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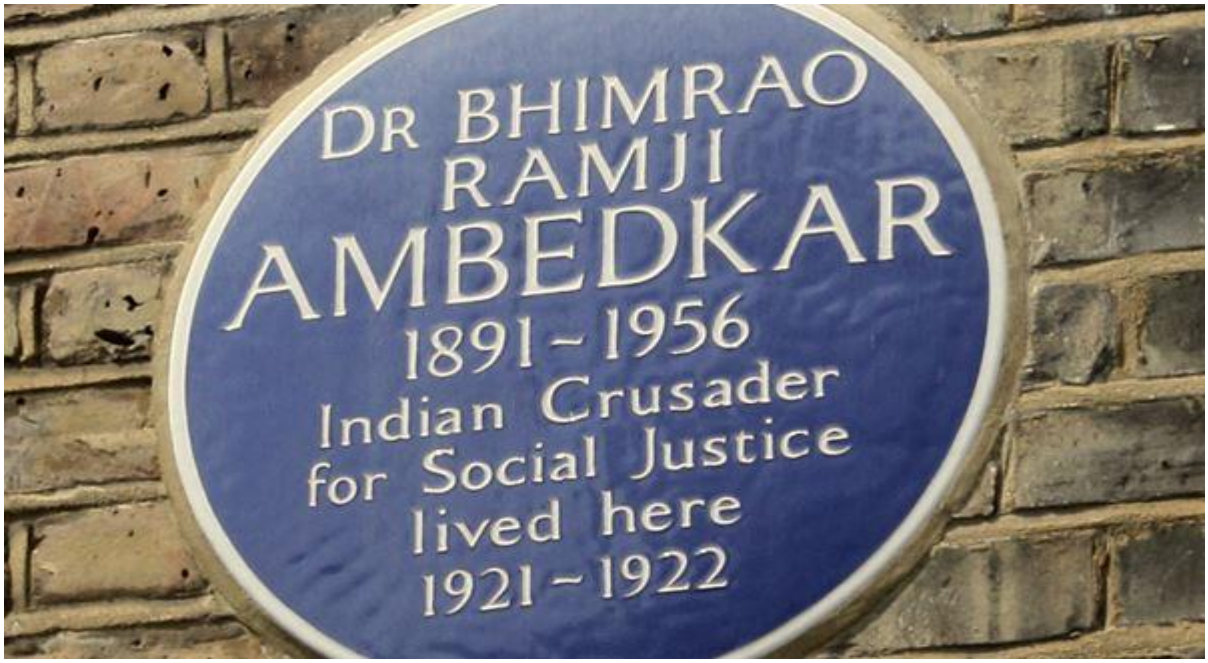

"Listen to me"

Young people's views and experiences of caste discrimination.

A comparative study of the Dalit community in India and the UK.

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1 INTRODUCTION

> "For a successful revolution it is not enough that there is discontent. What is required is a profound and thorough conviction of the justice, necessity and importance of political and social rights" Dr. B.R.Ambedkar

This project takes as its starting point that sociology as an academic discipline is primarily concerned with reflexive attempts in trying to understand how society and its sub-strata work. Qualitative sociological research projects such as this seek to provide insights into the forms of relationships, both formal and informal, between people, and historical and contemporary social structures and social processes, in this case caste identity and caste discrimination. Understanding and highlighting such caste based relationships in any 21st century society with its many diverse communities prompts the question 'whose side are we on' as the American sociologist Howard Becker once famously remarked. It is within this interpretivist framework that this project aims to promote social justice and social change, equality of opportunity, legal protection, and anti-discriminatory policies and practice.

Aim of the project

This exploratory study had two key aims: Firstly, to investigate young people, aged between 16 and 21 years of age, (18 to 21 in the UK), and their personal views and experiences of caste discrimination who were from the Dalit community in India (the term 'Dalit' is a contested concept; here we use it as referring to people who are 'exploited, suppressed, oppressed and violated' and in India referring to 'Scheduled Castes', the ex-untouchable castes – (see the Editorial, The Indian Journal of Social Work, 2007). In the UK we focused on young people with a South Asian - Dalit heritage. Secondly, to consider what impact, if any, on young people's caste identities and experiences of caste discrimination such issues as, globalisation, 'consumer capitalism', social networking sites, eg. Facebook, music, and the growing opportunities for upward social mobility.

This 'modernising' effect was highlighted in a study of Sri Lanka's Tamils who are among the most marginalized workers in that country. It showed that when young people the, 'Colombo boys', become exposed to a world outside, they were presented with alternatives to caste-based and social discrimination that led them to begin to question their inherited status at the lowest level of society (International Dalit Solidarity Network, 2005).

Statement of the problem

Caste-based discrimination affects some estimated 270 million people worldwide. India with a population of over 1.2 billion people according to the 2001 census has a Scheduled Caste population that comprises over 16% and a Scheduled Tribes population of over 8% over 250 million people in total (Wankhede, 2010). Many are subjected to segregation, discrimination, dehumanization, degradation, and violence every day (Dalit Network, 2012) with women often the primary target in the form of, for example, gender inequality in education and employment, favoring of boys over girls, sexual harassment and gang rape (Dunn, 1993, Fuwa, Ito, Kubo, Kurosaki and Sawada, 2006).

Other studies such as Thorat and Attewell (2007) have demonstrated that 'caste favoritism' and the social exclusion of Dalits and Muslims is prevalent in the Indian private business sector.

In India despite the Constitution that abolished 'untouchability' and outlaw's caste discrimination cases are often reported in the media, for example, the low percentage of individuals from Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) who are in high level government senior civil service posts and are instead being relegated to more menial posts such as cleaning (Times Nation, September 26th, 2012).

There are competing estimates as to the size of the Dalit community in the UK. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) was commissioned by the UK government and estimated it to be over 200,000 (NIESR, 2010) out of the UK's populations of over three million people of South Asian descent (Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA), 2012).

Since the 1950's the UK witnessed a growing number of people coming from the Indian sub-continent bringing with them traditional cultural religious customs and values including the caste system in all its many forms.

However, as the ACDA have quite rightly highlighted there are differences between, what they call "the manifestations of caste-based discrimination and the diaspora compared to the Indian sub-continent. Caste – based discrimination within the UK is not the same as in India. But the route cause – the concept of 'untouchability' – is the same" (2012).

The lived experience of 'untouchability' was evidenced in the *Hidden Apartheid* ACDA, 2009 report in which individuals across the UK who participated in the research recounted similar discriminatory experiences to research findings in India (Kushwaha and Wankhede, 2010) with many feeling socially excluded, being left psychologically vulnerable, and stigmatized.

There is sufficient evidence to clearly state that there is caste discrimination in both countries, how young people view this situation in a rapidly changing social and economic climate is however unclear.

Overview of literature

A preliminary review of the literature in India and the UK showed that this is an under-researched area particularly using qualitative methodologies. There appears to be little or no significant research on caste identity and caste discrimination from young people's perspectives. What research exists does not provide 'first-hand' accounts of young people's experiences, for example, deSouza, Kumar and Shastri (2009) in their attempt to explore the shifting landscapes of tradition and modernity on young people remain in the quantitative tradition of attitude surveys.

In particularly there appears to be a very limited understanding of the actual lived experiences and the forms of social support that are most effective for young people experiencing caste discrimination. It is necessary to draw attention to the social conditions under which living with such discrimination can be a disabling experience. For example, there appear to be hurdles to social equality presented by the consequences of such discrimination which arise from accessing education or employment opportunities which is under-recorded but where anecdotal evidence is strong (Green, 2010).

Several studies have highlighted evidence of 'educational caste discrimination'. These include a study by Kushwaha and Wankhede (2010) of young university undergraduate students from OBC backgrounds (Other Backward Classes) quite clearly how their educational attainment was affected by discriminatory practices, it showed they felt they had been discriminated against by staff, had experienced discriminatory attitudes by fellow students and the practice of untouchability was prevalent but in more subtle forms.

Jeffery, Jeffery and Jeffery's study in rural Bijnor district highlights another factor in the empowerment through formal education approach. How the most recent generation of high school and college graduates amongst the Chamars (Dalits) failed to find salaried employment. For some this resulted in growing alienation and feelings of being 'trapped' by education (2005).

Whereas the UKIERI funded three-year collaborative research project on widening participation between academics in India and the UK found evidence of division amongst students based on caste identity (Thornton, Bricheno, Iyer, Reid, Wankhede and Green, 2010).

Research undertaken by the Dalit Solidarity Network revealed that caste was an important consideration for selecting a life-partner amongst young people (2006).

Green's collaboration with colleagues from other UK universities and the Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) in undertaking research into caste discrimination in the UK (2009) provided evidence to the UK government, subsequently resulted in the inclusion of caste discrimination for the first time in UK law in the 2010 Equality Act. Whilst this research did not focus primarily on young people it did highlight evidence of ongoing caste discrimination amongst young people in the UK at school, accessing Higher Education, employment opportunities, and peer relationships (2009).

This study aimed to reverse the current paucity of Indian and UK research on young people's views and experiences of caste identity and discrimination. In doing so it aimed to make the connections between, for example, 'tradition', 'custom', 'rituals' and modernity (Economist, 2010).

Conceptual framework

> "Managlore: Dalits in Karnataka have challenged the humiliating practice of rolling over banana leaves on which Brahmins have eaten their food" (Source: IBN live, December 11th, 2012)

For the purpose of this study it is useful to attempt an understanding of what we mean by the term discrimination. Wankhede, for example, points out (2003) it is to make a distinction unjustly based on race, caste, age and sex, for example, and then to proceed with unfavourable treatment and related consequences. This reiterates Willmore's view that whilst "not all forms of social exclusion derive from discrimination, all forms of discrimination lead to exclusionary behaviour" (p1, 2001). Whilst Blank, Dabby and Citro's typology (2004) see their fourth type of discrimination as an 'embedded institutional process' that occurs within societies at both the formal and informal levels. Baron and Byrne (2003) define discrimination as being harmful actions directed against individuals or groups, or even whole communities in the form of prejudice.

However, when discrimination is applied to caste discrimination we see that discrimination per se is now illegal in a number of countries around the world, for example, in India and the UK. But in the former caste discrimination is unlawful by the Indian Constitution but related cases are often reported on in the Indian newspapers (The Times of India, November 26th, 2010; The Indian Express, March 14th, 2012; Times Nation, December 1st, 2012; The Times of India, December 4th, 2012), as Wankhede has noted it can be both latent,

manifest, open or subtle (2003) and where in the UK the Equality and Human Rights Commission considers discrimination as being unlawful when relating to, for example, race, age, sex, and disability but not caste! (EHRC, 2012).
As the ACDA have argued "if a person in the UK is discriminated against because of their caste in places of employment, education and when they receive public services like health and social care and education for example– there is no legislation in place to protect them. To date, no action has been taken by the UK Government to provide legal protection for victims of caste-based discrimination in the UK" (ACDA, 2012).

The research question

As an exploratory study we aimed to investigate young people's personal views and experiences of caste discrimination. Using a methodology rooted in ethnography and grounded theory rather than formulating causal hypotheses at the outset which we then 'test', we enabled the research subjects to 'speak for themselves' (Reeves et al, 2008). In as much as it is possible, ethnography and grounded theory allow young people to communicate their experiences directly. As Grover (2004) has noted, in articulating the research subject's inner experience, we aim to assist in giving the young person/interviewee the 'power' and 'voice'.
Ethnographic approaches capture the meanings ascribed to their experience by research subjects and has been successfully utilised in youth research, for example, Stretesky and Pogrebin, 2007; Palmer, 2009; Aldridge and Medina, 2008, Green, Turner, Stacey and Ebo, 2016.

Methodology

The first stage of this research was to conduct a literature review concentrating on firstly, undertaking a review relating to the themes of caste discrimination including its modernising influences, and secondly, existing Indian and UK research and publications on young people and caste discrimination. This was followed by community based semi-structured interviews and focus groups with young people, provisionally aged between 16 and 21 years of age (18 to 21 in the UK). Participants were recruited via Dalit Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) in both India and the UK.
The study aimed to construct a sample using a mix of purposive and snowball sampling where appropriate (Atfield, Brahmbhatt, Hakimi and O'Toole, 2012). In both India and the UK priority, was given to factors such as:

- Diversity of caste identities
- Education
- Young people form urban/metropolitan only

- Gender (both male and female)
- Socio-economic background
- Religious identity
- Occupation

As researchers we were prepared to be surprised by whatever may be revealed with the aim of allowing the phenomenon to present itself to us instead of us imposing preconceived ideas on it (Dahlberg et al, 2001). This openness was maintained throughout the entire research process.

Implications

Policy and Practice

It is expected that the findings from this study will significantly further inform both the Indian and UK government's social policies and legal frameworks on caste discrimination generally and young people specifically, for example, the UK Equality Act, 2010.

In addition, raise awareness amongst professionals and other practitioners working with young people experiencing caste discrimination and it doing so support NGO organisations working on caste issues in their knowledge of caste discrimination as it impacts on young people. It will aim to encourage them to further develop 'socially inclusive' policies, service provision, advice and information for young people experiencing caste discrimination.

Academic

The following academic outputs are envisaged:

- Comprehensive final report to the funding agency, ICSSR.
- Book proposal to an established publishing company.
- Two peer reviewed academic journal articles, and two conference papers.
- Final report to be accessible on the TISS, and Goldsmiths, University of London websites.
- Inform the media of the report's findings – press release.
- Dissemination to government departments and practitioner audiences via professional and community forums.
- Disseminate findings on social networking sites, such as Facebook, to reach young people and other 'hidden' audiences.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 India

Over a period of 18 months one to one interviews and 5 Focus Group Discussions were undertaken to cover around 50 youth, aged between 16 - 21 years, in different parts of Mumbai.

Effort was made to include a representative sample with priority being given to both male and female participants, different class backgrounds, and different religions for different caste identities. It was felt that the Buddhist-Mahars were the most widely present amongst other SC's, in our study undertaken for students in higher education institutes.

The methodology was rooted in ethnography and grounded theory as proposed, based on qualitative data seeking experiences, views and opinions of the youths about caste discrimination in the metropolitan city of Mumbai. Accordingly, the data collection was planned and executed during December 2013 and October 2014.

The researcher depended on the contact persons through a Ph.D. Scholar under the guidance of researcher at TISS who stayed for longer period in Mumbai and had contacts with persons in the selected localities.

The contact persons belonged to the Dalit communities, including the research scholar, and were social/community leaders. Therefore, it was found easy to identify and reach out to the respondents.

These contact persons played a great role in identifying and convincing the respondents about the research. The researcher made a few preliminary visits to the localities to know the situation and establish rapport with respondents, their parents and over all community people; fix date and time for focus group discussions (FGD's) and in-depth interviews.

