belonging to Chamar Caste had opened 'tea and paan shop' in Tinduhata Customers belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe social groups used to take tea and paan from his shop. However, persons belonging to Brahmin and OBC castes never took tea and paan from his shop due to notion of pollution attached traditionally with Chamar caste. This person belonging to Chamar caste faced complete exclusion in selling of tea and paan to persons belonging to OBC castes and High Caste Hindu persons. Similarly, to come out of poverty, another person belonging to Chamar caste had opened a 'tent house' to provide tents (used for weddings and other occasions) and catering services to people in the village in 2007. He took a loan from the bank to start this business/ service. He purchased various items used in making tents and hired cooks and other workers for the catering work. All households belonging to Scheduled Castes used to take tent services from him when they had a wedding or any other celebration. However, due to poor economic condition, they never demanded catering services and other members of their own caste cooked food themselves for the occasion. The tent and catering service provider never got an order for his services from OBC castes and High Caste Hindu either for tents or to cook food despite having good quality of tent and 5-6 well-trained cooks. He faced complete exclusion in tent and catering business as OBC castes and High Caste Hindu refused to use his services because of his caste status and notion of untouchability attached with his caste.

The traditional caste occupation of Kumhar Caste was making pots and other earthen works. As demand for mud pots declined, Kumhars households shifted their focus to making bricks, a task close to their traditional caste occupation as it involves working with mud and firing bricks in the kilns. Of the 22 households of Kumhar Caste, 16 of them were engaged in making bricks. This business required less financial investment but hard physical work. Despite being kiln owner and brick seller, economic condition of Kumhar Caste had not improved much, as they became victims of High Caste prejudice against their business (Box-4).

Box- 4 Types of caste prejudices against Kumhar caste business

1 Denial of payment for bricks

During the reference year, there had been one incident in which a High Caste buyer purchased bricks on credit, and due to caste prejudice against Kumhar Caste brick sellers, refused to pay at all. Mr. Jan Nayak Shukla (name changed) purchased 11000 bricks on credit from Mr Baiju Kumhar (name changed) in 2007, for renovation of the village Panchayat office. The market rate for bricks was Rs. 1000 per 1000 bricks. However, he had not paid for the bricks until the time of the survey (May-June 2008). The seller incurred a loss of Rs. 11000 due to non-payment for bricks. It may also be noted that the village Sarpanch was a woman from Scheduled Tribe category, as the seat for the Sarphach was reserved for Scheduled Tribe women. However, all the construction and financial decisions were taken by Mr. Jan Nayak Shukla (name changed) and she was just asked to sign on official documents.

2 Partial denial of payment for bricks

In addition, six households of Kumhar Caste reported partial denial of payment for bricks by the OBC castes and High Caste Hindus buyers. Because of this, one household incurred a loss between Rs. 500 and 1000, two households incurred a loss between Rs. 3000 and Rs. 5000 and three households incurred losses more than Rs. 5000.

3 Delay in payment for bricks

The time interval of payment (from the day of sale) has been used to measure the delay in payment for bricks. Seven households reported delay in payment for bricks. One household reported a delay between one and two weeks, two households reported a delay of one month, and four households reported a delay between one and four months. Thus, Kumhar households not only suffered from denial of payment for bricks, but those who received any payment, often received the payment after considerable delay.

4 Violation of government policy norms of Government of Madhya Pradesh

It is noteworthy that the government of Madhya Pradesh made a policy in 2003 to purchase at least one third of total produce of Scheduled Castes business owners. There had been no such purchases from any business owner in Tinduhata despite the fact that they face severe problems of exclusion of different kinds.

Forced inclusion, social exclusion and adverse inclusion of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe in traditional caste services and other activities

Forced inclusion of households from Chamar caste: Chamar is one of the major Scheduled Caste communities found in almost all the states of northern India (Singh, 2012). Their community's name is derived from the Sanskrit word charmakara, meaning leather worker. Manu's Dharmashastra also identify them with the Karewara or leather worker (Singh 2012). With 49 households and 219 persons, Chamar caste was the largest caste in Tinduhata followed by the Brahmin in term of total persons (215) and Lodhi in term of number of households (44 households) Table-1. Traditional caste service of removing dead cattle from all houses in village and skinning the animals was traditionally done by all Chamars of village until year 2000. In 2008, two households were engaged in traditional occupation, all other households left the tradition caste occupation in 2000.

