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Present-Day Dalit Repositioning in Rural Bihar's Social Hierarchy

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Abstract

The modernization-induced uptick in Dalits' awareness of their own existence, their sense of self-identity, and the difficulty of adjusting to other groups is only one of three primary identity-related variables that have emerged as a result of the influence of new socioeconomic pressures. A society's level of safety relies on its level of social progress and the warmth of its relationships within it. Questions of fairness include how some people are prevented from sharing in the advantages of economic growth while others are given an unfair share. The path of rural Bihar's social dynamics was set by these interconnected problems. Significant progress has been made in the state of Bihar during the last several decades, and social cohesion and the prevalence of untouchability have both improved. Several key measures of human development in the state have shown steady improvement in recent years. Growth has not been equitably distributed across all segments of society. As a group, Dalits are far less developed than the general population. The state government of Bihar formed the Mahadalit commission and launched a slew of training initiatives to help its citizens acquire the necessary job skills to reach this objective. This work has the potential to shake up established societal norms. The primary focus of this research has been on the Dalit and non-Dalit relationships in Bihar, as well as the dynamics within the Dalit community itself. The data for the empirical research was gathered through planned interviews with both primary and secondary sources. important conclusions were drawn from the research, such as the fact that untouchability has not been entirely eradicated from society but has been significantly decreased.

Keywords- *Untouchability, Dalit, Development, Caste, Bihar.*

Introduction

In India, Dalits are classified as a "scheduled caste" under Article 341. For this research, the word Dalit refers to members of the social group known as Scheduled Castes. The term "Dalit" originates from the Sanskrit word for "poor," "Daridrya," from whence the term "Dalit" was derived. However, the Dalit idea is conveyed more as a social notion than an economic one. Daridrya is a term mainly used as a metaphor to describe and portray financial hardship. In contrast, the term "Dalit" has come to represent more than one kind of marginalization, including but not limited to those in the fields of geopolitics, history, sociology, economics, religion, and education. Numerous factors determine an individual's social standing, and this book lays them out in detail, along with the many processes through which this might occur.

Since being exposed to contemporary ideals due to modernization, Dalits have developed a heightened awareness of their own existence, a sense of self-identity, and the difficulty of adjusting to other groups under the influence of new socioeconomic pressures. There is a security issue, and how severe it is

dependent on the level of civility in the community and the number of friends everyone has. Concerns about unfairness in the distribution of resources or the refusal to share in the advantages of economic progress. These factors are interconnected in many ways and have shaped the social dynamics of rural Bihar. Due in great part to social justice initiatives, the state of Bihar has flourished over the last several decades, with a corresponding rise in social cohesion and a decline in untouchability practices. Essential measures of human development in the state have been rising. However, not all segments of society have reaped the same rewards from this period of prosperity. All around, measures of human progress show that Dalits are falling behind.

Ambedkar argues that the fundamental principle of Brahmanism, which he defines as unequal status for men and women, is the foundation of Hindu society.

1. Dalscssssit and the untouchables must be completely disarmed.

2. The untouchable and Dalit population is explicitly forbidden from attending school.

3. Prohibit Dalits and other "untouchables" from holding positions of power or authority.

4. Property ownership is prohibited for Dalits and other social outcasts.

5. The Dalit women are subjugated and repressed. As a result, they are denied access to resources like formal education, wealth, and positions of power. While untouchability has diminished as a result of modern influences, it is still widely practiced in Indian society, albeit to varying degrees.

In his book "Slavery," published in 2008, author Joti Rao Phulley claims that Indian civilization is fundamentally founded on slavery. Therefore, the Dalit people's independence is significant and a desire of our own.