All of them were co-operative, enthusiastic and curious about the study and the topic. Yet, it was a challenge to co-ordinate with respondents, fix the convenient date and time for the meetings and interactions; especially selection of localities.

It may be noted that the city of Mumbai has almost 60% population living in suburbs and slums with predominantly Muslim and Dalit population who have been the migrants from all over the state and even out of the state. The migration of these communities has been mainly for employment in the city dating back to the British period. As an alternative to the over population, a twin city, Navi Mumbai, was developed where in the government provided cheaper housing schemes. Consequently, a significant number of Dalits shifted to this new city who are settled socially and financially.

In all there were 6 such localities finally selected for data collection where majority Dalit Communities lived. These localities were BIT chawl, Byculla, BDD Chawl, Worli (both in the city proper), Ghatkopar and Chembur (both sub-urbs), Belapur (Navi Mumbai) and Kalyan (another twin city but older).
The tools for data collection were FGDs and in-depth interviews of selected respondents. The FGDs were conducted with full consent of the respondent and venues used to be a community hall, class room or private house with full privacy. Generally, the FGD's lasted for 1.30 hrs with average 8-12 participants in each FGD. The participants had been regular students of school and college with male and female representation. All the FGDs were audio recorded and 3 were audio-visually recorded.
The language used was local (Marathi); it being their mother tongue. All FGDs and in-depth interviews were transcribed and translated into English. In addition, the data pertaining to the social and demographic background of 50 respondents from the FGDs was collected including sex, age, caste, religion, education, occupation and income etc. of their parents.
The collected data was arranged and analysed to suit the set objectives. During the interviews with these young people, it was found difficult to make them speak on the topic. Many were reluctant and shy and unclear about the issue and its importance, others were found to be open, bold, confident and clear in understanding. The majority were first or second generation learners and came from poor financial conditions with self-imposed feelings of inferiority.

2.2 UK

This exploratory study had two key aims; Firstly, it was to investigate young people's (aged between 18 and 21 years of age – for ethical considerations it was agreed that young people between these ages could give consent to participate themselves than require parental agreement) - personal views and experiences of caste identity and discrimination who were from a South Asian heritage, particularly where possible who identified themselves as having a Dalit heritage. Secondly, it aimed to consider what impact, if any, the following had on their caste identity; globalisation; 'consumer capitalism'; social media eg. Facebook; music; and the growing opportunities for upward social mobility, for example, via educational achievement.
The UK study unfortunately encountered unforeseen problems that resulted in severely restricting the scope and depth of the field work to a small sample of young people. This included a number of methodological challenges, for example, the very poor response by British – South Asian organisations, community and faith groups from the 51 organisations circularised in

providing participants with a Dalit heritage. Overall it delayed the writing up and submission of the UK report.

4 young people identified themselves as coming from a Ravidassia or Valmiki heritage with the majority of young people who responded to the call for interviewees coming from a Hindu non-Dalit heritage (n.12). This group of young people wished to be interviewed for a number of reasons, for example, to confirm that caste discrimination did not exist in the UK; that they have never experienced it, and how it might only affect them when they choose a marriage partner.

Community based semi-structured interviews and one focus group took place with these young people in London, Manchester, Bedford, Cambridge and Brighton. In all 16 young people participated in the research (female: n.11, male: n.5). Venues for the interviews included; cafés; university student common rooms; a Gurudwara, and the South Bank Theatre, London. All of the interview sessions were recorded and transcribed.

Each participant was given an information sheet before the commencement of the interview and a copy of the consent form for personal review and signature before taking part in the research study. Research participants were ensured of their anonymity and that no individual would be identifiable in this or any other report or publication based on the empirical findings.

The data gathered in this way was then utilised to develop 'grounded theory', namely theory which emerged from the data rather than theory which is imposed upon the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Hodkinson, 2008).

Each interview was coded to locate structures, patterns, differences and common themes. All of the transcripts were analysed closely again, and any necessary corrections made. In short, a process of open coding was used to identify the most important perceptions held by the participants (Benford & Hunt, 1997). The data and information gathered was analysed manually through a series of stages using a thematic analysis approach which analyzed the data by identifying, coding and categorizing patterns found in the data.

The data gathering was carried out in accordance and approval of the Goldsmiths Code of Practice on Research Ethics. The study was guided by the ethical frameworks described in, *A guide to ethical principles and practice* (University of Durham/National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, 2013).

The fieldwork data was supported by an overview of the limited available UK literature on young people and caste identity and discrimination. It provided a contextual framework for the interview questions and the subsequent data collection. From this the study constructed a sample using a mix of purposive

and snowball sampling where appropriate (Atfield, Brahmbhatt, Hakimi and O'Toole, 2012).

The UK researcher attended a number of related events and meetings that informed the research, these included; a meeting where caste-based discrimination, led by Ms Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, held at the House of Lords, and organised by the Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance, November 9th, 2013; London School of Economics seminar on 'Caste and Race', held on May 30th, 2014; a Dr Ambedkar event, held at the House of Lords, May 8th, 2014; and Professor Wankhede, guest lecture on 'India and the Caste System', held at Goldsmiths, University of London, June 10th, 2014.

The UK study acknowledges the limitations of this small-scale qualitative study in terms of the sample size and its composition. It should not be viewed as representative of all young people with a South Asian heritage in the UK therefore the findings should not be generalized from the data gathered.

3.1 YOUNG PEOPLE AND CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN INDIA. A REVIEW

This study was undertaken to understand the extent of caste identification and caste discrimination amongst the youth in the totally urban cosmopolitan city of Mumbai. The importance of the study rises from the fact that there is still a very limited understanding of the lived experiences of caste discrimination amongst the youth in big cities.

The context of Mumbai is important as Mumbai is also popularly known as the City of Dreams and is one of the highest contributors to the Maharashtra's State GDP and India's GDP. The city is also the financial capital as well as the Bollywood Centre of India. Even though it enjoys the place of one of the top cosmopolitan centres in the world, however there is wide disparity, which can be seen and felt across the city.

It is very important to also note that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who led a major movement against caste discrimination was also from Maharashtra and was born into the Mahar Caste. He refused to die as a Hindu, due to the injustices and the discrimination practiced in the caste system. He converted into Buddhism and advised all Scheduled Castes to do the same along with giving up their traditional occupations, which were considered as a major constraint for them in their path of living a life of dignity. The question we considered then do young people still face caste discrimination in Mumbai, a major city in Maharashtra, which was also home for one of the greatest leaders against caste discrimination?

Importance of this Study

Indian society is based on caste structure with its hierarchical, exploitative and discriminatory characteristics. However, due to various modern forces, its nature and form have undergone some changes and education is supposedly playing a strong and positive role in changing the attitudes towards caste based discrimination of the people in a slow and steady manner.

However, there is wide difference in the attitude of people in rural and urban set up. In the modern contemporary times, the young people migrate to cities for education and employment; especially from the lower castes coming from rural, poor background. However, these experiences of caste, caste based discrimination and its impact on their education and employment and their social life are yet to be empirically probed.

Many researchers have studied the effect of the reservation policy on the social mobility of SC's. Weisskopf, 2004, Thorat, 2002, Chalam, 1990, for example, have argued for the continued need for reservations in

educational institutions. Thorat, 2002, has suggested that the reservations must extend to the private universities as well, if they have to play a solid role in decreasing inequalities. Further, Weisskopf (2004) has analysed that even with reservation, equality remains a distant dream. The students who enrol face a huge 'cultural capital' deprivation. The cultural capital deprivation of SC students is evidenced by lower levels of education among family members, lower levels of participation in edifying cultural activities, and in general a home environment less conducive to learning.

In addition to the above, SC students lack the most important source of cultural capital in modern India i.e. a good command in English language. Moreover, these are instances of SC's facing continued discrimination within the educational institutions and hostels. Their performance and attendance also suffer due to difficulty in coping with pressure, difficulty in adjustment, difficulty in understanding, lack of proper support, pressure to earn etc.

Desai (1991) has also shown how educational supplies and physical amenities at home have an impact on the academic performance of children focusing on factors like the locality of a child's home, its distance from the source of drinking water, availability of toilets, and the child's father's work status and literacy. The author stresses on the continued need for various policies such as mid-day meals, free uniforms, text books, free or subsidized supplies to households with school age children, expenditure to provide water and sewage services to all households. While, reservations, family environment, other support policies by the government are important for enhancing access and ensuring completion, the SC's also face considerable challenges throughout their education experience as is highlighted by some studies. Nambissan, for example, has written extensively on the position of Dalits and education, highlighting mainly the caste hierarchies which have been historically responsible for the exclusion and isolation of Dalits from gaining knowledge. The author analyses the oppressive and unjust methods that manifest themselves via the caste system, and how these 'lock' Dalit children from full participation in education within schools. Her study explains how caste identity continues to impinge the education of the Dalits (1996). Further, Anita Rampal throws light on how the education system is predominantly designed and dominated for the elites. She stresses on the need for the educational discourse to consciously give voice to the silenced majority and redefine its objectives by valuing their lives on their terms. Decentralization, choosing enabling pedagogies, legitimate content for the curriculum are some of the reforms suggested by her (2004).

Vasavi (2015) questions the role of educational institutions which practice discrimination in various forms. Segregation of children during mid-day meals,

prohibition of drinking water from common sources, taunts, comments, discriminatory pedagogic practices amongst others. He analyses a number of issues and practices faced at every level in the life of a Dalit (who is at the receiving end), that create subjected personhoods, and an identity that is not independent of stigma.

Wankhede also elaborates on how traditional factors limit the influence of modern factors such as competition, knowledge, skills and performance. The layered structure of our society affects the SC's from all directions. The author has argued that higher education, in the current times, fails to completely equip and overcome the limitations resulting from caste. However, he also says that there is no other viable alternative to higher education for SCs, as a means to achieve social mobility in a closed society like India (2001).

3.2 YOUNG PEOPLE AND CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN THE UK. A REVIEW

> "Wherever Indians go in the world they carry caste with them" (Santosh Dass MBE, Chair, Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance, UK)
>
> "I am pretty sure the area of young people and caste is wholly under- researched. I certainly have not come across any studies on this" (Meena Varma, Director, Dalit Solidarity Network-UK, 2018)

The initiative for this study with young people originated from three sources; Firstly, it followed on from a previous successful UKIERI (UK India Education and Research Initiative) research project that both Dr Green (Goldsmiths) and Professor Wankhede (TISS) participated in along with other researchers from the following UK universities, the University of Hertfordshire, University of Bradford, the University of Cambridge, and Indian colleagues at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and the Guru Nanak College of Education and Research, Mumbai (Thornton M., Bricheno P., Iyer P., Reid I., Wankhede G. and Green R. 2011).

This project explored the nature of social cohesion, integration and separation, diversity, equality and discrimination experienced by diverse, minority, disadvantaged and under-represented students attending higher education in the UK and India.

A number of publications arose from this project including Thornton M., Bricheno P., Iyer P., Reid I., Wankhede G. and Green R. (2010); Wankhede G. and Thornton M. (Eds) (2012) and Thornton M., Bricheno P., Iyer P., Reid I., Wankhede G. and Green R. (2013).

Secondly, from work funded by the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission on caste identity and discrimination in the UK undertaken by Dr

Green and other colleagues in the UK from the University of Wolverhampton, SOAS, University of London, and Middlesex University (Dhanda, 2014).
Lastly, from Dr Green's earlier involvement with the Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) study 'Hidden Apartheid. Voice of the Community Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK. A Scoping Study' (2009).
Whilst these studies did not primarily focus on young people and caste discrimination they sparked an interest in an area of caste identity and caste discrimination that appeared to be largely ignored by researchers.
A preliminary review of the literature on caste identity and caste discrimination from young people's perspectives in the UK confirmed that this was indeed an under-researched area that provided the following evidence; that caste discrimination and the formation of caste identities was experienced by some young people in the UK in various forms, for example, when choosing a marriage partner, bullying at school, attending a Gurudwara or Temple, in Higher Education, employment opportunities, and peer relationships.
Firstly, how caste and Dalit is described in the UK;

> "The term "caste" denotes a hereditary, endogamous (marrying within the group) community associated with a traditional occupation and ranked accordingly on a perceived scale of ritual purity. It is generally (but not exclusively) associated with South Asia, particularly India, and its diaspora. It can encompass the four classes (varnas) of Hindu tradition (the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra communities); the thousands of regional Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Muslim or other religious groups known as jatis; and groups amongst South Asian Muslims called biradaris. Some jatis regarded as below the varna hierarchy (once termed "untouchable") are known as Dalit"
>
> (The Explanatory Notes in the UK's Equality Act 2010)

Caste Identity

Baumann's ethnographic account of group identities in Southall, West London near London Heathrow Airport, for example, makes some reference to how what he calls "Young Southallians" had developed a critical approach to 'Asian culture' and had reinterpreted ideas of caste and class, and marriage that was different from their parents' generations. He also takes the view that by school age the majority of children are aware of their own caste (1996).

Whilst Nesbit's work shows that caste awareness amongst the younger generation of South Asians living in Britain is heighten when they commence school (1997).
Similarly, Ghuman's work is useful in highlighting children's views on identity. Using a qualitative research methodology, in-depth face-to-face in-depth interviews, one of his findings was that the children he interviewed identified themselves as British or Asian and not related to their caste heritage, in addition there was evidence of caste 'teasing' amongst some of them (2009).

Marriage

The UK based Dalit Solidarity Network UK revealed that caste was an important consideration for selecting a life-partner amongst young people. One of the male respondents in this study, for example, from Birmingham, UK, was dating a Sikh girlfriend with discussions between them considering marriage. However, when she found out that he was of Dalit heritage, she immediately left him (2006). Dhanda's work also draws reference to marriage (2009).
Whilst the British Sikh Report (2018) reported that young people aged 19 and under were overwhelmingly comfortable with marrying someone from a different caste (p.39).

Bullying

Examples of bullying and name-calling are found in the work of Ghuman (2011) and Dhanda (2009). Dhanda's based on interviews with young urban *Dalit's* in the Indian Punjab and in the city of Wolverhampton, in the UK, showed how UK respondents reported caste-related bullying in school, and name-calling. Also, whilst they were open to marrying outside of their caste, what Dhanda called "crossing caste borders" they were pessimistic as to the reality of this happening because, for example, the negative response from parents and the wider extended family (2009).

Caste Discrimination

The ACDA study in the same year, 2009, exposed the wide ranging caste discrimination that was happening across the UK. Whilst it did not focus primarily on young people it provided evidence of ongoing caste discrimination amongst young people at school, accessing Higher Education, employment opportunities, and peer relationships (2009).

