

## **ABSTRACTS**

**[Arranged alphabetically. This is not an exhaustive compilation]**

### ***Ansari, Khalid Anis, The Idea of Indian Secularism: Towards a Post-Minority Critique***

Secularism is not an autonomous concept. It was wrought alongside what Charles Taylor terms the 'modern social imaginary' and derives its force and meaning within a conceptual assemblage that includes terms like liberty, equality, rights, nationalism and democracy. In the Indian context, the career of secularism was fashioned within the crucible of the anti-colonial struggle launched by the native modernist elite and the subsequent efforts to consolidate its power in the postcolonial phase of state formation. The hegemonic idea of 'secular nationalism' eventually came to confirm not the 'wall of separation' thesis, dominant in Western jurisdictions, but the Gandhian articulation of *sarva dharma sambhava* which referred to the idea of symmetrical treatment for all religious collectivities. Broadly, the Indian variant of secularism was conceived as a means of ensuring pluralism and respect for cultural diversity. However, this hegemonic articulation of secularism began to show strains from the latter half of the 1980s due to competitive mobilizations by conservative elements of Hindu and Islamic collectivities triggered by various significant events. Eventually, the large-scale communal violence that followed the demolition of the Babri Masjid seriously posed the question of whether secularism as a resource was potent enough to ensure social harmony and defend the values of pluralism. Also, the relation between secularism and minority rights was brought into sharp relief in the Indian debates on the 'crisis of secularism'. This paper reflects on the relation between secularism and minority rights from a post-minority perspective, as being articulated by the movement of pasmanda (dalit/shudra) muslims.

### ***Caesar, Thomas Franklin, Demand of Scheduled Caste Status by the Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims***

On 10.08.1950, the President of India had promulgated the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) order, 1950 (Constitution order 19. S.R.O. 385).

"In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 341 of the constitution of India, the President after consultation with the Governors and Rajpramukhs of states concerned is placed to make the following order namely :-

1. This order may be called the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.
3. Notwithstanding anything contained in paragraph 2, no person who professes a religion different from the Hindu the Sikh or the Buddhist religion shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste.

The above said Paragraph Three prevents the Christians and Muslims of Scheduled Castes Origin to avail the Scheduled Castes though their Castes names are there in the Schedule.

*Constitutional questions arise before:*

Whether Paragraph (3) of the Constitution (Scheduled Caste) Order, 1950 issued in exercise of Article 341(1) of the Constitution of India, which says that, "Notwithstanding anything contained in paragraph 2, no person who professes a religion different from Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste" is unconstitutional and void, being violatate of Articles 14, 15, 16 and 25 of the Constitution of India?

Whether a Scheduled Caste person professing a religion different from Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism can be deprived of the benefit of Paragraph 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, in violation of Articles 14, 15, 16 and 25 of the Constitution of India?

Whether non-inclusion of "Christians" and "Muslims" in Paragraph (3) of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, along with Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism, is discriminatory and violatate of Articles 14, 15, 16 and 25 of the Constitution of India?

Based upon the Indian Constitution Articles 14, 15, 16 and 25, I prove that the Paragraph 3 of the Constitution Scheduled Castes Order 1950's religious ban is unconstitutional concerned with the Scheduled Castes reservation to Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims.

With the content of my research paper, I am going to prove and it is quite evident that the President has (Union of India) before him the following material, indicating that the depressed classes of the Christian and Muslim communities (Christians and Muslims of Scheduled Castes Origin) are suffered from economic and social disabilities, cultural and educational backwardness, so gross in character and degree that the members of these Castes in the two communities call for the protection of the Constitutional provisions relating to the Scheduled Castes. President of India had arbitrarily brought this Order, based upon the Union of India's cogent evidences and authoritative detailed studies, other matter of fact and question of law, it is proved that the Christian Muslim members of the enumerated castes are suffered from economic and social disabilities, cultural and educational backwardness par with Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist of Scheduled Castes Origin.