Perspective on the Literature

According to Aristotle, human beings have a social disposition. Humans are born with certain animal tendencies, although these may be refined via socialization. Specifically: (B.C. Politics). The varna, Caste, and status of a person are all established under the varnashrama system. However, "caste and race in India" by Ghuriye (1932,1969) argues that positions in Indian society have been determined by race ever since the post-Vedic period. This view was attacked by Ambedkar (1936) in his essay and lectures titled "Philosophy of Hinduism," where he argued that Aryans are not invaders but rather natives of India. In his book "Home hierarchic: The caste system and its ramifications," Dumont (1972) argues that the Indian caste system and Hinduism are predicated on the concepts of purity and impurity and that the Dalit group is exploited on the basis of their perceived impurity. In India, economic life has always been governed by Caste (Dirks, 2001). Division of work lies at the heart of the caste system (Durkheim,1893). Due to workplace competitiveness, Dalits have been mostly shut out of the labour force (Srinivas,1979). As a result, lower castes continue to have monopolies on their traditional vocations (Leach,1947). This is a negotiating stance that lower castes have now, and it gives them a position of power from an assertion perspective.

Socio-Economic Structure

It is necessary to take into consideration a variety of aspects in order to have an understanding of the structure and characteristics of our society. One of these factors is the socioeconomic makeup of our society. The vast majority of social surveys have concentrated their efforts on gaining an understanding of indicators such as the distribution of the population, the distinctions between rural and urban areas, the size of families, age, gender, population size, linguistic characteristics, literacy rates, occupational patterns, and income patterns, in addition to civic conditions.

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When trying to make sense of the socioeconomic structure and characteristics of our culture, it is important to take into account the gender makeup of the population as well as the religious beliefs, social castes, and subcastes that are prevalent in the Indian setting. It has come to this that a person's social standing may be determined, in large part, by their professional position, as well as the kind and prestige of the methods by which they earn their income. There has been a correlation between a person's birthplace in the social order and their chosen line of work ever since the beginning of time. Sociocultural and economic situations in rural regions continued to follow the traditional pattern of India's Hindu welfare framework. This was the case in both the social and economic spheres. A person's social and economic standing is the central organizing principle for their whole life.

Despite the fact that members of the Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Vaishya castes have traditionally maintained a superior position, perceptions towards Dalits have altered in India, notably in the state of Bihar. As a direct and immediate outcome of the practice of untouchability, the oppressive behaviors that are traditionally linked with the caste system have drastically lessened. During the course of the investigation, it became abundantly clear that the assertion of Dalit rights was directly responsible for a decrease in the marginalization of Dalits, an increase in their acceptability, and the mainstreaming of the Dalit community in India. This was the conclusion that was reached after the investigation was completed.

The processes of liberalization, privatization, and globalization (LPG 1991) have led to the creation of new forms of subordination that are less tightly organized and may be seen in today's society. In addition to this, the notion is dependent on increasing the scope of the economy in order to function properly. The economic and technical foundations are required for the economy's growth to continue. As time goes on, Caste eventually replaces class. The caste system is another element that plays a role in the development of social hierarchy and stratification.

Studying the relationships between Bihar's non-Dalit and Dalit populations was crucial to this project's overarching goal of learning more about social inequality in the state.

According to this idea, untouchability occurs throughout the Indian state of Bihar and not simply between Dalits and those of other castes. Compared to the widespread notion that untouchability only affects non-Dalits and Dalits, this is not the case.

Selections for the methodology and the sample were based on a review of the relevant literature and specific primary and secondary data sources. Select one place from the Bihar Mithila cultural region and one from the Magadh cultural area to assist in the comparison and contrast. Darbhanga, in Mithila, Nalanda, and Magadh; next, two chunks within every district; then, one township with each block; and lastly, 75 families were picked using a standard random sampling process; all data was gathered using these locales as the point of origin.

1. Mochi, Chamar, Rohidas, Ravidas and Charmkar-

In Bihar, there are a total of 4915247 persons that fit this description; of them, 285016 are located in urban areas. Members of the Ram Dasia (S.C.), who are also known as Ravidas, are a sizable population. The districts of Barauni-Begusarai, Darbhanga, Nalanda, Madhubani, Munger, Gaya, Patna and a number of others in the state of Bihar are home to descendants of this traditionally semi-nomadic tribe. There are other members of this group from other districts throughout the state. His name, which has Chasmic origins and means "the skin of an Animal," reflects the centrality of his people's occupation to their ancient identity. They mostly speak Hindi but are also fluent in Maithili. Their first language is Hindi.

