

Research Article

Caste System: Origin of Ideology of Exclusion

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ABSTRACT

This article is purported to examine the Nepali caste system as the unique ideology of exclusion, which has its distinctive and continuous impact on Nepal's social, political, cultural and daily life. Unfortunately, in the democratic of Nepal, caste is a criterion of making one as the part of a society. In fact, caste may be one of the prime factors with which we look at each other. It implies the idea that one's 'being' is constituted and re-constituted by the other and the other in turn constitutes the one. What is central to the suggestion is that even today, caste has not lost its ontological status. Philosophically considered, they are the explicit manifestation of two kinds of ontologies that this tradition and culture has brought forth; the first one may be called as the ontology of permanence, and the second may be called as the ontology of impermanence. Thus, there are two conceptions of reality in this culture and the philosophies and world-view in this tradition may be categorised in terms of these two categories of ontologies. This is the most formidable, intellectual, cultural, political and social anxiety that modern Nepal faces with regard to the humanisation of Nepali societies.

Keywords: Caste system, Ontology, Varna, Origin, Exclusion, Ideology

INTRODUCTION

In the context of Nepal, there is no any authentic record of the origin of caste system. One can guess that Hindu tradition based on Hindu religious textbooks like

Vedas, Mahabharata, Puranas and Manusmriti gave to the caste system. Bista (2008) guessed that the caste system in Nepal came along with Brahmanic Hinduism from Gangatic Hinduism (Bista, 2008). In this way, Gangatic basin-based Hinduism brought the existing form of the caste system to Nepal. Therefore, caste is closely connected with the Hindu philosophy and religion, custom and tradition. It is believed to have had a divine origin and sanction. It is a deeply rooted social institution in Nepal. There are more than 125 castes with all their peculiarities. In the chronological past of Nepal, caste is a living concept with a reputable history and a highly regarded prospect. It may be understood so because historically and theologically caste has been made to recognise as a social reality in all through these years by the perverted rationality that is assigned to this notion. It is socially accepted as a reality because the entire society as envisaged by Indian classical thinkers in general and *Manu* (the first human on earth) in particular is categorised under four groups, each with distinct spheres of duties and obligations (*Rig-Veda*, 10.90).

The caste system is believed, not without good reason, to have been of immemorial antiquity. Many read a kind of caste structure in the Purusha-Sukta (hymn to the Supreme Being) of Rig-Veda (*Rig* means 'praise' and Veda means 'knowledge') as describing the origin of four Varnas, (class) later transformed into castes. Although doubts exist about the status of *Purusha-Sukta* being an internal part of Rig-Veda, it is certain that a functional division of society was known at the time of the Rig-Veda (10-90).

Historically, the caste culture is seen as originating in the increasing social discrimination, segmentation and stratification of the Hindu society. The primary basis for the Hindu Aryan Varna division has long been considered the Purusha-Sukta, which was as an addendum in the tenth chapter of Rig-Veda (Koirala, 1996; Kisan 2005; Prashit 2063; Daniel, 2010). Thus, caste was justified by interpreting the Purusha-Sukta in a particular way by saying not only that differences of function in society and their interrelations are part of the natural order of things but also that attribution of their differences on the basis of births among a certain group of people are also part of the natural order. Authors like Roy (1934), Dutt (1931) and Ghurye (1960), have linked caste with racial factor. The initiation of the Indian caste structure has been credited to the Indo-Aryans and the Varnas were said to be of racial origin, diluted in course of time through race mixture and hybridisation (Gupta and Sharma, 2012).

The Hindu society is historically marked by a rigid form of social stratification based on varna-jati model of social organisation in which the Brahminical religious principle, namely purity and pollution, played a central role in defining social hierarchy and separation. The terms Varna (class) and Jati (caste) are two distinct concepts. Varna ('class' from Sanskrit, literally 'arrangement') is a supposed unification of all the Hindu sub-castes or jatis into either four groups: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra or into one of several Varna-Sankaras. Jati (caste) is an endogamous group. Generally, a sub-caste is divided into groups based on the same *Gotras*. Caste systems are traditional, hereditary systems of social stratification, such as clans, genres or the Indian caste system (Bhusan, 2006; Quigley, 2012).

