

Research Article

Inequality and Exclusion Based on Caste in Relief and Rehabilitation after Flood in Bihar

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ABSTRACT

Caste system is an important feature of Indian society. Even in the perilous condition of livelihood after flood, the concept of purity and pollution is not negligible. *Government's oblivious attitude to provide relief funds in nonchalant manner without mapping the need of victim and the pre-existing discrimination based on caste has led to 'caste blindness' during the rehabilitation phase by the agencies. Therefore, this study unearths discrimination based on caste and marginalisation of the Mahadalit during the relief and rehabilitation phase.* This study is based on a sample of randomly drawn 472 households from the river basins of Ganga and Kosi in the district of Bhagalpur, Bihar. The method used was multivariate analysis of variance to analyse and interpret the discrimination faced by lower castes in the hands of upper caste and donor agencies after flood in Bihar. The method of focus group discussion was applied to know about the suppression of Mahadalit during rehabilitation. *The result shows that scheduled caste are deprived of equal relief material and fund. They are discriminated and suppressed in rehabilitation phase even by donor agencies, which is dominated by upper caste. The study suggests that a commission may be established to interrogate about the need of lower-caste victim and avoid any discrimination on the ground of caste divide.*

Keywords: Purity, pollution, marginalisation, mahadalit, discrimination

INTRODUCTION

Disaster management cycle consists of three phases: before, during and after (Fig. 1). The 'before' phase is the period of disaster when preparedness and mitigation is made in anticipation. The 'during' phase is the emergency time in which disaster occurs. In this phase, immediate responses and helps are provided. The last phase



Fig. 1: Different Phases of Disaster

is the 'after' phase in which recovery and rehabilitation is undertaken. The aim of the recovery phase is to restore livelihood of the affected area and reinstate normalcy.

In the planning, rehabilitation and (re)construction phase different agencies collaborate with the government to facilitate rehabilitation based on the impact of disaster. These agencies provide relief material such as water supply, sanitation facilities, health facilities, construction of schools and roads, etc. However, these agencies and government organisations focus on providing instant relief to the population affected but overlook the fact that there is disparity within population and socially constructed discrimination which generate difference in vulnerability and thus, in access to these relief material. The social discrimination and segregation that has grabbed the society for long has its influence after disaster. Exclusion and marginalisation of some groups due to caste inequality is also carried during the help and support provided in rehabilitation phase. In Bihar, caste functions from top to bottom in every core of the system and has throttlehold on the society but discrimination remains unchecked after crisis.

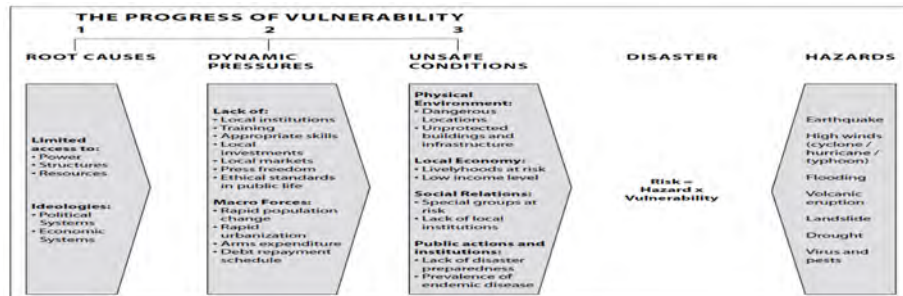
According to M. N. Srinivas (1962) caste is 'a hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group, having a traditional association with an occupation, and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes'. The caste system is dynamic in nature (Srinivas 1955), and thus, the concept of 'dominant caste' emerges due to preponderant economic and political power, high status, education and large population of upper caste (*ibid.*). As a result, lower caste are socially, economically and politically marginalised (Srinivas 1996). In India, marginalised groups live separately from the other caste and suffer from extreme poverty and social restrictions. Furthermore, discrimination and segregation is also maintained during emergency and in relief and rehabilitation phase after disaster. A rapid survey of

the flood-affected regions of Bihar, conducted by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights concluded that Dalits were the worst hit by flooding. According to the report of newspaper *Hindustan Times* (August 10, 2013), in the rehabilitation camp after flood Mahadalits were kept away from official relief camp (Kumar 2013). There was discrimination in providing relief material. The relief material provided to lower caste was in less quantity and reached late in comparison with other caste. According to the report of Randeep Ramesh (theguardian. com, Tuesday 2 September 2008) 'Relief supplies in Bihar are going to the higher caste first, ignoring plight of the most desperate'. According to BBC NEWS (12 September 2008), 'some of the victims face the additional hardships that come from being member of lower caste community'. The newspaper report says that lower caste is deprived from accessing relief material in rehabilitation period.

