INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW

MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 6 | Issue 6

2023

A Critical Study on the Impact of Caste Discrimination in India

TAMEENA H.[1] AND GOWTHAM P.[2]

ABSTRACT

Caste discrimination is a politicised and sensitive issue in India. The Indian society is divided based on the various sects and classes. This is because of the caste system which is present in the country. The roots of the caste system arise from the ancient Vedas dividing people on the basis of Varna or occupation. It has brought many evils in society. The discrimination was taking place more in workplace, schools and any other educational institutions. The object of the research to analyse the caste discrimination system in India, to know about the factors causing caste discrimination, to know about the rights of dalits and to know about the ways to reduce caste discrimination in India. The research has followed empirical research. A total of 200 samples has been taken out of the through convenient sampling. The independent variables are name, age, gender, education, income and occupation qualification. The dependent variable are caste discrimination is still prevalent in India, caste discrimination affects the society, caste discrimination higher in rural areas than urban areas, causes for caste discrimination and ways to reduce caste discrimination in society. The statistical tool used by the researcher is Graphical representation, pie chart and percentage.

Keywords: *Caste, Discrimination, Society, Untouchabilities, Government initiatives.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The World has moved to the 21st century and We are categorized as a Developing country. It has been 75 years since we attained Independence from British rule but still the ground situation is the same as it was when we were under foreign rule. One of the main reasons for non-development is Caste discrimination which is still prevalent in our society. People from the lower strata are still being marginalized by mainstream society and we are yet to see a casteless society. We may argue that Our contribution towards development in various fields like scientific innovations, Information technology is phenomenal but if we look at the grassroot level and find to see if it has reached the entire society, it will give us alarming results and one

---

[1] Author is a student at Saveetha School of Law, Saveetha Institute of Medical Technical and Sciences (SIMATS), Chennai, India.

[2] Author is a student at Saveetha School of Law, Saveetha Institute of Medical Technical and Sciences (SIMATS), Chennai, India.

of the main reason is caste discrimination. The Government has come up with various schemes and Laws to eradicate caste discrimination and bring the down-trodden people to mainstream society but still we have not been able to achieve it. Government initiatives to abolish caste discrimination are the establishment of Article 17 of the Constitution which deals with abolishment of the practice of untouchability. The practice of untouchability may be a punishable offense. The untouchability offenses Act 1955 provides penalties for the person who prevents a person from entering into the place of worship and collecting water from the well. The scheduled caste and scheduled Tribes (prevention of atrocities) Act 1989 was amended as scheduled caste and scheduled Tribes act 2015 are the laws enacted by the government to remove the concept of untouchability and to improve the quality of the life for the weaker sections of the society. The factor which is causing caste discrimination in society are social inequality were the people is divided into higher caste and lower caste, social distance were in India there is a social distance between caste, illiteracy and conversation because of which rural people are influenced by Rigid customs and traditions and consider their caste as superior industrialisation and urbanisation, development of transport and communication, sense of caste prestige, marriage restrictions and reservation policy. Women's status is still tied to the status of the male.Education and awareness for equalization of women among people has widely spread in India. In rural areas the movement of caste discrimination is specialising. On 6 August 2001, in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, an upper caste Brahmin boy and a lower caste girl were dragged to the rooftop of the house and hanged by their own family members where hundreds of spectators looked on. The public hanging was punishable to end an inter caste relationship. Despite a high incidence of heinous crimes such as these, the Indian government claims to have tackled the problems and maintained it is an internal matter. From a survey conducted in union United States among 1500 people from the South Asian origin revealed that dalits present there face various kinds of caste discrimination in South Asian American institution. This discrimination ranges from offensive jokes and physical violence and sexual assault. In the survey around 26% of the Dalit respondents said that they had faced physical violence because of their caste while 20% reported discrimination at their work places. When it came to religion 40% were made to feel unwelcome at their places of worship and 40% of Dalit said had been rejected as a romantic partners because of their caste. In all 60% of Dalits reported that they have experienced caste-based derogatory jokes and comments. The aim of the research is to know about the caste discrimination system in India.

(A) Objectives

1. To analyse the caste discrimination system in India

2. To dicuss about the factors causing caste discrimination

3. To know about the rights of untouchabilities

4. To suggest the ways to reduce caste discrimination in India.

(B) Literature review

The author has explored the cultivation of agricultural lands under caste basis and its productivity under various caste groups. The result shows the enormous difference of Output based on caste and the life condition of marginalized farmers whose life condition is pathetic and they are disadvantaged against getting various benefits. (**Karnati, 2020**).

