

Review Of Research

Abstract:-

Communalism as a concept or theoretical construction is used to refer to section of the population differentiated by religion or caste. In the concise Oxford Dictionary communalism is defined as “The antagonistic religious and social communities in a district.

Communal riot was a sudden and spasmodic incident. It was an aspect of social pathology and its causation either in prevalence of a communal atmosphere generated by religious feelings or caste feelings. It could be effectively handled by efficient administrative or police action and secular public opinion. Communal riot is a struggle of values of claims to status power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain desired values but also to neutralize or injure or eliminate their rivals.

Keywords:

Conflict, Riots.

CASTE CONFLICT AND WOMEN VICTIMS



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INTRODUCTION

Communalism as a concept or theoretical construction is used to refer to section of the population differentiated by religion or caste.[1] In the concise Oxford Dictionary communalism is defined as “The antagonistic religious and social communities in a district.

Communal riot was a sudden and spasmodic incident. It was an aspect of social pathology and its causation either in prevalence of a communal atmosphere generated by religious feelings or caste feelings. It could be effectively handled by efficient administrative or police action and secular public opinion. Communal riot is a struggle of values of claims to status power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain desired values but also to neutralize or injure or eliminate their rivals.[2]

OBJECTIVES :

Riots between the untouchables and other communities. Basically Indian social structure is based on varnasrama dharma. There are four varnas and respective varna has its own norms and values from birth to death. Caste is also responsible for division of labour in the rural areas. Tamil Nadu village, reveals that Brahmins, non-Brahmins and Adi - dravidas. Historically they have occupied different position in the economic structure of the village, with Brahmin as land owners, non – Brahmins mainly a tenants and Adi – dravida as agricultural labourer. This set – up have paved the way for communal riots. Although crime remains a crime whether committed against a person belonging to one caste – group or another, crimes committed against women have attracted much attention. The violent activities are directed against particular groups. The upper caste men against the lower caste women and the lower caste men against the upper caste women. Women and girls suffer disproportionately from violent conflict Rape and sexual violence have been recognized as instruments of riots, designed to weaken families and break down the social fabric of communities and societies. Although men and boys are also victims of gender – based violence, women and girls are the primary target.[3]

Factors Contributing For Communal Riots And Women Victims

- 1.Untouchability
- 2.Illiteracy
- 3.Poverty, Economic Dependence or Backwardness.
- 4.Ignorance of Law

Untouchability :

Practice of untouchability has its root in caste system. The Dalits are still treated as untouchables they continue to live separately from the village. Their relationship with the caste Hindus remains to be almost the same. In all public functions, festivals and ceremonies they are usually kept at a distance. They are made to sit in corner, away from those of their castes.

Illiteracy :

The scheduled castes were not allowed to get glimpse of education in the pre – independence period. This has resulted in to educational inequality and educational backwardness of the schedule castes. In the year 1931 the rate of literacy of scheduled caste was as low as 1.9 percent. It rose to 0.7 percent in the year 1951. The denial of education to the scheduled castes has resulted in to illiteracy. Due to illiteracy, ignorance crippled into them and they became educationally backward and dependent on others which made them vulnerable to the victims.[4]

Poverty, Economic Dependence or Backwardness

Most of the Dalits are the poorest sections, of the population. Majority of them are without land or other productive assets. The incidence of poverty is higher in rural than urban areas Dalit woman was working under the condition of bondage. She asked her employer to pay a little more wages. She was mercilessly beaten up and thrown out with severe injuries. It is therefore believed that poverty, economic dependence or backwardness of dalits is the main reasons for victims.

Ignorance of Law :

Majority of Dalits are illiterates and consequently ignorant about present law enacted for their welfare. They are also ignorant about the provisions of the act. Their ignorance the victims of atrocities in most cases do not lodge police report.[5]

Forms of Violence in Riots :

There are nine major forms of violence against Dalit women six being violence in the general community.

1. Physical assault
2. Verbal abuse
3. Sexual harassment and assault
4. Forced prostitution
5. Kidnapping and abduction

And three being violence in the family – female foeticide and infanticide child sexual abuse and domestic violence from natal and marital family members.

The majority of Dalit women face violence in public spaces – streets women's toilet areas, field etc in and around their villages and towns.[6]

Rape is a weapon of Riots :

If the goal is to destroy the social fabric of society, the rape of girls and women is seen as a particularly effective weapon. The following types of rape were applied in communal riots.

1. Genocidal rape where specific ethnic groups are targeted.
2. Forced concubinage in which girls and women are forced into sex slavery.