TRANSFORMATION OF VARNA INTO CASTES

In Purusha-Sukta of the Rig-Veda (10-90-12), there is reference to the division of Hindu society into four classes. It mentioned Varna as four organs of Birat Purush in the head (educating) as Brahmin for intellectual works, Kshatriya for hands (war and security), Vaishya for thigh (agriculture and trading) and Sudra for feet (hardworking and technical). This division is done according to the Guna (quality) and Karma (kind of work). Guna (quality) and Karma (kind of work) determine the caste of a man. This is supported by Manu in the Manusmriti (Kisan, 2005; Prashit, 2063; Daniel, 2010).

There are three Gunas (qualities), namely, Sattva (purity), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (inertia). Sattva is white, Rajas is red and Tamas is black (Aggarwal, 2010). These three qualities are found in man in varying proportions. Sattva preponderates in some persons. They are Brahmins. They are wise persons or thinkers. They are the priests, ministers or philosophers who guide kings or rulers. In some, Rajas is predominant. They are Kshatriyas. They are warriors or men of action. They fight with the enemies or invaders and defend the country. In some, Tamas is predominant. They are Vaishyas or traders. They do business and agriculture and collect wealth. Sudras are the servants. None of these qualities is highly developed in them. They serve the other three castes. In a broad sense, a Sattvic man, who is pure and holy and leads the divine life, is a Brahmin, a Rajasic man with a heroic quality is a Kshatriya, a Rajasic man with business tendencies is a Vaishya and a Tamasic man is a Sudra (Daniel, 2010). Fox pointed out that in fact there is more than one Varna scheme of classification in Hindu society and that Varna should be understood as an ideological device which 'merges castes into larger status categories'. The distributions of particular Varna schemes help demarcate cultural

religions (Sharma, 2002). But the modern caste system is only notionally a system of Varnas (ibid.).

THE BASIS OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

The basis of caste system and its classification is the 'division of labour' (Hutton, 1963; Dumont, 1980) or what is sometimes called 'specialisation of functions'. The aim behind this classification was said to be a better service to the society as a whole. The four classes in which society came to be divided are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. Each class was expected to devote itself to the performance of duties peculiar to it—Brahmins to intellectual and spiritual pursuits; Kshatriyas to soldiering and maintenance of law and order and protection of the society from external threats and aggressions; Vaishyas to agriculture, commerce, trade, industry, animal husbandry and so on and Sudras to the service of all others (Tamrakar, 2003). All these classes could ensure perfect coherence, justice and harmony only if they worked in close liaison with one another. It was thought that such a division of labour would invariably result in greater degrees of specialisation and acquisition of skill. But in course of time, the entire scheme became so rigidly followed that it gave rise to castes and sub-castes, birth of groups, not merit, and became the right to continue in one's ancestral group. A Brahmin's son, for instance, would become a Brahmin and would be so respected. There was no corrective to this growing and governing rigidity. That is why emphasis was laid not on merit (*guna*) but on birth (*Janma*). The Varna system, although enabled the Hindu society to survive, instead of completely disappearing as many other societies had disappeared under similar conditions yet could not uphold the spirit in which it was formed (Sharma, 2002; Patra and Velessery, 2014).

As Bowes (1977) argues, it happened because a society functioning on caste rules and regulations could somehow carry on under its own steam, so to say—albeit in a state of frozenness and without any visible institutions, like churches, monasteries and so on, and it thus proved to be virtually indestructible. Besides this, there was the belief in a timeless being which through changes of progress and degeneration remains essentially the same.

THEOLOGICAL APPROVAL OF CASTE SYSTEM

Various stories from the ancient Sanskrit symbolise caste exclusion. As for instance, we have the great examples of those of Shambuk, Ekalavya and Sita. For instance, in the Ramayana, Ram killed Shambuk (Sudra) because he followed Atri's advice,

and in Mahabharata, Ekalavya (Sudra) sacrificed his finger to Guru Dronacharya as Guru's fees. The main aim of the demanding Guru fee was to deprive Ekalavya from his archery education because he was talented in archery (Prashit, 2063). This implies that Puranas aggravated the concept of discrimination. In the Vishnu Purana, food touched by a certain Sudra could be eaten by Brahmin but some other was forbidden. For example, Sudra who lays down his life, wealth and wife for service to Brahmin, then the food touched by that Sudra was regarded as worthy of being eaten by Brahmin (Kisan, 2005). In the traditional culture of Aryan, only a Brahmin (or twice-born) could practice austerity; only a Kshatriya could be a great archer. These youth were victims of social exclusion due to caste. Sita was also a victim of Hindu's caste defined patriarchy. Cast away by her husband as a result of suspicion after her great ordeal, she had no independent access to property as innumerable Nepali women do not today. She was subject to the cruel norms of the day and to the whims of her husband.