Not only there is segregation between upper and lower caste but the concept of 'sacred' and 'profane' is also upheld within the other backward castes (OBCs) who maintain distance from Mahadalit. They are marginalised during normal days, and even after crisis, there is discrimination in accessing help and assistance, and relief material. Therefore, the lack of understanding of this discrimination during the rehabilitation period after disaster obstructs government initiatives and programmes from being successful.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Disaster research emphasises the harmful impact of disaster on livelihood, and perception and behaviour of households exposed to disaster (Daniel *et al.* 2006). Whereas the classical sociological study focus on the evolution of 'therapeutic or altruistic' community which help them to overcome the harmful consequence of disaster by providing help and support in the reconstruction phase. Therefore the studies focus on disaster impact, perception and behaviour of people during disaster and their coping measures. However the damaging effect not only differs due to intensity of flood but susceptibility and capacity to recover is not similar to all households. Furthermore, there is both physical and human dimension to 'natural disasters' (Pelling 2001). The vulnerability of community or group differs within the community according to the pre-existing condition of its constituting group. The preceding discrimination in the community is determined by the prevailing socio-economic and political condition. According to the Sphere Handbook (2011), 'The physical, social, environmental, and political factors caused difference in vulnerability after disaster'. Some groups are marginalised more than others are due to difference in ethnicity, age, sex, disability, class or caste, political affiliations or religion. However, all these factors are shaped by the social stratification and inequality embedded in the society. Thus, social inequality is shaped by political, economic and institutional factors (Watts and Bohle 1993; Blaikie *et al.* 1994).



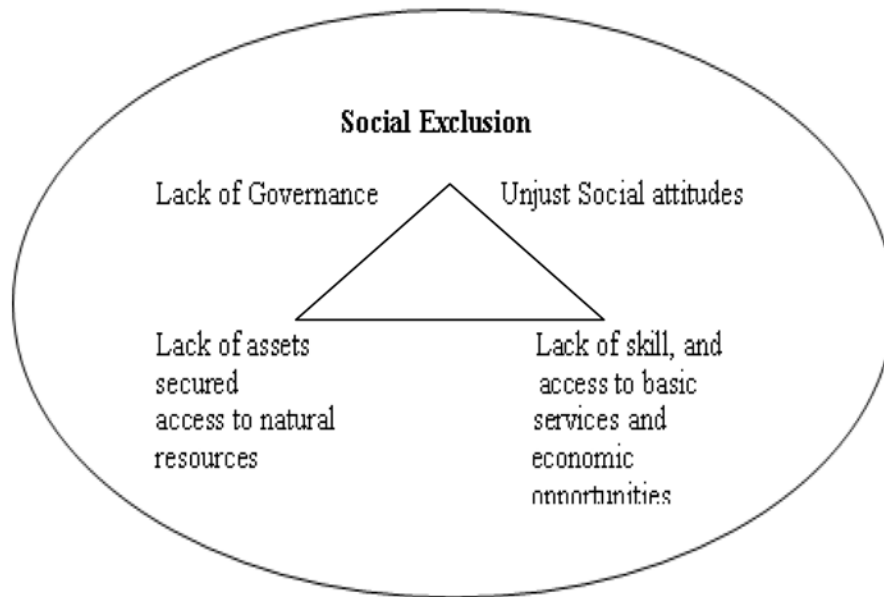
Source: Blaikie et al. (1994, 24)

Fig. 2: Pressure and Release Model

The root cause of the vulnerability is limited access to power, structures and resources, as well as vulnerabilities formed through specific political and economic ideologies, according to pressure and release model (Fig. 2) (*ibid.*). Therefore, the root cause and the dynamic pressure make some groups more susceptible than others. This difference has its foundation in inequitable social structure (Anderson 1996; Peacock *et al.* 1997).

The social construction of natural disasters (World Bank 2010) result from inequalities in society that leads to vulnerability of certain groups, which are more exposed to risk (McLaughlin and Dietz 2007). The disjunction between the sacred and profane structure of social inequality within caste, differentiates it from other forms of social discrimination. Social inequalities on caste basis create 'hierarchical polarity' and 'institutionalised inequality' (Dumont 1970), which leads to difference in their vulnerability in the same social structure affected by disaster. The level of vulnerability differs with the type of the population affected by disaster (Zhou *et al.* 2010). Vulnerability differs on caste basis due to long-term deprivation, which suppresses their capability to cope and recover from disaster. The occurrence of disaster further add despair to the unstable condition of majority of lower-caste population who live below poverty line with minimum income, and employment opportunities, deprived of education and health facilities and, thus are comparatively more vulnerable than upper caste. The groups, which are at risk, are more vulnerable to disaster and slower in recovering from it (Langer 2004), according to oppression theory of Fanon (1963). In these groups, livelihood condition is insecure with limited access to resources, and less concern for government action and intervention. The root causes led to particular forms of insecurity and transform it into unsafe condition (Blaikie *et al.* 1994). This led to social exclusion of some groups in comparison with others.

