Education and Human Rights of Dalit women in India

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Dalits’ are untouchable caste in India. The caste system in India means social ranking of Indian people. Caste system came in to the Indian society with the Brahmins. In an ancient India (3200-2500 B.C) caste system did not exist. Women’s status were socially high, they were learned, and intelligent. They could choose their life partner and also young widow marriage was permitted. The status of women became low with the arrival of Hindu religious books like Manusmriti which divides people into caste system men and women into different class system. Manusmriti mentioned that women should not have any right to wealth, education and in property. They should not also have any freedom and independence. Upper caste people can sexually abuse lower caste people. Killing Dalit women by Brahmins for a minor crime was also permitted. (Mahey: The Status of Dalit Women in India’s Caste Based System, p. 150: Retrieve August 8, 2014 from http://www.dalits.nl/pdf/StatusDalitWomen.pdf).

According to Brahmin texts there are four casts: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Certain groups, now known as “Dalits” and Other Backward Castes (OBC’s), were excluded from the Brahmin category. Dalits and OBC’s are facing huge social discrimination although discrimination against lower castes in India is illegal under Article 15 of its constitution. The focus of this paper would be the social status of Dalit and their educational situation which relates to the human right question. Some problems of Devdashi would also be mentioned. The paper ends with some suggestions which may help to improve the poor and pathetic condition of Dalit women. This paper will begin with the back ground of Dalit women.

Dalit women are poor and most disadvantaged caste in India and they are known as scheduled caste. Approximately there are 250 million Dalit women in India although no specific survey data was given to this number. Dalits are not monogamous group. Most of them are scattered in villages. They are also illiterate. According to the National Commission of SCs and STs 2000 around 75% of
Dalit girls drop out from schools. Although many institutions are offering many special programs for Dalit women in spite of the fact participation of Dalit women in education is fairly low. Early marriage, social pressure, need to work to earn for their family, need to help doing household work, poor infrastructure, distance from home to work, stop schooling after getting married - all these reasons are responsible for low rate of literacy. The literacy rate for Dalit boys is 31.48% and for Dalit girls 10.93% and 75% of them live below poverty line (Muthumary: Dalit Women Status in India: Retrieved August 8, 2014 from http://www.ambedkar.org/Worldwide_Dalits/dalit_women_in_India.htm).

Dalit girls are tortured by the other caste as well as the member of their own caste. They are tortured sexually, physically, socially and mentally. Traditionally Dalit women work as an agricultural labor, as sweepers, as human waste disposers of Ministry of Labor and health. Although they play an significant role in the society but they are poorly paid and also poorly treated by the upper caste people as well as the people in their own caste. Dalit women also paid marginally and their living condition is also very low. They work like slaves (Muthumary: Dalit Women Status in India: Retrieved August 8, 2014 from http://www.ambedkar.org/Worldwide_Dalits/dalit_women_in_India.htm).

Dalit women face a burden of class, caste and gender. Born as a Dalit woman is nothing but born in a life time imprisonment. Repression, oppression, rape and torture are their destiny. In some parts of India Devdasi system still exits. Devdasi system was introduced by higher caste of Indian. Devdasi is basically temple prostitution. Approximately 50,000 girls sold every year to the temple organization to involve in the Devdasi system. These girls involved into temple’s services and they involve into sexual services too. After wards these Davdasis’ were sold to brothels and they live measurable life. Davdasi systems are permitted in Hindu Scriptures. 1,236 rape cases were reported in the year of 1992-1993 and 10,000 human rights violations cases are reported every month. Most of them are unreported. Although India got its independence for 50 years but caste systems still exists and Dalit women are still suppressed and oppressed by the society. Dalit women cannot report as they are powerless and posses less power and wealth. One of the good ways to escape from these situations is to educate Dalit women and teach them the proper definition of human rights. Many organizations raised voice about their rights and for this reason their situation is improving day by day. But they need to raise their voice more. For two thousand years Dalit women are suffering and suppressed by
the society. It is a time for them raises their voice and to understand their rights (Muthumary: Dalit Women Status in India: Retrieved August 8, 2014 from http://www.ambedkar.org/Worldwide_Dalits/dalit_women_in_India.htm).

The major challenges of the Dalit women are as follows:
1. They are extremely poor
2. They are treated as impure and untouched
3. They cannot get basic education
4. 75% drop out from the primary school
5. They need to marry early because of social and family pressure
6. They are sexually, mentally and physically abused
7. They are ill paid
8. They are deprived of human rights
9. Sometimes Dalit women treated as witch.
10. They generally face social violence
11. They assault for not bringing enough dowry from their home.
12. They assault for not bearing child
13. Even sometimes they are poorly treated by police as well as by the court especially if the judges are from the upper castes.
14. They are sometimes victims of human trafficking
15. Forced sexual services are common for almost all Dalit women in India
16. In a male dominated society like India Dalit woman cannot raise their voice against man
17. Physical abuse is also common practice for all Dalit women in India
18. Early marriage and sexual relations with child are also prominent
19. They are also deprived of civil and political rights
20. In short, Dalit women do not treat as human rather treat as a slave of the society and for this reason they are deprived of human rights.