This report highlighted how young people experienced discrimination at college and university campuses and on the street as the following examples demonstrates;

> "This example relates to the London School of Economics. There is a Hindu cultural society and what not, and when people tell us what is happening, they have cultural institute where some of the boys' behaviour cannot be tolerated. They defaced Dr Ambedkar's statue and we wrote to the LSE and told them this is what is happening – you can see how they disrespect Dr Ambedkar as he is symbol of destroying Caste system; for him, India wanted a Caste-less society. And these people even have all the privileges of coming into a world class institute and still they can carry on with their narrow-minded… that sort of inferiority conflict they imported with them. Wherever they have gone, they carry it with them, never mind how educated or intellectual they are." (p.34).
>
> **"**You get gangs in places like Southall and you get stabbings and its related directly to Caste." (p.24)

This was further highlighted by Kaur's call to educate young people and engage with religious societies to tackle caste discrimination at the CastewatchUK UK conference in 2011;

> "….We should take our campaign to places of higher education through student unions….to get people interested and to educate them about need for a social change. We cannot expect other people to do it for us. We have to do it ourselves. If younger people feel passionate about this issue, they should take the campaign and messages about change to the universities, get people together making sure that young people from all background are present. That is the only way you can bring the change amongst the younger generations…….We know legislation is required but change in attitudes is equally important and that can be done only by engaging with people directly".

The Equality and Human Rights Commission report into caste in the UK at an 'expert's forum' highlighted that caste was not necessarily;

> "declining or confined to an older generation. Young people may experience exclusion from religious or community spaces on the grounds of their cross-caste marriage, as well as discrimination in relation to work or public services" (Dhanda et al, 2014).

This report also however stated that "compared with an older generation recalling social humiliation experienced in South Asia, younger people manifest a confidence and assertiveness in the face of caste sleights".

Music and Social Media

The 2014 Equality and Human Rights Commission report emphasised that caste manifested itself within youth culture including music and social media (Dhanda et al, 2014).

Religious Tradition

Singh's study of young British Sikhs and how they engage with Gurudwaras used a qualitative methodological approach with semi-structured interviews with 30 18–30 year old British Sikhs. It provided an insight into how young British born Sikhs are engaging with their tradition and with their religious institutions (2014).

Caste not relevant?

Perhaps the key issue as to why there is a deficit of literature relating to young people and caste discrimination in the UK is that a number of key British Asian organisations seemingly take the view that while caste discrimination may exist it is gradually disappearing with the demise of the older generation and traditional readings. An example of this is the Hindu Forum of Britain's commission report *'Connecting British Hindus. An enquiry into the identity and public engagement of Hindus in Britain'* study sponsored by the then Labour Government's Department for Communities and Local Government and undertaken by the Runnymede Trust (2008).

There was a recognition that caste might exist in the UK as highlighted by the following respondent;

> "We should be in a group of Hindu Community rather than divided in all the different caste groups (which make us weak as community). All Hindus should have unity between each other for good representation".

However, the view that traditional readings of jatis (caste) and old generation's views were now still relevant in Britain was questioned and that caste discrimination was becoming non-existent as the three following quotes demonstrate;

> "As a young Hindu I feel we need to break down the barriers of caste and region that the generations before us bought with them to the UK"
>
> "I think the caste system was to do with very old traditions; those traditions are disappearing. Because of equality"

> "…caste is not a cause of discrimination, if there is discrimination, it is dying, it is probably still in the older community, but it is definitely diminishing".

The 2014 Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report 92 highlighted that some of the participants at a seminar for experts and stakeholders took the view that;

> "…..legislation might institutionalise caste in the UK or introduce a consciousness of caste that would be damaging, especially to young people who, they claimed, have no idea about caste. This was a particular concern of Hindu organisations, who were fearful of new prejudice against themselves emerging as a result of legislation and a public discourse on caste as a 'Hindu problem', thereby undermining years of successful community integration in British society".

4 FINDINGS

4.1 India Findings

Differences Within Dalits

All the Dalits (SCs) have been historically untouchables. After independence, these communities were enlisted and put into a schedule under the authority of the President of India and as per the constitutional commitments, they have been provided with special provisions in education, employment and political representation at state and central levels. However, the response to these provisions differs from caste to caste and region to region mainly because these castes have been heterogeneous with vertical and horizontal divisions and have social hierarchy and also untouchability practices among themselves.

As per the government records, there are, in all 1092 SCs at all India level and in the state of Maharashtra they are 59 in number (see Appendix). Out of these 59 SCs, there are 5 major castes in the state like Mahar, Mang, Chambhar, Dhor and Holer. Among these five major castes, Mahars are in majority with 35% population followed by Mangs with 32% population. The remaining three have the population proportion between 10% and 14%. Analysing the social hierarchy among these castes, Chambhars are at the top followed by Dhors, Mahars and Mangs are considered at the bottom. Each caste has its own occupation with polluting status; all depending on upper castes; socially, economically and have traditional duty to serve upper castes.

Given the sample of our study, it is seen that the sample is overwhelmingly dominated by the Mahars/Buddhists and the other castes are poorly represented in the sample. There are historical and social factors behind. The role of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his movement has been a mile stone in the history of Dalits in the country in general and in the state of Maharashtra in particular. He himself hailed from Maharashtra and belonged to the Mahar caste. His struggle for emancipation of Dalits has been at several fronts ie. Social, political, cultural; and education as a key to liberation. However, the controversy between Ambedkar and Gandhi over the Dalit issues led to creation of divisions among Dalits. Gandhi's top priority was freedom from British rule under the banner of Congress party whereas Ambedkar advocated for social liberation first. The congress then under the leadership of Gandhi was successful in attracting the leaders and their followers from other castes other than Mahars like Chambhars and Mangs and manipulated

to oppose Ambedkar both socially and politically. There could be some exceptions to this. However, Mahars were following Ambedkar's leadership with full active support at all the fronts. One of the strongest messages given by Ambedkar was to give up traditional caste based occupations that was thoroughly followed by his Mahar followers and actively responded to his call for education and conversion into Buddhism. As a result, the Mahars seem to be more aware, socially active and ahead in education as compared the other castes.

The social differences among and between these castes continue to exist in some or the other form even in the urban locations. Each caste has its own group of houses in the localities in the city like Mumbai with strong caste ties and identity; although one can see some changes at peripheral level of the social fabric. Although they all are 'Dalits', 'broken' and 'marginalized', the basics of caste superiority with social distance continues to exist even today.

Experiences of Untouchability

Attempts were made also to record the experiences of untouchability; if any, of these young people. In general, it is revealed that there were no direct experiences of untouchability. However, a few of them mentioned about indirect experiences in the situation where they tried to enter a temple, visit to an upper caste friend's house where parents probed for caste and if caste known, serving tea/snacks/meal in separate utensils. Also, there was a mentioned of such experience during rituals. But such cases were found to be rare.

Social Background of Respondents

Social background plays a crucial role in all the aspects of one's life; especially in the modern context of globalization and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT). The variables covered under Social Background were sex, age, caste, religion, education etc of the respondents and education, occupation and income of their parents. In the sample of 50, there were 20 males and 30 females, 16 were aged 18, 12 aged 19, 10 aged 20 and 12 aged 21 at the time of data collection. All of them were unmarried. Castewise among these 50 Dalit youths was 15 Mahars, 31 Buddhists (Converts from Mahar caste), 3 Chambhars and 1 Mang. The entire sample was therefore dominated by Mahars and Buddhists.

The Mang caste is second highest in population and considered most backward. All other castes other than Mahars, including Mangs have been left out of Ambedkar's Social Movement and therefore remained behind in education. Religion wise, a majority 41 reported their religion as Buddhism

whereas 9 (18%) only mentioned that they follow Hinduism. It is to be noted that those claimed to be following Buddhism were actually converted from Hinduism and invariably Mahar by caste whose parents were converted in 1956 with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on a mass scale as a protest against Hinduism. Educationally, they were studying on a full time basis at school and degree levels with general education (Arts, Science and Commerce) in majority. Only 2 respondents were studying with jobs in private offices.

Native Place and Migration

Migration to Mumbai is an important and crucial issue with both positive and negative implications over social and economic life of these communities. Positive side is that migration to Mumbai city ensures a regular source of income through all kinds of jobs, at lower level, for example, unskilled from construction worker to rag picker.

Migrants also get out of traditional socio-cultural domination and economic exploitation by upper castes besides harassments and physical violence. They feel socially safe and enjoy relatively much more freedom. The negative side could be that they live in the unhygienic, congested and illegal hutments in slums with lack of proper basic amenities. It is noteworthy that Ambedkar did advocate for inter-caste marriages, mix localities and migration to cities to annihilate caste as three major means for social equality.

During the data collection, it was revealed that in migration to Mumbai takes place across region, caste and kinship ties seeking support from each other for migration. Therefore, all the migrants residing in slums/suburbs have region and caste-wise physical segregation of residents. This goes to the extent of sub-caste such as Dalit Basti will further be segregated based on sub-caste like Mahars/Buddhists and Mangs or Chambhars etc. This was revealed by the researcher during field visits and also being a resident of Mumbai for almost three decades. In our sample it is revealed that, almost all the districts of the state are represented including some from neighbouring states. While probing into the period of stay in Mumbai, it was revealed that the majority of them have been in Mumbai prior to 1990 to 3rd and 4th generation.

A significant number of them (n.20) did not know when their families migrated. This means that respondents parents migrated quite before they were born and brought up in Mumbai with full city exposure with urban-metropolitan culture and life style. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand their experiences of caste, caste discrimination with the exposure of educational and achievements.

Education of Parents

It was relevant to understand the educational background of the parents of our respondents and the direct impact on respondents' aspirations, motivation for education and thereby on their self-image, confidence and social identity.

The table below shows the educational levels of both the parents of the respondents.

Education	Father		Mother	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	3	6.0	8	16.0
Primary	2	4.0	6	12.0
Upper Primary	4	8.0	8	16.0
Secondary	31	62.0	20	40.0
HSC	2	4.0	3	6.0
Graduate	5	10.0	3	6.0
Post Graduate	2	4.0	1	2.0
Don't Know	1	2.0	1	2.0
Total	50	100.00	50	100.00

It is interesting to note that the majority of parents, excepting 3 fathers and 8 mothers who were illiterate, had some level of formal education varying from primary to graduate and postgraduate level. However, the majority of them were found to be educated upto secondary and higher secondary levels and one respondent did not know education of his/her father and mother. Given the historical and social context, these educational levels of the parents can be considered as an outcome of urban exposure supported by social and general awareness.

Occupation of Parents

Besides education, the occupation of parents also played a crucial role in life in general and in educational exposure in particular. Given the traditional caste-based occupations of these communities which were considered low, menial and degraded, it is worth knowing their present occupation in Mumbai city that is generally perceived as modern and secular environment with scope for modern and secular employment.

It was revealed that that majority of fathers (n.20) were engaged in lower level jobs such as attendant/peon in government/private offices and 11 of them were employed as a labourer /daily wager. Only 7 were employed in white collar jobs based on educational qualifications. 2 were engaged in small businesses and the remaining 10 were either old aged or did not work. In the case of mothers, 36 out of the 50 were 'home makers' and 2 each were doing lower level jobs, white collar jobs and working as a maid servant. The majority of both the parents were educationally and occupationally at a lower level, however they had improved from their original situations. This still proves to be conducive for their children's education to a great extent and thereby to face any caste based discrimination.

Monthly Income

Both the parents were in the category of income of Rs.20,000/- maximum per month to Rs.7,000/- and below a month. Compared to the cost of living in Mumbai, they all fell under the poor income category. Most of the mothers did not earn any cash income as they were home makers.

Therefore, the overall situation of the families our respondents belong to was found to be below average-socially, educationally, occupationally and income-wise but could be considered still better than the villages they migrated from.

Interviews and Focus Group Discussions with Young People

According to the National Curriculum Framework Working paper on SC and ST, 2005;

> "The SCs and STs are those who were at the bottom and margins respectively, of the Indian social order-viz. caste groups who because of their low ritual and social status in the traditional social hierarchy and tribal groups because of their spatial isolation and distinctive cultures have been subject to impositions of disabilities and lack of opportunity"
> (Galanter, 1986).

The main problem facing these two groups is that of exclusion and marginalization. Although, the SC and ST together form around 24% of India's population, their socio-economic, political and educational standing is much lower than the rest of the population, even though huge inter-group and regional variations exist.

Many studies have pointed out the weak economic indicators for SCs such as rising poverty, declining real wages, per capita expenditure and rising levels of rural unemployment. For STs, the paper points out colonialism as their

historic turning point. Tribals were reduced to economic and cultural subservience with growing economic interests of the colonists who required large-scale acquisition of natural resources. Forced absorptions have continued to take place at the behest of the aggressive dominant economic and political forces.

Through the years, religious and occupational migration have been pursued by SCs as methods to acquire a new social identity, achieving varied degrees of success. Especially politically, they have been able to come together as a force that cannot go unnoticed now and must be given its due importance. Education, coming out of new jobs and urban migration have helped in the process. But, economic exploitation and disadvantage along with concentration in menial occupations continue to sustain and reinforce the degraded social positions of a majority of the SCs.

Education has been seen as a powerful instrument in bringing about an equal and just social order which has led to universalization of elementary education and a commitment of the state towards educational "upliftment" of disadvantaged groups. But, the challenge of SCs/STs is the continued marginalization and exclusion, even from the mainstream education processes, both in terms of access and representation is still a harsh reality.

Existence and Understanding of Caste

The findings show a strong identification of all participants with their caste. This identification was mainly in the form of the caste categories. All linked caste to status and were clear on how society understood and viewed this caste hierarchy. None of the participants said that they didn't know about their caste or were unaware of the caste system. Caste system is a social reality, which is being carried on from one generation to another and people are born into a certain caste, which has tremendous implications due to the importance that the society as a whole has attached to it in the past and continues to do so in the present. A female respondent, in a personal interview said;

> "Caste means tradition, which has continued in all these years. Earlier whatever people have decided to live in the society that includes caste. Can't tell characteristics of caste exactly but caste system exists. I feel proud of my caste. I haven't felt inferior of my own caste".

Another respondent in an FGD expressed the view that;

> "Caste means 'God-Gifted'!"

This shows that the ascribed status, which comes along with caste continues even today. A ray of hope shined through when all respondents shared the

view that caste discrimination is much lower in Mumbai when compared to their situation in villages. Many of the respondents in interviews held the opinion similar to the ones given below;

> "It is prevalent, even though it may be less when compared to villages".
>
> "I was newly married. We went to our village. Went to Hanuman Mandir to offer coconut - I entered the temple. Many people objected (upper castes). There was a big fight between SC's and UC's. I am from Mumbai - I didn't know that SC's are not allowed to enter the temple in village".

