

**Tribhuvan University**

**Social Exploitation in *Poisoned Bread***

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Degree of Master of Arts in English

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**Letter of Approval**

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## Abstract

Caste system in India is based on exploitation. For example, the Mahars who are untouchables, lived a life of poverty, starvation, ignorance, insult and caste domination. The hierarchy of the caste ideology according to Hindu caste system leads the rank of caste and creates the class struggles among the caste. The upper caste people do respectful and prestigious work of mental labour. But lower caste people always engage in menial works like sweeping, cleaning, butchering and agriculture labour.

*Poisoned Bread* depicts the social discrimination and injustice of Mahars sub caste that creates class struggles in the Indian society. The stories try to show the landlord's exploitation over Mahar people. The short stories narrate the situation joblessness, poverty and starvation. The young people in village are suffered from poverty, discrimination. So they move to cities for searching work in textile, mills, dockyards because Mahars sub caste have no their own traditional occupation in village. Neither in the village Mahars are treated well nor in cities. They also lack any dignity, respect and wages for their labour. Influenced by Hindu caste ideology upper caste people believe superior themselves and inferior to lower caste and behave same things. Women from lower caste are more suppressed due to thrice alienation by Hindu patriarchal system, caste ideology and power. Women characters from Mahars subcastes in stories are treated more suppressed on their voice and freedom. It is believed that women from lower caste are impure and weak so they are sexually exploited by upper caste people. Thus, the short stories of *Poisoned Bread* narrate the suffering and cruel condition of downtrodden and women who are known as socially excluded group in community. The stories sketch the cruel condition of poverty and social discrimination over Mahars. The narration of exploitation in short stories certainly shatters the idea of a harmonious society.

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## Chapter I

### Caste and Class in Indian Society

Indian society is under the grip of caste system. Caste has been the indicator of social system. There are many castes and sub-castes in India. Each of the castes is related to special occupation. All these caste are grouped into four main *Varnas*. *Brahmins* are the superior castes and they perform religious ceremony. It is their allocated occupation. They are regarded as the spiritual leaders holding the highest position in the society. *Kshatriyas* are warriors and are less superior to Brahmins in social rank. *Vaishyas* fall into the third *Varna* and they are merchants, the traders, and the shopkeepers who look after the commercial interest of the community and who aid its wealth. And the last *Varna* is *Shudra*. *Shudras* are the labors, the washer man, the leather workers, the barber and the sweepers. The *Shudras* are at the lowest rung of the ladder. As mentioned in ancient dharma sastras and religious texts, the Hindus there were only four varnas or classes. The Brahmins were priests; the Shudras, skilled, semi skilled or unskilled labourers doing menial work. This hierarchy is primarily society based on class is a world - wide phenomenon.

There is not unique thought about the origin of caste system in India. Dangle says in *Poisoned Bread* that Many researchers have been founded that the origin of the caste system to the sage Manu because Manusmriti a religious text attributed to the sage, justifies the caste system. He also appropriates the negation of Dr. Ambedkar that castes existed even before Manu who was merely an ardent supporter who canonized the institution, and not the originator, of the system (xi).

Dangle further says that the social, political, economic and religious restrictions laid down by superior caste in the religious texts were implemented by the kings or the Kshatriyas. Thus, to follow the duties allotted to a particular caste in the texts became not only a religious obligation but also obedience to a royal order. In

other words, religion and state joined hands and bound the lowest class namely the Shudras into mental, cultural and social slavery and later into untouchability (xi).

Dangle further says that the living conditions of these untouchables were shameful. They had no land to till nor could they follow any profession. They did menial work ordered by the higher castes, come rain or shine. Treated like animals, they lived apart from the village, and had to accept leftovers from the higher caste people, in return for their endless toil. Hindu religious texts forbade them to wear good clothes or ornaments or even footwear, and prescribed severe and humiliating punishment for violating these orders. Even for a basic necessity like water they were helplessly dependent on the higher castes' good will. The most perverted practice of untouchability was that which at one time compelled the untouchables to tie an earthen pot around their necks so that their sputum should not fall to the earth and pollute it. Another was the compulsion to tie a broom behind them so that their footprints would be erased before others set their eyes on them.

At last Dangle concludes that the caste system in India was based on exploitation. An exploiting system always adheres to the philosophy or system which is most favorable to it, while other systems are either destroyed or corrupted. Social inequality and untouchability were convenient, indeed necessary for the earlier rulers, and were hence retained. Religious sanction was perpetuated and the cultural development and philosophy that supported the exploitation were encouraged to flourish. All revolts against untouchability or social inequality failed (xii).

Thus the untouchables lived in Indian society a life full of poverty, starvation, ignorance, insults, injustice, atrocities-practices totally against humanity. The only thing available to them in plenty was their wretchedness and this was so mingled with every drop of their blood that they forgot their own existence and could hardly dream of freedom or independence.

## The Hindu Caste System

Hinduism consists of old religion in the world. A hierarchical system among the castes and untouchability is the distinct feature in Hindu caste system. Hindu caste tradition dictates one's occupation and dietary habits and interaction with members of other caste. Brahmins are not only prohibited to drink the alcohol but even to touch the low caste people. The members of a high caste people enjoy more wealth and opportunities while the members of low caste perform low jobs. Outside the caste system are the untouchables. Toilet cleaners and garbage removal are some of the jobs allocated to the untouchables, which require being in contact with bodily fluids. They are therefore, considered polluted and not to be touched. Brahmins and even the other classes of Hindu believe that they are polluted if Sudhras are touched by the sweepers and scavengers. In the same way untouchables are not allowed to enter into the house of touchable. They are supposed to drink from separated wells. Therefore, upward mobility is very rare in the caste system. Inter-caste relations such as marriage and emotional relations are not allowed and supposed to be crime against the god. Untouchability and the prejudice of the caste Hindus against the sweepers and scavengers have been continued for ages till the present. Thus there is many social injustice and inhuman treatment over lower caste in Hindu caste system.

The outcaste (lower) people have been located in the hierarchical structure fixed forever. They found it extremely difficult to reconcile the untouchables to Hindu organizations with the ideas of equality. This hierarchy was class system and the development of a society based on class was a world-wide phenomenon. Jay Ram mentions in his article "The Hindu Caste System" that caste has been the indicator of social system. There are many castes and sub-castes in India. Each of the castes is related to special occupation. These castes are grouped into four main *Varnas*. *Brahmins* are the superior castes and they perform religious ceremony. It is their

allocated occupation. They are regarded as the spiritual leaders holding the highest position in the society. *Kshatriyas* are warriors and are less superior to *Brahmins* in social rank. They are the defender against any possible danger to the society and thus have a marital role. *Vaishyas* fall into the third *Varna* and they are merchants, the traders, and the shopkeepers who look after the commercial interest of the community and who aid its wealth. And the last *Varna* is *Shudra*. *Shudras* are the labors, the washer man, the leather workers, the barber and the sweepers. The *Shudras* are at the lowest rung of the ladder. A caste is a division of society based on occupation and family lineage. Hindu caste system recognized four distinct classes or divisions among people based on these criteria and enforced it through a rigid code of conduct that was specific to each class and rooted in the *dharmashastras* (religious books) of the later *Vedic* period. The four main castes recognized by traditional Hindu society based primarily on hereditary occupation and their position (2).

Banerjee says “As social structure in India. We don’t know precisely when the caste system originated and how it was conceived” (199). Further he says that the earliest reference to it is found in *Regvada* where it is the four castes in mouth, arms, thighs and feet respectively of the great primeval *purusa*. *Brahmins* are the priestly class, who are entitled to study the *Vedas*, perform rites and rituals for themselves and for others and obliged to observe the sacraments. They are known as the middle men between gods and men. They act as temple priests and invokes gods on behalf of others. They are expected to show exemplary behavior and spend their lives in the pursuit of divine knowledge and preservation of the traditions.