Their society's name, charmkar, comes from the Sanskrit term charmkar, which means "leather worker," despite the fact that they go by many other names across the world. The story goes that roughly a thousand years ago, a young sadhu in India was forced to dismember a male calf. He was shunned to the point that he was forced to support himself by tanning animal skins. The Chamar are a "Ruler" made up of individuals who are not all the same in terms of ethnicity or society, according to Bhatt (1961), who considers him to be the progenitor of modern Chamar. According to Bhatt, he is also the ancestor of modern Chamars. They are typical of the many low-status hereditary clans in Hindu society (Bhatt, 1961)

2 . Chaupal

Around 79628 persons in the state of Bihar identify as belonging to one of these groups; 4255 of these people live in urban societies (also called Khatwe and Tanti), while the majority of the Choupal population resides in Katihar and Purnea. These numbers depict the population's breakdown according to: (but smaller subsets may be found in many other neighborhoods). Many people in this area are polyglots, with Surjapuri (part of the Indo-Aryan family) as their mother tongue but also fluency in Maithili, Bengali, Hindi, or some other local vernacular. They eat things like fish, chicken, and eggs. Rice and wheat are their primary sources of carbs. The Basak, Jogi (deva Gotra), Tanti (Kashyap), and Khatwe are the four recognised Choupal families. The Jogi clan are the deva Gotra. A distinction has been made between the Kashyap and the Dev families. Women in the chaupal community contribute substantially to the monthly income and play significant roles in various cultural and religious sectors, but they have no say in how the family spends its money.

Even though farming and weaving are two of the Chaupals' traditional occupations, most modern-day Chaupals are day labourers in the agricultural sector. More earn their income weaving coarse Saris and other textiles, while still others engage in wholesale. In reality, just a fraction of them are company owners. Celebration of the Divine Mother Durga with an Evening of Worship Among Hindu celebrations, Laxmi puja and Durga puja are among the most well-known and widely attended. People who support the vaughn theory are included. Some people believe that the Indian sage Maharishi sri Chaitanya was a member of the Chaupal caste. There is continuous communication between the Bari, mala, Nai, and Choudhary, as well as any other adjacent communities. They will consume Kachcha and Pucca food cooked by any clan member other than the Mehtar. Education is a major area in which the Choupal people fall far behind other human populations. Modern Medicare is necessary, but individual citizens cannot fund it. They have a positive cultural outlook on contraception and other types of family planning.

The Societal Structural Pattern

Table 1: Dalit Communities in Selected Areas

Village Group	Region	Chunk	Place Name	Dalit Castes and Their Identifying Names
Urbanized Rural Area	Darbhanga	Singhwara	(Mahisari) Bhawanipur	Dhobi, Dom, Dusadh, Chamar, Nat
	Nalanda	Hilsa	Akberpur	Musehar , Dusadh

Underdeveloped Rural Area	Darbhanga	Kusheswer Sthan	(Vishanpur) Beri	Dhobi, Dom, Dusadh, Musehar, Chamar
	Nalanda	Rajgir	Pilkhi	Rajbhar, Dusadh, Pasi, Musehar, Chamar

Source: Field Data

The concept of "purity and defilement," according to Louis Dumont's analysis, is crucial to the functioning of the Hindu caste system. Consequently, caste-based discrimination and the practice of "untouchability" spread extensively. The Dalits are portrayed in this idea as dirty outsiders who threaten the upper class. Politicians, social reformers, and Dalit community leaders are just a few who have condemned discrimination and intolerance's harmful effects. Physical violence, legal sanctions, and social isolation were the most common forms of response to such behavior. Despite many advancements in other areas, the horrible social practice of discrimination based on race has endured. Despite India's Dalits having had 75 years of legal protection from discrimination, prejudice against them remains.