Work obligation: At least one male member from these two households had to be always available in the village to receive the message if any cattle died in the village. They were required to ensure that the dead cattle are removed from the house within an hour from getting information. Failing that, they and their family members were subjected to verbal abuse and sometimes even physical attack by the villagers.

Payment for obligatory work: These two households did not get any payment (monetary or kind) for this work from any household except the skin of dead cattle. Therefore, in addition to fulfilling caste obligation they were also engaged in casual wage labour for survival of their family. Further, these two households had to bear the exclusion and humiliation from two sides. On one hand, under the pressure of OBC castes and High Caste Hindus they were engaged in humiliating caste services, and on the other hand, they were boycotted and humiliated by other households of their own caste for being engaged in denigrating caste occupation.

Forced inclusion of households from Dhobi caste: Singh (2012) states that "dhobi are also known as Rajaka in different parts of the country. The word Dhoba/ Dhobi might have been derived from the Sanskrit word dhav, meaning to wash. The Dhobi wash cloths as a routine activity as well as at 'polluting' occasions like birth and death." The Hindu society observes birth and death pollution and it ranges from a week to a month from caste to caste. On the last day of pollution, purification is done in which the role of traditional services of Dhobi are crucial (Singh 2012). There were 9 households of Dhobi caste in the village, and 4 of them were engaged in providing traditional caste services of washing clothes on polluting occasions.

Usually, women belonging to all castes washed clothes of all members of their family. Services of Dhobis were used in Tinduhata, only for washing clothes that were considered polluted. These included clothes worn by a woman during child birth or clothes of all members of a family at the time of death in the family. Dhobis were obliged to wash these clothes. When asked about consent for traditional caste services, all 4 households expressed their disagreement and expressed their disinclination to continue the work. However, they were unable to quit the work because of coercion by OBC castes and High Caste Hindu households. In 2008, Dhobis were given Rs. 50 for washing clothes worn by woman during child birth and between Rs. 200 and 300 for washing all clothes of a family on the occasion of a death in the family. In addition to providing this caste service, they were also doing casual wage work for survival of their family. While they faced coercion from High Caste Hindu households, they (Dhobi) were not providing their caste services to any castes of Scheduled Castes (Chamar, Kumhar, Bediya, Kori and Kotwar) and Scheduled Tribe. On asking the reason for not providing the same services to other castes, respondents from Dhobi caste households replied that they did not provide their services to these castes as they are lower in caste position when compared with the caste position of Dhobi caste in Hindu caste hierarchy.

Forced inclusion of Nai caste: Cutting hair and shaving is the traditional caste occupation of Nai caste (barber). Traditionally, they also did the work of messengers for High Castes on occasions like birth, marriage and death in family. There were two households of Nai caste (barber) in the village. Of these two, the head of one household got a government job in Indian army. Nobody from this household was working as a barber. The other household continued to provide the traditional caste services of cutting hair and shaving beards. The head of this household provided regular service to 151 households, belonging to High Caste Hindus (Brahmin and Baniya castes) and Other Backward Castes (Lodhi, Kushwaha, Loni, Yadav, Dheemar and Lohar castes), in their houses. These households were called *Varga families*. He was required to visit Varga families on alternate days. However, in these visits, he gave first preference to Brahmin houses and visited their houses between 7:30 AM and 10:00 AM. Thereafter, he visited all houses where he was called. The person clearly denied doing this work willingly and categorically stated that he did this work under pressure from Varga families. When there was too much demand from Varga families, his both sons (one 21 years old, and another 19 years old) also had to join him in the work and ensure that the services were provided when demanded. In 2008, both his sons joined him full time to provide caste services to Varga families. The household got 15 kilograms of wheat and 20 kilograms of paddy annually from each Varga house. Varga families gave grain for traditional services of Nai either from the field on the last day of harvesting crop, or from the threshing floor on the last day of threshing of the crop. They (Varga families) would inform the Nai about when to collect the grain. If they paid from field, they were giving bundle of wheat or paddy to Nai for his services, and if they paid from threshing place, they were using a box made of iron to measure the quantity of grain. If the Nai was unable to collect the grain from the field or the threshing floor, and the grain reached the house of the cultivator from Varga families, the Nai lost his right to get the grain.