However, most of the student's lacked an understanding about the origins of caste and how it reproduces itself in the system. There have been numerous and complex theories about its origins. One mostly accepted view is about caste being derived along different occupations. Dr. Ambedkar has written extensively on how the existence and maintenance of caste hierarchies is closely linked to gender via endogamy. Many autobiographical accounts , for example, Viramma, (Racine, et.al, 1998) and micro-studies in India also show that it may be easier to break out of the traditional occupational structures but still it's very difficult to break out of the ascribed status of caste. This also came out strongly in the study. Some students recognized that changing their own feelings and relationship/identification with their caste still has limits as the society continues to believe in caste and acts against positive change.

A female respondent stated that;

> "Even though we young generation decides not to believe in caste, but society has great impact, people still follow untouchability".

Experiences of Discrimination: Neighbourhood, Basti or Locality

The Focus Group Discussions were held in 5 different localities in different parts of Mumbai i.e. 2 in South Mumbai and 3 in the Suburbs while the Personal Interviews were held separately.

Some instances of localities being divided along caste lines were visible especially in Kannamwar Nagar, Ghatkopar; BIT Chawl, Byculla and BDD Chawl, South Mumbai. Here, the allocations of houses by the government were along the lines of caste and religion. On the other hand, a few areas within these broader localities also, have a mixed population belonging to different castes.

Further, there were instances of having separate buildings within castes as well, which were divided along the lines of sub-castes! For example, in

Kannamwar Nagar, 100% buildings are for SC people. There is further instance of two separate buildings, which are one for Chambhars and one for Buddhists. Buddhists and Chambhars are sub-castes amongst SC's. Both don't allow each other in!

There is wide evidence of spaces and localities being divided across caste lines. The SC's are often secluded and stay close to but outside to the main settlement area. In many places the cemeteries are often also different for different castes.

The experience in Mumbai shows how the State plays a major role in maintaining or breaking the hierarchical structure. As is shown by a study by Deshpande (2003) there is a strong indication that the top positions in both the governments and the private sector are occupied by the higher castes. This has the potential to skew the policies propagating the beliefs and practices of the higher castes in all domains of life. Even Bowles and Gintis (2014) argues that there is a direct mapping between the class/caste structure, employment as well as access and performance at schools. It has been shown through many studies that in the Indian context, class and caste do overlap significantly but there are exceptions.

Probing further to the kind of discrimination faced by the SC's in Mumbai, the following answer aptly highlighted the points where caste comes to the foreground. A respondent shared that;

> "Caste issues become important in Mumbai- at the time of marriage, employment, higher education, family functions and rituals".

This comment points to the fact that in all aspects of socialization, caste still plays a major role.

Friends Circle and Community Life: Social and Religious

Interestingly and encouragingly many respondents shared that they had a mixed friends circle. Although some also said that;

> "People ask about caste when forming new friendships"

Caste is thus seen as a big barrier towards fostering and making new associations. One respondent also shared an incident of hiding his caste amongst friends, as it became a matter of prestige. There were also a few instances where respondents stopped talking amongst themselves when they got to know each other's caste. Even in educational institutions, where the belief that everyone is equal and should get equal opportunity, these kinds of feelings while fostering new friendships continue to exist. Collectively, as a society, we must ask ourselves, why this still continues to happen in educational institutes? What kind of education is missing? How can this be

completely removed, at least from the school system first? Kumar and Barclay, 1976, has advocated a "reverse socialization" process in schools to break down the reproducing nature of schooling in the context of caste/class/gender hierarchies.

Invitations to each other's houses also had mixed responses. Interestingly, varied experiences were shared specially with regards to invitations to religious functions. Caste and religion also have a very strong linkage. Many followers believe that the caste hierarchies came and were propagated by Hindu Spiritual texts and practices. As the following respondents stated;

> "My friends invite me to their homes on Pooja, but I don't go, as I don't believe in religion"
>
> "I don't go to any friends' house, as I am a girl"
>
> "When I go to my friend's home, I am not allowed to enter the kitchen or touch things. I feel very bad and humiliated"

The second statement gains importance in the context of fear and domination by the upper castes, especially amongst women. This fear is not just present in lower castes, but unites women across groups, across countries against the strong gender discrimination that is present in most countries in the world.

In one particular FGD group, the young people belonged to more wealthier families (higher class) and were very alert to this question of invitations and friendships. As a group, they shared that they had no experience of being discriminated during Pooja's (prayer meetings) in Mumbai. In fact, a respondent in this group shared that he had once taken his Non-SC friends to Chaityabhoomi, where Dr Ambedkar's body was cremated, but guards there had asked them to remove Saibaba and Ganpati, Hindu Gods, pendants and throw those away before entering the memorial! This can also be seen as reverse discrimination or maybe it was just a way of avoiding clash in the large crowds of people.

A respondent commented;

> "People look down upon us when we say Jai-Bhim. Why should that be? Buddhism is one of the first religions in India and Babasaheb was one of us…He wrote the Constitution. So- why are we looked down upon?"
>
> "Many Maratha friends told me that on 6th Dec (Dr Ambedkar breathed his last on this date) you gather and make the whole place dirty. One Maratha also said that they don't like Buddhists. I responded by saying that it's because you don't know history!"

It was also shared that the Jain temples don't allow SC people inside the temple. Specifically, the Sweeper Community sits outside and is not allowed inside. In fact, the students shared that everyone with shabby clothes is asked to stay outside. They felt that untouchability existed but manifested itself in hidden forms. This further shows a caste and class overlap. It also points to the role income has, in alleviating the people from lower caste groups and their lives of constant humiliation.

Apart from invitations on religious occasions, one respondent also shared the following instance;

> "Yes. One of my best friends was Brahmin- she used to tell me not to reveal my caste when I went to her house. Once I revealed- her mother didn't serve me food. We are friends, but we don't visit each other's houses now".

This was a very inspiring thought. It shows that there are people in the next generation, who are more open and flexible when thinking about caste and manage to find solutions to avert the taboos set by the society in different ways. Another respondent shared her experience about how reflection and dialogue have potential to cross these barriers;

> "One of my friends from upper caste used to tease me. I told her about Badasaheb – Ambedkar somehow she was convinced"
>
> "Met an OBC boy during dance practice but he used to feel that his caste was superior to ours and he used to call me backward and treat me inferior. I challenged his belief"

The inspiration that the SC's have derived from the scientific and liberal approach propagated by Dr. Ambedkar is strongly visible in the youth of Mumbai. Their constant references to history, the writing of the constitution, taking on Buddhism as a religion and turning it into a positive identity has much to do with how the movement led by Dr. Ambedkar has impacted the lives of millions of SC's.

Although people have been able to critically understand and contest the nature of caste discrimination and have also derived power from the movement by Dr. Ambedkar, there is a constant tension with their continued identification with their castes.

Discrimination in School/ College

Respondents were encouraged to share their experiences (if any) of caste discrimination in schools and colleges as well. As many studies show (Bowles and Gintis, 2014) educational institutions are one of the major systems through which the caste hierarchy is reproduced in the society.

Historically, people from lower castes have been completely excluded from the Educational Institutions. India's education system has been strongly influenced by the requirements of the British Rulers and even after independence, the educational structure, which was initially laid down by the Colonial power continued. Mass education started much later and suffered from chronic problems like lack of funding, good teachers, and inadequate infrastructure has remained lower in quality than the elite educational institutions. On the other hand, education is also one of the major tools, which has been challenging the inequalities arising out of the ascribed status of caste. It has immense potential and is also increasingly being seen as a powerful requirement to challenge and break out.

Some students shared that when they were in college, people continue to ask about caste. This is especially true while forming new friendships as is also shared in the previous section;

> "My caste is not known by my surname. So the students asked me about it. I told them honestly that I belonged to SC-Mahar caste. I had nothing to hide but after 10-15 days the upper castes reduced contact with me"
>
> "People know caste by your surname, language, and personality along with the locality where you live. The span of social interaction and friendship between castes is limited. Everybody makes his/her friend circle based on caste like Muslim-Muslim, Maratha-Maratha and Dalit-Dalit"

Social discrimination against SC students in colleges and universities is a fact of Indian life. What is not clear is if it is based primarily on caste identity per se or on cultural differences (Weisskopf, 2004).

Apart from the conscious socialization amongst the respondents in some cases, some respondents also shared about the pre-conceived notions, stereotype like SC's do not work hard they are non-deserving students;

> "When people score low marks, others around me immediately say, "He is an SC, he will be like that". I have seen this too many times."
>
> "My mother who is a Vice Principal at xxxx college also looks at caste! Not just her but many others do character sketches"

A respondent who shared that in his school, students divided into A/B/C categories in colleges - students from B division were SC/ST/OBC, C division was sports, A was the first merit list. There were segregations or categorization done along these lines.

While this may indicate that people realize that the performance of SC students has a higher probability of being lower than the other students, there

is a failure to understand the importance of socio-cultural background factors of SC families, which may have led to poor performance. Equal opportunity does not imply that all students come from similar backgrounds and can take advantage of the educational opportunity in the same way. There is a higher probability of an SC students being a first generation learners, having to work extra hours to support family, being uncomfortable to express a non-understanding of lessons out of fear of ridicule or punishment, feeling completely alienated from the curriculum and teaching at school or having a low network to seek help from (Desai, 1991, Nambissan, 1996, Weisskoff, 2004).

Time dedicated to non-academic work also stressed out some students in the study due to caste discrimination;

> "During cultural festivals, the teachers rejected the lower caste students and do not give a chance to participate"
>
> "While doing Buddha Vandana in school - some children made faces. School had mixed community"
>
> "I applied for a book under Book Bank Scheme. The librarian taunted me with saying that I take all the facilities and now also want a book from the bank scheme!"
>
> "I was at a primary school run by Brahmins. I used to help them prepare list of students according to alphabetical order of surnames. There are some common surnames amongst the SC's and Brahmins- like my surname is 'Bhise'. The head teacher first used to put all the Brahmin surnames in the catalogue and then put all the SC surnames at the bottom"

This may also be due to administrative reasons adopted by the school to cater to the policies of the government but it's interesting to note how it can be read in such a way by a student who has faced caste discrimination all his life. To him, it seemed like the names also must be kept separate!

The policies meant for upliftment of the SCs also have led to unfavourable reactions by the teaching and administrative staff along with other students. Singling out SC students in front of the whole class can have a wide impact on the self-image. If one is not comfortable with his/her identity and is hiding his caste, this system of raising hands for stipends, extra classes or other facilities can have a bad effect on the mind if the one is good in studies and performing well.

Reservations

As per the latest reservation policy, Maharashtra State has 23% reservations in jobs and educational institutions. Out of this 13% is for the SC's. The

reservations are only applicable for government institutions. In the case of SC reserved seats, minimum qualifying score for at entry levels is set below the general category and often there is a relaxation of age-limit as well.

Many respondents shared the view that the behaviour of other students, administration and faculty was pretty negative when it came to reservation of seats for SC's in government colleges along with the relaxation of the cut-off marks for entry. There are many arguments for reservations but the most common one is the one, which comes from within the lower castes and the second, which comes from the higher castes. There are more voices to make reservations solely on the criterion of income and not caste and income as there are some evidences that the status of some SC's has been changing across the years and poorer people are getting left behind due to unaffordability. Merit is used as a strong argument to humiliate the SC children as seen in the previous section without realizing their background situations but it's also true that low affordability as well as limited access to other resources cannot be generalized with the changing times.

None of the respondents held the view that the government should do away with reservations. They were unanimous in their opinion that the SCs get benefited from the same and this should definitely continue. This is also because all the respondents in our study were students themselves and had directly benefited from various government schemes. One respondent even advocated enhancing the reservations to private colleges.

From the interviews several respondents held varying views of looking at reservations;

> "If caste was different- wouldn't have got good opportunities"
>
> "At the time of getting facilities- there is talk of SC's getting all advantages. Sometimes, people also say that because you get all facilities you are spoilt, rotten"
>
> "I have lot of benefits due to caste. Even though we get 50-60% we get admission in good college. This is not the student's mistake- it's a rule framed by the government"
>
> "My friends say that I am a son-in-law of the government! They behave as if they are giving reservations out of pity as if to beggars!"

A few opinions which sought to understand why there was a contention from the non-SC's regarding reservation felt that reservations are both good and bad as some people didn't work hard and still get reservations;

> "One of my friends from open category was poor but still had to pay fees. He said that it's good that you people don't need

> to pay fees… Nothing to feel bad or guilty about taking benefit of reservations…"
>
> "Every time everyone doesn't depend on reservation- it is felt that open candidates get admission after reserved candidates, which is wrong. I have taken admission without reservation. I have worked hard"

Some respondents shared experiences of being teased or taunted if they had obtained admission under the reserved category;

> "People tease if admitted under reserved category"

There were also respondents who shared that they didn't wish to apply under reserved category, because of the discrimination and the taunts that they face due to the same;

> "I didn't apply through the reserved category, as we are able to afford fees. But I was persuaded to take advantage of the policy. This is a problem. Even in jobs this happens. Even if I am capable- both by marks and income- I get admission under reserved category"
>
> "During admissions, wanted to apply from open category but the authorities wouldn't let me! So, I took admission from reserve category. So - always I have to listen to these remarks made on receiving benefits due to caste"

It seems as some respondents wished to break out and have the capacity and the capability to do so, but now the reservation system in place wouldn't let them! A small section of SC's responded very strongly expressing not wanting to use reservations and getting recognized of their admission on merit. But, on the whole, many SC's recognized the importance of the reservation system in changing their lives;

> "Overall caste is good. If we remove the caste system, then everything will remove"

Several respondents echoed this view. This expression was related to identifying with caste due to the benefits that were available and can be obtained. These very benefits however limit the breaking out from the caste system. There was a constant tension of being a part and wanting to not relate to their castes by SC students.

As Arundhati Roy has commented;

> "Don't have to blame the State here- we have a Constitution that is more enlightened on caste issues than the society we live in!"(2014)

Discrimination in Employment

Very few respondents were employed or had experiences to share on employment. One respondent though shared his angst during selection for National Service Scheme (NSS). His application was rejected twice on the basis of his surname. He raised his voice against the injustice and finally got through. Vasavi's paper on "Government Brahmins" (2015) elaborates on the kind of difficulties faced by educated SC's for obtaining government job

Identification with Caste

This section explores how students feel about their own caste. A number of mixed responses came out during the study- some shared that they were proud of their caste while some said that they were ashamed. Very few students i.e. only one or two refused to link the feeling of pride or shame to their caste identity;

> "I feel ashamed of taking birth in this caste- it's our fault that people tease!"
>
> "Yes, they are from the Brahmin community but never behave or think like Brahmin. Their thinking is Dalit. What is the use of being in upper caste if their thinking is Dalit?"
>
> "I feel inferior but don't hide it. Caste is Caste!"