According to Piron and Curran (2005), 'Exclusion is defined with reference to groups of people who are excluded from social, political and economic processes



Source: Singh and Faleiro (2013)

Fig. 3: Factor Responsible for Vulnerability

and institutions on the basis of their social identity and who experience to a greater or lesser degree significant poverty impact as a result of their exclusion. 'Exclusion also led to deprivation, deficiency and dispossession. The interrelationship between social exclusion and lack of skills and basic services further leads to lack of asset and resources. Socially excluded groups are also disadvantaged in term of household amenities, landholding and deprived from socioeconomic and political partaking. According to Action Aid (2013), vulnerability consists of three factors (Singh and Faleiro 2013) (Fig 3):

1. Social exclusion;
2. Lack of skills, access to basic services and economic opportunities; and
3. Lack of assets and secured access to natural resources

Social exclusion is a manifestation of vulnerability (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux 2008). Social exclusion means fully or partially isolated from the main socio-economic and political system (Walker and Walker 1997). The groups, which are oppressed and discriminated, in the society gradually, accept it, as a part of their life and work in their own subordination (Desai and Dubey 2011; Gerth and Mills 1946; Dumont 1980). However, the concept of social exclusion on caste basis is

inconsistent with Weberian approach of caste hierarchy, which emphasises that the subordinate group slowly recognises and accepts their own lower social status. Moreover, social exclusion based on caste discrimination is a 'spiral of precariousness', where one form of deprivation leads to others (Paugam 1996) and encumber the path of lower caste to overcome deprivation and inequality within social, economic, political sphere of society. Social exclusion based on caste is the 'outcomes and processes of deprivation', which has been continuing in the society for long (Haan 1999). The socially excluded caste groups are suppressed (Béland and Hansen 2000) or disabled to participate in the mainstreaming function of society itself (Kabeer 2000; Percy-Smith 2000).

Social exclusion and marginalisation combined with some discriminatory practices result in social exclusion of some groups like lower caste by exploitation and oppression. The iniquitous economic arrangements or asymmetric distribution of power in the society, poverty and deprivation helps in the persistence of discrimination and exclusion. Unequal distribution of income, wealth, resources and opportunities push them back to poverty. Dalit are underprivileged in all social, economic and political fronts, which lead to their misery, discrimination, exploitation and oppression by the caste-dominated society.

The *Manusmriti* defined 'caste' based on theory of transmigration of the soul and of karma (rebirth) and dharma (duty). The Varna model divides the Hindu society into four castes: the Brahmins, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Sudras. The hierarchy of caste are in order of occupation that is ascribe to them. The first three castes are considered twice born or 'dvija' and they entitled to use the sacred thread, which is forbidden for the Sudras. Sudras are also called scheduled castes (SCs), outcaste, harijan, untouchable, mlechhasor and Dalit. They are the lowest in the hierarchy and are supposed to serve upper caste by cultivating their land, doing menial jobs and in return, upper caste helps them to survive. To maintain the system divided by occupation, the conception of 'purity' and 'pollution' is added to it. The SCs are mainly agricultural labourer with small landholding, sharecropper or tenant (Mohanty 2001).

The SCs and scheduled tribes (STs) are deprived on the indicators of social, economic, education and health even after 67 years of independence. The legislation and provisions of the government though fruitful in the upliftment, can be accessed by a small portion of well-off SC and ST. Programmes and penalty laws to prevent the atrocities against lower caste can control the crime committed against them to certain extent but cannot change the very base of social relation of the society (Beteille 1965) which ascribe them the dissimilar duty and monopoly of upper caste against lower caste in all realm of life. The dominant caste's strong position does not let lower castes to avail their rights. In the words of Parliamentary

Standing Committee, 'generally SC/ST people avoided reporting crimes and fighting cases just to escape police harassment and fear of cases languishing in courts for long'.

A study conducted by the National Commission for SCs and STs (1990) emphasised that various factors were responsible for atrocities. These include economic causes such as land disputes, land alienation, bonded labour, indebtedness, non-payment of minimum wages as well as noneconomic causes such as caste prejudice and practice of untouchability, deep-rooted social resentment, political factions on caste lines and refusal to perform (formerly traditional) services like digging burial pits, arranging cremations, removal of the carcasses of dead animals, beating of drum, etc. Bihar is fifth and eleventh, compared to other states, in terms of crime against SC and ST. In 2007, sixty-five incidents of crime against SCs and STs were recorded in the state. The crime rate (i.e., number of crime incidences per lakh population) was 18.71 and 7.48 for SC and ST, respectively, in Bihar. The corresponding crime figure at all-India level was 16.35 and 5.87. The crime rate against SC/ST in the state is thus higher than the all-India average. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, Bihar had witnessed the highest number of caste-based crimes in the country in 2011.