So Christians and Muslims of Scheduled Castes Origin (Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims) should be given the Scheduled Castes privileges by the way of deleting the Paragraph 3 of the Constitution Scheduled Castes Order 1950 or amending the above said paragraph 3 in Indian Parliament.

### ***Deshpande, Satish, Caste, Religion and Entitlements: The Problem of Commensurability of Languages***

The "languages" in which entitlements are legitimised, fought for and acquired differ on the registers of the law, politics and social science. How have these incommensurabilities

affected the progressive broadening and deepening of democratic rights in India? I will try to address this question in the specific case of caste and religion defined social groups.

### **Falahi, Masood Alam, *Islam and Caste: An Analytical Study of Indian Muslims from Historical and Ethical Perspective***

Before the advent of Islam, Arabs used to consider Non-Arabs, inferior to them. Even Arab world was divided into a society of upper and lower class. *Quraish* generally considered themselves high and perceived others as low. We can find such evidences in pre-Islamic era. Although the pre-Islamic Arabian society was divided into tribes and clans and rivalries between clans and tribes were common, but social grades within the clan or tribe and the conception of superiority or inferiority of one clan or tribe in comparison to another clan or tribe was unknown.

Islam is an egalitarian religion. It does not believe in casteism, racism or any kind of discrimination on the basis of nation, family, caste and creed.

Islam rejected the concept of superiority of Arabs over non-Arabs & Quraish over other Arabs and vice-versa.

Islam spread in India due to its message of equality and brotherhood. The majority of Indian Muslims are descendants of 'untouchables and low' caste converts, with only a small minority tracing their lineage to Arab, Iranian and Central Asian settlers and invaders.

Although Islam is fiercely egalitarian in its social ethics, insisting on the radical equality of all believers, Indian Muslim society is characterized by numerous caste-like features, consisting of several castes – like groups (*jatis, biraderis*). Muslims who claim foreign descent, such as the Sayeds, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans, claim a superior status for themselves as *ashraf* or noble'. Descendants of indigenous converts are commonly referred to as '*ajlaf*' or 'base' or 'lowly' (for Julahas, Darzi, Kujra, Qasai, etc.) and '*arzal or Dalit*' i.e. Bhangi, Bakhkho, Bhand, Halkhor e.t.c.

During the Muslim rule in India, the '*ashraf*' and '*high*' caste Hindu converts played a key role in the state administration, as advisors, ministers, governors, army officials, and estate managers. Most of the ulamas and Sufis were also from upper caste strata of the society. On the other hand, despite their conversion to Islam, the social and economic conditions of '*ajlaf*' and '*arzal*' Muslims hardly changed and they remained tied down to their traditional occupations as artisans, peasants, labourers and sweepers.

In Muslim India, *Ajlaf and Arzal (low caste and Dalit)* Muslims were exploited not only by their own people, but by the government also. Many great '*ulama and intellectuals*' of the past and present, belonging to the various Muslim sects and formations, including *Shia* and *Sunni*, *Aligarh Tahreek (Movement)*, *Deobandi*, *Barailvi*, *Ahl-e-Hadith*, *Jamaat-e-Islami* and the *All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB)* supported the caste system either in the name of the supposed superiority of the *satat / ahl-e-bait (people tracing their origin to the Prophet's daughter Fatima)* or the belief that only a person of *Quraish descent (Sayeds and Shaikhs)* could be the Caliph or through caste-based *kufu (endogamy)*.

The caste system is still alive among Indian Muslims. There are many incidents based on caste. There are also examples that mosques and graveyards are divided on the ground of caste. Every caste wants to give benefits to his own caste. Inter-caste marriages are very rare. If any couple goes for an inter-caste marriage they are killed by their family members and social elements. Arranged inter-caste marriages are very few in numbers and are usually based on materialistic grounds and love affair.

The paper will focus on caste among Indian Muslims historically and ethically special focus on casteism among current time.