Banerjee quotes rules of *Manu*, the law maker that *Brahmin* was an incarnation of *dharma* (sacred tradition), born to serve and protect the *dharma*. He belonged to the excellent of the human race, endowed with intelligence and

knowledge to attain Brahman. He was the highest on earth, the lord of all created beings. Whatever that existed in the world was the property of a *Brahmana* and he was entitled to all. *Kshatriyas*. They are the warrior class, who are commanded (by tradition) to protect the people, bestow gifts to the Brahmins, offer sacrifices to gods and ancestors, study the Vedas, dispense justice, and, according to Manusmriti, abstain themselves from sensual pleasures.

He further says that Manu laid down that it was a king's duty to protect his kingdom and his people. He had something in himself of the gods such Indra, Vayu, Yama, Surya, Varuna, Moon and Kubera. A king should not be despised even if he was an infant. His authority should not be questioned except when he ignored his duties in supporting and protecting Brahmins. The king had the right to punish, but he must be fair in his punishment. It was king's responsibility to protect the caste system and the social order and lavish the priests with generous gifts at every opportunity. *Vaishyas*, They are the merchant and peasant classes, who are expected to tend cattle, offer sacrifices, study the Vedas, trade, lend money and cultivate the land. They had the right to perform and participate in certain *Vedic* rituals but they were not allowed to marry women of higher castes.

Ram defines that *Shudras* are the labor class, whose only duty is to serve the other three castes. They were not required to observe any Vedic rituals or Samskaras except a few. They were not allowed to study the Vedas or even hear the sacred chants. They were not allowed to eat food in the company of higher castes or marry their women. Chandalas, The lowest of the *Shudras* were called Chandalas or the impure ones. They were treated as untouchables because of their gory religious practices, penchant for sacrifices, magical rites and unclean habits. In ancient times they were not allowed to enter a village or city during day time or walk in the same street where men of other castes walked. Even their shadow was considered impure

and their very sight as a bad omen. So they lived mostly on the fringes of society, unknown and uncared for, following some esoteric religion of their own and working mostly in the graveyards and cremation grounds or as hunters, butchers and professional cleaners of human waste (5).

The idea of staying away from unclean people is understandable in a society that was obsessed with the concept of physical and mental purity. There is nothing unusual with people who are selective in choosing their friends and relationships. It is normal behavior to stay away from people who are found to be socially deviant, untrustworthy or unfamiliar. It is an expression of our social intelligence and self-preservation instinct. Personal hygiene, family background and financial status do matter today in society as it was thousands of years ago. But what was wrong with the Vedic society was it recognized inequalities among men based on birth and family lineage and proclaimed it to be the will of God. This line of thought was perpetuated by vedic scholars for centuries through the authority of scriptures and fear of divine retribution. They wrongfully created human stereotypes to justify a social structure that favored a few at the expense of many, denying a vast majority of people opportunities to use their inborn talents and pursue their own dreams and aspirations.

### **Caste in Hindu Mythology**

In the Hindu mythology we find men of lower castes ascending to positions of eminence and authority. Some important characters in the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* belongs from lower castes. Lord Rama was assisted by mostly men of humble origins, who lived in the forests and were ignorant of the *Vedic* scriptures. Lord Krishna himself was brought up by a family of cowherds. So was Balarama, his step brother, who is sometimes included in the list of Vishnu's ten incarnations. Only three or four of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu came from higher castes. Of the ten only one, the incarnation of Vamana, belongs to the Brahmin caste. Rama,

Parashurama and the Buddha belong to the Kshatriya caste while other incarnations such as the incarnation of fish, turtle, boar and the half man and half lion are actually animal incarnations, which in other words means once born, just like the forest dwellers that assisted Lord Rama in his battle against the demon king Ravana.

Joseph states in his books concern to the Hindu mythology that many ancient sages also came from humble backgrounds. Parasurama was a Brahmin by birth but a warrior by profession. Vishwamitra was a warrior by birth but practiced austerities like a Brahmins and became a great Rishi. Sage Parashar, the famous law giver, was the son of an outcaste (Chandala). Rishi Vashishta was born to a prostitute, while sage Vyasa, the original author of the Mahabharata, was born to a fisherwoman. Rishi Valmiki the original composer of Ramayana came from a tribal family of traditional hunters. He further states that some composers of the Vedic and Upanishadic hymns belonged to either lower castes or mixed castes. Satyakama Jabala was born to a prostitute who could not tell him who his father was. Karna, the famous character from the Mahabharata was brought up by low caste family, while Drona, the teacher of the Pandavas, was a Brahmin by caste but excelled in martial arts.

### **Class-Caste Nexus**

Generally caste means breed, race, or kind. Among the Indian terms that are sometimes translated as caste are *varna*, *jati*, *jat*, *biradri*, and *samaj*. All of these terms refer to ranked groups of various sizes and width. *Varna*, or color, actually refers to large divisions that include various castes; the other terms include castes and subdivisions of castes sometimes called sub castes. The relationship between caste and class is not simple or there is complex relationship between each other. Dumont says that “caste” is not just a ritual entity, but has an ideological meaning (4). This ideology is all pervasive and hard to be end. Now regarding class have not weakened caste, but have led to changes in caste system to suit itself to modern society.

Castes are ranked, named, endogamous (in-marrying) groups, membership in which is achieved by birth. There are thousands of castes and sub castes in Hindu society (especially in India and Nepal), and these large kinship-based groups are fundamental to South Asian social structure. Each caste is part of a locally based system of interdependence with other groups, involving occupational specialization, and is linked in complex ways with networks that stretch across regions and throughout the nation. Class has also further created strata among caste groups. Unequal development and unequal access to opportunities has created class among castes. Class acts as a basis of some of the aspects of caste and vice-versa. Many material and non-material aspects of caste like pollution, ritual has a class basis too. Changes in caste reflect its adaptability to changing situation. It is no more a rigid and closed group. It has become more dynamic and has gone much beyond mere ritual status.

Caste struggles are today not purely caste, but are of class also and caste only. As Beteille puts it, "The hierarchies of caste, class and power overlap to some extent, but also cut across" (129). He says that caste class nexus is not about the affinity between caste and class, but of their complex relationship of interaction, antagonism, similarities also. It is about going beyond both caste as well as class. Many castes are traditionally associated with occupation, such as high -ranking Brahmans; middle-ranking farmer and artisan groups, such as potters, barbers, and carpenters; and very low-ranking as untouchable group leatherworkers, butchers, launderers, and latrine cleaners. There is some correlation between ritual rank on the caste hierarchy and economic prosperity. Members of higher-ranking castes tend, on the whole, to be more prosperous than members of lower-ranking castes. Many lower-caste people live in conditions of great poverty and social disadvantage.

In rural communities of India, most of the population resides, caste and class affiliations overlap. An anthropologist Miriam Sharma states the exploitation of lower

caste who involve in land labour, “Large landholders who employ hired labour are overwhelmingly from the upper castes, while the agricultural workers themselves come from the ranks of the lowest-predominantly Untouchable-castes (91)”. She also points out that household-labor-using proprietors come from the ranks of the middle agricultural castes. Distribution of other resources and access to political control follow the same pattern of caste-cum-class distinctions. Although this congruence is strong, there is a tendency for class formation to occur despite the importance of caste, especially in the cities, but also in rural areas.