According to the 61st round of National Sample Survey (Report on 'Employment and Unemployment Situation among Social Groups in India', 2004–05), the SCs have the lowest possession of land holding. According to the agricultural census (2005–06), the concentration of marginal holdings in Bihar is very high in the case of SCs (95%) and STs (88%). Table 1 presents the distribution of individual and joint holdings of SCs and STs in Bihar and the cumulative land area enclosed by the holdings at different levels of aggregation. It indicates that 79.3 percent of all individual and joint holdings of SCs are concentrated within only 3.98 percent of the total area enclosed by the individual and joint holdings of all social groups. The Revenue and Land Reforms Department, Government of Bihar emphasised that 2, 10, 437 Mahadalits did not have homestead land. According to a report of Department of Labor Resources, Government of Bihar (ref. letter no. 5/ *ShramStha*. 3-21/2007-2156), the bonded labour supported for rehabilitation during 2011–12 is nearly 26.08 per cent (60 out of 230), which shows the economic hardship of SCs. The report also highlights the minimum wage of SCs and employment of child labour. According to Planning Commission report (2011–12), the STs (47.4%) suffer the highest level of poverty among social groups in rural areas, followed by SCs (42.3%) and OBCs (31.9%) as against 33.8 per cent for all classes. The OBCs, SCs and STs are poorer by more than 10 percent and 15 percent point comparatively.

Table 1: Landholdings by Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe

S. No.	Size of the Holdings (in Hectares)	Total No. of Holdings	Cumulative Percentage of Holdings (%)	Area (in '00 Hectares)	Cumulative Percentage of Area Out of the Area Enclosed by Holdings of Social Groups (%)
1	Below 0.5	1367079	79.33	2475	3.9
2	0.5 – 1.0	266905	9.48	1706	6.7
3	1.0 – 2.0	73319	99.0	907	8.1
4	2.0 – 3.0	11352	99.7	263	8.6
5	3.0 – 4.0	3775	99.9	126	8.9
6	4.0 – 5.0	568	99.9	24	8.9
7	5.0 – 7.5	87	99.9	6	8.8
8	7.5 – 10.0	21	99.9	2	8.8
9	10.0 – 20.0	6	99.9	1	8.8
10	20 and above	3	100.0	1	8.8
All classes		1723115		5512	

Source: Agriculture Census, Government of India 2005–2006

The deprivation and pitiable condition of the SCs also enforce their children to leave school early and support their parents in work. This has led to high dropout rate of the SCs at primary level, upper primary and secondary level are higher than other caste too (1.2) (Table 2). However, this differs in different districts of the state of Bihar.

Table 2: Dropout Rates at Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary Levels

Year	Primary (1–V)			Upper Primary (1–VIII)			Secondary(I–X)		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Scheduled Caste									
2004–2005	56.1	54.6	55.2	82.7	80.2	81.1	90.8	89.1	89.5
2005–2006	59.4	56.2	57.4	79.9	78.2	78.8	92.7	89.1	90.4
2006–2007	51.2	51.6	51.5	77.8	72.8	72.8	86.7	85.4	85.9
2007–2008	51.0	53.3	52.4	70.3	71.8	71.2	86.0	83.0	84.1
2008–2009	49.5	50.5	50.1	69.4	70.5	70.1	83.2	82.8	83.0
2009–2010	49.7	50.9	50.4	69.8	72.7	71.6	80.7	81.4	81.1

Source: Department of Education, Government of Bihar (2012)

Table 3: Early Childhood Mortality Rate by Socioeconomic Background

Caste/Tribe	Neo-Natal Mortality Rate	Infant Mortality Rate	Under-5 Mortality Rate
Scheduled caste	46	66	88
Scheduled tribe	40	62	96
Other backward caste	38	56	73
Others	35	49	59
All	39	57	74

Source: National Family Health Survey3

Health is also an important indicator, which also shows the socio-economic backwardness of SCs. According to National Family Health Survey III report on the relative levels of achievement of millennium development goals in India, critical indicators reflecting the early childhood rates in India is higher for SC and ST children compared with children of other social groups (Table 3). Vulnerability seems most acute in the case of SCs and STs in terms of neo-natal mortality rate, infant mortality rate and under-5-year child mortality rate. The indicators show the exclusion and backwardness of these social groups from the mainstream of development. Across social groups in Bihar, the percentage of children categorised as undernourished was higher among SC community. As per data of National Family Health Survey (NFHS) II reports 71.8 percent of women were anaemic in comparison with 67.4 percent of OBC and 64.1 percent of women from other castes.

This culture of discrimination describes ethos of Indian society at the time of crisis. The concept of purity and pollution is maintained even after disaster by upper caste (Subramaniam 2006) and any breakdown of the ritual and trait can malign the purity (Chakravarti 2003). The deeply ingrained social inequality and social exclusion of lower caste also have implications during relief and rehabilitation. The relief programme without the knowledge and involvement of the marginalised and oppressed lower caste cannot be successful in their operation. Caste-based discrimination is not only rampant but it has adapted to new socio-economic realities and has taken new forms (Shah *et al.* 2006). However, only a small fraction of SC population is educated and majority of them live in rural areas agriculture labourers (Shukla and Verma 1993; quoted in Bayly 2001) and are deprived of income and literacy (Bayly 2001). Accordingly, their suffering is also more in the aftermath of disasters in comparison with the dominant caste (Norris and Alegria 2006) due to unequal access to resources, according to social ecology theory. The privileges of programme and policy of the government is

availed by the creamy layer of the SCs, and a vast population is still dispossessed of basic human rights.