Researchers have tried to investigate the dynamic nature of communication and collaboration between and within groups of Dalits in light of the existing social realities. Sixty-five percent of those surveyed indicated there is no caste-based prejudice amongst sub-castes; this number rises to 82% in economically developed villages and decreases to 48% in economically underdeveloped ones. However, 35.0% of respondents said that they had been subjected to harassment in the recent year due to their race or ethnicity, which is much higher than the overall proportion of 18% and the percentage of 52% in the two types of villages. In this context, it is essential to recognize the pervasiveness of caste-based oppression toward Dalits in both rural and urban settings.

2. Dalit sub-caste discrimination in the local community.

Details		**Urbanized Rural Area**		**Underdeveloped Rural Area**		**Total**	
		Digit	**Percentage**	**Digit**	**Percentage**	**Digit**	**Percentage**
Caste based discrimination within Dalit sub-castes in your village	**Yes**	28	18.00	78	52.00	105	35.00
	No	123	83.00	74	79.00	586	52.00
Elaborate on the primary justifications for this answer	**Crafts of a more ancient and traditional nature**	6	19.51	16	20.23	21	18.04
	Cleaning and sweeping	4	12.11	11	13.82	18	12.38
	Keeping Pigs as Pets	5	8.40	4	7.41	2	6.68
	Our forefathers enjoyed beef.	3	8.40	4	5.12	6	5.71
	In a state of extreme uncleanliness	5	26.92	22	27.92	30	26.67

	to rank lower in status than one's own Caste	6	28.62	19	30.48	33	40.52

Source: Field Data

Further, participants were prompted to elaborate on the causes of discrimination and prejudice against the several sub-castes of Dalits. Based on the statistics supplied, harassment toward Dalit sub-castes is more prevalent in less developed cities. Untouchability and caste hierarchy were the two primary forms of prejudice reported by the participants. Economic and social factors, such as ancestor labour, scavenging and cleaning work, pig maintaining, beef eating, living in unclean and unsanitized environments, and the contempt of members of higher castes, are widely believed to have contributed to the perpetuation of special measures and caste hierarchy among Dalit people.

Table 3: Non-Dalits' Social Event Invitations

Detail		**Urbanized Rural Area**		**Underdeveloped Rural Area**		**Total**	
		Digit	**Percentage**	**Digit**	**Percentage**	**Digit**	**Percentage**
Getting invited by non-Dalits for parties, celebrations, and religious events	**Yes**	141	94.	130	89	271	92
	No	9	6	20	11	29	8
Permission to Eat with Those Who Are not Dalit	**Yes**	80	55.00	50	35	130	45
	No	70	45.00	100	65.55	170	55
Overall		150	100	150	100	300	100

Source: Field Data

The following table demonstrates the range of social events non-Dalits invite Dalits. Almost all respondents (94.67%; 94.66% in high-income areas; 88.53% in low-income areas) reported being invited to formal events by non-Dalits. Only 8.33% of those who responded gave negative feedback. Because of socioeconomic factors, progress in today's rural areas has been slower to manifest.

Dalit people take part in Hindu social and religious rituals. The most pressing issue is whether or not they are permitted to share meals with those not part of the Dalit caste. Only 44.33 percent of respondents gave a positive evaluation, while 55.67 percent gave a negative one. There has been a dramatic change in Bihar's rural districts.