In an analysis of class formation in India, anthropologist Harold A. points out that a three-level system of stratification is taking shape across rural India. He calls the three levels forward classes or higher castes, backward classes or middle and lower castes, and Harijans very low castes. Members of these groups share common concerns because they stand in approximately the same relationship to land and production; that is, they are large-scale farmers, small-scale farmers, and landless laborers. Some of these groups are drawing together within regions across caste lines in order to work for political power and access to desirable resources. For example, since the late 1960s, some of the middle-ranking cultivating castes of northern India have increasingly cooperated in the political arena in order to advance their common agrarian and market-oriented interests. Their efforts have been spurred by competition with higher-caste landed elites. Predictably, class in India is predicated upon caste. There are three main classes accordingly, the hierarchy of caste. The higher castes and generally have access to better and more numerous options than the other classes. India’s class divide has long been characterized by a huge wealth divide between the upper and lower, with little in-between. However, the economic landscape is changing for India, and more and more people are beginning to occupy the middle class.

### ***Poisoned Bread of Caste and Class***

*Poisoned Bread* is an anthology of Dalit literature edited by Arjun Dangle a Dalit represent of Indian panther revolutionary time published in 1992. This anthology contains selected short stories from translation of Marathi literature.

*Poisoned Bread* is a powerful expression and indicating caste system in India. Raja Ayyappa says, “Dangle’s *Poisoned Bread* discusses the exploitation of landlords in Maharashtra, India. The characters in the story, are trying to show the oppression of caste Hindus, difficulties of the Mahars to oppose the landlords and the message of being disseminated by story writers” (1). Thus, short stories narrate the Dalit and women suffering and pain known socially excluded people in community. Stories have depicted the joblessness economic crisis of Mahars community. Mahars are Dalit sub caste who has not especially their own traditional occupation. In the village Mahars are not treated as well. They also lack any dignity and respected work and wage for their labour. The collection of short stories sketches cruel condition of untouchable, poverty, starvation, ignorance, insult and social injustice. A focus on protest in the writings in *Poisoned Bread* is not inadvertent.

Vemaib criticizes that the Dalit literary development while the *Poisoned Bread* is the first literary publication. Dalit literary conference held in 1958 went almost unnoticed in mainstream literary circles, but Dalit literary production continued to gather momentum in the next two decades. In 1972, Dalit literature took a consciously political turn with the coming together of several Dalit writers and poets, led by Namdeo Dhasal and Raja Dhale, to establish a movement called the Dalit Panthers in Mumbai. As Arjun Dangle, the editor of *Poisoned Bread* and himself a former Dalit Panther, asserts, “Dalit literature is not simply literature. Although today, most Dalit writers have forgotten its origins, Dalit literature is associated with a movement to bring about change”. Arguing for a sociological,

materialist approach to Dalit literary criticism, Dangle also emphasizes that literature in itself is inadequate as a medium for transformative change.

*Poisoned Bread* presents its readers with a broad representation of critically claimed work produced by Dalit writers in the post-independence period, but gaps and absences in the body of work that appears in the collection also point to some of the material conditions that dictate cultural production. There are few non-Mahar writers and few women contributors to the collection in *Poisoned Bread*. The dominance of Mahar writers in the anthology is an indication of the relatively higher economic mobility and political maturity that the Mahar community experienced during colonial times as a result of their early entry into the industrial working class. The relative lack of women's voices is a reflection of the great difficulty that Dalit women have in accessing literacy as well as gaining recognition in traditionally masculine literary circles.

The heroes of the stories are struggling for survival at different levels. They are shown confronting limitation, abject poverty, misery and brutality. The story entitled "Livelihood" depicts the fierce battle for life in an urban slum, and a world serving beyond the pale of so called cultural values. And the "Poisoned Bread", "The Cull", "Explosion" and "The Storyed House" demonstrate the position of Dalits in rural society, and their fight for existence. These stories show attitudes of caste superiority, then "Promotion" reveals the ambivalent crisis of identity in Dalit middle class (Dangle, *Homeless 2*).

## Chapter II

### Casteism as a Means of Oppression

The caste system has become an instrument of oppression in the hands of socially privileged castes especially the peoples who are treated as untouchables. Caste creates economic, social, cultural and other hierarchy among the different caste of people. So caste system indirectly contributed to the decline of Hindu religion as many people belonging to the lower castes were converted to other religions to escape the social indignities and inequalities associated with their castes.

Beteille defines the caste, “caste is a small and named group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system” (46). With Sinha’s words, caste is a hierarchy of endogamous groups, organized in a characteristic hereditary division of labor (94). Beteille mentions the six main features of the caste system are: segmental division of society, hierarchy of groups, restriction of feeding and social intercourse, allied and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections, lack of unrestricted choice of occupation, and restriction on marriage.

Dalits were associated with “impure” occupations, such as butchering or cleaning sewers. As such, they were considered to be polluted and for anyone outside of Dalit status to interact with them were considered to be polluting to that individual. Accordingly, Dalits were extremely segregated, not being allowed into villages, temples or schools. Such writers have written with the perspectives of Marxisms rather than with any concrete ideas to bring a real change in the caste hierarchy. These writers have argued that the caste system in its original form was based on different occupational groups. Some writers argued that the lower case should get chance for

vertical mobility because that would be justice for them. Thus writing on caste theme emerged from all sides and has reached into a new zeal. In this regard, Sisir Kumar Das writes, “The inequality generated by the caste system is a recurring theme in Indian literature to which almost all major writers have been responding seriously. We cannot think any writers defending the system though a very few could actually visualize the caste free society” (301). But all the writings on caste inequality failed to create any significant impact until the movement against the system emerged from the oppressed themselves. And the movement against the caste system started by the low caste people. The voice that arose was undoubtedly the voice of minority. This movement highlighted the sufferings of the people belonging to the lower castes and untouchables. Sisir Kumar Das, in writing the reason of the movement, further states:

The display of the Brahminical authority prompted by a well-nourished fear for pollution, the denial of basic human right to lower caste (even the conversion does not effectively change a man’s social position), the engagement of one member of lower caste against another in humiliating and assaulting one, all are components of a tortured narrative of suffering. (302)

Thus, Sisir Kumar believes in movement for abolition of caste injustice from Hindu caste system. There is no other way as alternative of conversion the religion and changing of social position. It is not also easy to change the social position and conversion of religion. Some people are doing such kind of practice but there is no guarantee of freedom. So movement is reasonable to change the society as Das argues.

In the short story “Poisoned Bread” Landlords and wealthy merchants exploited the lower castes and subjected them to inhuman treatment without fear as the lower castes did not enjoy equal rights or the confidence of those who enforced the laws. “Poisoned Bread” by Bandhu Madhav discusses the exploitation of

landlords in Maharashtra. The characters in the story, are trying to show the oppression of caste Hindus, difficulties of the Mahars to oppose the landlords and the message of being disseminated by story writers. Mr. Patil is the supporter of Hindu caste system. So his view for looking lower caste is hateful. He claims that the God has created the hierarchy among the caste i.e. Brahmin, the Maratha, the fisherman the weaver, the Mahar-many, the Dhor and cobbler in that order. And no one to be dared to destroy the type of caste hierarchy and every man should proper stand in their place. He says “A chappal is never worshiped in place of God, is it?” (168). here is trying to show the upper class is in the place of god and lower class in the role of chappal. A chappal can't be similar in the place of God represents the Dalit and upper caste such as Brahmin position can't be similar that Patil exploded in talking with a lower caste of man. He is proud that he is from upper caste and oppressed the lower caste of people. He believes in the caste system that God has created.