### **Gudavarthy, Ajay, *Reservations and Stigma***

The policies of affirmative action seem to create an inherent conflict between the processes of redistribution and the demands for recognition. While it is a fact that the policies of reservation have created new opportunities for the specific disadvantaged social groups, these however have come at a cost of causing the more intangible injury of mis-recognition. 'The result is to mark the most disadvantaged class as inherently deficient and insatiable, as always needing more and more. In time such a class can come to appear privileged, the receipt of special treatment and underserved largesse. Thus, an approach aimed at redressing injustices of distribution can end up creating injustices of recognition.'

### **Jodhka, Surinder Singh, *How to Make Sense of Caste Among the Sikhs?***

The presentation will engage with the following three questions: First, the empirical context and specificities of caste among the Sikhs in contemporary times; Second, nature and patterns of change in caste relations in contemporary Punjab and its implications for the Sikh community and its identity related concerns; and finally, how could the Sikh experience of caste help us in questioning the popular Orientalist view of caste? My presentation will draw from my empirical work on caste in Punjab and my ongoing work on the politics of theorizing of caste.

### **Krishnan, P.S., *Reservations for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes of Muslims (BCM) in India as Part of Their Holistic Development***

This paper starts with a brief analysis of Muslim society in India, its structure, stratification and hierarchical pattern and seeks to clear widely held misconceptions about Muslim society.

Socially and Educationally Backward Classes belonging to Muslim society have already been included in the Backward Classes' lists of States, some before Independence, and the State-

wise BC lists of the Centre. Yet, widespread ignorance and misconceptions about them prevail. Among them are that the caste system is a phenomenon exclusively of Hindu society. The papers shows, as analysed in detail in the author's Report on Identification of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes among Muslim Community of Andhra Pradesh, that there are castes/ caste-like communities/ social groups with inter-generationally continuous identity among Muslims of India, that there is a hierarchy among them and, as in the case of many Hindu castes, many Muslim hereditary social groups are also linked to or identified with a traditional occupation which is the basis of their identity and social status. There are also a few Muslim social groups, not more than about 1% of the Muslim population, who are the victims of social discrimination akin to "Untouchability".

The paper brings out the important distinction and dichotomy between the social ideology of a religion and the socio-economic practices of its adherents, with analogies from different religions. When we speak of BCs we are speaking of society and not of religion. As brought out by many scholars cited by the author, the Mandal Commission, Sachar Committee and Ranganath Misra Commission Reports and the Supreme Court's landmark Mandal case judgment, castes do exist even among followers of non-Hindu religions also except Zoroastrianism.

As brought out by the studies of numerous scholars, historiographers, anthropologists, census demographers and administrators etc., referred to in the paper, most converts to Islam were from "Untouchable" castes and mainly from artisan and other occupational castes, who carried with them the same traditional occupations and the same social status.

Having cleared these and other misconceptions about the Muslim society, the paper proceeds to discuss solutions and alternatives. The solution, in order to be safe, must be rooted firmly in the Constitution and the Supreme Court's interpretation of the relevant Articles 15(4) and 16 (4).

They provide for reservation and other necessary special provisions for SCs, STs and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (BCs). The paper then discusses the dual recommendation of the Ranganath Misra Commission regarding Minorities, points out the unaddressed problems of its first recommendation and its second and real recommendation of a sub-quota within the BCs. The paper explains that the justification for categorisation of BCs with sub-quotas within the total 27% reservation for BCs and provides information of long-standing practice in South Indian States, partly of pre-Independence vintage. In Andhra Pradesh, where alone in the South there was a wide gap, his Report of 11-6-2007 identified 14 BCs of Muslims which together with 2 numerically small BCs of Muslims earlier listed constitute about 75 to 80% Muslim population of AP. He recommended 4% sub-quota for these 14 BCs of Muslims. This was accepted by the Government and legislated by the Assembly within one month. The Paper points out the vastly beneficial effect of this, with statistical particulars, on a hitherto forgotten category of BCs belonging to Muslim society. The BCs of Muslims identified by the Centre and the States constitute not less than 75-80% of the total Muslim population and even a larger proportion of non-tribal Christian population.