This shows a strong presence of internalization i.e. low self-esteem and lack of confidence due to years of humiliation and discrimination faced by the SCs. Further it was interesting to note that, mostly Buddhist respondents who had converted from Mahar expressed that they were proud of their caste. Some also said that Buddhists are higher in the caste hierarchy than Chambhars and Dhors. This is a great paradox. Dr. Ambedkar recommended conversion of religion to break out from the caste system. He thought that the hierarchy will break by changing the religion, but this hasn't happened. Although the religion has been changed, the hierarchy remains intact. There are Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Sikh etc. with caste hierarchies in India. Buddhism is now recognized both as caste and a religion. This has also been due to the fact that before the Mandal Commission (1990) converted - Buddhists were denied reservations under the SC category. Due to this, the SC category and the hierarchical structure of caste is still present, although the religion is changed.

People has also tried changing surnames and occupations for breaking out of the humiliating categories of lower castes, but this has also limited effect. One experience of a girl's aunt's husband who had to change his name as patients would refuse to come to him even though he was a good doctor. Another instance of a family changing surname in Kohlapur to was narrated

(from Kamble to Sarnaik). The respondents shared that even though the surname was changed, people inquire whether they had that surname from the beginning!

Buddhism also advocates that there is no God although there are multiple ways of following the religion. Many respondents in this study said that they do pray to God and celebrate Hindu festivals. Some said that they only go to Viharas (Community Halls for Buddhists). This shows that individuals face a constant tension, between continuation of identification with caste and breaking out of it. The following responses were given during the course of the interviews;

> "We are not proud of our caste - humanity is our caste. We don't follow the caste system".
>
> "I don't feel proud of my caste. I am not proud of it because if I am proud I would be doing exact same thing as others! I have never felt the need to hide it".

This shows that there has been change in the thinking of people and somewhere Dr. Ambedkar's ideas have percolated fully.

Further, tension within the SC sub-castes was also visible. Even though the SC category is treated as a homogeneous category by the policy makers, it is very heterogeneous and has a caste hierarchy of its own.

Within SCs, there is widespread evidence that the Chambhars discriminate against the Buddhists. They feel that they are higher in the caste hierarchy. They feel that the benefits of facilities are given more to followers of Babasaheb because he fought for the facilities. Some Mahar Buddhists also treat the Mang community as lower.

Further, during the interviews, there also seemed a disconnection of SCs who have managed to rise from their SC status in cities, to the other SC community. Due to the need to break out, the identification of the people who have broken out, with the rest of their community is not there. This is not surprising, given the oppression that was faced by these families since time immemorial.

Means of Breaking out

Respondents expressed different means of breaking out of the system. Many echoed Dr. Ambedkar's recommendations for the same - Educate, Organise and Agitate (2011). Education, changing attitudes, taking benefit of reservations, getting into varied fields like politics, sports, business; dialogue; inter-caste marriages, unity amongst SC's, eradication of blind faith, spreading awareness were some of the ways suggested by the respondents themselves;

> "Best way is to spread awareness. But everyone has a different mindset- whoever wants to change and take it will, others won't. Those who want to progress will make efforts".

Inter-Caste Marriages

Dr. Ambedkar recommended more inter-caste marriages for removing the caste system. The respondents related directly and passionately to this issue of conversation. There were very interesting discussions on, if inter-caste marriages happen between different SCs as well. Many positive experiences were shared;

> "Have one Brahmin friend who married an Adivasi girl. There are many people who don't believe in caste. I give lectures on the same as well. I am going to marry a person from a different community- families have agreed. I want to show that there is no caste. Our Principal is also a Brahmin, but he married a Muslim".
>
> "Today's generation doesn't believe in it. One of my friends got married to a Muslim girl. His mother is a Chambhar, and father a Buddhist"
>
> "My mother's uncle did an inter-caste marriage. The girl was a Brahmin. In this case, it was positive for the children, as they got oriented towards Brahminical thinking and life style and may face less discrimination later in life

Both males and females belonging to the Buddhist caste expressed that they will be open to marry Mangs. Mangs is a sub-caste within SC's, which is considered to be lower than the Buddhists. An alternate view also emerged. One respondent felt that the children of the people wished to go inter-caste marriage face problems in getting married. He expressed the view that arranged marriages become difficult because of the older generations and traditional views of caste.

Another respondent also shared an incident where a mother who belonged to a low caste and worked as a police officer didn't let her son get married to a Muslim girl he loved. Interestingly a girl respondent shared that she fell in love with a higher caste boy but decided to leave him because she was afraid of the consequences in the future.

Another respondent shared that his upper caste friend told him that he was not allowed to marry out of caste and his family had threatened that if he does so, they will deny his share of property and also impose a fine of Rs. 1 lakh! He further shared that his friend backed out of his relationship with a lower caste girl due to fear.

On the whole, the respondents felt that SC's have a bright future, but progress is very slow as compared to others due to lack of education, awareness, cultural capital and low social status.

Higher Education

Some basic quantitative data was collected from SC students studying at Higher Education institutions.

This data was very revealing. It points to the dominance of SC-Mahar-Buddhists in educational institutions. Another very interesting aspect is on the number of working students. This suggests that the SC's who actually reach this stage of higher education find the government support enough or are able to sustain themselves without jobs. It's a positive finding but cannot be generalized across Mumbai or across the SC population in higher education institutes.

For the majority of the sample, the parent's education around 44% fathers had completed SSC while 30% mothers had completed secondary school. Only 14% fathers had education above graduation while 8% mothers fell in this category. Illiteracy amongst mothers was higher at 16%. Around 20% fathers were not employed whereas 72% mothers worked as housewives. Around 40% fathers had lower level jobs and 22% worked as labourers/daily wage earners. Only 14% fathers and 4% mothers had white collar government jobs. Interestingly 32% had incomes greater than Rs. 20,000 per month while 12% were unemployed and 18% had income below Rs. 7,000 and 10% between Rs. 7000-10,000. Around 6% women also had income above Rs. 20,000 per month whereas 10% had income less than Rs. 5,000 and 78% had no income at all.

4.2 UK Findings

This study of the under researched area of young people of South Asian descent and their personal views and experiences of caste identity and caste discrimination in the United Kingdom (UK) is very valuable. It comes at a time in the narrative when successive Governments in the UK are looking at the issue of caste and the calls for caste discrimination to be recognised in equality legislation.

As with all equality law campaigns we have had many hurdles. We expected these. During the early Government consultations in 2004 on a Single Equality Bill caste and caste discrimination deniers in the UK had the ear of Government. But organisations including the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance were able to give a voice to a community and victims who spoke about their experience of caste discrimination and published reports on the

subject. Parliament finally listened and introduced a clause in the Equality Act 2010 that gave a Government minister a *power* to outlaw caste discrimination in the future. This was later reinforced in 2013 with a *duty* that Government must outlaw it.

After years of procrastinations, and Government-commissioned research into caste, the UK Government announced in 23 July 2018 that it will not specifically outlaw caste discrimination and repeal a piece of now-declined-to-be-implemented pro-equality law. They cited difficulties with defining caste, not knowing the extent of caste discrimination; and a legal route already available in existing law. We do not accept this, and the campaign will continue. Penny Mordaunt, Minister for Women and Equalities in a Statement to the UK Parliament on the day of the announcements did, however, begin with the sentence "*No one should suffer prejudice or discrimination on any grounds, including any perception of their caste*." This was clear acknowledgment that caste and caste discrimination exists in the UK. She also committed to producing Guidance for use by any individual who feels they may have suffered discrimination on grounds of caste and to help employers, service providers and public authorities who are outside those groups understand caste divisions.

There are over 4.5 million South Asians living in the UK. The numbers of permanent citizens continue to grow together with those from this group temporarily living in the UK for shorter periods whilst in education or employment. Government, and organisations cannot afford to bury their heads in the ground on the existence of caste and how it impacts on lives of people in a country that prides itself on equality of opportunity and equality of treatment laws that are fundamental to a just society.

This study begins to help us understand how 18-21 year olds view caste and their experiences of it in the UK. I hope this study will lead to more research for this age group.

(Santosh Dass MBE, Chair, Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance, London, 6th September 2018)

> "Literally I only came to learn about that term (Dalit) when I was like 13 or 14....I undertook a GCSE in Hinduism and that was one of the topics...the caste system...I obviously knew about the four but then I didn't even know about the subject" (Female, Valmiki heritage)
>
> "I am really feeling crap about being a high caste Hindu right now. Although I am actually an atheist but still, the caste system needs to go" (Hindu - Non-Dalit respondent)

The following themes emerged from the interviews with the young people the study engaged with. The findings are structured to differentiate between those young people who identified themselves as being of a Ravidassia or Valmiki heritage (which we have place under the broad category of Dalit) and those young people with a South Asian Hindu heritage who did not.

Learning about caste

From the sample of young people interviewed, whether they were from a Dalit heritage or not, a common thread was that their experiences of learning and understanding about the caste system was primarily at school and their educational experiences. One respondent described her first experience of learning about the caste system;

> "….literally came to learn about that term Dalit when I was like 13 or 14…took a GCSE in Hinduism…on the topic of the caste system…I obviously knew about the four castes but did not know that this…the Dalit..existed"

Another commented;

> "…the term was brought up probably when I was 8 or 9 years old…by…13 or 14…had a better idea…secondary-school people started talking about it…13 or 14 years old and you start realizing…pre-GCSE…I started having conversations hinting about caste, etc."

For two other respondents the following memory of their first encounter was also at school;

> "….learned about Dalit from GCSE…Hinduism…in the second year of the GCSE...Never heard it before…earned about the four caste distinctions, and all the history behind...the caste system"
>
> "I started understanding caste when I took my GCSE in Religious Studies…the…Hinduism paper….I first encountered caste in school…when I was about 13 years old"

Caste identity

How respondents described their caste identity depended on their heritage and how they perceived that. A number of factors such as immigration from India; family's identity, particularly inter-generational; and cultural traditions and influences; whilst for others it was not considered an important issue for them.

A female Ravidassia believed that Asians who immigrated to the UK brought with them their stringent caste values and beliefs;

> "…people from India really impose it…caste values…here… because its' their norm…their norms and values in the UK… behind closed doors what are they teaching their children…I think it's a disgrace…I'm using this harsh terminology….that is just wrong"

Another commented;

> "It's not a topic in our house….my parents will only refer to anything to do with caste if something comes up on the television or one of the older aunties or uncles mentions it"

Those young people from a non-Dalit heritage were clear that references to caste identity and the caste system were brought over from India and didn't have any real significance in their daily lives. As one commented she learned about her caste from her family;

> "I learned it from my Dad in India…in the UK I didn't have a clue."

Whilst another expressed the following view;

> "The older generation…mostly people in India from India…did not let go of old attitudes…young generation…in Britain…is clearly different"

Another, a female, described the caste beliefs of family members who have immigrated to the UK;

> "Big distinction between me and my grandparents…Caste shouldn't stop me from being friends with people"

One other female described a childhood experience during a trip to India as follows;

> "I visited India when I was 7 years old…we are kind of higher-caste….so instead of saying xxxxx they'll add a 'xx,' 'xxxxx,' and that sounds really strange because we only used that for elderly people…I was really confused, why are older people are calling me 'thou'?…t's because you are a Rajput…so you a higher caste...I think…this…was my first exposure…to the concept of caste"

Whilst another considered it from a cultural perspective;

> "As a British Asian…it isn't as strong as my parents'….but at the same time I don't just ignore my caste, I do say I'm a Kshatriya …high-caste…I'm a Rajput and I'm kind of proud of that… but it's not something I go around just using against others…it is just part of my culture…it's just who I am"

Others shared a different view on caste;

> "I don't even know what caste I am. My parents really don't know very much about caste…what I know about caste pretty much comes...from…last year…I actually did an essay on religion and caste in Indian politics…that is the basis of my knowledge, of course…really never talked about caste…it's never been a part of my life"

Whilst three actively chose not to identify with any caste instead, regarding themselves solely as British-Asian. A Brahmin (non-Dalit) male, explained this decision as follows;

> "I don't identify myself to any caste… I identify myself as British first then Indian… and caste has never played any aspect in it… I've never chosen my friends based on caste."

Another expressed a similar view;

> "I've never seen myself identifying with the caste system at all …No one's ever told me….my parents never told me you're of this caste…never been in that situation…of…needing to identify with any caste"

Similarly another stated that;

> "…as long as I can proudly say that I'm a Hindu, caste doesn't really matter to me".

Experiences of caste discrimination

As previously stated there is clear evidence from a variety of sources that caste discrimination exists in multiple forms across the UK. However when applied to young people living in the UK this still remains largely an under-researched area. The experiences from the young people interviewed varied depending on how they viewed their own caste identity.

There was a clear view amongst the young people who identified themselves as coming from a Dalit heritage that caste discrimination existed, and that some had personally experienced discrimination. As one Ravidassia explained;

> "If you're in a heavily Asian populated area, you've got someone who's at a position of power…they are slightly biased in their belief…in terms of caste…I reckon the surname can hold you back or pull you forward"

Similarly a female respondent shared this view;

> "Caste grouping as Hindu over time…it's just been abused and institutionalized by society…so people at the top end manipulate the people at the lower end…it is more held by

culture, families, etc., than religion…I think religion should promote equality"

Another remembered her school experiences during a focus group discussion;

"…at school it was mostly…members of the…Asian community …so we mixed in with each other…only until secondary school …when I was about 15 it became an issue…there used to be a whole big group of high Sikh castes and they associated me with them because they thought I was the same caste as them…when it came out that I wasn't i.e. that I was a Dalit, slowly, one by one, they all just stopped talking to me"

One other member of the focus group of young people commented;

"…back in Birmingham a few months ago there was this woman, she was like a Sikh of a higher caste…she imposed her caste…beliefs…on…a 5 year old boy…who goes to school the next day…he would only associate with people i.e.,other British-Asians who were of the same caste as him…it all depends on the parents, and how they impose the caste system"

A male Ravidassia highlighted issues around caste discrimination in a British Asian dominated workplace;

"….there is a lot of problems like pizza factory and things like that…that is a common place for a lot of Asian people to work …and obviously people who are like racist or casteist to each other…I think wherever there is a lot of Asians working… they've got backward mentality…discriminate against each other race wise…something to do with caste discrimination at xxxxx…is a…factory for medication…I think there was a lot of Asians there working at some time…there was an argument over promotion for someone…they felt they were getting discriminated against caste wise"

Whilst a female shared her perspective on the South Asian community;

"…..if you look at the segregation of the Asian community with different temples, etc.…yes everyone is polite and everyone is nice, but behind your back, there's always an argument going back to what you said, I'm a different caste or I'm higher than you, etc.…its really petty and stupid…other people from other castes will want to deliberately antagonize…they want to say something to you..just because they feel bad in themselves …they want to set their authority…because they feel they are

> a lot more higher (within her family context…the older generation…they're extreme in their way"

Another female went beyond caste discrimination in describing a race-related problem encountered at school during her childhood;

> "I haven't actually experienced any caste discrimination… back in like primary school, there wasn't caste discrimination, just racial discrimination …why you're Indian and I'm not"

However those from a non-Dalit Hindu heritage felt there little or no caste discrimination as a male Brahmin (high-caste) commented;

> "…in my personal experience, the caste system in the UK does not operate; the only time I ever heard it being mentioned is like I mentioned before, like a new surname is heard, or at a wedding."