Dalit can't go against the upper caste although they need to open their mouth for even their appropriate voice because their educational carrier or qualification and economical access don't support them. There is the space among caste hierarchy that upper class people consider higher themselves so the Patil exploded to his follower “Look here, boy! Simply because you've had a little education, don't think you can teach me” (169). Mr. Patil is being as superior, He excluded that caste and their role is determined by God so lower caste can't be behaved similar as upper. So he is favor on the caste system. In this way, It is comprehensive that Caste hierarchy is brought as religious perspective but not truth itself, is a kind of blind faith in Hindu philosophy. The mind with the bad religious perspective has made strong the caste existence in Hindu society. The characters are trying to show the oppression of caste Hindus, difficulties of the Mahars to oppose the landlords and the message of being disseminated by story writers. Mr. Patil is the supporter of Hindu caste system. So his

view for looking lower caste is hateful. He claims that the God has created the hierarchy among the caste i.e. Brahmin, the Maratha, the fisherman the weaver, the Mahar-many, the Dhor and cobbler in that order. And no one to be dared to destroy the type of caste hierarchy and every man should proper stand in their place.

Exploitation of landlords in Maharashtra, India is also one of Dalit problem was depicted in this story "Poisoned Bread". The characters in the story are trying to show difficulties of the Mahars to oppose the landlords and the message of being disseminated by story writers Land is the basis of food, shelter as well as social prestige. It is strange that lower caste people who involved as land labour they have not even small piece of land but landlords who never work on field has sufficient land. Dalit or poor people were treated as slave in other land also they have to face the landlord's discrimination, lack of land right, Non-payment in land labor. "Poisoned Bread" by Bandhu Madhav discusses the exploitation of landlords in Maharashtra. Landlords and wealthy merchants exploited the lower castes and subjected them to inhuman treatment without fear as the lower castes did not enjoy equal rights or the confidence of those who enforced the laws.

"The Storyed House" is also the Dalit short story which depicts the suppression and domination upon the Mahar caste for their living freedom. Bayaji's returning in the house from Bombay after 35 years of long service in the dockyard. He had worked very hard whenever he could, day or night. When Bayaji reaches the Bhujaba on the way who was known as rascal of the village. In the story "The Storyed House" the speaker states the psychological domination in the case of not doing the greeting by lower caste to upper caste as following threats by Bhujaba:

Bayaji was Mahar by caste and something to age old custom should have greeted Bhujaba with 'My humble salutations to you, sir who are my father and mother' so when Bayaji merely said 'Greeting' Bhujaba became

furious and said' Do you think you can became a Brahmin merely by saying  
 'Greetings ?' Can you forget your position because you have turned Buddha?  
 (176)

Generally greeting is a system in Hindu society that lower caste should greet for upper caste even for lower age of people. Otherwise Mahars were said unless they were forgetting their situation or they change their religion.

As Bayaji came in his house all become happy. The children asked to the Bayaji, "You haven't brought any things for us?" then Bayaji run his eyes over all his children and says, "Look here children if I had brought an ornaments it would soon wear out. Out of my earning I wish you to have something that will last longer." His eldest son also seems positive y his father's ideas and says, "Neither we nor our wives wants anything." Bayaji further says, "Ours is such large family. Even at meal time we've to eat by turns or sit crowed, knowing our knees together. I wish to build a house out of my earning; it has to be a storeyed house" (180). Knowledge and awareness play the significant role to change the living standard of lower caste of people not only money. Saving the money is the one importance task and the investment of money another significant task in changing life. The Bayji's family understands it nicely so they agree to make a house because they need it for good shelter for all family members. They give up the ornaments and new clothes which don't provide the long lasting happiness.

Patil counsels over Bayaji plan of making the storyed house, "why spend unnecessary on a storyed house?" (181). The counsels of Patil shows that people in society are jealous to someone's progress. Mr. Patil threatens, "You may go in for a storyed house only if you don't wish to stay in the village. I hope you know what I mean." Kandiba also shot out a warning to Bayaji (182). The upper caste people who believe on feudal system they suppress not only for poor Dalit but also act for middle

class people who are in progress. Their intention is to control the Mahars under their power and still being in the stage of power money and prestige. In spite of different threatens and fear Bayaji had to plans for storyed house. He completes the house and planned the traditional house warning ceremony.

Amitabh's short story "The Cull" clearly presents that Dalit inhabitants are into a subhuman marginality. A pervasive motif of animality, of the scavenging beast, is especially strong in "The Cull". The narrative opens with the discovery of a dead cow, Timaji Patil's sacred one, and the excitement that ensues from that find (191). Caste Hindus have taboos against eating carrion, but Dalits cannot afford such restrictions in their struggle to avoid sheer starvation (193). In this story, the Dalit being is reduced to the level of other animal carcass-eaters, the crow, the jackal and the stray dog. Beef is, of course, not eaten by caste Hindus, and Amitabh's choice of carrion, a temple cow, underscores that the untouchable stands outside the caste Hindu domain by not participating in the most entrenched of its practices. Here, however, the sacred cow is already dead and of no concern any more to the powers that be. The Mahars of the village then spring into action, claiming their rightful share not of the surplus, but of the unwanted, already decaying, discarded waste.

The frenzy with which they attack the dead animal only reinforces their otherness in the caste economy. In a periodic inversion of high caste Rajput warriors going to battle, Amitabh describes the savage energy of the attack on the dead cow by the Mahars:

They pounced upon the prey, raising a full-throated battle cry. Young and old, all marched forth, and flashing their knives. Everyone had an eye on the thick thighs and buttocks. They pulled and tugged at the carcass. Tens of knives were sawing at the chest at once. Whatever piece, small or big, they could manage, they cut and put into their containers. The knives slashed and

sliced, chunks and chunks of meat were piled into the hampers and baskets.

They were all covered in blood as if they had played Holi. Their hair was red.

Their limbs were red. The dirty rags they wore were red. From top to toe they

were all dyed in the same colour-red? (193-4)

Amitabh starkly highlights the violence of the exchange, embodying the exploitative roots of this brutality, and marks its bloody excess on the Dalit body. Ironically, Amitabh's invocation of Holi, the Hindu spring festival of riotous, carnivalesque play, only reflects the electric momentum of the crowd; their snarling desperation, however, conveys no joy.

The village Mahars are reduced to competing with each other and with other animals for scraps:

The kites, vultures, and crows now sprang into action. The dogs, alerted, attacked the skeleton. The crows hovered over the heads of the people going home and swooped down on the troughs they carried on their heads ...

The men and women, used to such attacks, held on to their baskets and troughs tightly with one hand and with the other brandished their knives and twigs picked on the way toward them off. (195)

As the human and animal challengers clash, some invariably fail, as does Nilya, the scholar and asthmatic, “who had been reading till late night in the light of the kerosene lamp” (192). Nilya arrives last, reluctantly, after the carcass is almost completely stripped. As he makes home with the few pieces of meat that he finds to feed his large family, he is attacked by the animals, emboldened to find an isolated, weak target, and he is left bleeding on the ground, most of the meat stolen or fallen in the dirt. Somehow he manages to 'rescue' his pot containing a few bones covered with dust. The narrative pointedly positions Nilya, whose pursuit of reading is an activity not in compliance with his position in the caste economy, as an outsider and as falling

behind in the race for survival because of his transgression. As the story concludes, “the birds are still hovering over his head, swooping and pecking, the dogs are barking. But Nilya is busy filling up his pot” (196). The village becomes a space of terrifying competition not between Dalits and caste Hindus (the margins of this conflict are deliberately rendered invisible in the narrative), but between animals and fellow untouchables. Nilya cannot choose to step outside of the boundaries of socially sanctioned Dalit labor without disastrous, isolating consequences. His bloodied body becomes the locus of resistance in the text; the intellectual self (that reads by night) is reduced to a cowering animal by day. The narrative casts the responsibility for this deconstruction back on the collective conscience of high caste Hindus, who not only accept but also expect such debasement from the untouchables.