India is a sub-continent with a population of 1,236,344,631 (July 2014 est.) (CIA, world fact book, 2014) and out of which 250 million are Dalit. A big number of populations are treated as Dalit. Many people have the question in their mind, who are Dalits? Generally Dalits are lower caste and untouchable people in India but all lower caste people are not Dalit but all Dalits are lower caste. Dalits are mixed population. They speak in different languages, they practice
different religion and also they possess different cultures. If this large number of population is deprived of basic human rights, it would be hard for India to develop and stand themselves as one of the most developed countries in the world. For the development of a nation gender equity is one the primary steps that a country needs to focus. At the same time, it is necessary to reduce the caste systems in India. For any nations diving human based into a different caste is not healthy. As caste system is practicing in India for almost 2000 years, it would not be possible to eradicate the caste system in a year but the process needs to begin. Although inter caste marriage now a days are common I many Indian cities but in the rural area the situation is fairly backdated. A large number of people live in rural area so without their development social development would not be possible.

To do so educating people is important because education is a process through which people learn to create new institutions, use new technologies, cope with their environment and alter their patterns of behavior. Economic and social development of a nation depends on these factors. In a broad sense education improves the capacity of individuals and institutions that contributes to the social, economic, cultural, and demographical changes which are related with the national development. As a whole, education is a process of providing enlightenment and skills to a nation. It is not clear how these changes occur through education but evidence suggests that schooling and education can make major contributions to poverty reduction, gender equity, responsibility of citizenship and equality of life. As 75% Dalit women are illiterate and this big number of illiterate people is a threat for the nation. Government should try to educate Dalit women and implement some special policy for them like Stipend for Dalit Girls, food for the family and so on.

From the above mentioned discussion, we can see that along with education many other problems exist in Dalit women’s life. To overcome the current situation, the following steps can be taken. It would not be possible to implement at one time but government can take long term plan to develop the situation of Dalit who consist one fourth population of the country.

1. Mentality of the society needs to be changed. The term “untouchable” should be abolished. One human should not treat other human as untouchable. To do so moral education can introduce in the school’s curriculum and syllabus.
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2. Provide basic facilities like clean water, healthy living environment, compulsory education and proper medical facilities.
3. Ensure minimum wages for the Dalit women.
4. Dowry system should be abolished strictly by the government.
5. Girls and boys should treat equally
6. Laws should be equally to them
7. Moreover they should treat as human not as in human beings
8. Girls need to be empowered
9. Girls should not be treated as a sexual tool
10. They should feel from their inside that they are human and they have equal rights like other non-dalit people as well as like men
11. Jobs should not be based on the caste system

Until today many works have done in the field of Dalit and Human rights. Some development also came into the society but a long way to go. The most important thing to come over from this situation is to change the mentality of the Indian people. If their mentality does not change, all the works will keep in the paper. Human should treat on the basis of their humanity not on the basis of their birth place and caste. For the development of India this change is very necessary. In this world of globalization, people can get information in 10 seconds from one parts of the world to the other. So if the world will know about Dalit and the condition of Dalit women in India, the impression of India will get lower to the rest of the world. Time will tell how far Indian people can improve the situation of Dalit women in India.

Reference
Dalit Women Status in India: http://www.ambedkar.org/Worldwide_Dalits/dalit_women_in_India.htm
Dalit Women in India: http://idsn.org/caste-discriminatin/key-issues/dalit-women/india
インドにおけるダリット女性の教育と人権

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ダリットはカースト制度の最下層民である。バラモン教の聖典によると四つのカーストが存在し、それぞれバラモン・クシャトリア・ヴァイシャ・シュードラである。ダリットとその他後進階級として現在知られる特定の集団は上記のバラモン教によるカテゴリーからは除外されている。インド憲法第15条でインドにおける下層カーストへの差別は違法だとされているのにも関わらず、ダリットとその他後進階級は巨大な社会的差別に直面している。

ダリット女性は貧しく、インドで非常に不利な立場にあるカーストであり、彼女達は指定カーストとして知られている。この数値に関して具体的な調査データ存在しないものの、約2億5,000万人のダリット女性が存在する。ダリットは一夫一婦制の集団ではなく、彼女達のほとんどは村々の中に散在している。彼女達は読み書きもできない。2000年の指定カーストと指定部族に関する国家委員会によると、約75%のダリットの少女は学校を退学する。多くの機関がダリット女性のための特別プログラムを提供しているが、その事実にも関わらずダリット女性の教育参加は非常に少ない。早婚、社会的圧力、家族のために働いて賃金を得る必要があること、家事を手伝う必要があること、不十分なインフラ設備、家から働く場所まで距離があること、結婚後に学校を辞めること——これらの全てが低い識字率の原因となっている。

ダリット女性は階級、カースト、性の苦しみを負っている。ダリット女性として生まれることは終身刑として生まれること以外の何物でもない。抑圧、圧迫、強姦、拷問が彼女達の運命である。インドの一部ではデーヴァダーシー制が依然として存在している。デーヴァダーシー制はインドの上層カーストによって導入された。デーヴァダーシーは基本的に神殿による宗教である。約5万人の少女が神殿組織に毎年売られ、デーヴァダーシー制に従事させられている。この少女達は神殿への奉仕に従事させられ、また性的な奉仕にも従事されている。

本研究の焦点はダリットの社会的地位と人権問題に関わる教育事情である。本研究はダリット女性の貧しく痛ましい状況を改善するのに役立つであろういくつかの示唆を述べて締めくくられる。