Another respondent echoed this view;

> "In my 21 years here I've never seen any issue with caste… and considering my interaction with the South-Asian community it can be taken with some weight that it doesn't seem to be there for the majority of people. The only time I ever actually thought about the issue of caste was when this entire debacle of bills passed through (Houses of Parliament) and it was brought to the news; before that I didn't even think of it as an issue within the UK"

Similarly a male felt discrimination might happen;

> "I don't think so as such…do I think there is caste discrimination in the UK? Possibly there could be, personally myself I haven't seen that"

Similarly others commented;

> "I don't think it does [matter] in Britain…I have not experienced…caste-related issues."
>
> "I've never come across it [caste discrimination]…I've never seen it"
>
> "…don't think it's really a massive factor, I think it really depends on individual families and how much they want to cling on to over there. Compared to India, I don't think there is really any in the UK"

The India connection was expressed by another respondent who felt that if it did exist, it was restricted to the home situation;

> "Inside the home, there is a possibility that it could be going on…never been discriminated...against…but it still does exist …people from India bring that attitude here"

However a female, described a surprising encounter with a British-Asian man which gave a different insight into these respondent's views;

> "Caste is still very much an issue in the UK…I attended an event for young people for ethnic minorities…city law firms… and was asked what caste are you?…really weird…hat was a question he even thought of asking…we don't use it in our daily lives, but he still brought it up…I found it quite strange"

Marriage

The question of choosing who a respondent could marry at some future stage was heavily influenced by caste and family tradition.

From a female Ravidassia described the following experience;

> "When their family came over…from India]…they had their views…oh, so she is one of them…Ravidassia], is she?…it made me feel like this small"

Similarly another shared an important aspect of her extended family;

> "Discriminated because of your caste/identity…"Yeah I had it from my in-laws…they come up with some terminology which I never know existed…its blatant discrimination"

Another commented that;

> "…it hasn't happened yet…but I am sure there will be questions asked by members of the family when I get to that stage….what's his name…where does he come from…."

From the majority of respondents who were from a Hindu non-Dalit heritage a different picture emerged, for example, a female, candidly described her family's probable opinions on her marrying outside her caste, and specifically to a Dalit;

> "Mom wouldn't mind, as long he's a Hindu…If I were to marry a Dalit that might cause a problem…my parents would allow me to get married to someone between the Brahmin caste and the Shudra caste, but if it was…a Dalit they would raise 50 questions which I would have to debate…with..them"

Another commented;

> "My family would have a biased view…they can only explain to me about caste from their experience, not a wider perspective, and I understand being a Brahmin is…as it is on top of the caste system, and therefore does not necessarily provide the best view…but I've never asked them…for…details or more information because I know the

best place to do that would be to conduct my own research and find out myself"

Another made the following observations on her family's attitude towards the significance of caste in marriage:

"…in the context of marriage and stuff, my older sister… marriage is in the conversation…how important it is, and it comes out really strongly, that we're this caste, and you can't get married to someone else, and I always [ask] how can an individual's behaviour be affected by their caste?…for them [parents) it is so important"

A male, described his family's views as follows;

"…caste system affects when people get married… surnames especially are considered when people wish to marry"

Whilst a female, believed that caste affiliation does play a major role in British-Asian families. She made the following comments in interview:

"In weddings and stuff I think caste is a big factor. In terms of marriage alliances caste just plays a very big role, a massive role. It is important to my family"

Another respondent described the problems of marrying into another race, and the vital role of surnames in the British-Asian community;

"Race does play…a big role…taboo to marry outside…Mom would be concerned about the clash of cultures. Religion, faith plays a part. There's not much of a caste problem…in terms of marriage…The surname issue is quite common in the UK…especially for the…older generation"

Parents' and other family members' attitudes to caste

Those interviewees (n.4) identifying themselves as from a Ravidassia or Valmiki heritage were clear that caste was hardly ever mentioned at home or elsewhere. When it was highlighted it tended to be either older members of the extended family such as aunts, uncles or grandparents, maybe a parent or occasionally at the temple they attended as one commented;

"….when my uncle visits from India he brings with him his history of what is occurring in India…we might have a short discussion but otherwise it's not a topic….rather which Premier team (UK Football) are you supporting is talked about"

However one example of a parent mentioning caste to one of the interviewees provided an insight into perhaps an under-recorded world;

"…my dad explained to me once that young girls getting raped on buses or in the fields in parts of India was

> commonplace…why?....because they were 'untouchables' and anything could be done to them with no repercussions (perpetrators)….from the police"

Another took the view that:

> "…there might be some reference to caste at the temple but we (friends) don't really bother about it"

A female shared the following thoughts on her family's dynamics;

> "…they're more strong than my views….because they are the older generation…..I still think they have that strict rigid attitude. I think I'm more lenient, that's come across quite a lot in our conversations, just like general marriage and stuff… I don't see caste as much of a big deal…."

A different picture emerged from those young people identifying themselves as being from a Hindu non-Dalit heritage. A male stated that the subject of caste identity would probably meet with *"resistance"* from his family. Whilst another was asked whether caste was discussed by members of his family, and replied;

> "No…only when I asked…we discussed caste… but don't tend to get answers very straight"

Whilst another commented;

> "I haven't seen it happen with any of my cousins….who you should love, bearing in mind parental opinion on caste…it's a question that would come to my mind, and I'm not going to lie… if I meet somebody I will question who they are….sometimes you know…from just learning about their surnames you kind of find out what caste they come from… I guess you live around people who are so accustomed to going back into the past it will automatically come your way to ask this question…."

Caste and peer groups

To what extent young people discussed caste with their friends was again dependent upon how they identified themselves. A Ravidassia male, for example, shared one of his experiences whilst in university that again highlighted how an individual's caste identity shaped interaction with other British-Asian friends;

> "…when I went to University a lot of my mates were big on caste…it's because their parents were born in India….we had our moments when girls were discussed and about who they

were…difficult at times to maintain friendships when this happened"

Whilst another explained that caste was rarely addressed in conversations within her peer group at university;

"We never really talk about caste….it….never really comes up…but I suppose we just wish to get on with life and keep it under the carpet"

A respondent from a Hindu non-Dalit heritage took a different view comparing the views on caste held by her university friends and her extended family;

"…my friends at university they don't care at all…they don't know what caste they are…but my cousins, they're kind of more strict with the whole caste system because of their parents, but if I look at other of my friends they don't seem to be worried about it"

Whilst another, a university student, when asked if she had any British-Asian friends from a lower caste. She replied as follows;

"No, I actually don't know anyone, I've never come across them"

Other influences on caste

The responses to this area highlighted the impact of social media and music on caste identity. A female Ravidassia took the following view;

"I believe that caste does segregate, specifically….music…song in Punjabi dialect….it's like some of us are Sikhs and some of them are Ravidassias…to interpret, that really does segregate people…II believe it [music] also divides and segregates"

Whilst a non-Dalit male, described learning about the concept of "untouchables" from the media;

"The Bollywood film Lagaan is where I first learned about untouchables"

Another non-Dalit female made a similar observation;

"Media probably plays a big role. Quite a few of my friends are interested in Bollywood… I think that kind of influences people a lot"

Another respondent, who declined to state any caste identity, shared her experiences of the influence of Western culture on clothing, language and music;

> "…music is important to me…it mixes Indian with western…I swing to and fro from each depending where I am and who I am with"

She felt that the belief in caste hierarchy is declining in Western culture (specifically British society), and noted that;

> "….in college/university we mix with other people…drink in the student bar…dance to the same music… it doesn't really matter who you are".

One respondent a Hindu non-Dalit male, when asked to describe the influence of social media on caste in the UK, his response indicated a lessening in caste identity;

> "…it doesn't really matter what caste you belong to if you start globalizing….Facebook doesn't take into account who you are...it's up to you"

These findings question the notion of there being a 'Dalit community' in the UK as possibly misleading. The four young people interviewed from such a background used the term Ravidassia or Valmiki to identify themselves. Whilst the twelve young people from a Hindu non-Dalit background used more caste related terms.

This study has also highlighted the general and specific disparity between those young people interviewed from a Ravidassia/Valmiki (Dalit heritage) compared to those who were from a Hindu non-Dalit heritage.

The findings support previous, albeit limited research, that young people from a Ravidassia or Valmiki heritage and indeed those from a Hindu non-Dalit background learn and begin to understand about the caste system at school and their further educational experiences such as at university.

Caste identity appeared to be largely dependent on their heritage and how that is perceived. A number of factors such as their families affect this such as immigration from India; the family's identity, particularly inter-generational, and cultural traditions and influences. Similarly the question of choosing who they might marry at some future stage was heavily influenced by caste and family tradition although varied between the two groups of respondents. Identity was also shaped by home life, by older members of the extended family or occasionally at the temple they attended.

The study also highlighted that caste is manifest within youth culture including music and social media.

There was a clear view amongst the young people who identified themselves as coming from a Ravidassia/Valmiki heritage that some had personally experienced discrimination, for example, at school, who they could be

friends with, parental attitudes, and in employment. However those from a non-Dalit Hindu heritage on the whole felt there little or no caste discrimination in their experience and took the view that the caste system was disappearing in the UK.

This qualitative study of sixteen young people from a South Asian heritage provides a snapshot into their views and experiences of caste identity and discrimination and its meanings for them.

5 CONCLUSION

> "My final word of advice to you is "Educate, Organise and Agitate" have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I do not see how we can lose our battle. The battle to me is a matter of joy. The battle is in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or social in it. For ours is a battle not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for reclamations of the human personality" (Ambedkar, 1996)

This study aimed to reverse the current paucity of Indian and UK research on young people's views and experiences of caste identity and discrimination. In doing so it sought to make the connections between, for example, 'tradition', 'custom', 'rituals' and modernity.

It showed that the issue of caste and caste discrimination continues to exist in both the developed and developing countries studied. It also reveals caste as an issue of stigma amongst young people that affects their self respect and dignity and for some is found in hiding away from their caste identity

The review of the existing literature from both India and the UK has highlighted that the issue of young people, caste and caste discrimination has not been addressed in any substantive way.

Barring a few studies, for example, Rao 2002, Thorat, 2002, Thorat and Attewell, 2007, and Wankhede, 2003, of caste discrimination in education and employment, and Dhanda, 2009, looking at young urban *Dalit's* and caste-related bullying in school, and name-calling, the whole issue of young people in both Indian and UK academic discourse is missing and requires urgent attention.

What this study has achieved is providing an insight into the experiences of young people growing up in different but connected social worlds. Where, for example, social media is formulating young people's social worlds and perspectives including how they view caste.

Caste and caste discrimination in India has a very different historical pathway and is distinctly different to the experience in the UK. However there are clear similarities as this study has shown, for example, its stratification quite clearly reinforces class and gender inequalities.

It is this issue of caste and caste discrimination in India that has centuries of old deep-rooted resilience to change whereas in the UK generational family ties ensures it remains, for example, in choosing a marriage partner.

Bringing a comparative perspective on caste and caste discrimination between a western society such as the UK and a more traditional developing society like India that is moving towards modern values of justice, equality and secularism has highlighted societies in the phase of transition. Two societies that are caught between tradition and modernity with both aspiring to social justice and equality along different paths when confronting this issue of caste identity and caste discrimination.

In the UK, for example, the UK Government's decision to not bring into force law agreed in 2013 and add caste as an aspect of Race in the Equality Act, 2010, is a missed opportunity. If the existing caste provision is repealed, caste discrimination in the areas of employment, provision of services and in education will not be on the face of Equality Law. These are areas all young people journey through. And those of South Asian descent carry with them their caste and sometimes caste prejudices as this study has shown.

In India education is supposedly or viable means for social change and development however there have been inherent flaws in its structure, functions and scope; that has been impacting the marginalised sections of society particularly Dalits. At the same time in the current times India represents the second largest youth population in the world and therefore it is relevant to address the underlying issues which perpetuate these growing inequalities.

Mainstream media in both the UK and India appears more concerned with other matters deemed newsworthy, such as Royal weddings, football, cricket and Bollywood film stars rather than, for example, the continuing brutalisation of Dalit women in India, and caste discrimination cases being brought to Industrial Employment Tribunals in the UK.

It would appear that whilst current public, media and political concern in the UK is focused on young people's involvement with, for example, youth gangs and criminal activities, educational performance and outcomes, and the over use of mobile phones and social media generally, discrimination on caste grounds amongst some young people is not deemed newsworthy and subsequently remains largely hidden and off the radar.

Whilst age is a protected characteristic under the UK Equality Act, 2010, that prohibits unlawful discrimination and protects them from being discriminated against because of their age in, for example, employment, (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2015) caste discrimination of young people seemingly continues to exist. Although somewhat surprisingly the British Youth Council Report (2016), for example, which examined young people and issues of racism and religious discrimination makes no mention of caste in its report.

In India the youth policy appears to be vague and implementation seems to be unsatisfactory. The gross unawareness of the policy and programmes and biases by some sections of society against the reservation policy are directly negatively impacting on the opportunities that are available. Indian youth continue to be sandwiched between tradition and modernity along with the social and economic diversities.

As Sujatha Gidla (2017) argues in her recent book in relation to the 'Untouchables' in India;

> "Discrimination against them is on a par if not worse than the treatment of negroes in the USA before 1900. Despite this the rest of the democratic world says nothing. It deplores the treatment of women in Muslim states and child labour In Asia but turns a blind eye to the gross injustice meted out to the untouchables in India. They might as well not exist"

Caste discrimination amongst young people living in India and the UK should not be allowed to continue and be seen as somehow not as important as some of the other challenges young people face. Discrimination is discrimination wherever it manifests itself, it should not be tolerated in India, the UK or elsewhere.

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7 APPENDICES

7.1 Ethics Approval Form
7.2 Information Sheet for Potential Participants
7.3 Participant Consent form
7.4 Information Leaflet
7.5 Interview Schedule
7.6 Questionnaire
7.7 Organisations Contacted
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7.1 Ethics Approval Form

Goldsmiths

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Research Ethics Sub-Committee

Approval Status: Approved

To: Dr. R. Green
From: Prof. C. French
CC: Dr. M Swijghuisen Reigersberg
Date: 10th February 2014
Ref: EA 1176

We are pleased to inform you that the Research Ethics Sub-Committee has approved your project: **"Listen to me". A qualitative study of young people's views and experiences of caste discrimination. A comparative study of the Dalit community in India and the UK.**

Approved ethical applications are available in the Research Office for other researchers in the college who are applying for grants; they may also be sent out as email attachments if requested. This is to help applicants. Please let Emmy Gregory know within two weeks of this letter if you would rather not have your ethical application form available in this way. Many thanks.