“Livelihood” is situated in the slums of Mumbai and its focus is on the sexual appropriation of labour from the body of a Dalit woman, Kashi. In the story, Kashi is assailed by death and disappearance at every step of her precarious existence. First, her mother is killed by an oncoming train as she collects coal off the tracks to sell for a living. Kashi's newly-wedded husband Dharma, with “some education, but no qualifications and without work, finds it hard to stay on the straight road” (173). Finally, he pawns a brass pot, one of his dead mother-in-law's only valuable possessions, to a Marwari pawnbroker. The broker, however, swindles him and, in a fit of rage, the husband kills the man and is hauled off to jail.

In “Promotion”, the caste issue has been depicted prominently. Dalit can't be against the upper caste although they need to open their mouth for even their appropriate voice because their educational carrier or qualification and economical access don't support them. There is the space among caste hierarchy that upper class people consider higher themselves so the Patil exploded to his follower “Look here, boy! Simply because you've had a little education, don't think you can teach me”

(161). He also said to know him that God intended to have a definite hierarchy when he created the Brahmin, the Maratha, the fisherman the weaver, the Maharmany, the Dhor and cobbler in that order. Everyone must abide by this scheme and act accordingly put every man in his proper place, as they wisely say. Mr Gode bole says to his superior that he has determined to give tit for tat. He says:

So you think you can treat us like your footwear! But are we really like that? Aren't we also made of the same flesh and blood as the rest of you? We too are born after nine months in our mother's womb. Is not that logically that basically there's hardly any differences between us? (170)

Mr. Patil acts as superior. He excluded that caste and their role is determined by God so lower caste can't be behaved similar as upper. So he is favor on the caste system. In this way, It is comprehensive that Caste hierarchy is brought as religious perspective but not truth itself, is a kind of blind faith in Hindu philosophy. The mind with the bad religious perspective has made strong the caste existence in Hindu society.

The caste system creates the hierarchy where upper caste is known as superior and lower caste as inferior that is clearly presented in "Promotion". The Godbole is ordered and commanded to respect him and adds heavy load of work if it is not possible for worker. He says:

Look here Godbole, The lady's on leave for two more days and this proposal has to be sent in today. Please get it ready. If you don't shall have to..... You can report me if you like. I have told you a thousand times that this is not my job. Have some manners to respect your superiors. (191)

If we think scientifically and practically all human beings are similar naturally no hierarchy but hierarchy was created by humans themselves. Thus human beings

themselves are responsible in such type of caste hierarchy and to create struggle among the different kinds of castes.

The Dalit young boy Shetiba is unemployed and joblessness although he has passed the matriculation depicted in “Explosion”. Also it showed the poverty, starvation of Mahar family. Shetiba is the only one son of his family has the great responsibility to feed the all members. His family poverty and his long time not finding the job causes increases more problems. “So many questions alone could answer what had come out of Shetiba's visit to the factory at Dhoki? Did he get job?” (185). In the case of difficult situation, his father Sheku was placing his case before the Sarpanchayat. He appeared among them having turned in desperation and asked his share of the Vatandari somehow. He said his son’s thinks as fault “I was wrong to listen to Shetiba and give up the Vatandari, I will set him to do the village duty” (189). But Shetiba was dazed and bewildered to tremble like leaf and say I shall not stay in house. Early in the morning his mother, “I will do any work that I get even carrying molasses” (190). He refused the Vatandari system in village even any kind of crisis in his family.

### **Gender in Caste-Based Discrimination**

The intricate interconnection among gender, caste and class in Indian society has been recognized. According to Friedman, Ellen, and Jennifer Gender distinctions are found in economic-, kinship- and caste-based stratification systems. In the same way Stunning, Karen that In patriarchal societies, the opposite holds true. Sex- and gender-based division of labor is historically found in the annals of most societies and such divisions increased with the advent of industrialization. According to Maria Mies, Sex-based wage discrimination exists in some societies such that men, typically, receive higher wages than women for the same type of work. Other differences in employment between men and women lead to an overall gender-based

pay-gap in many societies, where women as a category earn less than men due to the types of jobs which women are offered and take, as well as to differences in the number of hours worked by women. Patriarchal inquiry in long contribution in which she explores the concept of gender and caste from feminist perspective, witness today in the increasing violence that enforces the maintenance of order in relation of caste and gender is the weakening of absolute power that did not allow or permit the space for the articulation or even the awareness of grievance or sense of wrong and the consequent blurring of carefully down lines of caste. Maria further says that Dalit women are as being “thrice alienated on the basis of caste, class and gender” (9). It means women from lower caste are economically poor, they are suppressed by upper caste women and men and also dominated by their same caste of male members in family and society.

The stigma of untouchability makes them especially vulnerable victims of all kinds of discriminations. Women from Dalit community are economic dependent on male. In short story “Exploitation” in *Poisoned Bread*, Pami and his mother perked up their ears with hope of good news and wiped away the tears while they find no hope of employment and earning of Shetiba (185). Neither have they had job or education nor any source of income. Economical dependency of women is with the hope of that man is leading personality and responsible member in family. So the hope and happy of women is determined on the men status of economic prosperity.

Naik states that women’s economic subjugation or dependence leads to exploitation and denial of social justice and human rights. The nature of gender discrimination is shown in the short story “Barriers” in *Poisoned Bread*. Sitalbeie was threatened by her husband. He threatens, “Be quite, Are your wits better than mine?” (228). The voice and the decision of the women in patriarchal society are not listened. These all has been ignored even having of quite good and logical. Patriarchal

domination on the freedom of thinking and decision making is still on existence in Hindu traditional patriarchal society. Everyone in the village insisted that Narayan be sent to Murtjapur for his further education. They said that he could stay comfortably at Gadge Baba hostel. Since the decision, his mother Sitalabai had been crying for days because her dear son was going to live all alone, away from her. “It’s my one and only son too much for you to feed?” (227). She reported her husband, driving him mad with her incessant wailing he mother is crying for not to send his only son to Murtijapur because they have a lot to feed but no one listen her voice even logical. The position of Dalit women is still worse than upper caste women.

Sharmila Rege observes that the reasons the rates of women’s sexual abuse are higher in Dalit communities are tied to the Dalit economic situations and the attitudes of the upper castes towards Dalit women. Rege says that while the upper caste women are not allowed to go out freely, Dalit women must do so for survival and for their labor. During their work in the upper caste land or houses, Dalit women are forced to have sex with upper caste men. Dalit women will not speak out about whatever is being done to them by the dominant caste men.” All the more the upper caste mentality about Dalit women is that Dalit women are “impure” and “immoral”.

“Livelihood” is situated in the slums of Mumbai and its focus is on the sexual appropriation of labour from the body of a Dalit woman, Kashi. In the story, Kashi is assailed by death and disappearance at every step of her precarious existence. First, her mother is killed by an oncoming train as she collects coal off the tracks to sell for a living. Kashi's newly-wedded husband Dharma, with “some education, but no qualifications” (198) and without work, finds it hard to stay on the straight road. Sexual appropriation of labour from the body of a Dalit women, Kashi and sufferings shows that the familial situation as well as her economic condition is the obligation overcome the labour in spite of any risky and insecurity. Kashi has to face the many

problems the reasons is the responsible that one is she is from lower caste and economic crisis and another is having the women. The bodies of Dalit women are supposed to be freely available for labour, pleasure, abuse or serving their interests. In case of Dalit women, the need for sexual control extrapolates several fold as Dalit women work in insecure environments which makes them vulnerable and socio-economically discriminated. In addition, their bodies are treated as sites of dishonor, revenge and domination. Dalit women's bodies can also be seen symbolically as apparatus, reproducing subjects of subjugation, better destroyed, before gaining consciousness about their exploited state.