The author has analysed the effects of Class and caste-based discrimination in access to agricultural credits in our country and how smaller farm size class was not able to get agricultural credit because of their lower asset valuation and caste discrimination. The author has argued that there should be a reorientation of the present agricultural policy to empower smaller farm size farmers. (**Chirala Shankar Rao, 2018).**

The author has tried to address Caste-based inequality and discrimination in society and questioned the reason for not taking it as an important issue by the government. The outcome of the study suggested that caste discrimination is followed to ensure down-trodden people are marginalised in their career advancement and a policy innovation needs to be pursued by the government to bring changes in society (**Mosse, 2018**).

The author has done an empirical analysis of caste discrimination prevailing in society where it was found out that affirmative action policy of reservation is followed in public sector and not in private sector. The outcome of the study reveals that lower caste people are subjected to endowment differences, low wages, occupational discrimination in both public and private sector and the necessity for the extension of affirmative action policy in private sector also. (**Madheswaran & Singhari, 2016**).

The author has made an attempt to study the performance of Indian Agriculture using data from Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households and how caste-based discrimination has affected the Input and Output. The result shows how discrimination has affected Lower strata people with access to their resources, productivity and lower realisation of returns. (**S.Rao, 2015**)

The author has used the National Sample Survey to examine caste discrimination prevailing in the Urban labour market. The findings of the survey shows how marginalised people are discriminated against in wages, public and private sectors, occupational discrimination,

endowment discrimination. **(Paul Attewell,2015)**.

The author has studied current affairs in Britain as the law of Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (UK) (ERRA) was passed which was caste-based. The study showed how caste was irrelevant in British society until this law was passed by the Labor party. **(Waughray, 2014)**.

The author has studied the history of social discrimination prevalent in our society based on caste, race and how the society discriminates a person based on colour such as light coloured and dark coloured persons. The study revealed that contemporary form of colour based discrimination is still prevalent as can be seen in MNC's. **(Ayyar & Khandare, 2013)**

The author has studied the caste discrimination of Dalits in Nepal and how it has affected their livelihood. The study found out that Dalits have been marginalised for years and even though prevalent laws warrant against caste discrimination, it is prevalent in the society impacting social and economic development. **(Roresearcher et al., 2013)**.

The author has studied the impact of the Common Minimum Program introduced by the UPA government in 2005 to include reservation for Backward Class people and minorities in Private sector so as to uplift their life standard and end caste discrimination. The outcome of the program was not satisfactory as is evident from recruitments. **(Thorat & Neuman, 2012)**.

The author has attempted to study caste based differences prevailing in the private sector in our country. The study finds that on an average, a lower caste applicant needs to send at least 20% resumes when compared to upper caste applicants to get a call back. The study also finds that upper caste applicants are mostly favored by firms with smaller scale of operations than firms with larger scale of operations. **(Siddique, 2011)**.

The author has done an empirical study of the dalit situation in south asian countries like Pakistan, Srilanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. The study reveals the fact that though the various forms of discrimination in these countries might be different, but the bottomline is that the dalits in these countries are deprived of economic development, social exclusion and life of humiliation. **(Jodhka & Shah, 2010)**

The author has done a case study of the situation of Dalits in our country where they are discriminated against and how they are characterized as Dalits based on International and Indian Law. The study also enabled to include Muslims and Christian Dalits as Scheduled Castes so as to improve their life standards using reservation. **(Waughray, 2010)**.

The author has attempted to study Caste based discrimination prevailing in the labor market in North India using Regression analysis method where reservation wages are estimated along

with market wages. The study showed how backward class people are affected in getting regular employment in spite of the government coming up with various reservation policies. **(Ito, 2009)**.

The author has studied the implication of enacting the caste discrimination law in Britain and how it has polarised society. The study has revealed that this regulation created rifts in society where caste was irrelevant in Britain and the impact it has on the government. **(Waughray, 2009)**.

