

# Caste malice: How to stop the rot



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Following the atrocities against Dalits at Melpaathi and Vengaivayal, the Nanguneri incident of anti-Dalit cruelty has caused more outrage. If the first two episodes feel like cases of caste discrimination and marginalization, the latest Nanguneri case has been sparked by malice, sadism and perversion rooted in casteism.

## **Goal of education**

Behavioural change is the basic of education. But our education system has caused only mental perversion and moral deficiency. Utility-based education is the western system while culture-oriented education is Oriental.

But today's macabre scenario is a fall-out of the syndrome wherein education has shrunk from the sublime domain of knowledge to the abysmal level of just a token to enter into the job market.

Then how will the future be like for the children being moulded and to be moulded into single entities pursuing the self-centred goal of self-development. Nowadays nobody understands the concept of man being a social creature. In fact, it is centres of education, which have a major role in 'socializing' our children because they spend most of their time there. Several vital features figured in the education plan for a few decades after our country attained Independence.

### **The extant good features**

There are two basics for development of childhood: One is mental exercise and another physical exercise.

In the past syllabi, the activities such as recitation of songs, joint performance of tales, group word games and so on were part and parcel of what were then called 'Moral Classes.'

For physical exercises, evening games and group drills were conducted.

By way of linking both these exercises, mental and physical, horticultural work, art exercises, handicraft classes were also held. All these exercises went a long way in promoting friendliness and camaraderie among the students and instilled in them the qualities of cooperative sense, selflessness, patience, balanced sense and sophistication. The kinship between knowledge and labour was indirectly driven home, plugging the gap.

But all these lofty activities have vanished in the hustle and bustle of today's education system oriented towards exam marks. Tours and field visits, which were once in vogue, promoting the

children's general knowledge and habit of sharing with others, have become extinct at present.

We have not promoted scientific temper either. Actually, it should begin with children. For that, the study of the science-oriented sociology is the gateway. First, our children should be taught how the world and creatures were born and then the scientific sociology must be taught so that the children learn and understand the religions, the castes and the gender discriminations.

### **Malice that is promoted**

Some selfish anti-socials go about promoting misunderstanding in the society. The foremost issue over which such wrong impressions are deliberately afloat is reservation. A totally erroneous and pernicious viewpoint is doing the rounds, which projects reservation as an exclusive right of the SCs and STs. In fact, it is the Backward and Most Backward communities, which benefit much more from the reservation system. But the fact is deliberately hidden.

Besides, after the advent of the millennium, government job has become something like a mirage and the problems of unemployment and price rise have mounted. All these issues have to be tackled by all of us unitedly. But what is happening now is that caste malice is being sown everywhere in order to divert the society's attention from the issues plaguing our system.

In a society functioning with lots of inequalities, all cannot be treated equally. The difference between the SCs associations and the organizations working for other communities must be understood.

It must be driven home strongly that caste is just a myth. For that, an ideological preparation is absolutely necessary. During the Freedom Struggle, students and youth joined hands, rallying

behind the ideal of caste elimination. Later, the struggle revolved around linguistic rights.

But after the 1980s, with the advent of liberalization, globalization and consumerism, a society without any ideals emerged. There is no ideal among the youth of today. Public service and public welfare associations and outfits have vanished from the villages and urban areas. There are no political parties nor leaders now to inspire and instil hopes among the youth and students. There are no principles; no jobs guaranteed for the educated.

So, in this environment it has become easier for caste to take hold on the younger generation.

### **Caste omnipresent**

In the 1990s, the children's hands began to sport bands tied around them in the Muthupettai area in Tiruvarur district during the Vinayagar Chathurthi rallies. Later when various kinds of the caste leadership emerged forcefully, the religious bands tied to the children's hands took on the colours of caste. The trend still continues, engraving the 'code names' at schools, colleges, rest rooms, bicycles and two-wheelers.

In fact, the practice of adding caste suffixes to proper names has long ago almost stopped. It is a boon granted by the social justice movement.

But today in some areas even children's names have suffixes that feel like disturbing nicknames.

Caste, being the filth dating back to thousands of years ago, cannot be swept aside in one ago. A mental preparation is a sine qua non to overcome the prevalent caste affinity. For that, a proper understanding of the differences between those who are 'caseist' and those who are 'democratic' must be created.

## **Ways and means for solution**

The root of caste lies in endogamous marriage. This explains why honour killings happen. In this context, we have to speak not only about gender equality but also social equality.

Caste practices, low caste status and their resultant caste violence are the major challenges to a civilized society. To put an end to all these pernicious things, a vibrant and valiant law and a stringent punishment system are required.

The big parties must give up on the practice of making caste-based choices in the electoral politics; the caste and local panchayat-based system during local festivals must be abolished; a directive must be issued to ban writing anything other than the actual registration number at motor vehicles and the caste symbols such as colour bands in schools and colleges must be abolished.

Moreover, law should crack down on the use of caste suffixes. The leaders and government officials must not take part in the meetings where the caste suffixes are prominently displayed. Since it is social media outlets, which almost play a major role in propagating caste malice, we must pay more attention to this syndrome to stop the rot.

Literary, library and sports festivals must be held regularly in schools and colleges to enable all sections of the student to participate collectively. Apart from the professional orators, the socially influential speakers must be roped in for the government functions. Serious initiatives must be taken in all schools, colleges and government offices to combat the caste and gender discriminations.

Healthy cultural events must be introduced at all units such as extensive reading, literary programs, art exhibitions, field tours and so on.

If there are clear-cut thinking and planning, we can gradually redeem our younger generation from the cruel clutches of the monster called caste.

**Translated by V. Mariappan.**