The Paper also discusses the Government of India's 4.5% sub-quota for already identified BCs of Religious Minorities within the total Central BC quota of 27%, brings out its validity, but bad-timing just before the Assembly elections of 2012, the AP High Court judgement

striking it down, in which important points were missed apparently because the Ministry of HRD and Assistant Solicitor General did not point them out to the Court. If facts and arguments are properly presented in the Supreme Court, there is a good chance of getting the High Court's judgement reversed.

The paper emphasises the need and justification for a comprehensive categorisation of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes with sub-quotas, in which schema BCs of Muslims and other Religious Minorities can be provided appropriate place and what was attempted by Government of India in 2012 but not pursued systematically is a valid first step in that direction.

Reservation is only one part of Social Justice, the goal of which is creation of Equality between SCs, STs and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes including BCs of Muslims and other religious minorities, on the one hand, and the Socially Advanced Castes (SACS) or Non-SC, Non-ST, Non-BC (NSCTBC) castes, on the other hand, in all parameters of life, development and welfare through a full spectrum of Constitutionally mandated Social Justice measures (miscalled Affirmative Action, aping American practice and ignoring American Constitutional context) of which education at every stage, employment, creation of employability and the aid of Reservation constitute important parts.

### ***Kamble, Ramesh, Ambedkar's Critical Theory of Caste and Religion***

Throughout his life his Ambedkar remained engaged with the caste question. Both as a critical thinker and as a political scholar-activist he analyzed various dimensions of caste, the multifaceted impact and consequences the institution had for both the victims as well as the very character of Indian civilization, and the need to make India a democratic civilized nation was his pursuit. The problematic of Caste presents as a connecting thread that unites his writings, right from his first important work, 'Caste in India', to his last, 'The Buddha and his Dhamma'. His analysis shows that caste question is the central problematic of Indian society that impacts the notions of self and identity formation, the social and material relations, the character and functioning of public institutions, and the very structure of Indian society. Caste thus impacts and in turn is reproduced by the domains of culture, economy and religion. In Ambedkarian analysis caste is simultaneously interactional, institutional and structural. Ambedkar draws on this analysis to interrogate the domains of institutions and structures and to devise the strategies for critical institutional intervention.

Unlike the other attempts of theorizing caste, offered by both his contemporaries as well as the later efforts by academics such as Ghurye, Dumont, Srinivas among others, Ambedkar offered a theory of caste that presents the character of the institution in terms of interconnection and the simultaneity of the ideological, material and existential. Moreover, the contemporary recognition of the intersectionality of caste and gender in India among some feminist scholars has to be located in the writings of Ambedkar. In fact his detail analysis of caste, (in his first work caste in India) showed that the emergence and reproduction of caste was rooted in women's subjugation. Furthermore, his concept such as "graded inequality" has not only provided the ground for the discussion of complex nature

of inequality in India, but has also informed feminist thinking, especially, Uma Chakravarty's articulation of 'Brahmancial patriarchy' and 'graded patriarchies', and the recent attempt by Sharmila Rege.

An attempt will be made in this paper to contextualize Ambedkar's theorizing of caste to understand the complexity of caste question in Contemporary India. My attempt will be to understand the complex inequalities produced by caste through the analysis in complexity theory, that is, to understand the inequalities and marginalities produce by ongoing, complex interactions of set of social relations such as caste, class, gender and ethnicity and on the one hand and the institutional domains such as economy, polity, culture and civil society on the other.