The difference of vulnerability due to prevailing inequality within caste structure of society also determines its resilience capacity. Caste discrimination, which persists in Indian society, is enhanced at the time of crisis. The fragile socio-economic condition of Dalit often deteriorates their coping capacities due to lower income, less saving and unemployment (Peacock *et al.* 1997). The lower-caste victims face more difficulties in recovery than upper caste (Fothergill *et al.* 1999). The occurrence of the Gujarat earthquake (2001), tsunami (2004), Bihar floods (2007 and 2008), Assam floods (2009), Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka (2009), tsunami in Tamil Nadu (2004) and Odisha super cyclone (1999) have highlighted the inherent discrimination of caste, which multiplied after disaster. Dalits are ignored and excluded by the agencies providing relief and rehabilitation materials (Chatterjee *et al.* 2010). In post-tsunami recovery operations in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, agencies implementing disaster programmes acted on the caste divide (Gill 2007). Nevertheless, there is paucity of empirical study of discrimination on caste basis in relief and rehabilitation phase after flood. Furthermore, the relief provided by Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief (EFICOR), *East Cooper Community Outreach* (ECCO) and Europe Aid to the state and NGOs for rehabilitation after flood in Bihar did not ensure that it might be reached in equitable ground to everyone who is affected by flood without any discrimination. The SCs, which endure the inequality imposed by the social system, rotate in spiral of deprivation and poverty, and depilated health condition, which further drag them further into worst conditions. The government relief-providing agencies, which are dominated by upper caste, further add to it by promoting discrimination based on caste inequality in providing relief fund. The relief fund provided by the government and the concerned agencies without the knowledge of vulnerability, and mapping the discrimination and segregation of caste in the context of disaster deprived the marginalised section from help and support. The programme of the government to serve the need of donors agencies visualise the disaster-affected population as a whole but in Indian society the deeply rooted inequality has divided community into different sections. In the caste-ridden society of India, discrimination in disaster response is highly predictable; discrimination practice in everyday life is also carried out after disaster. The programme without ensuring the need of the different sections of the victims cannot be made successful. Therefore, the caste system that is ingrained in Indian society further proliferate the problem even in the hazardous condition after disaster and thus, make lower caste more vulnerable and less resilient. The discrimination based on caste is not taken into consideration in disaster mitigation and preparedness.

In this background, the research objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the discrimination and exclusion based on caste during relief and rehabilitation phase.
2. To unearth the discrimination faced by Mahadalit, and
3. To develop strategy and mitigation method based on social inequality in the society.

According to Census 2011, Dalits constitute nearly 15 percent of Bihar 104 million populations. Backward castes in Bihar are divided into two categories extremely backward caste (EBCs) and OBCs. EBCs include 109 groups and account for 32 percent of the population, and OBCs include 32 groups and account for 20 percent of the population (Deshingkar *et al.* 2006). The latter includes Yadavs, Kurmis, Baniasand, and Koeris. After independence, Bihar was the first state in the country to constitute Mahadalit (a special category of poorest among Dalit created by government to provide special benefits to them) commission to envisage the status of the neglected sub-castes among Dalit and suggest ways to uplift them, but there is not much improvement in the condition. According to the Constitution of India, there are twenty-two SCs in Bihar called Mahadalit. In all these caste, the percentage of Bhuiya, Dom, Musahar, Dhobi, Pasi and Chamar are more than other caste. This study was carried out in Bhagalpur district of Bihar in the year 2013. Table 4 shows the number of SCs in Bhagalpur district of Bihar.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance was performed to investigate caste differences in accessing relief and rehabilitation. The independent variable 'caste' was categorised into different groups: Group1: OBC; Group 2: General Caste; Group 3: SC; and Group 4: ST. The dependent variable on which the discrimination in relief and rehabilitation after disaster is measured are problem in accessing medical service, emergency service like rescue boat, in accessing drinking water and sanitation, in registration for relief fund, in accessing food, in accessing relief material, threat by others in accessing common shelter, problem in accessing common toilet, facing abuse, sexual harassment and physical assault, problem of looting after flood, forcefully made to do work and problem of sharing shelter.

Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance–covariance matrices and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. MANOVA was used to analyse and interpret the data. There was a statistically significant difference between OBCs, general caste, SCs and STs on the dependent variables: $F(36,$

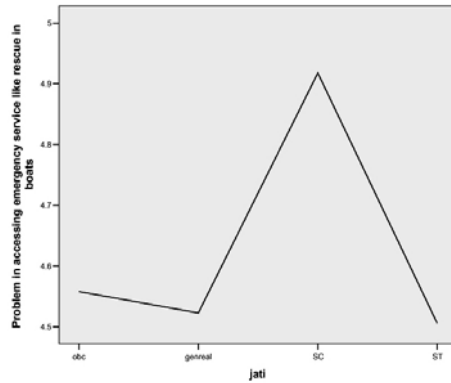
Table 4: Percentage of Scheduled Caste in Bhagalpur District of Bihar