This article has analyzed the steps taken by dalit groups to highlight their grievances in International forum through their advances in transnational NGO's, International organizations and foreign governments. The study reveals the broader implications that can be played by International organizations to empower downtrodden people. **(Bob, 2007)**

The author has tried to study the effects of caste discrimination in our society and how it has impacted the economic development, like allocating labour and other critical resources thereby reducing the full development of human capital in society. The remedy to this issue is for the government to come up with Interventionist policies to check and eliminate caste discrimination. **(Sukhdeo Thorat and Katherine S.Neuman, 2007).**

The author has investigated Dalit participation in select states and the factors affecting government's mid-day meal scheme and public distribution system. The study reveals that measured aspects of participatory empowerment, physical access and community level access will empower the down-trodden people. **(Sukhdeo Thorat & Joel Lee, 2005)**.

The author has studied the views expressed in " UN conference against Racism" by certain dalit activists and the Indian Government. The outcome of the study suggested that Caste and race are at par with each other even after numerous legislations by successive governments. **(Ambrose Pinto, 2001)**.

The author has done a quantitative analysis of the prevailing caste discrimination in our country with a special emphasis done on Delhi labour market. The study found out how lower strata people are being marginalised with the difference in wages, occupation jobs and how this practice serves the economic interest of those who follow discrimination. **(Banerjee & Knight, 1985)**

(C) Methodology

The research method followed here is empirical research. A total of 200 samples here have been taken out of which is taken through convenient sampling.. A type of non-probability sampling which involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population that is close to the

researcher's hand. The data was collected through questionnaires, which was shared across the interweb. The independent variable taken here is name, age, gender, occupation, education and income. The dependent variables are caste discrimination is still prevalent in India, caste discrimination affects the society, caste discrimination higher in ruler areas than urban areas in society, causes for caste discrimination and ways to reduce caste discrimination in society. The statistical tool used by the researcher is graphical representation, pie chart and percentage.
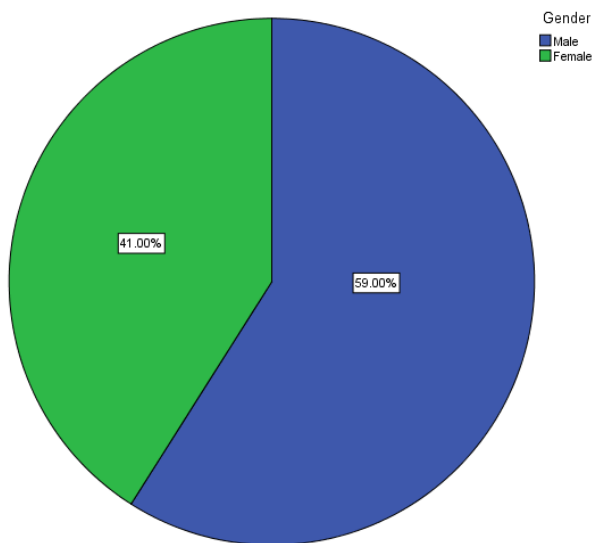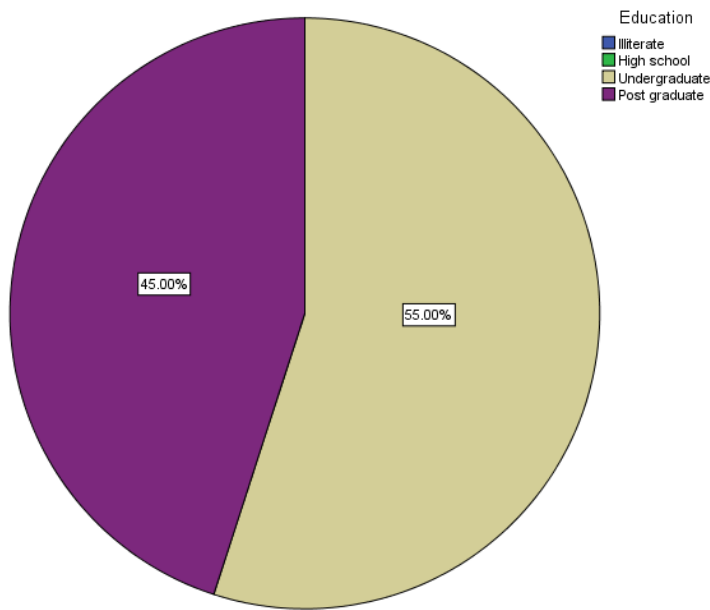
II. DATA ANALYSIS