Social exclusion and adverse inclusion of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe in receiving caste services of Nai and Dhobi: All 105 households of Scheduled Castes (belonging to Chamar, Kumhar, Bediya, Kotwar and Kori castes), all 20 households of Scheduled Tribe (belonging to Kol caste), and 9 households of OBC caste (belonging to Dhobi caste) were excluded from barber's services (cutting hair and shaving beards) in their houses. Unlike for OBC castes and High Caste Hindus, barber did not visit their houses to provide his services. Similarly, all households of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe were excluded from the services of Dhobi caste on the occasion of birth and death in family. If persons from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribe, and persons of Dhobi caste (from OBC castes) visited Nai for his service, he (Nai) further discriminated

against them while providing his services. He used a different scissor (which was old and in a bad condition) for cutting their hair, and blades that were already used for shaving in Varga families for shaving individuals of these groups. Moreover, a different payment system was used for providing services to members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe. Unlike Varga families that paid annually in grain, customers from these castes had to pay Rs. 10 for cutting hair and Rs. 5 for shaving immediately after receiving the services. In addition to caste discrimination, if we estimate the price of Nai for Varga families, by converting the value of paddy and wheat in rupees (on the basis of market price of wheat and paddy in 2008). The estimated price of Nai shows that he was charging more than three times higher ($149280/43790 = 3.41$) from customers belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribe and Dhobi caste of OBC castes when compared with his prices for Varga families. As shown in Box-5, the cost of barber's services was 3.41 times higher for Scheduled Caste/Tribe households than for Varga families.

Box- 5 Comparison of Cost of Barber's Services to Varga families and Scheduled Caste/Tribe families

There were 216 adult men (139 adult men of Other Backward Castes, excluding Dhobi caste and 77 adult men belonging to High Caste Hindus) and 164 children (117 children of Other Backward Castes, excluding Dhobi caste, and 47 children of High Caste Hindus) in Varga families. Nai was providing year-round service to them in their houses. He was getting 15-kilogram wheat and 20-kilogram paddy from these 151 Varga families annually.

Estimated annual price of Nai for shaving beards of Varga families

$216 * 2 * 4 * 12 * 5 =$ Rs. 103680 (rupees one lac three thousand six hundred eighty).
(216 adult men members * 2 two shaving per week * 4 four weeks in month * 12 twelve months in a year * 5 Rs. 5 price per shaving)

Estimated annual price of Nai for cutting hair of Varga families

$380 * 12 * 10 =$ Rs. 45600 (rupees fourty five thousand six hundred)
 $380 = (216 \text{ adult men} + 164 \text{ children}) * 12 \text{ hair cutting in a year} * \text{Rs. } 10 \text{ price per hair cutting.}$

Total estimated annual price of Nai for his services to Varga families

$103680 \text{ (shaving beards)} + 45600 \text{ (cutting hair)} =$ Rs. 149280 (rupees one lac fourty nine thousand two hundred eighty).

Estimated total annuale of 15 kilogram wheat and 20 kilogram paddy

$15 * 10$ (market price of wheat in 2008) $150 * 151$ (number of Varga families) = 22650
 $20 * 7$ (market price of paddy in 2008) $140 * 151$ (number of Varga families) = 21140
Total estimated annual value of wheat and paddy is Rs. 43790.

Price difference = $149280/43790 = 3.41$ (times higher for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribe and Dhobi castes of Other Backward Castes).

Therefore, despite constitutional provisions of freedom to choose occupation of their choice, Chamar, Dhobi and Nai castes were forced to fulfil their traditional caste obligation towards OBC castes and High Caste Hindus, and were compelled by them to live the life of fear and stigma in Tinduhata. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe suffered more as Dhobi and Nai, despite being socially downgraded, humiliated and oppressed under caste system, further excluded and discriminated against them (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe) in providing their caste services.

Economic gain to High Castes in Tinduhata village

In contrast to adverse inclusion, exclusion and forced inclusion for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; High Castes gained economically in Tinduhata, due to their dominant caste status in the village. Economic gain to High Castes in Tinduhata was observed through their engagement in traditional caste services and through caste favour in securing formal and informal employment and contract (Box-6).