Caste	Number of the caste in Bhagalpur
Bantar	554
Bauri	5
Bhogta	4
Bhuiya	4973
Chaupal	66
Dabgar	0
Dhom, Dhangad	4240
Ghasi	5
Halalkaor	338
Hari, MahtarBhang	554
Kanjar	5
Kurariar	4
Musahar	25817
Nat	716
Pan, Sawasi	142
Rajwar	82
Turi	793
Dhobi	22304
Pasi	11805
Chamar	104164
Total	176020

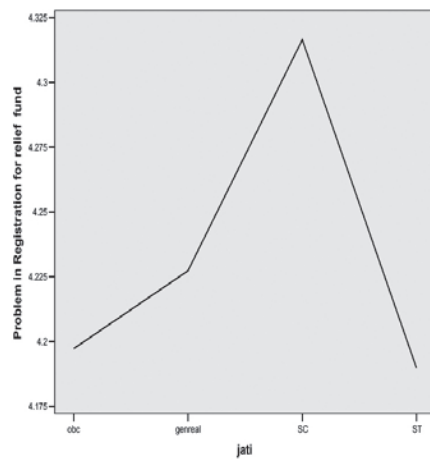
1350) = 3.57, $p = .004$; Wilks' Lambda = .84; partial eta squared = .05. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, using Bonferroni adjusted alpha level the dependent variable, i.e., problem in accessing drinking water and looting after flood, abuse, sexual harassment and physical assault did not reach statistical significance. Figure 4 shows the result of MANOVA of different caste on various measures of discrimination.

The findings of this study show that the inequality and discrimination during relief and rehabilitation period was executed in varied way. Lower caste was vulnerable and socially excluded groups within a vulnerable population. Caste favouritism was carried out in many ways during the rescue process. In the aftermath of flood, emergency help was provided but accessibility to the aid was not equal to each group in flood-affected area. Not only purity and pollution was

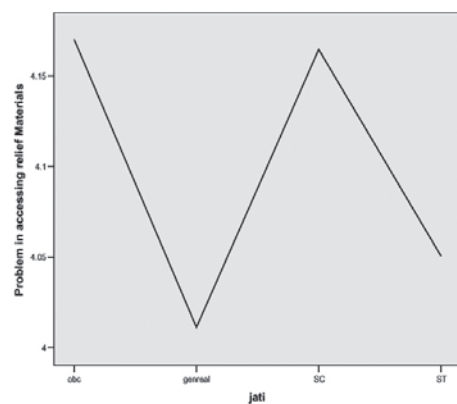
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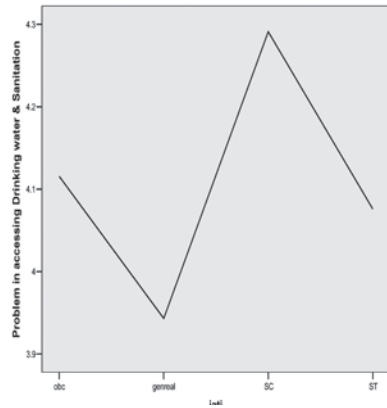
Problem in accessing emergency service like rescue in boats: Significant mean differences in (Group1: OBC ($M=4.55, SD=.78$), Group 2: General ($M=4.52, SD=.100$), Group 3: SC ($M=4.91, SD=.75$), Group 4: ST ($M=4.50, SD=.106$), $F(3,468)=5.18, p=.001$



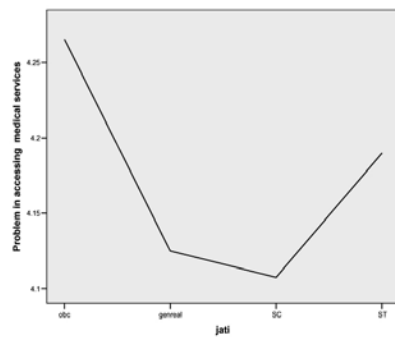
Problem in accessing relief fund: Significant mean differences in (Group1: OBC ($M=4.11, SD=.11$), Group2: General ($M=3.94, SD=.147$), Group3: SC ($M=4.29, SD=.10$), Group4: ST ($M=4.07, SD=.15$), $F(3,468)=1.30, p=.03$



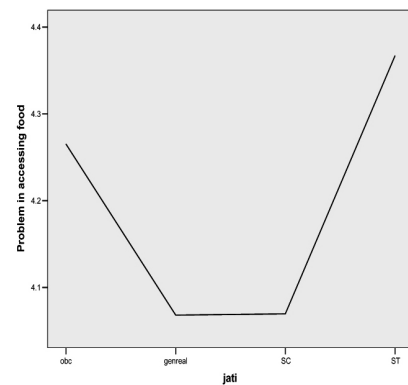
Problem in accessing relief material: Significant mean differences in (Group1: OBC ($M=4.17, SD=.11$), Group2: General ($M=4.01, SD=0.14$), Group3: SC ($M=4.16, SD=.10$), Group4: ST ($M=4.05, SD=0.15$), $F(3,468)=.373, p=.002$



