

Searching for an Alternative Information System: The Demolition of Caste

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Abstract— This issue of caste is of seminal importance in a society where it is a matter of psychological identity for functional distributive reward structure despite the inequities it breeds and the insensitivities perpetrated in the name of human progress. Individual progress becomes a clarion call only for the elites and the haves and the rest are deemed inefficient and disabled. Such a society must necessarily be functionally and structurally corrupt without any way out for individual, minority and collective redemption. Unfortunately, caste means lower caste and they are in a majority. So, economic growth indicators hide distributive injustice.

However even if we concede that poverty is falling and that economic liberalization and globalization, land reforms, industrialization and education has helped mitigate caste inequalities, progress has been slow and humiliating. This entails a reaction and thus the psychological identity and status structure gets inbuilt into the system. Reward and penalty structure breed further conflicts and strengthens overreaction generating mass movements. Such movements breeds counter movements and isolationism and erodes cooperative impulses needed for national and universal consciousness. Census is an instrument for constant and recurring social transformations to fulfill the objectives of the Constitution. However, the Indian Constitution does not talk of caste but of class consciousness that is supposed to be secular, objective and measurable. Caste is multidimensional, often tracing esoteric and unidentifiable origins and made to relate to religious aspirations of people. Deservingness of humans is attributed to gods and god fathers and so caste persists in some form or other in sub-systemic envelopes for a further super-systemic aggregation for identity formation and group conflict. It is feared that census will showcase classification and lend a stamp of permanency to perceived and attributed caste identities. It is also feared that caste will bring in alternative alignments across political

parties over the entire Indian landscape thus making political party based politics redundant, treacherous and explosive.

It is this above problematic that make for a search of an alternative paradigm imperative: a paradigm of voluntary transformation based on transparent disclosures. Every individual and social group will on its own accord give to itself identities and justify change. False claims will be tested and penalized as it serves a social purpose.

The methodology has a dual character: normative individualism of Rawls and transcendental institutionalism of Sen. The former justifies the inner and latter the outer. The second pillar of Sen's approach in his theory of Justice, that is, social realization, does not need a comparative approach and is neutral in its binary relational structures. So while Census enumerates various demographic and ethnographic details, its informational structure is subject to an interactive medium for informational focus. The process is to be overseen by a Census Commissionerate with a technological interface with possibility of uploading and revising information returned by stakeholders in the system. Any change of information has to be queried periodically by regional branches of the Commissionerate and action taken on false information to comply with citizen legitimacy.

This alternative information structure is interactive and has other supportive structures like classificatory income sources, HH size, historical consumption profiles, endowments, reputation as a public good (leadership profiles), gender profiles, dependents, children's educational status. Criteria can be worked out to measure (horizontal and vertical) mobility and acquisitions regionally, socially and economically.

While this will help focus on possible inequities based on achievement profiles, transparency disclosures provide a sense of involvement and commitment for future progress. It also shows the nature of group movements and alignments based on reward structures and potentials of progress.

Corruption is endemic to the system and human character is subject to experiments and change.

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Normative idealism provides a witness for progress based on voluntary disclosures. If the latter is lacking then there is need for retrieval of information and so possibility of high transaction costs. It is mutual interaction between the state and the individual that is the cornerstone of this technology interface for affirmative action. This is an alternative approach to information sharing in the sense that it is client or agent based not principal based.

Index Terms— Caste, normative individualism, transcendental institutionalism, commissioner of caste, information system

I. INTRODUCTION

A strict avowal of transparency for integrity and providing institutional structure thereof may not bring about transformation and distributive justice unless people are involved directly in a recurring value retrieval process. A deeply, layered, tradition bound heterogeneous structure as India, may not be impervious to change but the reflective impulses do need a prism to reveal its functional character. Caste as an instrument for social order and classification manifested more dysfunctionality in magnitude despite minority arguments for individual progress. The latter arguments hid the social interactive and experimental learning processes of the individual despite metaphysical training of the human mind available to the few. The narrow identities it bred ingrained deeply divisive forces in multitudes that a system of psychological nature like status provides. This is not to deny the functionality of status identification for linkage of chain hierarchy for work needs necessary for a technological society. The imperatives and fluidity of work and 'karma' for a functional whole need not be lost sight of. The 'envy' for the deserving and in the rewards for right work is a dysfunctionality that needs constant purgation.

This paper is divided into four sections as a matter of classification of analytical categories to provide for a possible theorization and therefore revelation of a certain methodology.

1. Issues in Caste and therefore the objectives of this paper
2. Information Technology Structure as Instrument for Self Renewal: The necessity for underlying theorization and Methodology for the argument for an alternative paradigm
3. Allowing Aid and Reservation to Reach the Needy: Operational Possibilities and Potentialities.