Though the Vedic texts describe a stratified society, it was not yet a caste society. The first text that had mentioned four Varna is the Purusha Sukta of the Rig Veda, which is considered relatively late (around the 10th century). This famous text Rig Veda describes the Brahmin as being born from the mouth of the primordial man, the Kshatriya from his shoulders, the Vaishya from his thighs and the Sudra from his legs/feet (Rig Veda 10-90-12). The inequality is clear that the feet normally being considered lower. Falling at a person's feet is still widely practiced in Nepal as a way of declaring one's humility before someone greater. The famous passage from the Chhandogya Upanishad, which is generally considered as text that sanctioned the philosophical and theological conditioning of one's birth declares that birth into a particular caste results from actions in a previous life, the theory of Karma.

Hence, Chhandogya Upanishad (5-10-7) affirms that

...those who are of pleasant conduct here; the prospect [in rebirth] is indeed, that they will enter a pleasant womb, either the womb of a Brahmin, or the womb of a Kshatriya or the womb of a Vaishya. But those who are of stinking conduct here, the prospect (in rebirth) is indeed that they will enter a stinking womb, either the womb of a dog (who is despised even today) or the womb of a swine, or the womb of a candela.

Strikingly, here the untouchable is equated with a dog or a pig. This, among other things makes caste system a living reality, that it is the denial of humanity to those

of castes considered 'low'. But it is the Dharmasastras and later texts which offer the fullest elaboration of caste. The Manusmriti, one of the Hindu laws, legitimated this, and hence, caste hierarchy became Dharmashastra of Manu. It has described in detail about Varnas and caste system and made it rigid hierarchy with greater privilege to the Brahmin (Ahuti, 2010). It elaborated Varnas into caste and gave duty restrictions. As a result, the difference and hierarchy among various groups widened, and Varna position, including caste, became fixed by birth and it restricted upward mobility in the Varnas system and provisioned of only for downward mobility (Poudel, 2007). Various rigid social rules legitimated and implemented the caste hierarchy and projected Dalit as untouchables.

Sudras/Dalits were considered inferior because they were born from the feet of legendary, the occupational labour division, and labelled them as lower class hardworking people. The persons who became disobedient were socially boycotted. They were considered as untouchable and they were not included into untouchable groups as Chandal and Swapach even to the subgroups (Poudel, 2007). These groups of people were kept at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. They were restricted from all the aspects of life like politics, social, culture, education and economy using the Hindu religion and books.

The show that Manusmriti fixed the caste with birth and made hierarchical. This hierarchical mindset implemented the practice of untouchability strictly. It also distributed the power and authority to the society and Sudra/Dalit were made powerless (Ahuti, 2010). Gradually, Dalits were boycotted from the religion, education, economy, politics, social, cultural and legal right and were restricted upward mobility also.

In course of time, the caste culture promoted a doctrine (Koirala, 1996) of Karma (fate), Jati Dharma (caste religion) and Kula Dharma (ancestral religion). As the time went on, the state imposed caste rules to tighten caste mobility, especially for Paninachalne Tatha (untouchable) Sudra. Currently, Nepal has both the Paninachalne Sudra and Panichalne Sudra as a product of contextual as well as relational phenomenon as a behavioural norm more than just a cultural entity (Sharma, 1980; cited Koirala, 1996).

CASTE AND ONTOLOGY

In the socio-political and cultural life of Nepal, caste is an existential reality. Nepalese people have been nourishing and practicing caste system in their daily lives. Given

the caste considerations as a reality in the socio-cultural life of Nepal, it may be acknowledged that caste is a serious determinant in the social life of Nepalese. Acknowledging the idea that caste is a shared factor in our daily life of experiences is to admit that caste is an identity factor of Nepalese life that has produced certain shades of human morphology.

It may not be philosophically viable to argue for the scientific credibility of casteism in the 21st century, yet that it does not mean that caste has lost its credibility in the social life of Nepal. In fact, caste may be one of the prime considerations with which we look at the each other (Bhumali, 2007). It purports to the idea that my 'being' is constituted and re-constituted by the other and the other in turn constitutes the 'me'. What is central to the suggestion is that even today, caste has not lost its ontological status.