Dr Muriel Swijghuisen Reigersberg, Secretary, Research Ethics Committee
pp. Prof. Christopher French, chair

7.2 Information Sheet for Potential Participants

Goldsmiths

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Information Sheet for Potential Participants

Title of the Research Study***: "Listen to me". A qualitative study of young people's views and experiences of caste discrimination. A comparative study of the Dalit community in India and the UK.***

My name is..... and I am a member of staff of the Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London.

This study is a joint research project between Goldsmiths and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, India. The Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance, a UK based charity, who are working to eliminate Caste Discrimination within the UK, are also collaborating with the study.

The study is being funded by the Indian Council of Social Sciences from March 1st, 2013 – September 31st, 2014. The study aims to discover young people's personal views and experiences of caste discrimination.

It will consider what impact, if any, on young people's caste identities and experiences of caste discrimination are the following factors having, such as social media, the current music scene, and consumerism.

We aim to interview up to 100 young people, in both India and the UK who are aged between 18 and 21 years of age. In the UK we aim to interview up to 50 young people from a South Asian heritage.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be interviewed and asked a number of questions. The interview should take no longer than 30 to 45 minutes. You will be free to withdraw from the interview at any stage, and you would not have to give a reason.

All the information (data) gathered from the interview will be anonymised. Your name will be replaced with a participant number or a pseudonym, and it will not be possible for you to be identified in any reporting of the data gathered. All data collected will be kept in a secure place (a locked filing cabinet in the Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London) to which only the researchers involved with the study will have access to. These will be kept until the study is completed following which all data that could identify you will be destroyed.

The findings from the study will be presented at local community events, a report will be available on the internet, and published in an academic journal.

If you have read and understood this information sheet, any questions you had have been answered, and you would like to be a participant in the study, please now see the consent form. **THANK YOU**

7.3 Participant Consent form

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Participant Consent form

Title of the Research Study: "Listen to me". A qualitative study of young people's views and experiences of caste discrimination. A comparative study of the Dalit community in India and the UK.

1. *I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.*
2. *I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.*
3. *I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this study.*
4. *I understand that all the information I give in this interview will be anonymous and confidential.*
5. *I give my permission for the data/information from this interview to be securely stored and/or electronically processed for the purpose of this research and to be used in related studies or other studies in the future.*
6. *I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage without giving any reason.*
7. *I agree to participate in this study.*

Name of participant (Block Capitals): Signature of participant: Date

Name of researcher (Block Capitals): Signature of researcher: Date:

Contact details of the researcher: Email / Telephone:

7.4 Information Leaflet

Are you from a South Asian Dalit heritage?
Between the ages of 18 and 21?
We would like to interview you

We are undertaking a collaborative research project between Goldsmiths and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, India. The Anti-Caste Discrimination Alliance, a UK based charity, who are working to eliminate Caste Discrimination within the UK, are also collaborating with the study.

The study is being funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research and aims to discover young people's personal views and experiences of caste identity and caste discrimination both in the UK and India. It will consider what impact, if any, on young people's caste identities and experiences of caste discrimination are the following factors having, such as the family, education, social media, globalisation, the current music scene and youth culture, and consumerism.

Interested? Then contact: Dr Roger Green, Director, Centre for Community Engagement and Community Research, Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London, Room 207, 21, St. James, New Cross, London SE 14 6NW Email: r.green@gold.ac.uk Tel: 0207 717 2591 or Jennifer Mayo-Deman, Research Administrator, Email: j.mayo-deman@gold.ac.uk

7.5 Interview Schedule

Aim of the interviews/informal group meetings: To capture young people (age18-21) experiences of caste discrimination or not!

1) Personal information

1. Who they are...their age – gender – are they at school/college/university/employed/ unemployed/ other?.....details.
2. Status...single...married....other?
3. Where do they live?.
4. Do they have a faith or religion?
5. Any other relevant information?

2) Family background

1 Were they born in the UK?

2 Heritage-where were the family originally from in South Asia....which country...name of the place?

3 Their family's religion....have they converted from a different religion?

4 Ethnicity.

5 Place of worship.

6 Parents/family attitudes to caste.

7 Tribe or community.

3) Understanding of caste

1. What do they understand by the term caste?

NB. If their response is that they do not understand caste, will they as South Asians understand the concept of biraderi (they may be from India but a Muslim, or in the UK of South Asian Muslim heritage?). If not familiar with caste, they may nevertheless be familiar with the idea/ concept of jati – or at least be aware of different 'groups' or 'communities' with different names some of whom do not mix with each other.

2. What is their understanding/knowledge of what the caste system is – discuss

3. To what extent do they believe it does or does not operate in the UK – if they feel it does exist does it affect them in any way?

4. Is it discussed within their family/friends/elsewhere...if yes under what circumstances?

5. What are your parents/family attitude to caste?

4) Caste identity?

1. Do they personally feel they belong (or identify with) a caste or community? If yes...at what age did they first become aware of this?

2. Do they see themselves as having a caste identity? Yes or no?either way do they feel this is a positive or negative thing?

4a) If yes to a caste identity (possible reasons why)

1. Parents/family attitudes.
2. Caste alliances – marriage.
3. Peer group pressure/friends.
4. Attending a place of religious worship.
5. Any other reasons?

NB. Need to check if the interviewee(s) are Valmikis or Ravidassias as they may say no to a caste identity but yes to a religious identity!

4b) If no to a caste identity (possible reasons why not)

1. Personal choice...deliberate choice not to align with the caste identity of the family/ascribed caste identity.
2. Parents/family attitudes eg. never really discussed within the family.
3. Peer group pressure/friends.
4. Modernising' effect eg. social media (eg. Facebook – Twitter etc.).
5. Cultural homogenisation of young people across the world.
6. Impact of globalisation eg. Capitalist consumerism.
7. Originally no but it came up later in relation to getting married.
8. Any other reasons?

5) Caste Discrimination

1. Do they believe there is caste discrimination in UK society? Yes or no... discuss.
2. If they believe there is caste discrimination in UK is it the same as outside UK (eg. India?).
3. Have they or their friends ever experienced caste discrimination?
4. Have they personally been discriminated against because of their caste? – if yes...their experience(s)...was it at school? university? work? other? details needed
5. Was it overt (direct) or covert (hidden) discrimination?....what were the circumstances?....get them to describe what happened...details!
6. Have they ever been in a situation where certain rules or criteria were applied which it was easier to meet if you were of a particular caste/ difficult to meet if you were not of a particular caste?
7. What were their feelings about being discriminated against?
8. Did they complain about the discrimination they faced? If not, why not?
9. Do they know of any other young people who have been discriminated against because of their caste?...details.
10. Any thoughts/ideas they have for tackling caste discrimination ie. what could be done?

6) Other

1. Ask them if they have any other information they might like to give

Thank them for their time

7.6 Questionnaire

"Listen to me" A qualitative study of young people's (aged 18 – 21 years) views and experiences of caste discrimination. A comparative study of the Dalit community in India and the UK.

Section (A) **Personal information**

1 What is your name
2 What is your age
3 What gender are you
4 How would you describe your ethnicity?
5 Where do you live
6 Do you attend school/college/university/other?
7 Are you currently employed/ unemployed/ other...if yes please give details?
8 What is your marital status – single/married/separated/divorce
9 Which religion or faith do you practice

Section (B) **Family background**

1 Were your parents born in the UK?
2 What are their occupations
3 Where is your family originally from in India/South Asia?
4 What is your family's religion?
5 Are they converts from a different religion?
6 What is your family ethnicity?
7 What is your family's place of worship?
8 What are your parents/family attitude towards caste?
9 Do you belong to a tribe or community If yes which?

Section (C) **Understanding of caste**

1. What do you understand by the term caste

2. What is your understanding/knowledge of what caste system is? Explain briefly

3. What extent do you think caste system does or does not operate in the UK

4. Does it affect you in any way?

5. Is caste ever discussed within your family/friends/your place of worship elsewhere? If yes/no, under what circumstances

Section (D) **Caste identity**

1. Do you personally feel you belong (or identify with) a caste or community? If yes, at what age did you first become aware of this
2. Do you see yourself as having a caste identity? Yes or no...if yes which caste
3. Do you feel this is a positive or negative thing?

If *'yes'* to a caste identity (possible reasons why)

1. What are your parents/family attitude towards caste identity?
2. Does your family believe/practice caste alliances, such as marriage?
3. Is peer group pressure/friends influence view of caste/identity
4. Do you attend a place of religious worship?
5. Any other possible reasons why caste identity is important

If *'no'* to a caste identity (possible reasons why not)

1. Would you consider it a deliberate choice not to align with the caste identity of the family or ascribed caste identity
2. What are your parents/family attitudes towards caste identity? Has it ever been discussed within the family
3. Have you not shared your caste identity due to peer group pressure/friends?
4. Do you think that there is a modernising effect, eg., social media, Facebook, twitter, google, etc., effect on ones' perception of caste identity?
5. Do you think there is a cultural homogenisation of young people across the world?
6. Do you think caste identity is impacted by globalisation, eg., consumerism...music?
7. Do you think that caste identity could come up later, especially in relation to getting marriage alliance?
8. Any other reasons

Section (F) **<u>Caste Discrimination</u>**

1. Do you think there is caste discrimination in U.K. society?
2. If yes is it the same as outside U.K. (e.g., India, Nepal)
3. Have you or your friends ever experienced caste discrimination
4. Have you personally been discriminated against because of your caste? If yes, was it at school? university? work? other? Please provide details
5. Have you ever experienced overt or covert discrimination because of your caste affiliation? If yes/no - what were the circumstances? Provide details
6. Have you ever been in a situation where certain rules or criteria were applied which it was easier to meet if you were of a particular caste, or difficult to meet if you were not of a particular caste
7. What were your feelings about being discriminated against
8. Did you ever complain about the discrimination you have faced? If not, why?
9. Do you know/or not know of any other young people who have been discriminated against because of their caste? Provide details
10. Any thoughts/ideas you have for tackling caste discrimination in the UK and elsewhere i.e., what could be done

<u>Other</u> Is there any other information you like to share?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

7.7 **Organisations Contacted**

Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Bedford
Ambedkar Memorial Trust, London
Sri Guru Ravidass Cultural Association, Birmingham
Asian Rationalist Society

Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations, UK

Caste Watch UK

British Organisation of People of Indian Origin

Dalit Solidarity Network, UK

Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA)

Begumpura Foundation

Voice of Dalit International

Dr Ambedkar Mission Society, Bedford

Bhagwan Valmik Sabhas, Bedford

International Christian Asian Front

Kanshi Radio/Kanshi TV

Shri Guru Ravi Dass Mission International

Buddha Dhamma Association, Southall

British Organisation of People of Asian Origin (BOPA)

Shri Guru Ravidas Sabha, Southall

Caste Away Arts

Kesri Lehar

Hindu Council UK

www.hinducounciluk.org

Alliance of Hindu Organisations

BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir

British Hindu Voice

Gujarati Arya Kshatriya Mahasabha UK

Hindu Forum of Britain

Hindu Lawyers Association

Sikh Council UK

Shree Prajapati Association UK

National Association of Hindu Priests UK

National Hindu Students Forum UK

Confederation of Indian Organisations

Hindu Swayamsevak Sangha UK

International Krishna Consciousness

Namdhari Sikh Sangat UK

Sant Nirankari Satsang Bhavan

National Council of Hindu Temples UK

Oxford University Sikh Society

Sikh Feminist Research (UK rep.)

South Asia Solidarity Group

Southall Black Sisters

British Pakistani Christian Association

The Panjabi Centre

Leicestershire Brahm Samaj

Nepalese Hindu Forum UK

City Hindus Network

Punjab Buddhist Society

University of East London South Asian Students Society

Brunel University South Asian Students Society

7.8 Seminar: Caste Discrimination in India and the UK, Goldsmiths, University of London

Caste Discrimination in India and the UK

Professor Govardhan Wankhede, from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, India, will be talking about caste discrimination in India, and showing a short documentary about cleaning workers from the Dalit community and their struggle with Mumbai Municipal Corporation for better rights and working conditions.

He will also be discussing a current research project, funded by the Indian Council of Social Science Research, looking at caste discrimination amongst young people in the UK and India he is co-researcher on along with Dr Roger Green, Centre for Community Engagement Research, Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies.

Monday July 15th 2013

2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

Room: RHB 150

For further information please contact:

Jennifer Mayo-Deman
Research Administrator
Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies
23 St James, Room G-01
Goldsmiths, University of London
New Cross, London SE14 6NW
Telephone No: 0207 919 7212

7.9 Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance Statement August 2018

Introduction

At a meeting in June 2015 to mark the great social reformer Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar's 120th birth anniversary in the House of Lords, Lord Eric Avebury made these pertinent points: "*We have a South Asian population of 4 million in the UK, and we assume that by some miraculous process they left their cultural baggage behind when they migrated here. So, caste prejudice and discrimination, though obviously still rife in the subcontinent, is held to vanish somewhere in the skies between Mumbai and Manchester*". In a few sentences Eric put his finger on the reality of Caste and Caste-discrimination in the UK.

Since the 1950s there has been a gradual increase in the numbers of people in the UK from the Indian subcontinent. They have settled here and alongside making a living and set up places of worship and charities along Caste lines. I arrived in England in 1968 as a child. I recall hearing stories of discrimination, ill treatment and exclusion based who was so-called low or high Caste in schools, temples, *gurudwara's*, and on the factory floor. We were somewhat sensitised to this because this was normal in India. And we had enough to deal with race discrimination in those early years - the 1965 Race Relations Act had only been in force for a few years.

The policy of successive Governments has been to deal separately with issues of discrimination. However, in the years leading up to the Equality Bill in 2005, they recognised that there were common features (e.g. treating someone worse than other people because of who they are) in the discrimination (direct, indirect, harassment and/or victimisation) that people faced. It was clear these common features apply equally to people being discriminated against because they belonged to a particular caste or were so-called Dalits. Our lobbying to outlaw Caste discrimination in the UK began in the early 2000s. We highlighted cases of discrimination in the media and in correspondence with Government. Around the same time, during the early consultations on the Single Equality Bill, a number of Hindu organisations published reports to argue Caste discrimination didn't extend beyond personal relationships. We knew different!

In 2009 when the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) invited people to tell us about their experiences of discrimination, two cases out of the many stand for me that we published in our report 2009 *A Hidden Apartheid –Voice of the Community*. The first was the case of a vulnerable elderly Indian woman in the East Midlands. She had faced discrimination and, as a result, neglect at the hands of her carer. The second had been a young personal

secretary mistreated in the office of a radio station broadcasting to the Indian, particularly Punjabi diaspora. Both cases had one feature in common – the Caste of all the people concerned. To me, it's clear and simple. If we have laws in the UK to protect members of our society, let's call them vulnerable people, from other types of discrimination – based on, say, age, disability, gender, race and sexuality – why not one on Caste-based discrimination?