4. Gradual erosion of Need for Caste Identity by Internal Forces of Self regeneration as Conclusion

II. Classification and thrust to a possible theoretical Structure

A. Issues in Caste

Many ethnographic studies that reflected dimensions of caste differentiation questioned the nature and need of persistence of caste and whether caste identity is hierarchical or not. These two issues are relevant to the prime objective of this study. The issue of Caste persistence in the context of globalization, liberalization, industrialization showed the importance of psychological forces of identity formation that is supposed to work as a bulwark against uniformizing forces of modernization. Modernization was accepted as an instrument of equality and progress through competition, education and market approach via a vis estate acquisition and violent assertion of traditional power. Once identity formation for dignity and survival of Indian mind was accepted, caste through its traditional and esoteric identities became of mode of acquiring forces of production. Dubey and Desai (EPW-2011) therefore write that the narrative of inequality rung so deep that subordinated groups willingly became part of status hierarchy wherein the inequality of outcomes determined the inequalities of opportunities. The almost entire literature post 1940s reflected this relative subjugation without any possible solutions in sight till date.

Therefore the objectives are:

1. Arguments for reservation for economic upliftment is set up as a cornerstone through not providing for any hallowed permanency (traditional debates has been through its two underlying parameters, i.e. identity and material access)
2. Seeking solutions at 2 levels: Information updatment and psychological approach to identity training on the issue of religion-race-caste consciousness.
3. Data base identification through Indian Human Development Studies, Census and National sample Surveys and arguing for a Permanent Caste/identity Secretariat
4. Need to dynamize database and its transaction cost (like UID status):macro approach versus micro approach since fluidity makes for possible alternative sources of legitimacy and hierarchy. A micro approach is not an addendum but an integral part to Census participation problem. Since at least fifty sources of income are identified and incomes are sources of both identity formation and capability for material access, the role of the

Permanent Commissionerate has to oversee subaltern studies on individuals and materials providing alternative caste identities over time and regions when undergoing internal migrations.

B. Information Technology Structure as Instrument for Self Renewal: underlying theorization and Methodology for the argument for an alternative paradigm

The underlying economics of nation state formation and current boost to economic growth theory comes from regional growth prospects. Both balanced and unbalanced growth theorists have cited resource constraints as reasons for dilutions and spread of investments across different sectors and agents. Modern growth theorists are aware of need for development, accountability and measure of human capital as drivers of growth. Considering knowledge as an accumulative venture, those who start with initial endowments end up with higher rankings. So those who are left behind rarely have the opportunity to catch up or converge. State leadership therefore have the responsibility to spread endowments differentially. This serves to fulfill the test of distributive justice at differential points in time. The state needs a database and that is to be provided by the decennial Census.

Census is a state instrument for constant and recurring social transformation to fulfill the objectives of the Indian Constitution. However, it is feared that caste in census will bring in alternative alignments across political parties over the Indian landscape making political part based politics redundant, treacherous and explosive. It is this problematic that makes for a search for an alternative paradigm imperative, i.e. a paradigm of voluntary transformation based on transparent disclosures. Every individual and social group will on its own accord give to itself identities and justify change. False claims are to be tested and penalized for information architecture to serve a social purpose. While the Census can enumerate various ethnographic and demographic details, its informational structure is subject to an interactive medium for informational focus. This information architecture would comprise of stakeholders, a constantly accessible computer net interface for information status and change, compliability and confirmation. This process of citizen agent and state principal interchange is to be overseen by a Permanent and Independent Commissionerate (like Election Commissioner answerable to the constitution and subject to control by President of India) via the information technology interface with possibility of uploading and revising information returned by stakeholders in the system. Any change in information can be queried periodically by regional

branches of the Commissionerate and action taken on false information to comply with citizen legitimacy.

This alternative information structure is to be interactive and has other supportive structures like classificatory income sources, household (HH) size, dependence ratio, historical and current consumption profiles, endowments, reputation structures characterized as public good with implications drawn there-from, gender profiles, children's educational status. Criteria can be worked out to measure (horizontal and vertical) mobility and acquisitions regionally, socially and economically.

The **methodology** has a dual character: **normative individualism** of Rawls and **transcendental institutionalism** of Amartya Sen. The former justifies the inner and the latter the outer. The second pillar of Sen's approach in his theory of justice is the issue of **social realization**. This does not need a comparative approach and is neutral in its binary relational structures as Subramaniam points out (EPW-2010-May 8). The criteria of social realization can be used as citizenry happiness test at a **mature** stage of nation state evolution when all have fulfilled or have accessibility to basic food, clothing and shelter. Caste does not need to pass the homogeneity test for macroscopic social realizations. Subjective assertions will define the nature of objective definabilities.

This will help focus on possible inequities based on achievement profiles, transparency disclosures provide a sense of involvement and commitment for future progress. It will also show nature of group movements and alignments based on reward structures and potentials for progress. Multiple identity and subcaste structures will veer around a sole caste identity. Fluidity leading to agent exploitation of state will be reduced leading to lowering of transaction cost of administration though initial high capital cost of establishment and initialization will have to be borne and accounted for. Penalizing cost can be deemed as working capital expense and extracted from group formations that did not help the agent conform to truth and dignity.