Figure: 1
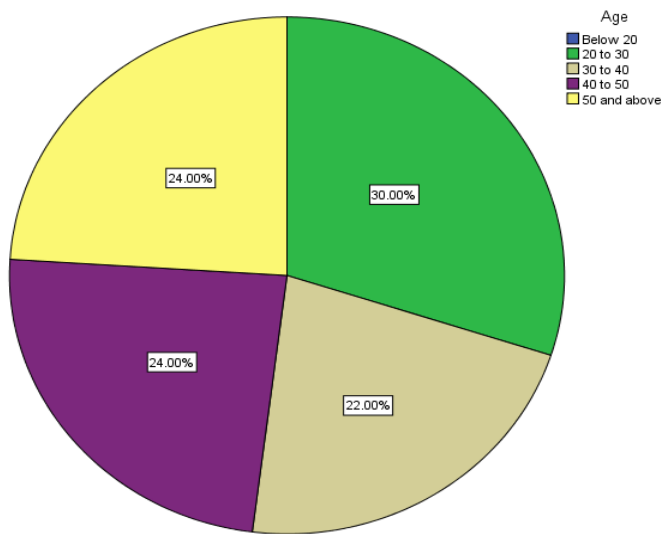
Legend: Figure 1 shows the age distribution of the respondents.
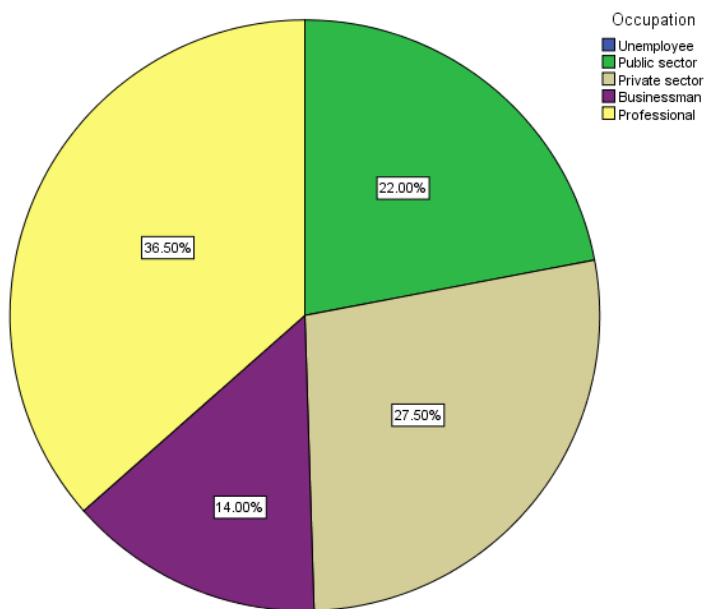
Figure: 2

Legend: Figure 2 shows the gender distribution of the respondents.
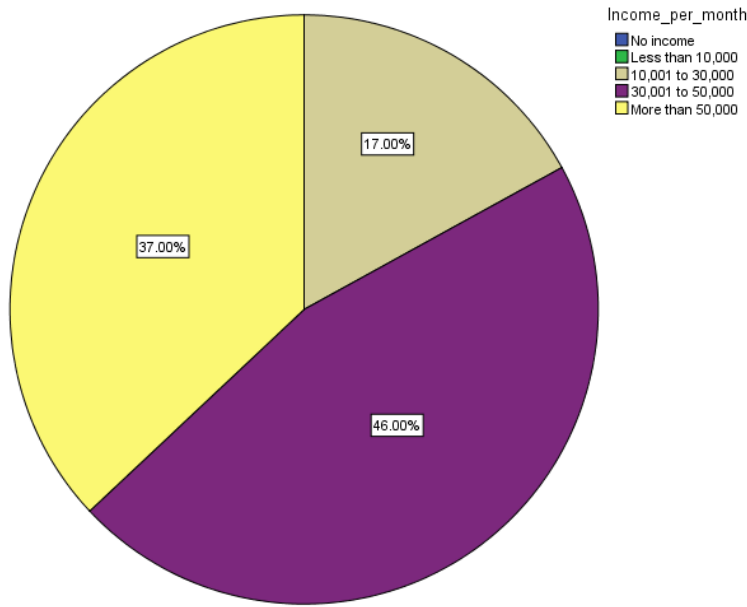
Figure: 3