Another important and complex dimension in Ambedkarian analysis deals with the domain of religion. Ambedkar engagement with religion presents both a critique that looks at religious ideology as a fundamental factor legitimating inequalities and hierarchies, as well as an attempt on his part to reconstruct the 'religious' as a moral philosophy guiding social, economic and political domains of human activity. Ambedkar's engagement with religion presents a complex terrain. For some his choice of Buddhism suggest his continuity with the basic edifice of Indian civilization, whereas for others, rooted in centralizing the 'material' aspect of human existence, the religious/moral prioritizing in Ambedkar presents limitations in terms of fundamental transformation of Indian society. The presentation will try to address this complexity.

**Kumar, Arvind, *Changing Occupations, Continuing Perceptions:  
Biradaris and Exclusion in Purani Dilli***

*Biradari* is definitely not caste and is undisputedly present in Muslim society across India. And there is no unanimity over any specific definition of 'caste' either. But even from the most agreed definition, if we discount one key defining marker i.e. 'purity and pollution' which manifests in untouchability, rest all other markers, birth, occupation, hierarchy and endogamy hold true for *biradari* as well. Many in academics are pointing that 'exclusion' was not used at all in caste-studies till very recently but that does not substantiate that exclusion was absent. Ambedkar's '*Bahuskrit Bharat*' is one such expression. Like several other concept 'exclusion' too is a western import (Hann and Kabeer, 2008). True, caste also has changed and has continuously been changing (Beteile, 2012). Recently, with regard to changing situation of caste noted academics, suggested that inequality is a structural condition and structures underlie and renew this condition. Caste as an ideology forms part of this condition; articulates this condition and also makes the hierarchical condition applicable and effective. Caste continues to regulate the condition of inequality (Guru, 2012). Inequality necessarily excludes. Exclusion of an 'individual', however, is fundamentally different from that of exclusion of a 'social group'. While exclusion of an individual holds no connection with her/his social and cultural identity, the exclusion of social group is closely associated with social and cultural identities such as social origin like caste, ethnicity, religion, gender, colour and race. And thus group characteristics of exclusion are based on social and cultural identity, irrespective of individual attributes

(Thorat and Sadana, 2010). This study is an attempt to explore into how notion of *biradari* has played a crucial role in pattern of settlement as the *mohallas*, *phataks* and *gallis* are named in *Purani Dilli*, their social interaction and how its manifestation has led to 'group-exclusion'. A majority of *pasmanda biradaris* are categorized under the OBC category which obviously is indicative of their social and educational backwardness but there are *biradaris* like *Abbasi*, *Dhobi* and *Rehmani* to name a few hold the deep rooted stigma and humiliation attached to their occupations. While the Hindu counterpart of these caste/*biradaris* enjoys the Scheduled Caste status; the old perceptions about such *biradaris* in Muslim society continues.

### **Louis, Prakash, *Dalit Christians' Struggle for Schedule Caste Status***

Dalit Christians or Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin (CSCO) or Dalits Converted to Christianity have been asserting their right for utilizing Constitutional provisions given to Dalits of this country. This has been denied to them historically and denied today too. Similarly, Muslims of Scheduled Caste Origin are also knocking at the door of the government to bring them also under the purview of reservation since they were and are treated as Scheduled Caste even today. Thus, the demand for including Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims like the Hindu Dalits, Sikh Dalits and Buddhist Dalits into the ambience of reservation has come to the fore in the last two decades.

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the Dalit Christians it is necessary to understand the Scheduled Caste origin of this social group, the discrimination they suffer due to their caste background both within wider society and Christian world. Those who hail from caste Christian origin at regular intervals highlight the latent benefits received by the Dalit Christians by being members of Christianity as outcome of manifest plan of action for emancipation. But they continue to treat the Dalit Christians as untouchables as the untouchables are treated in the wider Indian society. Thus, after converting to Christianity, the Dalit Christians are treated as Dalits by the caste Christians. The ruling class on the other hand denies any benefit that is legitimate to the people of Scheduled Caste origin who got converted to Christianity on the ground that they have embraced another religion namely Christianity.