C. Allowing Aid and Reservation to Reach the Needy: Operational Possibilities and Potentialities

Corruption is endemic to the system and human character is subject to experiments and change. Normative idealism provides a witness for progress based on voluntary disclosures. If the latter is lacking then there is need for retrieval of information and so possibility of high transaction costs. It is the mutual interaction between state and individual that is the cornerstone of this technology interface for affirmative action. Control structures are transcendental state

mechanisms that help to sub-serve the individual to overcome desire to align caste identity with higher income and reservation earnings and approvals.

Mr Anand's belief that 'caste inclusion (in the census) empowers the elite and marginalizes the oppressed' needs to be addressed. If there is provision for providing space for addressing injustices in caste based reservations in the technology interfaces that is of a long term or medium term nature, with a vigilant media, struggle will be even on either side, the corrupt and the other. There is no transaction cost for the other, only the culprit will be punished by group rent extraction. That brings a community dimension to quasi-judicial proceedings and reduces burden on the judiciary. Moreover subaltern power sharing is already happening, so elite legitimacy is not needed. Thus the issue of viability of power sharing is negated. Such a collective self portrait of community based living need not bring 'effacing of a Chinese micro individual' swamped by the state, even by conservative analytics. Spillovers of unintentional social realizations in manner of political dynamics and involuntary transparency disclosures and manner of tackling corruption will change the informational landscape of India.

There are further issues to be tackled though. Mr Anand's expressed that the neoliberal project modernization dispossessed people of their land and other indigenous endowments. Information need to be collected as to what region specific people lost due to industrialization processes over last 10-20 years or further. Thirdly there is the issue of logistical challenge. There will be issues of shift of people regionally or globally, numbers of additions and dependents, replacement, sacrifice, family, dent, nature of dispossessions, fluidity and fraudulence in identity formations are larger issues. A beginning needs to be made.

D. Gradual erosion of Need for Caste Identity by Internal Forces of Self regeneration as Conclusion

Dr Hajirnis in the recent conference observed that the number of caste groups for reservation is increasing rather than decreasing. This is an unfortunate development, if true. This goes against Babasaheb's concern to oversee the annihilation of caste system. This trend is like the nature of corruption in Indian economy. When decadal Amnesty schemes are introduced, the subsequent decadal announced scheme sees a 10 fold increase in unearthing of hitherto unaccounted money. If a similar issue arises in caste consciousness, it becomes the sociologist's unenviable task to expose the nexus to nip it. This census exercise is thus a continuous process. Otherwise by current estimates, if 80% of Indian society is deemed backward

as Rahul Gandhi observed in BITs Goa meet in April 2011, India will end up with more than 1005 reservation. This will be a Planning and capitalist's nightmare. But violent revolutions do not lead to a classless society as the Chinese Marxian new philosophers are hinting.

E. Attitude Survey for Policy Change

A clear information focus is an outcome of moral possibilities confronting the macro class in Feldman's long run growth, regeneration and Solovian convergence. Then constant working on attitude is necessary. For example, if basic premise of Brahmanism is people are created unequal by God, then work on evolutionary potential of the agent rather than destroy him. This is the new face of the state via the new NGOs. If a man is poverty stricken, don't go by Brahmanism, help him be self reliant. In 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' Paulo Friere says that it is important to unfold the evolutionary potential by engaging him/her in a dialogue. Nicolas Stern laments the credibility crisis of public policy. Perhaps an information voluntary transparency disclosure approach to caste issue will be a step in the right direction.

III. Inference

Good social science research ranging from economics of caste to politics of knowledge, ethnography, philosophy of caste is necessary to unravel the dysfunctionalities of any system. If caste is becoming for unleashing the monster on the new demographics, one has to provide civilized way for making it accountable in a democratic society irrespective of the initial transaction costs of a civilized society.

A quick outline of successive stages of implementation of this information architecture is in place.

1. Stages of debate and project implementation be outlined.
2. Preparation for questionnaires and stage wise investigative reporting
3. Counter the critics: Understanding of counterfactuals involved on both sides. On disagreement, make empirical surveys. Economics and history join hands here. Truth should be unraveled by holistic social science, not sociologist alone.
4. Feedback and counter feedback and historical examination of change of stakeholder's mindsets and reasons thereof.
5. Overseeing caste phasing and not caste planning. Caste annihilation be based on social realization in a post-post census phase.

Thus the issue in the caste in Census debate goes beyond a decadal effort. It is an exercise for regeneration of a big segment of a human race. Political-administrative-social-academic is a scarce commodity and needs to be nurtured holistically and not in a segmented manner as modern education purports to do.

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Apart from being an academic, he is a spiritual activist and reformer. He has delivered lectures on a diverse range of topics nationally and internationally and has published his writings and researches. It may be added here that BITS –Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus seeks an interdisciplinary focus, rather than compartmentalized education structure.

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