Effects of rape:

1. Girls and women who are raped are stigmatized, sometimes driven from their homes by the shame.
2. Many suffer long – term physical and emotional damage.
3. Many victims become pregnant giving birth to unwanted children who are themselves stigmatized by the rape.
4. Rape can be used specifically as a tool to infect women and girls with HIV.[7]

Upper cloth revolt and women victims :

The upper cloth controversy or upper cloth revolt by Nadar women asserting their right to wear upper body clothes against the caste restrictions sanctioned by the Travancore kingdom

In 19th century Travancore had a rigid caste hierarchy. The Nadar women were not allowed to carry pots on their hips or wear clothes that covered their breasts. Baring of chest to higher status was considered a sign of respect by both males and females. The aristocratic Nadar women their counterparts had the rights to cover their bosom.[8]

An Ezhava lady who happened to travel abroad and returned well dressed was summoned by the Queen of Attingal and her breast was cut off for covering them. In Travancore a riot occurred when a group of upper caste men assaulted a lady of Ezhava caste for wearing cloth below her knees. Women had no right on her own body, her body was purely only for sex and had to fulfill this need of High caste men. How would they all live with every day torture, imposition and punishment of breast cut off in violating the rule.[9]

Victimize of Dalit women :

Victimization of Dalit women in India presents clear evidence of widespread exploitation and discrimination against these women subordinated in terms of power relations to men in a patriarchal society as also against their communities based on caste.[10]

The UN special Rapporteur on violence against women has noted that Dalit women “face targeted violence, even rape and death from state actors and powerful members of dominant castes, used to inflict political lessons and crush dissent within the community”

The hardships of Dalit women are not simply due to their poverty, economical status, or lack of education but are a direct result of the severe exploitation and suppression by the upper classes. Dalit women face a triple burden of caste, class and gender in which she sums up the plight of Dalit women are a distinct social group and cannot be masked under the general categories of women or Dalits. A Brahmin, kshatriya and vaishya man can sexually exploit any Sudra woman. Even the killing of a Dalit woman is explicitly justified as a minor offence for the Brahmins. It is equal to the killing of an animal. The bright young girls who are punished by the upper caste teachers in rural areas for daring to score good grades. Feeling rejected most girls in these situations drop out of school.[11]

Facet of mass killings of Dalit :

Social awareness society for youth has been conducting fact finding missions and found that, there are 7 Dalit women are brutally raped and murdered by the upper caste Hindus in Tamil Nadu.

Riots between landlords and tenants :

Even where untouchability is practiced, in the case of Harijan women there is no untouchability. A Brahmin land lord who seduces a Harijan girl only practicing touchability. In Bihar, Harijan women

were exploited by the high class men. Particularly landlords young Harijian girls are surrendered to land lords at very early age. The girls cannot marry anyone outside the village but the husband is asked to live with the girl in the village so that the girl can be at the call of the landlord. In parts of telungana Dalit women were sent to landlords when their wives are pregnant. In Karnataka Dalit women are still forced to dance naked during religious festivals.[12]

Communal Riots between Kallars and Dalits

In the 1890's there was a large scale agitation against kallar village watchmen around Dindigul. The aim of the agitation was drive the kallars from the area and it became quite violent. The anti – kallar agitation started by what was seen as a kallar affront to the honour of women of the Idaiyar caste.[13]

The Paraiyar girls were affected by the vanniya. On 16th September 1989, there was a riots between kallar and pallar in cumbumvalley. According to one widely believed story a pallar girl had been seduced by a kallar youth. He had promised to marry her but had broken his promise after pressure from his family. To get rid of the girl some of his relatives kidnapped, raped and killed her. This riot was triggered off by an attack on women's honour such attacks are quite common causes of local conflicts.[14]

Social realities of rural women in the conflict region :

The armed conflict affected women and men differently men were the main casualties of war of the survivors, women were the most affected by the loss of family members, death and disappearance of income earners. All women were affected by the conflict though they experienced different effects based on their ethnicity, location. Women who became heads of house holds with the loss of their sepouses are the most visible category of women victims of the conflict.

CONCLUSION :

There are conflicts in every village. If there is no conflicts, it is not a true Indian village. So the conflicts are common in Tamil villages within families and between families, between factions and between local caste groups, between landlords and between landlords and labourers. Caste conflicts of this type are not a new phenomenon in Tamilnadu. Men groups are the root cause to engage the communal riots. But the real sufferers are women in the society. Women suffer from various disabilities. "Individual and group assaults also have been found to be common. Threatening, harassing, Arson, loot, rape and murder have attracted much attention in the conflicts. The government must come forward to eradicate the communal conflicts and women victims in rural areas. Voluntary organizations may come forward to create awareness of communal Harmony among the common people. The age old evil practices of discrimination can be eradicated only slowly by persistent effort and good will on the part of every man and woman.

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