Caste has created the different kind of hierarchy among the upper and lower caste of people such as economic, social, cultural and others. Downtrodden people were associated with impure occupation such as cleaning sewers, butchering etc. They were extremely segregated not only being allowed into temples, schools or other public places. There is landlord's exploitation over them. They subjected into inhuman treatment. They are losing consume their right of property due to caste based discrimination and their silences. Dalit women have been particularly badly affected. They are discriminated against not only because of their sex but also because of religious, social and cultural structures which have given them the lowest position in the social hierarchy. The Dalit women regard more oppressed than upper caste women; they were economically very poor and socially discriminated.

## Chapter III

### Caste Struggles as Class Struggles

Caste system created a class of individuals who were regarded as untouchables and treated as less than human beings. They were not allowed to enter the cities and villages freely. People of higher castes were advised not to touch them or let their shadows fall on them because the shadows were also treated as sources of defilement. They were not allowed to draw water from the wells or ponds used by the upper castes. In modern times, many untouchables converted to other religions because they saw no hope in sticking with their traditional castes and among those who did not opt for conversion, the educated ones are its worst critics.

The caste system lowers the self-esteem of many and makes them feel bad about their social status and caste identity. Since it is based on birth, there is nothing much anyone can do about one's caste other than changing one's religion, a decision that may have other social implications such as alienation from one's own family, friends or community, accompanied by feelings of guilt and fear of divine retribution. The caste system is a blistering and festering ancient sore of Hindu society that evokes painful memories and keeps the Hindu society divided forever.

Caste system has been deeply rooted in the Hindu society. Though the system has been formed according to the respective occupations, it has been fixed forever. Higher caste have made the stereotype images of the lower caste people, Untouchables have been oppressed and ruled by caste Hindus. Thus, the society has been divided into the two main classes. Such a pattern of the historical impact on the existing society cannot be easily removed. M.V.R. Sastry realizes that the removal of the caste system is not an easy task. Continuous struggle is needed to remove it. Sastry states:

Casteism is the major evil afflicting all religious communities in India. This evil must be fought continuously till it disappears from the Indian society. Caste based discrimination against Haryans (scheduled castes) and Vanavasis (tribal) has been mitigated to a great extent in the last few decades through legislation, social and religious reformed education, affirmative action's, industrialization and Urbanization. (35)

The abolition of caste system is not easy task which is deeply rooted in the Hindu society. But it can't be said impossible because some of social religious and legal acts supported to decrease in Indian society. Different sociologists concern different ideas about caste class struggles. Durkheim says, "The chief form of social conflict and class struggle that Durkheim addressed was crime" (67). In this matter social conflict and class struggle Durkheim says a kind of crime which is different from Marxist analysis of class.

Saunders states that Marx has described two other classes, the petite bourgeoisie and the lumpen proletariat. The petite bourgeoisie is like a small business class that never really accumulates enough profit to become part of the bourgeoisie, or even challenge their status. The lumpen proletariat is the underclass, those with little to no social status. This includes prostitutes, beggars, the homeless or other untouchables in a given society. Neither of these subclasses has much influence in Marx's two major classes, but it is helpful to know that Marx did recognize differences within the classes. Karl Marx was aware that most of the people living in capitalist societies did not see how the system shaped the entire operation of society. Just like how we see private property, or the right to pass that property on to our children as natural, many of members in capitalistic societies see the rich as having earned their wealth through hard work and education, while seeing the poor as lacking in skill and initiative (35).

While Marx focused on the way individual behavior is conditioned by social structure, where as Weber emphasized the importance of “Social Action” i.e., the ability of individuals to affect their social relationships (20). Social structures are created through conflict between people with differing interests and resources. Individuals and resources, in turn, are influenced by these structures and by the “unequal distribution of power and resources in the society” (Livesay 228).

### **Caste Economy and Marxist Discourse**

The Marxist theory has no place for caste. Marx did not write a special treatise on “caste” just as he wrote on “capitalism” under the title “Capital”. Its basic unit of social analysis is class. However, in the Indian social scenario caste is regarded as the most important social reality.

Marxist theory focuses the base or the economy that determines political and social phenomenon which constitute the superstructure, not the other way round. Therefore, if we see from the Marxist perspective we shall come to the conclusion that class being an economic category is the primary building block of the base or larger economic structure while caste is a primarily social formation, a part of the superstructure that is sustained by the logic of economic structure of the society. But the tricky problem is to determine whether the caste superstructure has attained some sort of autonomy from the deterministic economic structure to independently spark off events and phenomena. Communists linked communal outlook and caste prejudices with relations of production prevailing in colonial India. They particularly stress the occupational division of labour associated with the caste system and consider it to be the single most important aspect of the caste system. Such a division of labour in their analysis led to the subordination of the entire working class .i.e. the

Shudras and untouchables to the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas who constitute the ruling class.

This simply means that caste hierarchy is nothing but class division in disguise. Therefore, in the Indian society caste can't be thought of in isolation from class because they are overlapping. Dwelling on the caste based occupational division of labour the Marxists further argue that such a division of labour was the key to the functioning of the feudal economic structure and land relations prevailing in India. The entire purpose of such a system was to generate huge surplus value for the ruling class. In their analysis, caste and communalism in India are sustained by feudal relations of production which can only be overthrown through Marxian form of class struggle. The abolition of caste hierarchy could not be separated from the Marxian form of class struggle.

### **Caste and Labour Relation**

Marx talked about labour relations. He talked about exploitation of labour that has been taking place since hundreds and thousands of years in the arena of labour relations. He discussed various kinds of problems that arise due to exploitation of labour. He indicated the solution to those problems. Therefore, it is our responsibility to understand our problems. It must have to ascertain whether exploitation of labour is present in India. In talking about connection between castes and labour, Marx's says in his book *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. It applies to Indian society also.

Marx connects any problem with human society is intertwined with labour relations. Since caste question is connected with human beings, it also comes under the purview of the theory that talks about labour relations. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.

Though caste system is a specific problem of India; it can be understood how Marx's theory is relevant to connection with labour. If caste is observed even though superficially there is obvious distinctions among them: that some castes are high and some are low. In what respect do we find this "high-low" distinction? Generally speaking, all the upper castes are those which possess land, capital and money; those which have hegemony and engage in social organization and administration. Again, generally speaking, all the lower castes are those that do not have properties even as means of livelihood. They live as labourers and servants. They are subjected to the hegemony and ruling of the upper castes and live in dire poverty and social inferiority.

The upper castes can be found the way of life of "not doing any labour" Or if they do, they are engaged in mental labour and clean labour. On the other hand, the situation of lower castes is totally opposite. It is unimaginable for the lower castes to live without doing any labour. The kind of labour they perform is the bottommost manual labour. All kinds of unclean labour that are needed for cleaning the entire society are the responsibility of these castes.

Societies based on exploitation further increase the naturally existing gap between values of different kinds of labour. Thus, such societies and their conventions pay more value to a mental labour than it inherently possesses and less value to a manual labour than it inherently possesses. Societies based on exploitation of labour exploit more intensely the manual labour, especially the bottommost manual labours. If we consider a doctor and an agricultural labourer in a society based on exploitation, we find unimaginable distinctions between their income and their way of life, although both perform labour. The system has been in practise since remote past, whereby a class, which occupied all the means of production as its property, lives on exploitation of labour by extracting rent from land, interest and profit from capital in

the name of property rights, without doing any labour. The division of labour that emerged from these relations of exploitation always ties labouring people to only one kind of labour. A person who performs manual labour has to languish in the same kind of labour throughout his life. It is not possible for that person to expect to do some kind of mental labour, education relevant to such labour or income that it fetches. Mental labourers like doctors, engineers and scientists need not ever do any manual labour. They need not even undertake the responsibility of cleaning their own dirt. The fact that the upper castes of India are leading their lives without entering manual labour and unclean labour implies that they are throwing that burden onto the lower castes.