Box- 6 Economic gain to High Castes in village economy**Economic gain through traditional caste services**

In rural India people are bound by traditional rules to receive certain services/ rituals from the Brahmins (like naming of new-born child, marriage, and purification of house in death and birth in family), and in return Brahmin receive gift for their services. Brahmin of study village (Tinduhata) were very famous for providing their traditional caste services in adjoining/ neighbouring villages.

In 2008, five households were involved in providing caste service of Brahmins—in birth, marriage and death in family. Major services of Brahmin included naming of child, Katha, Marriage, Barua, Statue inauguration, Terahi-Barkhi and Shradha on death.

Caste and economic gains

In April-May 2008, total annual earning of these five households from traditional caste occupation was Rs. 83550 (eighty-three thousand five hundred and fifty) and individual household earning ranged between Rs. 9400 and Rs. 25600.

Essential gift items

Wheat, Rice, Pulses, cloths (separate cloths for male and female), shoes, Nariyal (coconut) with jaggary, complete set of beauty items, household utensils, milch cow and some cash were some of the essential gift items which every household that desires to receive services was required to arrange and gift.

Economic gain through securing contract and other economic opportunities

One person belonging to Kushwaha caste was contractor, carrying out construction and maintenance work in Indian railway in Maihar, which was about 35 KM from Tinduhata. Among many other things, he secured this contract because of his family connections. Although, there was formal tender for this contract before finally awarding contact of work to this person. Generally, due to relatively poorer economic condition, individual belonging to SC/ST caste didn't apply for tender because of security deposit as one of the compulsory requirements.

Although, one person belonging to Scheduled Castes category borrowed money from relatives and friends and applied for same tender which was finally awarded to person belonging to Kushwaha caste. But he could not secure contract because of lack of contact/ approach with officials involve in awarding contract for work. Thus, due to poorer economic condition individual of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled tribe were excluded from opportunities which requires security deposits. However, even if they manage to arrange the security deposit, outcomes were not in their favour because of lack of contact/ connection, as scarce economic opportunities were being shared along the caste lines.

In another incident of caste favour, one woman belonging to High Caste with the help of Village Panchayat Secretary belonging to OBC caste was appointed as nurse in Aaganwadi without holding pre-requisite educational qualification. As per the rule this post was reserved for Scheduled Castes category, and eligible Scheduled Castes women was also available in the village. However, to favour High Caste women village Panchayat Secretary did not make this opportunity public and therefore, High Caste woman was secretly appointed as nurse against the post which was reserved for Scheduled Castes. This incident of caste favour match with earlier work of Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004 "*Are Emily and Grey more Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination.*"

Box- 7 Caste discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe children in public school

1. School was in the High Caste locality, which was about one kilometre from Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribe habitation. Behaviour of High Caste towards Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe children in school was terrifying.
2. There were separate sitting arrangements in school for High Caste and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe children.
3. Teachers used to physically beat Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe children, if they failed to complete assigned task in time.
4. Two cooks were appointed in school to prepare and serve mid-day meal for High Castes and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe students separately. Quality of mid-day meal prepared and served to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe children was inferior and insufficient.
5. High caste children were not playing with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe children in school.

Caste benefit in favour of High Caste children in public school in Tinduhata

6. High Caste children were allowed to sit in the front row and were encouraged by teachers to ask questions.
7. Teachers used to appoint class monitor only from High Caste children.
8. Only High Caste children were encouraged by the teachers to participate in sports and other extracurricular activities.
9. During 5th class exams in 2008 High Caste and OBC children were accommodated in one room and teachers were helping them to write correct answer, whereas Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe students were made to sit in another room, without any help to write their exams.

Social status of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe vis-a-vis of High Castes in Tinduhata: Among many other forms of social exclusion and discrimination, the tradition of practice of untouchability was one of the worst forms of caste discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe. Although constitution of India under the Article 17 abolished untouchability and its practice in any form. However, informally its practice was wide spread in the Tinduhata. Nature of social discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe in Tinduhata is summarised in Box- 8.