Legend: Figure 3 shows the education distribution of the respondents
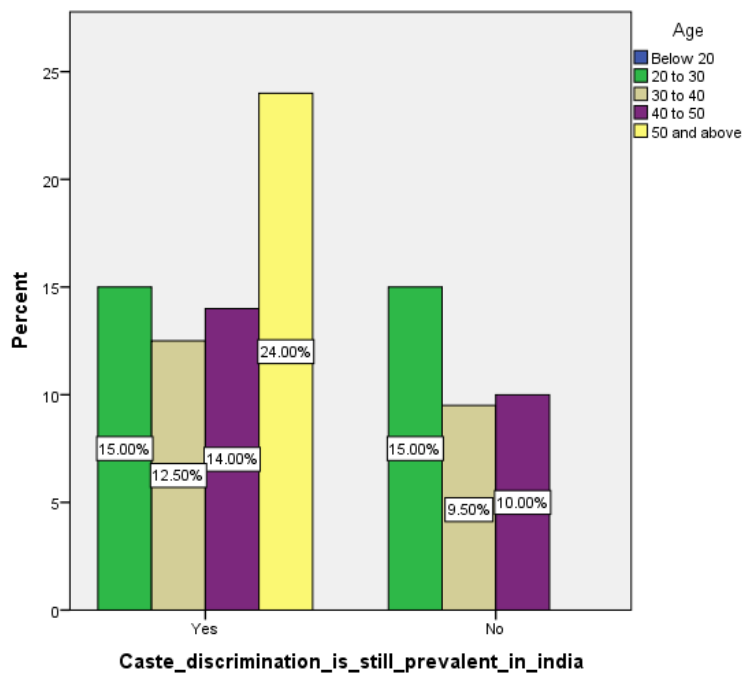
Figure: 4

Legend: Figure 4 shows the occupational distribution of the respondents.
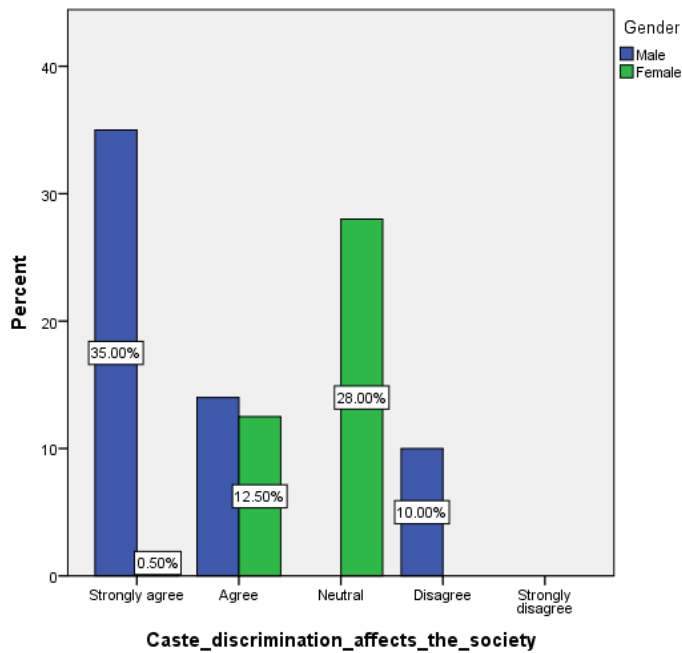
Figure: 5

Legend: Figure 5 shows the income per month distribution of the respondents.
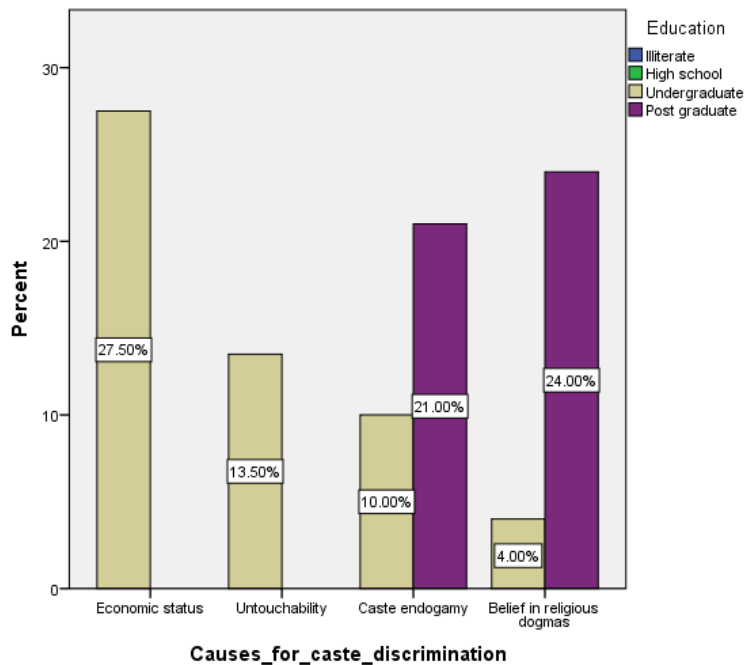
Figure: 6