According to Marx's theory, there must be a material cause for the evolution of human history. If it is a correct answer, that cause is something that arises from labour relations. However, since the past times, there has been an idealist conception among philosophers predominantly with regard to the evolution of history. It is a conception which assumes that human history evolves based on the will of god, or of the kings who are incarnation of gods, or religious leaders or some supernatural power.

### **Caste and Division of Labour**

Various kinds of labour are necessary for human beings to live. While different kinds of labour emerge and continue, some division would emerge among them. It can be kept aside the question how a given division of labour transformed subsequently; the initial basis would be existence of different kinds of labour.

This is a question of whether division of labour gave rise to castes or castes gave rise to division of labour. According to Marx, division of labour is primary. The same formed into caste occupations in the subsequent period. While this was the

situation, historians assumed castes as primary and they gave rise to division of labour.

When we observe what castes do, we find that different castes perform different kinds of labour. From ancient times to the present time, there has been a connection between castes and different kinds of labour. By logical thinking, we can grasp that division among different kinds of labour itself gradually transformed into castes. However, different kinds of labour and division of labour exist in all countries and all societies. However, the division of labour is transformed into castes only in India (Rattansi 201).

Therefore, the task that remains before us is to find out the solution for the caste question. Unless we ascertain this point, we cannot take even a single step toward the solution. We have seen that, according to Marx, division of labour is primary. The same had crystallized into the caste system. Therefore, the solution for the caste system is to transform the division of labour that created the problem. The laboring class or working class which is subjected to exploitation must wage this struggle. This class struggle had begun in the period of slaves.

This alone is the path of liberation for the lower castes who have been leading the unbearable life of manual labour and servitude for many thousands of years. This path is possible by means of class struggles only. Marx states his opinion on "Poverty of Philosophy" for proper understanding of division of labour and that he assumes it to be identical at all times. Marx wrote as follows:

But was not the caste regime also a particular division of labour? Was not the regime of the corporations another division of labour? And is not the division of labour under the system of manufacture, which in England begins about the middle of the seventeenth century and comes to an end in the last part of the

eighteenth, also totally different from the division of labour in large-scale modern industry? (158)

If all the lower castes in society are part of the working class and if they are living within traditional division of labour based on exploitation, then elimination of faulty relations of labour alone will be the correct solution for the liberation of those castes. Caste system is a kind of division of labour. Though there are no laws that defend caste distinctions all the social conditions are such that they keep castes intact.

It can be examined that classes in India; all the lower castes are part of working class. Further, these are sections that are subjected to exploitation of labour to a large extent. They have to liberate themselves from exploitation. They have to change the division of labour that exploitative societies created. For that, they have to go along the path of class struggle only. If they do not recognize that path and go in that direction, there will not be a way out for them from this problem. The same situation will continue in future also just as they have been languishing in the caste system for the past hundreds and thousands of years. It is not possible to escape from it in any other way.

Landlords and wealthy merchants exploited the lower castes and subjected them to inhuman treatment without fear as the lower castes did not enjoy equal rights or the confidence of those who enforced the laws. "Poisoned Bread" by Bandhu Madhav discusses the exploitation of landlords in Maharashtra. In the story "Poisoned Bread" Exploitation of landlords in Maharashtra, India is also one of Dalit problem was depicted in this story. The characters in the story, are trying to show difficulties of the Mahars to oppose the landlords and the message of being disseminated by story writers land is the basis of food, shelter as well as social prestige. It is strange that lower people who involved as land labour they have not even small piece of land but landlords who never work on field has sufficient land. Dalit or poor people were

treated as slave in other land also they have to face the landlord's discrimination, lack of land right, Non-payment in land labor.

In the short story "The Cull" is the significations of labor in Dalit consciousness are inextricably linked to the ideology of the caste system itself. While caste had a material base in the feudal economy, whereby Dalits were the unwaged laborers who generated surplus for the village, the exchange derived its ideological legitimacy from religion. A wider justification for the decrees in scripture also lies in the philosophy of karma that sees untouchables and other low people i.e. women and shudras as being in debt to the larger community for the sins of their previous birth. In effect, this justifies an indentured existence for life without allowing for any conception of egalitarian justice in the modern sense of the term to operate in favor of the oppressed. Many Dalits have found it in their interest to try and break free of this economy of karma and enter the capitalist market-place, who's relatively less rigid and impersonal currency of exchange allows for a shattering of at least some of the oppressive underpinnings of the village economy.

In the short story "Livelihood," the setting shifts from the village to the city slum and it becomes clear that the conduits of economic mobility for untouchables in the city are still precariously grim and often replicate feudal patterns of segregation and occupational choice, although the ideological constraints may be more tenuous. Dalits who had migrated in the years before independence had been relatively better off, with established working-class jobs in the docks or textile mills. The scarcity of such permanent wage occupations in later years meant that a large section of Dalits found employment only as seasonal workers and many survived as beggars or petty thieves.

At first, Kashi resists Kesu's advances and throws burning coals at him, which disfigures his appearance further. But Kashi later rationalizes that she needs Kesu's

'protection' and becomes his mistress. Soon she is pregnant with his child, but, insane with jealousy, Kesu continuously abuses her. One day, he stuffs lime into one of her eyes and permanently blinds it. Any sign of attractiveness in Kashi is a threat to Kesu's ownership of her body and needs to be expunged. Meanwhile, he cannot find regular work and his gruesome appearance is detrimental to his quest for employment. Eventually, he is arrested for trying to rob a couple on Marine Drive and sentenced to three years in prison. Kashi goes into premature "labour" upon hearing the news and delivers her child on the pavement. The product of her labour is, however, horrifically deformed:

With a distended stomach and limbs like match-sticks, the creature bore no resemblance to humanity. And it had begun to scream from the moment it was born. Kashi grew fearful of the child's terrifying ugliness. She saw in its noseless, lipless face an image of Kesu's cruel face, and she felt the urge to strangle it on the spot with her own hands (199).

Kashi also falls into an extreme depression because the source of her security, her body, has now betrayed her; she is loose and flabby and no longer desirable to men. However, she soon discovers that her son, the monster, is a saleable product. She sets out to beg on the streets with the child on her lap, where people throw coins at her 'on account of the terrifying ugliness of the baby's face (207). She transfers the exploitation of her own body to that of her son. The crises emanating from living under the infamous 'poverty line' of economic theory resonate in Bhimrao Shirvale's "Livelihood". The text also oscillates between social realistic detail and symbolism in order to dredge up the grotesque and deformed products of Dalit work. However, this narrative, unlike many stories in *Poisoned Bread*, does not explicitly name caste as a factor in the abuse that its protagonists suffer. The focus here is on an underclass that subsists in the margins of the urban economy. The invisibility of caste in the

narratives may not be accidental: the anonymity of the city seems to erase the mark of caste ideology on the Dalit body. However, as the narrative delineates, there is little to celebrate in this erasure, as the weight of class oppression overwhelms its central Dalit characters. At a psychological and material level, their bodies go into crisis as circles of cultural subjugation and capitalist exploitation intersect.

In the narrative short story “Explosion” Yogiraj Waghmare is trying to show the extreme poverty that whole family is going to in the crisis with the starvation due to unemployment. The opportunity working and any earning sources are being lost in lower caste from Mahars community. This story delineates the unemployment and economic crisis of Mahar family. They have no own traditional occupation for their survival. So they have to struggle for working anything what they find. In spite of matriculation passed before several years ago. He has not found still job. It leads many problems and poverty for himself and his family. All family members are hopeful to the positive result of visiting at Dhoki. But unexpected results have come. His family poverty and his long time not finding the job causes increases more problems.