Consider a typical a poor Dalit from the remotest area of a village side. The wide nostrils, the thick lips, the black figure, the untidy clothes and the overall undernourished body and mind are typically considered as a remark of the upper castes towards the Dalits. It means that our conception on the idea of a lower caste person is particularised with a perceptual blink that he/she is shabbily dressed or he/she has a shabby look. This may be said to be the unique existential reality of Nepali upper castes whose approximations on the 'idea' of lower castes is crammed with a normative value; it also points to the idea that that caste is the basis of solidarities and collective identities and pointed towards the search for an unusual exploration into the meanings of beings which is central to the experiential metaphysics of Nepali world-view and philosophy. What is central to the ontological issue of the meaning of being in this culture is founded on the understanding that all beings are conditioned and patterned by the structural determinants of 'Being itself'. Thus, Nepali ontology is centred on the fundamental question on the understanding of what being is. Defined from the aspect of *being*, caste may be regarded as the historically and culturally located categorisation of human persons involving certain visual determinants such as colour, ascribed social stigma, stark poverty, ancestry, outside perception, habits and practices and so on. In fact, caste considerations got their metaphysical validity and efficacy through the medium of human cognition, which has been considered as philosophy in caste system (Velassery, 2005; Ahuti, 2010). Hence, it may be stated that 'If this is the social *ontology* that demarcated a social division of labour in terms of "functions" as well as by the "colour", then we may say that social *ontology* has paved way for social exclusion too in Nepal'.

Philosophically considered, they are the explicit manifestation of two kinds of ontologies that this tradition and culture has brought forth; the first one may be called as the ontology of permanence and the second may be called the *ontology* of impermanence. Thus, there are two conceptions of reality in this culture and therefore the philosophies and world-view in this tradition may be categorised in terms of these two categories of *ontologies*.

EXCLUSION IDEOLOGY

When we look at the philosophical milieu of caste system as a force that engineered diverse sections of society even during the independence struggle, there are certain factors that demand a thorough critical observation. Though some personalities (social and political leaders) were methodically opposed by a section of individuals who were also pioneers in their respective fields, yet they could not make headway to the lives of poor Dalits. It makes one to think that the possibilities of understanding the issue of caste system lie beyond merely the social-cultural structures of Nepali societies. What are evident are the philosophical settings in caste exclusion, which has certain peculiar and uncharacteristic features such as the faith and the meaning character that is implied in it. It is certainly a fact that caste system is predominantly based on an ideology of 'exclusion' where the human self constructs its own hierarchy and differences (Sharma, 2002). The problem of the 'realistic image of a lower caste person' and his alienation and aloofness in a caste ridden society like ours provokes trouble in his relation to the human community which imposes itself as one of the central questions concerning the Nepali society. More often than not, our countrymen as public persons/citizens assign priority to their identities not as free and equal individuals but on a solidarity which is built out of an awareness of distinction where an 'us' is opposed to a 'them', which is exclusively based on one's caste identification.

Let us start with a provocative statement that our understanding, conception and attitude towards Dalits are based on an implicit faith, which underlines the idea that the upper castes people are superior due to their race, look and colour. In fact, most of the upper caste people's approach and attitude towards the Dalits are based on a contemptuous feeling. In other words, we search for an abortive meaning in the very existence of Dalit as a person and thus accord a futile search for identity, appreciation and recognition (Patra and Velessery, 2014).

Although caste system in its historical beginnings was a justificatory device providing an ideological justification for the constellations of political, social, cultural and

economic power which was devised in suppressing a huge section of individuals, gradually the idea of the superior caste was heightened and deepened in meaning and value so that it pointed beyond the historical structures of relation in which it emerged to human existence itself (Shah, 2012, p.109-138). The alleged superior caste became and persisted as a centre of value and an object of devotion, which has reference to some sort of content. In Nepal, multitudes of men have been gaining their sense of the 'power of *being*' from their membership in the superior caste almost like the accredited membership of certain elite clubs. Thus, the most deprived member of the superior caste-say for instance a Brahmin-culturally, socially and even politically is able to think of himself as better than a lower caste. Thus, caste system is transformed into an active state of consciousness in this country which may not be described in terms of the given, but is a subjective response to the given.