Legend: Figure 6 Graph represent the age of the respondents and percentage and their opinion towards caste discrimination is still prevalent in India.
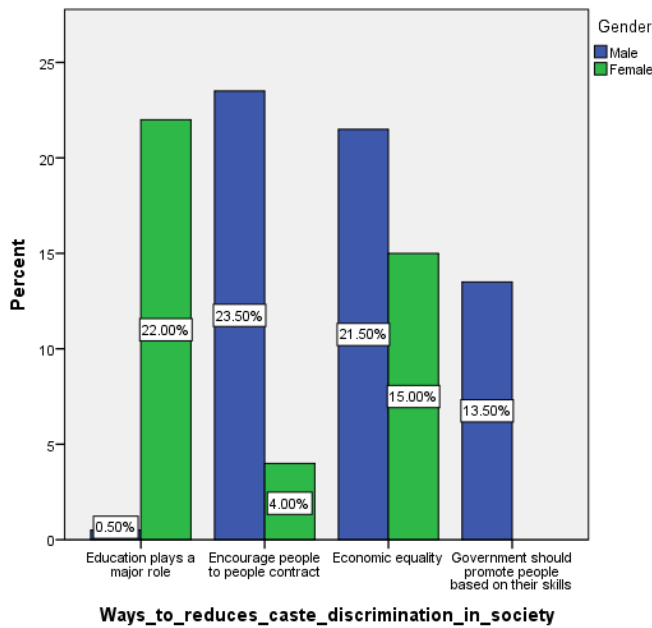
Figure: 7

Legend: Figure 7 Graph represents the gender of the respondents and percentage and their opinion towards caste discrimination affects the society.

Figure: 8

Legend: Figure 8 Graph represent the education qualification of the respondents and percentage and their opinion towards the causes for caste discrimination.

Figure: 9

Legend: Figure 9 Graph represent the gender of the respondents and percentage and their opinion towards ways to reduce caste discrimination in society.
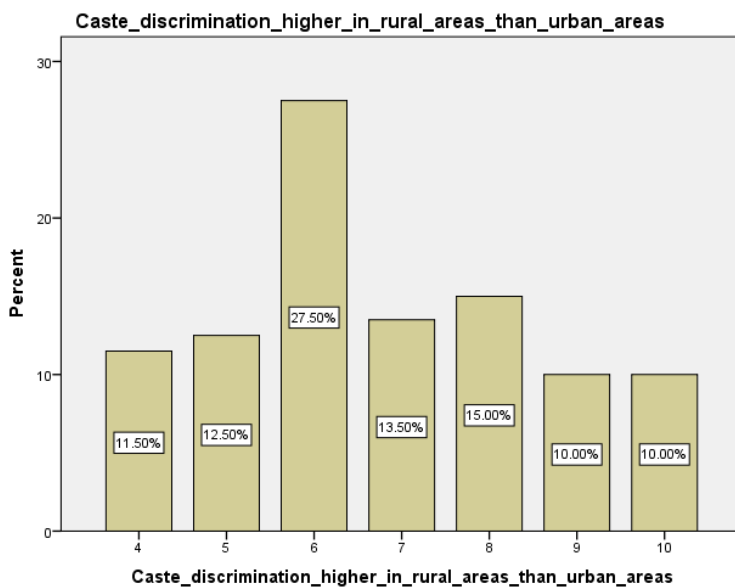
Figure: 10

Legend: Figure 10 Graph represents the opinion towards caste discrimination higher in rural areas than urban areas on the scale of 1 to 10.