Problem in accessing drinking water: Significant mean difference in (Group1: OBC(M=4.19, SD=.10), Group2:General (M=4.22, SD=.13), Group3: SC(M= 4.31, SD=.10), Group4: ST(M=4.19, SD=.14, F (3, 468)=.288, p=2.0

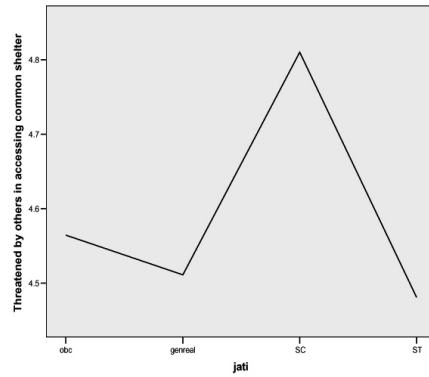


Problem in accessing medical service: Significant mean differences in (Group1:OBC (M=4.26, SD=.11), Group2: General (M=4.12,SD=.14), Group3: SC(M=4.10,SD=.11), Group4: ST (M=4.19,SD=.15), F(3,468)=.370,p=.001

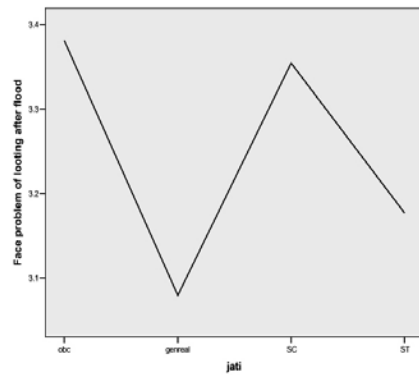


Problem in accessing food: Significant mean differences in (Group1: OBC(M=4.26,SD=.11), Group2: General (M=4.06,SD=.15), Group3:SC (M=4.07, SD=.11), Group4: ST (M=4.36,SD=.16, F (3, 468)=1.128, p=.004

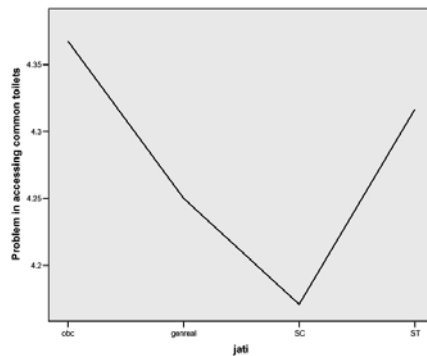
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Threatened by other in accessing common shelter: Significant mean differences in (Group1: OBC (M=4.36,SD=.11), Group2:General (M=4.25,SD=.14),Group3:SC (M=4.17,SD=.10), Group4:ST (M=4.31, SD=.15, F (3, 468)=.573, p=.002



Face problem of looting after flood: Significant mean differences in (Group1: OBC (M=4.73, SD=.06), Group 2: General (M=4.72, SD=.08), Group 3: SC (M=4.60, SD=0.06), Group 4: ST (=78, SD=6.09), F (3, 468)=1.22, p=3.8



Problem in accessing common toilet: Significant mean differences in (Group 1: OBC (M=4.53, SD=.08), Group 2: General (M=4.39, SD=.11), Group3: SC (M=4.77, SD=.08), Group 4: ST(M=4.57SD=.120), F (3, 468)=2.76, p=.003

Fig. 4: Result of MANOVA of Different Caste on Various Measures of Discrimination

maintained by upper caste during crisis but relief-providing agencies also did not ensure that the vulnerability of the affected population in flood-prone area differ on caste basis. As upper caste, dominate the society for long, in rehabilitation phase also these dominant caste rule over lower caste. The upper caste had better status and was dominant in the community, which was continued during emergencies. Dalit were not permitted to ride the boat with upper caste. Even the rescue agencies were reluctant to provide service first to lower caste. During evacuation, Dalit could not sit besides upper caste in boat and were asked to keep distance. Lower caste was reinforced to provide their service during unstable condition. They were compelled to do menial job for upper caste and were forced to remove their belongings to safer place as water stays for long and guard their home. The boatman was asked to work for them without any proper payment. In the relief camp, Dalit were asked to make their shelter camps separately by keeping a distance from upper caste so that purity could be maintained. Not only upper caste suppresses lower caste but also the relief agencies of government and non-government equally play pivotal role in enhancing the discrimination. These agencies also work under the overriding influence of upper caste. Dalit were last to receive relief material, fund and medical service, and debarred from registering for getting relief funds. **Restriction of commensurability and social intercourse was also followed during crisis instead of combating the situation by being united.** The food provided to them was of low quality in comparison to that given to upper caste. The upper caste either looted the materials or threatened to take the relief material. The quantity of food provided to them was also not sufficient. Not only were they restrained from sharing common shelter but also prohibited from taking water from common well or pond or hand pumps and were told to carry water from far-off places or use it after upper caste. They were also forbidden to use common toilets. Furthermore, violence was also triggered due to physical abuse and harassment by upper caste. However, the problem in accessing drinking water, looting of relief material and forced by upper caste to do work was not found.