CASTE SYSTEM AND BELIEF

The casteist relies on his caste as the source of his personal value. His life gets meaning and worth because he is part of the particular caste. He fits into and merges with a valuable whole, the caste itself. As the value centre, the caste is the source of value for him as well as the object of his value. No question can be raised about the rightness or the wrongness of the caste: it is the value-centre, which throws light on all other values.

When the casteist is also a Hindu, which is often the case in Nepal, he is frequently a polytheist. Historically, in polytheist faiths, various gods have controlled various spheres of authority. Thus, a casteist may think that he lives under the requirements of *Sruti* and *Smriti* in the areas of his life. But whenever matters of caste impinge on his life, in every area so affected, the matter of caste determines his attitude, decision and action.

Accordingly, the casteist asserts that the whole field of caste relations is an area with which religion has nothing to do or say; for instance, a Brahmin and a Dalit believe in the same gods and products of the same religion. When pressed for a positive statement of the matter, they say that segregationist caste practices are merely moral expressions of private preference. They completely overlook the fact that caste relations are structured and patterned as a system, which is not only enforced by the social mores but by the institutional policy over the country either by law or by public policy. The judgement that caste relations involve moral forms of behaviour means in effect that inter-caste practices are beyond the reach of Hindu moral ideas and norms.

For a long time, casteist ideas and practices were viewed by morally sensitive people as nothing more than an expression of cultural lag and products of inheritance. Because caste hostility is one of the forms of human conflict in Nepal, many have sought to understand casteism wholly in terms of political, economic and cultural factors.

CASTE SYSTEM AS HUMAN ALIENATION

The faith character of caste system makes it in its final and complete forms of human alienation. Caste system can be regarded as the prototype of all type of human alienation. It is one form of human conflict that divides human beings as human beings. From a strictly philosophical point of view, what the casteist glorifies in himself is his personhood. What he hates and rejects in members of Dalit castes is precisely this aspect of human personhood/self. Although the casteist line of demarcation and hostility inevitably finds expression through the institution of society, it is not primarily a cultural, political or economic boundary. Rather, it is a boundary of alienation in the order of human person as such.

In view of the above considerations, it may be stated that the basic casteist affirmation of superiority, on the one hand, and inferiority on the other, is not an empirical generalisation as is commonly supposed by the sociologist or political scientist. Rather, it is an affirmation concerning the fundamental nature of human beings. It is a declaration of faith that is neither supported nor weakened by any objective body of facts. It is an expression of the will to believe, for the casteist attitude is supported and enhanced by a will to believe. One of the factors that make caste system a reality is the mental function of perceiving significance in one's will to believe. Perception of significance consists in relating the individual with a particular concept or percept. It is because we are capable of perceiving significance that our casteist consciousness and attitude become homely and those we are able to inhabit in and cope with it.

Significance is a relational concept. It is neither totally subjective nor objective. A universe devoid of consciousness would be neither significant nor non-significant. An object, situation, person or group becomes significant when it enters into a relation to consciousness; object, persons and situations are significant to consciousness. The fundamental casteist affirmation that the so-called superior caste is pure and glorious as to his being and the lower caste *Sudra* is defective and depraved as to his being is the outcome of such a consciousness. Any conclusive statement that the casteist makes regarding the cultural and social achievement of

the superior caste or the inferior caste is based on this prior judgement concerning human being.

DESEGREGATION AND INTEGRATION

In the field of caste relation, Nepali society is in a state of continuous change. Social change has been going fast since 1990. The society is and has been to a great degree a colour-caste society, the terms desegregation and integration are worthy to be examined. These terms belong together, but they do not mean the same. Desegregation refers to a process-the elimination of compulsory segregation. Desegregation may be voluntary or involuntary. It is voluntary when those who administer and make the policies in an institution, freely decide to change its policy from one of caste exclusion to one of caste inclusion. It is involuntary when law, judicial decision or public pressure requires such a change. Integration refers to a rectified condition of community, involving mutuality, reciprocity and respect among persons. The terms belong together because in a caste segregated society, by and large, people of different caste groups lack the simple conditions and experience of togetherness upon which integration can exist without the prior process of desegregation.

Desegregation is referred to as a prior process because the more 'mixing' of the caste is not integration. There is much desegregation now in Nepal but little integration. Integration requires more of persons than the mere removal of the external barriers and distances that separate them. But the transition from a segregated to an integrated society cannot be made without the process of removing the external barriers.