III. RESULTS

It is found that 30% of the respondents are between the ages of 20 to 30. 22% of the respondents are between the ages of 30 to 40. 24% of the respondents are between the ages of 40 to 50. 24% of the respondents are between the ages of 50 and above. **(Fig-1)** It is found that the majority is male with 59% and female constitute 41% of the respondents population. **(Fig-2)**It is found that 55% of the respondents are undergraduates and 45% of the respondents are postgraduates. **(Fig-3)** It is found that 22% of the respondents are from public sector and the private sector employees are 27.50%. 36.50% of the respondents are professional and 14% of the respondents are businessman. **(Fig-4)** It is found that 17% of the respondents have 10,001 to 30,000 of income per month. 46% of the respondents have 30,001 to 50,000 of incomer per month. 37% of the respondents have more than 50,000 of income per month. **(Fig-5)** It is found that caste discrimination is still prevalent in india, so the age group of 20 to 30, 15% said yes and 15% said no. age group from 30 to 40, 12.50% said yes and 9.50% said no. age group from 40 to 50, 14% said yes and 10% said no. age group from 50 and above, 24% said yes. **(Fig-6)** It is found that caste discrimination affects the society,14.50% of male respondents have agree, 35% have said strongly agree, 3% have said disagree and 10% have said they disagree. 12.50% of female respondents have agreed, 0.50% have said strongly agree, 28% said neutral. **(Fig-7)** It is found that causes for caste discrimination, 27.50% of undergraduate said that because of economic status, 13.50% said because of untouchabililty, 10% said because of caste endogamy and 4% said belief in religious. 21% of the postgraduate said because of caste endogamy and 24% said because of belief in religious dogmas. **(Fig-8)** It is found that ways to reduce caste discrimination in society, 0.50% of male respondents said education plays a major role, 23.50% said encourage people to people contract, 21.50% said economic equality and 13.50% said government should promote people based on their skills. 22% of female respondents said education plays a major role, 4% said encourage people to people contract, 15% said economic equality. **(Fig-9)** The graph represents the agreability of the notion that the rate of caste discrimination is higher in rural than urban areas. Highest percent of 27.50% have rated 6 and the lowest percent of 10.00% rated 9 and 10. **(Fig-10)**

IV. DISCUSSION

A study was taken into discussion on Caste Discrimination in our Country based on age group and majority of the respondents were in the age group of 20 to 30 because these people have observed, worked with older and newer generations and the least were in the age group of 30 to 40 as these people are still relevant to the workplace. **(Fig-1)** The topic of discussion based on

Gender basis showed that male counterparts responded higher than their female counterparts since they are emboldened by education, they feel that it is a social issue which requires their participation to overcome this stigma. **(Fig-2)** When the survey was conducted based on education level, Under graduates are majority of the respondents. Post graduates were the least respondents. Respondents were understand their importance to eliminate caste discrimination. **(Fig-3)** professional and private sector people responded higher than people like businessman people were the least respondents. **(Fig-4)** A discussion was conducted based on the income per month, majority of income was 30,001 to 50,000 and least respondents have 10,001 to 30,000 of income per month. **(Fig-5)** A survey was taken into discussion to examine if caste discrimination is still prevalent in our country and major respondents were people in the age group of 50 and above who said "Yes" as they understand the dilemma prevailing in society and how it impacts the growth where as people in the age group of 30 to 40 said in the negative. **(Fig-6)** The topic of discussion that if caste discrimination affects the society based on Gender basis showed that male respondent strongly agree to it as they interact with society more and understand the real situation prevailing in society where as female respondents neutral. **(Fig-7)** A survey was taken into discussion to examine the causes for caste dicrimination, undergraduate said because of economic status is high in the society so this the reason for caste discrimination.it shows more important to caste and honor and benefits arising out of a particular religion. **(Fig-8)** An opinion was conducted towards ways to reduce caste discrimination in society based on Gender basis and majority of the male respondents felt that people to people contact should be encouraged to wipe off caste discrimantion while the least number of female respondents felt that gender equality should be promoted to eliminate caste discrimination as male respondents understand the delicacies prevailing in society and the needs to be done to overcome it. **(Fig-9)** The graph represents the agreability of the notion that rate of caste discrimination is higher in rural than urban areas. Majority of them agreed to it because rural people are less educated than urban people. **(Fig-10)**

V. LIMITATIONS

One of the major limitation of the study is the sample frame. There is a major constraint in the convenient sampling method, the survey was conducted through questionnaires by google forms to collect responses from the people. Another limitation is the sample size of 200 which cannot be used to assume the thinking of the entire in a particular country, state or city. Most of the people they faced improper network issues.