Taking into these facts, the Dalit Christians have been knocking at all the doors demanding that justice be done to them. These are some compelling reasons that forced the Dalit Christians to go to the Supreme Court to fight for their equal rights. They have also presented their case forcefully and based on facts to the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities asking them to recommend their case for reservation. Like the Dalit Christians, the Dalit Muslims too have been demanding for equal rights of being Dalits first and Muslims later. Will their struggle for Constitutional rights be materialized is a million dollar question only time would answer. But for the present, there does not seem to be any hope for them.



## **Rehman, Mujibur, *Ambedkar, Islam and Indian Dalit Muslims***

This paper explores the perceptions of Ambedkar about Indian Muslims, and his ideas of Islam. As an extension of this exercise, it will be attempted to explore whether there is anything called “Dalit Indian Muslims “ that Ambedkar was able to identify, and if he did what was his perception about their role, existence, and future.

In the over- all discourse of Muslim question, the writings and views of Nehru, Gandhi, Jinnha, Azad and a few others have dominated the commentaries and research invariably at all levels. On the other hand, overwhelming attention is being paid legitimately to Ambedkar’s writings on Indian Dalit question. Interestingly, there is a very limited interest (the attention is almost insignificant) in analyzing his thoughts and views on the subject of Muslim question, their idea of identity and issues concerning backwardness. Ideas of Ambedkar on Muslims and Islam have become more relevant and useful in the wake of publication of Sachar Report(2006) and Mishra Commission Report(2009) and the public debate that these Reports has triggered. In the light of current discourse in post- Sachar India, this paper seeks to analyze views and thoughts of Ambedkar and seeks to examine whether the discourse on Muslim question in general and its backwardness in particular would profit positively with such ideas. Attempt will also be made to explain how the understanding of contemporary Islam and Indian Muslims in South Asia would have benefited from the writings on the subject by Ambedkar.

## **Sanal Mohan P., *Social and Religious Experience of Dalit Christians in Kerala: A Historical Analysis***

The paper takes a long-term view on the social and religious experience of Dalit Christians in Kerala. Conversion is a theme that occupies an important place in this presentation. While dealing with this theme, I would like to argue against the conventional and instrumentalist interpretations that suggest that conversions among the untouchables were ‘not caused by a deep conviction of sin and a strong desire to be saved’, but more by the wish to better their worldly conditions, to emancipate themselves from their social misery, and to be freed from the tyranny of the higher classes. On the contrary, I would like to show that Christianity provided a new worldview to the Dalits in the context of Colonial Modernity.

## **Singh, Santosh Kumar, *Between the Devil and the Divine: Exploring the caste-religion dynamics among the Ravidasis of Punjab***

Punjab has historically been a site of great emancipatory religious movements. Sikhism, for instance, provided one of the most formidable counter positions to the orthodoxy of Hinduism and its annihilating caste practices that spawned wretched hierarchies. Yet contemporary Punjab is a crucible of contesting caste ideologies and its dangerous

implications and undercurrents, every now and then, look ominous for the peace and tranquility of Post-militancy Punjab. Is there caste in Sikhism? No, should be the answer theoretically and textually. Sikhism, though originated on the premise of equalitarianism and non-ritualism, is today infested with the regressive and abhorrent caste practices.

The phenomena of Dera and separate Gurdwaras for the Dalits that dot the landscape of Punjab today bear testimony to the indelibility of caste, both as an institution and as an idea. The erstwhile lower castes that joined the new religion of Sikhism, propagated and founded by Guru Nanak, in anticipation of an equal, non-discriminatory world of divinity proved to be a chimera. The devil of caste, however, did not disappear. Rather it continued to haunt them for centuries. Caught in this corridor of uncertainty, between the devil and divine, the lower castes of Punjab today show signs of impatience and restlessness with the old promises and want to split and reconstitute the religious configuration. The paper attempts to highlight the complexity of this intersection and overlap between religion and caste as it unfolds in Punjab today.