To unearth the situation and inequity faced by the Mahadalit after flood, separate groups comprising men and women of different age were formed. The members of the group were selected from different localities to make sample representative. The person within the group either volunteered or identified by the researcher. Focus group discussion was carried out in an informal manner. Before beginning the discussion, the members were detailed about the purpose and objectives of the discussion so that they could feel free to share their problem and that help in understanding their problem. The discussion was carried out in an amicable environment. Initially members were reluctant to share their problem, but as the

discussion was in progress eventually they started feeling more comfortable in sharing their view. The following questions were placed before them for discussion of the focus group. The members were asked to pay attention to the question carefully and give their opinion about the situation watchfully.

1. What discrimination did you face after flood in accessing relief and rehabilitation?
2. Did the agency differ on the ground of caste in providing relief material?

The members were asked to speak one after another so that each member had equal and fair chance to share and give their opinion about the problem they faced. The first request was to opine on the major problem they faced after disaster. Members of Mushhar and Dom caste said that they were not allowed to share common shelter even by OBCs. As they had been doing menial jobs since ages, they were consider untouchable and excluded from the community. They live in outskirts of village and do menial and scavenging job, and during flood, they were not allowed to live and share anything. The member of the donor agencies was from upper caste and so they discriminated in providing relief materials first to upper caste and then by giving the remaining to lower caste. To maintain purity Mahadalit were not allowed to take drinking water from common well and were asked to prepare their food separately. Not only upper caste but the OBCs also considered themselves higher in the hierarchy than lower caste to maintain their purity. Members from Mushhar, Dom and Pasi caste said that they were forced to work even during emergencies. They did not have any means for livelihood; hence, they earned their living by serving upper caste. Members of these caste said that flood destroyed their homes and ransacked all their belongings and so they served upper caste for food and other basic needs. Compensation had been the major aspect of the flood relief management, which was criticised to a great extent by the respondents. Segregation in seating arrangement while serving food was observed, and in some cases, dominant caste refused to eat food because Dalit were served first. In many cases, dominant caste did not allow Dalit to dine with them.

The findings of this study show that the government overlooks the inequitable caste divide of society while providing relief and rehabilitation, which hamper relief programme and cannot reach the needy group. The government may ensure that the relief materials reach the poor and deprived sections of society. The government may establish a separate commission to get an idea about the condition of Dalit after disaster and a special wing to monitor the need of these groups. It can also be make certain that relief reach lower caste without any discrimination on the grounds of caste inequality. Mitigation strategies and programme of recovery

can be made by keeping in consideration the needs of these groups. Mahadalit Commission not only looks after the bias against Mahadalit during normal days but can also pay attention to them in aftermath of disaster. Government can also ensure that relief material may not only concentrate in the hands of the officials and upper caste but lower caste may have proper access to the relief funds. The officials may be active and restrain discrimination in the availability of water, food, toilet and medical service. The lower caste living in shelter home during rehabilitation phase may also file complaints against any form of looting assault, threaten and enforce to do work, and instant action may be taken to curtail the problem. The commission may also confirmed whether the relief provided to these groups is of adequate quantity and quality. Attention can be given to the Mahadalit who are most vulnerable in flood and deprived from assistance and support to re-establish their livelihood.

CONCLUSION

The socially excluded groups who have been facing discrimination for long depend on agriculture for livelihood, serve upper caste, work as wage labourers and perform menial and scavenging job. Flood ransacked the very base of livelihood and income. The groups who struggle hard to sustain their livelihood are comparatively more at risk from any kind of external shocks. They cannot recover by their own means and need external help and support. However, irony is that relief-providing agencies instead of making certain that these section access reliefs in equal terms with upper caste who are comparatively in better status, follow the tradition of hierarchy and provide last aid to them.

Therefore, the relief and rehabilitation programme is not successful because it is operationalised and monitored by keeping in view the deep-rooted caste system of the Indian society. The inequality or discrimination did not emerge during recovery period but it has existed in the society from time immemorial and also has its overriding influence during emergency period. The dominant caste power and status supersede during the recovery period. They follow purity and pollution rituals during evacuation, and while distribution of relief materials or emergency services. Purity is maintained by keeping distance from lower caste. Hegemony is followed in medical service, food, shelter and water. Moreover, upper caste intervenes in the relief operation and has control over relief material and supremacy over lower caste. The relief-providing agencies also maintain inequality and neglect the need of lower caste that was last in their list in receiving relief. The relief provided to lower caste is insufficient and less quantity and of poor quality.

OBCs are seeking upward mobility by emulating the rituals and practices of the upper or dominant caste in the process of sanskritisation and retain their purity by

maintaining distance from the Mahadalits. Caste like Muhshahr, Pasi and Dom are last to receive aid. Mahadalit who are deprived and struggled hard for their existence are in the service of these dominant castes. The embedded inequality may be kept in consideration by the relief and rehabilitation agencies while providing relief material. The donor agencies may also ensure that not only the need of these agencies but also the varied need of the victim may be considered.

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