VI. CONCLUSION

The following study has shown that Caste Discrimination is still prevalent in our Country. If we are to stand up and counted as the Developed country in the world, as one of the superpowers of the world, Caste Discrimination should be totally eliminated which is a bane to our society. We should follow measures such as avoiding people who practice caste discrimination, spreading the importance and awareness of casteless society not only in rural areas but also in urban areas, have societies where people from different castes live, analyse people based on their wisdom not on their caste background, have multicultural festivities, elect representatives based on their performance and not caste-based, envision a bright future for our children by imbibing knowledge which is not caste-based, helping the downtrodden people so as to make them feel that they are also part of our society.

*****

VII. REFERENCES

- Ambrose Pinto. (2001). UN Conference against Racism: Is Caste Race? *Economic and Political Weekly*, *36* (30), 2817–2820.

- Ayyar, V., & Khandare, L. (2013). Mapping Color and Caste Discrimination in Indian Society. In *The Melanin Millennium* (pp. 71–95). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-4608-4_5

- Banerjee, B., & Knight, J. B. (1985). Caste discrimination in the Indian urban labour market. In *Journal of Development Economics* (Vol. 17, Issue 3, pp. 277–307). https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-3878 (85)90094-x

- Bob, C. (2007). "Dalit Rights are Human Rights": Caste Discrimination, International Activism, and the Construction of a New Human Rights Issue. In *Human Rights Quarterly* (Vol. 29, Issue 1, pp. 167–193). https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.2007.0001

- Caste Discrimination and Agricultural Performance in India. (2015). *Economic and Political Weekly*, *52* (25-26), 7–8.

- Chirala Shankar Rao. (2018). Class–Caste Differences in Access to Agricultural Credit in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *53* (1). ISSN- 0012-9976

- Caste Discrimination in the Indian Urban Labour Market: Evidence from the National Sample Survey. (2015). *Economic and Political Weekly*, *50* (23), 7–8.

- Ito, T. (2009). Caste discrimination and transaction costs in the labor market: Evidence from rural North India. In *Journal of Development Economics* (Vol. 88, Issue 2, pp. 292–300). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2008.06.002

- Jodhka, S. S., & Shah, G. (2010). *Comparative Contexts of Discrimination: Caste and Untouchability in South Asia*.

- Karnati, K. K. (2020). Agricultural performance among the social groups in India. In the Journal *of Public Affairs*. https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2465

- Madheswaran, S., & Singhari, S. (2016). Social exclusion and caste discrimination in public and private sectors in India: A decomposition analysis. In *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics* (Vol. 59, Issue 2, pp. 175–201). https://doi.org/10.1007/s41027-017-0053-8

- Mosse, D. (2018). Caste and development: Contemporary perspectives on a structure of discrimination and advantage. In *World Development* (Vol. 110, pp. 422–436).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.06.003

- Roresearcher, J. P. A., Aryal roresearcher, J. P., & Holden, S. T. (2013). Land Reforms, Caste Discrimination and Land Market Performance in Nepal. In *Land Tenure Reform in Asia and Africa* (pp. 29–53). https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137343819_2

- Siddique, Z. (2011). Evidence on Caste Based Discrimination. In *Labour Economics* (Vol. 18, pp. S146–S159). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2011.07.002

- Sukhdeo Thorat, & Joel Lee. (2005). Caste Discrimination and Food Security Programmes. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *40* (39), 4198–4201.

- Sukhadeo Thorat, & Katherine S Newman. (2007). Caste and Economic Discrimination: Causes, Consequences and Remedies. *Economic and Political Weekly*, *42* (41), 4121-4124. DOI:10.2307/40276545

- Thorat, S., & Neuman, K. S. (2012). *Blocked by Caste: Economic Discrimination in Modern India*. OUP India.

- Waughray, A. (2009). Caste Discrimination: A Twenty-First Century Challenge for UK Discrimination Law?1. In *Modern Law Review* (Vol. 72, Issue 2, pp. 182–219). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2230.2009.00740.x

- Waughray, A. (2010). Caste Discrimination and Minority Rights: The Case of India's Dalits. In *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* (Vol. 17, Issue 2, pp. 327–353). https://doi.org/10.1163/157181110x495926

- Waughray, A. (2014). Capturing Caste in Law: Caste Discrimination and the Equality Act 2010. *Human Rights Law Review*, *14* (2), 359–379.

*****