An integrated society is one in which there is a sense of a will toward the common good. The common good is received through and communicated by persons. This means that an integrated society is one in which the individual person comes alive. It is not really the group, which accepts or respect another group, but it is rather a community of persons who accept and respect each other. In such a society, all definitions of function and opportunity presuppose the equal dignity of persons. Humans are thus able in defining tastes to focus on those qualities of the individual person, which are really related to performance, namely, talent, training, knowledge and skill. Extraneous reasons such as the question 'what is your caste?' do not enter into the decision as to whether a man shall be permitted to join as a Lecturer in a University/College. His appointment rests on such criteria as his individual character, ability and the quality of his training.

In a caste segregated society, parochialism and prideful separation are normative values. When some people fail to interiorise these values, they are forced by law 'to keep step' in their external behaviour. Thus, an upper caste person is required by law to relate to the 'lower caste' man as a person. An objection here may rightly be raised that an authentic community does not exist anywhere on a larger scale in the globe, let alone Nepal, and accordingly, a truly integrated society with or without a history of caste alienation is an ideal. But to say this is not to dismiss such a society as a human requirement. Man never fully achieves any of his ideals that have the quality of the transcendent, but they are nevertheless incumbent upon him. The society is never fully realised, however, can be in a process of realisation of its ideal of the common good.

CONCLUSION

It has been examining the basic problematic in the ideology of exclusion by considering the issue of caste system in Nepal. A widely applied and frequently contested model for system of birth ascribed rank is that of 'caste', deriving from the example of Hindu Philosophy. If one requires a specifically Hindu rationale of purity and pollution and/or endogamy and strict universal occupational specialisation, the one restrict caste to only regions and groups where the society on Nepal is based on traditional Hindu value system and which is very hard to get similar situation and position within the Hindu world. The rules that define purity and impurity, varies certain regional and historical setting which create fundamental problem to define the caste within this narrow sense.

Nepalese have been nourishing and practicing casteist considerations in their daily lives. It may be acknowledged that caste is a serious determinant in the social life of people. Acknowledging the idea that caste is a shared factor in our daily life of experiences is to admit that caste is an identity factor of Nepalese life that has produced certain shades of human morphology. Although it may not be philosophically viable to argue for the scientific credibility of caste system in the 21st century, it does not mean that caste has lost its credibility in the social life of Nepal. In fact, caste is one of the prime considerations with which we look at the each other. It purports to the idea that one '*being*' is constituted and reconstituted by the other and the other in turn constitutes the one.

Caste identifications have been causally associated with one's history, his/her ancestral background, perception of oneself by oneself and the perception of others toward oneself and so on. It is also true that caste identifications have external as

well as internal proportions which work as identifying factors to denote someone as belonging to a particular caste.

In the Hindu as well as Nepalese social life, this problem of identity is expressed in two ways: (a) how do we express the identity of a lower caste person vis-à-vis the upper caste person? and (b) how do we express our social identities in the context of other societies? The former is called individual identity and the latter is known as multiple identities. In the Nepalese social and cultural life, it becomes difficult to define the identity of a lower caste person as an individual.

The so-called superior castes such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas could approximate themselves as equals and hence as like oneself. In this case, the other's caste identity may be denied either at the level of existential practices or at that of cultural practices. Thus, knowingly or unknowingly, in our culture and civilisation, the superior castes had formed an identity in their existential and cultural practices. Here, subjection and assimilation of the superior castes among themselves reflect the same consideration toward the other, so to say the Dalit as Other-as Object.

Thus, caste-based hierarchy and exclusion in Nepal affects the people by constraining them to accept lower positions and conditions of work embedded with oppression and exploitation. On the other hand, caste-based discrimination, be it state or private level, provide a ground for various movements to emancipate the oppressed. Caste is not today what it was before 1960; and it has not become completely class of it. It is also true that a dominant caste has not necessarily a part of the dominant class.

Sum up by stating that these caste identities and its socio-cultural determinations have occurred at three levels according to their historical emergence. They are (i) an axiological level according to whether the other is my equal, my superior or my inferior; (ii) a praxeological level distancing or approaching the other, going from submission to the other to other's submission or fall into undifferentiated neutrality and (iii) an epistemic level with endless gradation between the lower and highest states of knowledge regarding the other's identity.

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