The father of Shetiba has been suffered more due to increasing heavy problem over his family. Shetiba trying to convinced his father to be optimistic that he will find job in future and problems will be solved. But Sheku becoming irritated with son and said, “how long are we to wait? This endless waiting will kill us” (194). While Shetiba doesn't find the job and there was no other source of income in the family so the family status become more raged. All members looked repulsive and Shetiba also felt sick. His father Sheku placed his case before the Sarpanchayat that he had turned to in desperation and asked his share of Vatandari. The Vatandari was given up some years ago in the listening of his son now he is feeling wrong. He is going to set him to do the village duty. Here is cleared that the economic situation determined not only

class hierarchy but also responsible to grow the caste rank and discrimination. Mahars family is now ready to set the Vatandari of traditional due to economic crisis and due to circumstances.

The economic status determined the dependency on higher class for survival strategy. So poverty creates the hierarchy in the society. But Shetiba disagreed with the father plan of continue of village Vatandari he was dazed and bewildered to tremble like leaf. So he decided not to stay in house. He left there early in the morning telling his mother, "I will do any work that I get even carrying molasses" (197). Not finding the job in long period of waiting even Shetiba's matriculation has already finished that invites more crisis in his family. To move from this crisis there is two ways of either accept the vatandahri at village or leave the house and involve in labour work in the city. The circumstances upon his life compels to work of labour such as carrying the molasses still not finding the job. The work of interest has been unable to choose due to different obstacles in their life of Mahars youth they work for survival rather than making carrier.

It can be concluded that Hindu caste system has created the caste hierarchy with occupational division which supports class hierarchy then struggle among the many castes. Marxist theory focused on the division of the labour is primary rather than caste which formed into caste occupation. But other historians assumed caste is as primary which raises the division of labour.

All lower castes in the society are part of working class and they are living within division of labour based on exploitation. Land lord's exploitation, exploitation on wage labor to the lower caste people is a kind of caste based discrimination not by class. Land labour, bondage, poverty and depression. In the case of Dalit women, they are more oppressed in Hindu society. The society doesn't listen their voice even these are logical and good. It is the destiny of lower caste women to involve in labour due

to their poor economic condition but they are exploited in proper wage being women from lower caste.

Not only in outside of family even in family also can women be dominated by male members. Due to the poor family background they can't raise their voice for rights and freedom because they have to depend on male economically for survival. So poverty and economic dependency of Dalit men and women helps saliency for them. Land labour or other labour for upper caste people is key source of livelihood of Mahars people. It is enclose to Marx's description of alienated labour.

The Hindu caste system also created the caste hierarchy according different occupation such as Brahmin as priest, Kchchetriya as warriors and Baisya as trader and farmer and Shudra as low or menial works. This is called Barna System. This hierarchy of caste creates the class struggles among the castes.

## Chapter IV

### Conclusion: Caste as a Means of Oppression

Casteism is a key means of oppression. *Poisoned Bread* shows social, economic, material and psychological alienation and injustice to Mahars because of their caste.

The collection of short stories sketch the cruel condition of untouchable, poverty, starvation, ignorance, insult and social injustice. The stories also show the material and psychological situation of Mahars who are living in urban slums. Mahars are Dalit sub caste suffered due to caste discrimination and untouchability in village they are oppressed by land lords and higher caste people. They hardly find the works what they need for survival in the village. Wage system is also exploitative i.e. Vatandhari. They move to urban city to search of work at mills, farms Dockyard etc. In the cities also they can't find sufficient wage.

The untouchables are found living pitiful condition such as a life of poverty, starvation, ignorance, injustice. It can be said that they are living the life of lacking and struggles. There is caste class relation on the caste hierarchy and economic prosperity. Members of higher ranking caste behave as whole to be more prospective than members of lower ranking caste. Many lower caste people live in condition of great poverty and social disadvantage. All the stories in *Poisoned Bread* narrate the social discrimination and suffering lower caste and also class especially Mahars subcastes in India.

Bhandhu Madhav's "Poisoned Bread" depicts the both caste discrimination and landlord discrimination on Mahars caste in India. Retort Patil's expression about caste hierarchy that God has created represents his strong believe in caste system. He says that the hierarchy among the Brahmin, the cobbler is God's intention. In this way caste system is tried to connect with religion to make strong in the society. Some

Dalit right activist and Dalit are searching their own right proving the fact with scientific reasons and logic. They addressed that the blind concept of caste hierarchy and untouchability is considered as inhuman treats. One of the characters of “Poisoned bread” expresses that all human either upper caste or lower are born after nine months in mother womb or all have same blood so there is not logically any difference and hierarchy in the name of caste.

“The Cull” depicts the Dalit struggles for survival. Caste Hindus have taboos against eating beef but Dalit cannot afford such restriction in their struggle to avoid sheer starvation. Nilya in spite of struggle with some animals, he makes home with few pieces of mat to feed his large family he is attacked by the animals and he is left bleeding on the ground, most of the meat stolen or fallen in the dirt, somehow he manages to rescue his pot containing a few bones covered with dust.

“Livelihood” has focused on the sexual appropriation of labour from the body of Dalit women, Kashi. Kashi is assailed by death and disappearance at every step of her precarious existence. Her mother is killed by an oncoming train as she collects coal from the tracks to sell for a living. The narrative of despair, come Waghmare’s short story “Explosion” Yogiraj Waghmare is trying to show the extreme poverty, starvation, joblessness and suffering of Mahar family. In spite of matriculation many years Shetiba does not find the job at Dhoki even many times asking the job with Shahib. Here the ignorance and joblessness of Mahar youth is shown that also helps to create other problems to them. It is compulsion that Dalit for the sake of money and survival they have to give up any dignity and prestige while becoming an inferior to upper caste and rich people. Sheku decided to follow in the footsteps of his father at last situation of poverty. But his son Shetiba refuses it and becomes ready to even work of carrying molasses. In “Promotion” is trying to show that hierarchy among the company staff superior and inferior where inferior belongs to lower caste. Gode bole

is commanded to work over in the absent of some lady workers. When he refuses he was threatened and asked to respect to superiors. Dalit are rising own voice for free from land bondage and to leave independently, with sense of pride. They refuses the enslaving from land labour and exchange for right. Mahars talking it as right and favor to beg for bread as long as they live. They demands to be free from land labour and land exploitation on Mahars caste is logical and suitable against caste discrimination. In this way these short stories shows that the caste is a major issue to create operation and hierarchy. It also plays the vital role to make class conflict.

In “Barriers” Sitalabaie’s argument is ignored and threatened by her husband saying “Be quite Are your wits better than mine” (226). In patriarchal society women have not right of decision making and raising the voices. If they raises any voices and ideas these are ignored. The poverty and economic struggle is more shameful in Dalit women. Poverty and economic dependency on male is also one cause to be more suppression. In the situation of poor status and for survival Dalit women themselves have to involve in difficult job and work so they are unsecured. In the “Livelihood” Kashi’s mother was killed by train while she was engaged in so risk work of collection coals for survival. Kashi herself involve in work and she was sexually exploited by upper caste men.

It can be recognized that the language, experiences and heroes of Dalit literature are totally different. In selecting short stories *Poisoned Bread*, The quality of writing has been the main criticism. Another has been the aim of showing the material and psychological situation of the Dalits living in urban slums, these living in rural areas, and those who have raisin to middle class through the special facilities for their caste. These stories show the sufferings of downtrodden class imposed by the upper caste cruelty. Stories shows that Mahar caste is Dalit sub caste, they have no their own occupation so they are facing different discrimination in village so in the

free from caste discrimination many people are moving village to city. And the second reason is to economic mobility or they moves for works job and money. Short stories have depicted the many of the problems faced by the Mahars sub caste including the discrimination, untouchability, sexual exploitation, ignorance, threats and also poverty and starvation. For their all problems and suffering caste has become major factor. In spite of caste poverty, education and social injustice and political awareness also come together with caste hierarchy.

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