Box- 8 Social discrimination against individuals belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe

Individuals belonging to Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribe as workers, service providers and business owners were humiliated by the OBC castes and High Caste Hindus, in terms of practice of untouchability, while making transactions with them. Usually, before bathing in the morning, High Caste Hindu male members used to give wages in the hands of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers. However, if they had already bathed, they either dropped money in hand from distance or put it on ground. On the other hand, High Caste Hindu women never gave money in hands, not even before bath. High Caste Hindu women always gave money either by dropping it in hand from distance or by putting it on ground. All 16 households of Kumhar caste that were involved in making and selling bricks, reported the practice of untouchability by High Caste Hindu customers (buyers) while paying money for bricks. The form of practice of untouchability was exactly same as it was for Scheduled Castes wage workers. Further, the practice of untouchability was also observed in public place (Village Panchayat Office). The Village Panchayat president post (Village Sarpanch) was reserved for a Scheduled Tribe woman in 2008. During meetings, all High Caste Hindu members used to sit on chairs, while the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe members were required to sit separately on the floor. Further, while the peon used to wash tea cups of High Caste Hindu, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe members were required to wash their tea cups themselves after having tea. Even village Panchayat president belonging to Scheduled Tribe was required to wash her cup after having tea.

Dominant position of High Castes in Tinduhata: The social position of High Castes was very dominant in Tinduhata. All individuals belonging to Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribe community were required to greet all individual of Brahmin, Lodhi and Kushwaha castes whenever they happen to meet them and came a cross. Further, individuals belong to Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribe caste were not allowed to sit on chair/ stool/bed/ cot or ride the bicycle in the presence of individuals of High Castes.

Educational discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe, and gain to High Castes in Tinduhata: The village had schooling facilities only up to the 8th standard. A school up to the 10th standard was in Madai, about 2 kilometers away, while students had to go to Nadan, about 7 kilometers from village, for classes beyond the 10th standard. School in the village was in High Caste locality. Detail of caste discrimination against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe children and caste benefit in favour of High Caste children is summarised in box- 7.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY SUGGESTION

Although, due to constitutional provision and various welfare policies of government in favour of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe the social, economic, and educational status of these groups has improved. However, traditional caste-based prejudices against them still results in various forms of adverse inclusion, social exclusion and forced inclusion against them in modern India. For, example, in economic sphere, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe workers were suffered from four types of adverse inclusion in labour market. Non-payment of wage, partial denial of wage, delay in wage payment, and untouchability in wage payment for their labour. Individual of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe business owner and service provider suffered from four types of caste prejudices against their business and services. Denial of payment at all for their goods and services, partial denial of payment for goods and services, and delay in payment for goods and services, and refusal of High Castes to buy certain consumer items (such as salt and clarified butter) and to consume tea and betel sold by the Scheduled caste due to notion of pollution and untouchability. All members of Scheduled Castes, and persons of some OBC castes (Dhobi and Nai castes) were collectively restricted by the High Castes to change their traditional caste based and denigrating occupations. Despite being declared as punishable offence in the Constitution of India— an incident of forced work also occurred in Tindhata— as one member of Bediya caste (belonging to Scheduled Castes) was forced by High Castes to take care of entire village's cattle. He suffered worst form of social and economic oppression through forced work.

In education sphere, children belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe suffered various types of caste disabilities in public schools. They were required to sit separately in school and were not required to share food and water in school, as separate mid-day meal was cooked for them in school. They were not allowed to play with High Caste children. Behaviour of teachers and High Caste children was not cooperative and were terrified by the presence of High Castes in school. In addition to caste prejudice and oppression in economic and educational spheres, persons of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe were also condemned socially through practice of untouchability. The casual wage workers, business owners, service providers, and even village panchayat members, village Panchayat Sarpanch (President) belonging to these groups were the victims of untouchability. In contrast to economic and educational and social loss to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe, High Castes and some dominant OBC castes benefited economically and educationally from their High Caste status. Thus, High Castes used their high social status to preserve traditional caste-based economic, educational, and social gain in the modern India, by depriving Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from scarce economic and educational opportunities.

Policy suggestion

- 1 To make Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes economically independent, land and capital assets should be provided to them by the state as one time arrangement to compensate them for long historical deprivation from the same under the caste system.
- 2 Minimum wage policy should be implemented by the state in the farm sector to prevent economic exploitation of poor, and particularly of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, as minimum wage was denied to them under the caste system.
- 3 Anti-discrimination policies of the state should be strictly implemented to ensure fair economic and educational opportunities, and protect them from tradition caste oppression.

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