The timing of the publication of ACDA's report produced with help a number of academics at report stage of the Equality Bill was perfect. Our report and Dr Annapurna Waughray's Modern Law Review Article *Caste Discrimination: A Twenty-First Century Challenge for UK Discrimination Law?* (2009) 72(2) gave the amendments tabled on the Equality Bill on Caste the kudos that had been lacking over the years.

In April 2010, Parliament agreed a clause in the Equality Act 2010 (Section 9(5) a) that provided Government Ministers a power to insert (by secondary legislation) the word 'Caste' as an aspect of Race in the EA2010. The then Government commissioned the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) to conduct its own independent research into Caste discrimination to support any future secondary legislation. NIESR published its report *Caste discrimination and harassment in Great Britain* on 1st December 2010. This confirmed evidence of Caste discrimination and recommended legislation to outlaw it.

It took a further three years before Parliament agreed in April 2013 a *duty* to add Caste as an aspect of Race in the EA2010 as part of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. A timetable for implementations of the law was published July 2013. Whilst we would have welcomed this, essentially this kicked the legislation into the long grass with commissions of further research and two consultations timed right up to the 2015 General Election. The Government said they wanted to consult the communities likely to be affected by the legislation. By that they didn't mean just the Dalits who were the main sufferers of the discrimination. They meant the whole of the Hindu and Sikh communities. This was like saying "*We're not going to introduce legislation on race discrimination because the whites might object to it.*" Or "*We're not going to have legislation on gender because men didn't like it*".

When the Government finally began the public consultation in March 2017, we knew from the tone and biasness of the survey and related document we stood little chance of keeping the 2010 law. As expected, the Government announced on 23 July 2018 it would repeal the Caste *duty* and rely on emerging Case law instead. The case law Government was referring to was the 2014 Tirkey v Chandhok Employment Appeal Tribunal Judgement that

provides only limited legal protection. The related principles established in this case could be overturned anytime. It should be noted however, Penny Mordaunt, Minister for Women and Equalities in a Statement to Parliament on the day of the announcements did, however, begin with the sentence "*No one should suffer prejudice or discrimination on any grounds, including any perception of their caste*." This was clear acknowledgment that caste and caste discrimination exists in the UK. She also committed to producing Guidance for use by any individual who feels they may have suffered discrimination on grounds of caste and to help employers, service providers and public authorities who are outside those groups understand caste divisions. By taking the long route, Government cannot dismiss the fact that clarity in the law is required.

Dr Roger Green was one of the academic advisors on the ACDA report. This report on which the ACDA has collaborated since 2014, is extremely valuable. It adds to the narrative on Caste in the UK. It helps us understand how the South Asian diaspora youth of today see Caste and their experience of it.

Ms Santosh Dass MBE

Chair, Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance, UK

London, 14 August 2018

7.10 Timeline of key dates in relation to the Caste law in the Equality Act 2010

The timeline below sets out the key dates and announcements on Caste discrimination law from April 2010 to July 2018.

April 2010, Parliament agreed a power in Section 9(5)a of the Equality Act 2010 that could be used by a Minister to add Caste to the list of 'protected characteristics. During the passage of the Equality Bill, the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance's November 2009 report *A Hidden Apartheid – Voice of the Community* informed the debate and was referred to in Hansard. Alongside adding the power to the EA2010, the then Labour Government announced it would commission research into Caste in Britain. They invited the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) to undertake it (Metcalf and Rolfe, 2010).

1 December 2010, NIESR published its report *`Caste discrimination and harassment in Great Britain* and found strong evidence of Caste-based discrimination in the areas covered by the EA2010. The new Coalition Government made no response to the report.

In **August 2011**, one of the first Caste-related Employment Tribunals (*Begraj V Heer Manak Solicitors*) was heard in the UK courts. The case collapsed in February 2013 after information handed to the judge by police led the judge to excuse herself from the case.

September 2011 - the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD) following its 79th Session called the Minister responsible in the State party to invoke section 9(5)a of the Equality Act 2010 to provide for "Caste to be an aspect of race". Prior to this, a recommendation to deal with Caste-based discrimination in the UK was included in the final report of the 13th Universal Periodic Review in May 2011. This also called for the immediate adoption of Section 9(5)a.

28 November 2012, at an ACDA (Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance) led meeting in Parliament, a joint statement was issued calling on the Government to accept NIESR's evidence and the acceptance of Equalities and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) call for implementation of the law. Baroness Thornton was one of the attendees. In response the Government indicated it was still considering the 2010 NIESR report. This was two years after the NIESR report.

19 December 2012 Baroness Thornton (Labour) tabled the first amendment on Caste to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill (ERR Bill) that would activate Section 9(5) a of the EA 2010.

1 March 2013 Helen Grant, Minister for Women and Equalities, made a Ministerial Statement on Caste during the passage of the ERR Bill. She announced the Government would take an educational approach to deal with Caste-based discrimination in the UK and that *Talk For A Change* had been appointed to support this. She also announced the EHRC has been asked to review the existing evidence of discrimination and report on its findings and make recommendations by end of 2013.

23 April 2013 the Government introduced a slightly re-worked amendment on Caste, put forward by the Lords, and this was agreed by Parliament that same day. During the passage of the ERR Bill Amendment Clauses on Caste were tabled in the Lords and two of these came to a vote. The Coalition Government lost both votes.

25 June 2013 the ERR Bill received Royal Assent. This included a provision (Section 97) in the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 that includes a *duty* on Government to add Caste as an aspect of Race in the EA2010.

On 29 July 2013 Government announced the Caste discrimination legislation timetable. This was timed to run right up to the announcement of the 2015 General Election and included two sets of consultation and some research with the aim of introducing a draft Ministerial Order in Parliament by the summer 2015.

On **6 November 2013**, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms Navi Pillay attended a meeting about Caste-based discrimination at the House of Lords at the invitation of the ACDA. In her speech Ms Pillay called for "*strong, swift implementation*" of the amended Equality Act 2010 to protect the tens of thousands of people in the UK from low Caste backgrounds.
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13973&LangID=E)

On **28 February 2014**, The EHRC published (on time) the two independent research reports it had commissioned in September 2013 (following the 1 March, Helen Grant Ministerial Statement) *Caste in Britain*.
(http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141003215501/http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/commission-publishes-new-Caste-research) These two reports confirmed that Caste discrimination "*cannot be tolerated and should be included in the protections against discrimination and harassment provided in the Equality Act 2010*". The reports also question the proposed

sunset clause: "*for non-discrimination ground is legally without precedent and goes against this key differential*".

Following the July 2013 Caste law timetable announcement, several Parliamentary Questions sought to discover the date on which the Coalition Government would publish its consultation but with no joy.

9 July 2014 the Minister for Equalities announced Government would conduct a Feasibility Study into how best to establish baseline data into the extent of Caste discrimination in the UK.

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmhansrd/cm140709/hallltext/140709h0002.htm#14070973000314. On the same day during the debate in Parliament, Richard Fuller MP asked the Minister a direct question "*if the issue was discrimination based on gender or race, would she personally be as comfortable about the arguments for delay that she has presented today for those suffering discrimination based on caste?*" The Minister replied "I *believe that any form of discrimination is absolutely unacceptable, and I will seek to deal with it as quickly and effectively as possible. That relates to caste, colour, race or any form of discrimination, because it is abhorrent, and I know how much hurt and damage it can cause*".

16 December 2014, in response to a PQ, the then Minister for Women and Equalities, Nick Boles, explained that the delay in the consultation's publication was due to ongoing legal proceedings. Without expressly mentioning it, the Government was referring to the Chandhok v Tirkey Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT).

19 December 2014 the Chandhok v Tirkey EAT made a Judgement. http://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKEAT/2014/0190_14_1912.html

This judgment considered existing case law which suggests that 'ethnic origin' for the purpose of section 9(1) of the Equality Act 2010 should be interpreted widely. However, the Judge was careful to say that his conclusion on this issue was fact-specific and he specifically declined the invitation to find that all Caste-based claims would come within the definition of 'ethnic origins'. Following that judgment, whether Caste discrimination has occurred is to be decided on the particular facts of each case by the tribunals. What exactly does or does not constitute Caste for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 remains unclear from this particular case.

During the 2015 General Election the National Council of Hindu Temples was referred to the Charity Commission for publishing a letter urging their supporters to vote Conservative. They said, "*The Tories are the only party which will not make Caste discrimination a punishable offence*."

5 December 2015, in response to Bob Blackman MP's calls for repeal of the Caste provision the ERR Act 2013, the Minister for Women and Equalities

(Nicky Morgan MP) replied "*The Government completely oppose caste discrimination and the judgments in the Tirkey v. Chandhok case suggest that legal protection against such discrimination already exists under the Equality Act 2010. We are considering the legislative position in the light of those judgments*".
https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151015/debtext/151015-0001.htm#15101528000127

December 2015, Baroness Williams of Trafford, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government stated that the UK Government was 'currently considering the conclusions and recommendations of the Caste feasibility study as part of our wider consideration of the implications of the *Tirkey v Chandhok* tribunal judgments'.

2 September 2016 Government announced it would publish a consultation by end of 2016.

28 March 2017, the Government published its consultation on Caste law. Responses were sought by 17 July 2017. The deadline was later extended to 18 September 2017 to take into account the 2017 General Election.
https://www.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603675/170328_-_Caste_condoc_-_Final_PDF.pdf

28 March 2017 - Alongside the consultation, the GEO (Government Equalities Office) also published, over three years after it had been announced, a report of a Feasibility Study into whether it is possible to measure the extent of Caste and Caste discrimination in the U.K. The researchers had submitted the final draft of their report to the GEO in February 2015 [Freedom of Information request by the ACDA]. The study found there were no significant ethical or methodological barriers that could not be overcome to allow a survey measuring the extent of caste discrimination. They also said a standalone survey would require significant amount of financial resource to conduct with a robust sample that could provide reliable estimates.
https://www.gov.uk/Government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603486/Report_Caste_Discrimination.docx

19 April 2017 seven leading UK organisations on the campaign to outlaw Caste discrimination wrote to the Secretary of State for Women and Equalities an open letter of complaint. The letter set out the organisations' concerns about why the Government was consulting on whether to implement the law which was already agreed by Parliament in 2013 and the disturbing level of bias pro-option 1 (case law) and anti-option 2 (add Caste as an aspect of Race in the Equality Act). The letter also highlighted the extent of misleading information and omission of data necessary to enable respondents to

provide informed answers to the questions raised in the consultation document.

17 July 2018 the consultation on Caste law concluded.

23 July 2018 – the Government published its response to the consultation together with the report of the analysis of the consultation. The Government decided it would rely on emerging case law and repeal the now-declined-to-be-implemented 2013 *duty* on Caste and pro-equality law contrary to the UK's principles of equality legislation. https://www.gov.uk/Government/consultations/Caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consulation .

23 July 2018 – the Equalities and Human Rights Commission published its response to the Government's announcement. *'Victims of caste discrimination will continue to have limited legal protection by the government ruling out a change in the law and restricting the scope of protection to what can be interpreted through case law. The government has missed a crucial opportunity to improve legal clarity and has taken a step back by looking to repeal the duty to include caste as an aspect of race in the Equality Act 2010. This is inconsistent with the UK's international obligations to provide for separate and distinct protection for caste in our legislation. While we welcome the government's commitment to produce guidance for employers, service providers and landlords on the sort of conduct that would be unlawful under the Equality Act, it does not replace the need for separate and distinct protection against caste discrimination in the law.'* https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/caste-consultation-our-response-government-statement.

(Nb. This above section was written by Ms Santosh Dass MBE, Chair, Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance, UK)

7.11

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Department of Social Justice and Empowerment
Government of India

State wise list of Scheduled Castes updated up to 26-10-2017

Maharashtra

1. Ager
2. Anamuk
3. Aray Mala
4. Arwa Mala
5. Bahna, Bahana
6. Bakad, Bant
7. Balahi, Balai
1[8. Basor, Burud, Bansor, Bansodi, Basod]
9. Beda Jangam, Budga Jangam
10. Bedar
1[11.Bhambi, Bhambhi, Asadaru, Asodi, Chamadia, Chamar, Chamari, Chambhar, Chamgar, Haralayya, Harali, Khalpa, Machigar, Mochigar, Madar, Madig, Mochi, Telegu Mochi, Kamati Mochi, Ranigar, Rohidas, Nona, Ramnami, Rohit, Samgar, Samagara, Satnami, Surjyabanshi, Surjyaramnami, Charmakar, Pardeshi Chamar; 12.Bhangi, Mehtar, Olgana, Rukhi, Malkana, Halalkhor, Lalbegi, Balmiki, Korar, Zadmalli, Hela.]
13. Bindla
14. Byagara
15. Chalvadi, Channayya
16. Chenna Dasar, Holaya Dasar, Holeya Dasari
17. Dakkal, Dokkalwar
18. Dhor, Kakkayya, Kankayya, Dohor
19. Dom, Dumar
20. Ellamalvar, Yellammalawandlu
21. Ganda, Gandi
22. Garoda, Garo
23. Ghasi, Ghasia
24. Halleer
25. Halsar, Haslar, Hulasvar, Halasvar
26. Holar, Valhar
27. Holaya, Holer, Holeya, Holiya
28. Kaikadi (in Akola, Amravati, Bhandara, Buldana, Nagpur, Wardha and Yavatmal districts and Chandrapur district, other than Rajura tahsil)
29. Katia, Patharia
30. Khangar, Kanera, Mirdha
31. Khatik, Chikwa, Chikvi
32. Kolupulvandlu
33. Kori
34. Lingader
35. Madgi
36. Madiga
37. Mahar, Mehra, Taral, Dhegu Megu
38. Mahyavanshi, Dhed, Vankar, Maru Vankar
39. Mala
40. Mala Dasari
41. Mala Hannai
42. Mala Jangam
43. Mala Masti
44. Mala Sale, Netkani
45. Mala Sanyasi
46. Mang, Matang, Minimadig, Dankhni Mang, Mang Mahashi, Madari, Garudi, Radhe Mang
47. Mang Garodi, Mang Garudi
48. Manne
49. Mashti
50. Meghval, Menghvar
51. Mitha Ayyalvar
52. Mukri
53. Nadia, Hadi
54. Pasi
55. Sansi
56. Shenva, Chenva, Sedma, Ravat
57. Sindhollu, Chindollu
58. Tirgar, Tirbanda
59. Turi.

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1. Subs. by Act 31 of 2007, s. 2.