Chart -1

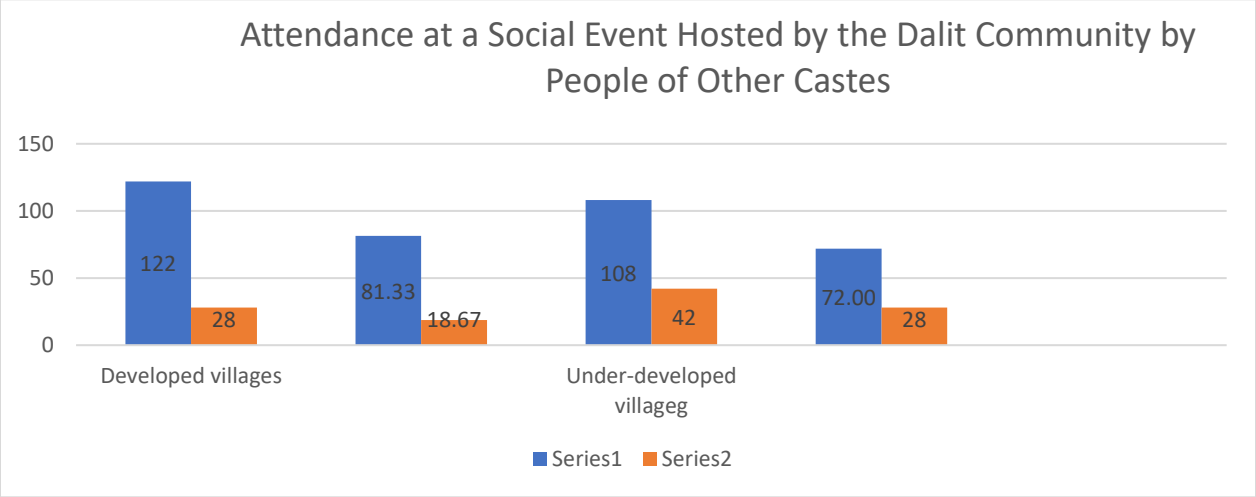

Table 4: Do non-Dalits sometimes visit the area?

Do people who aren't Dalits attend these events?	**Yes**	103	84.42	87	80.56	190	82.61
	No	19	15.58	21	19.44	40	17.39
Total		150	100.00	150	100.00	300	100.00
If No Support Your Claim	**Caste system**	2	1.37	2	1.35	5	2
	Untouchability	3	1.36	4	2.14	6	1.66
	Discrimination	2	2.15	2	2.25	5	1
	Dismal economic standing	4	2.5	6	4	8	2.69
	Habits every day in rural areas	6	4	5	3	11	4.50
	Zero Feedback	2	1.67	2	1.45	2	1.65

Source: Field Data

While in the field, I also investigated the opposite tendency. Eighty-two percent and sixty-one-hundredth of those who responded claimed that non-Dalits attend such parties when invited. Changes to the rural structure have been dramatic, yet 18.55 percent of respondents in both types of towns claimed that non-Dalits did not fit their criterion. A number of variables contribute to this, including the economy, cultural traditions in Orthodox communities, the social norm of avoiding touching others, and caste-based socioeconomic inequity. On the other hand, this pattern indicates the established social order and biases of the past.

Table 5: Specifics on the Dalits' grateful reception of free food

Facts		Urbanized Rural Area		Underdeveloped Rural Area		Total	
		Digit	Percentage	Digit	Percentage	Digit	Percentage
Do-Non-Dalit Consume Food	Yes	103	68.67	87	58.00	190	63.33
	No	47	31.33	63	42.00	110	36.67
If so, describe the type of food.	Meals from the Katcha restaurant.	3	2.91	1	9.09	4	2.11
	We feed the pucca.	93	90.29	82	94.25	175	92.11
	Food for both Katcha and Pucca.	7	6.79	4	4.59	11	5.78
Period of transition	Maybe up to ten years.	56	54.36	46	52.87	102	53.69
	11-20 years.	39	37.86	34	39.08	73	38.42
	21-30 years.	5	4.85	4	4.59	9	4.74
	Certainly more than 30 years' worth of time.	3	2.91	1	1.14	4	2.10
	There was silence.	-	-	2	2.29	2	1.05
Factors of transformation	Increased prosperity for Dalits.	103	100.00	87	100.00	190	100.00
	Dalit advancement in politics.	103	100.00	87	100.00	190	100.00
	Improved family life through education.	103	100.00	87	100.00	190	100.00

Source: Field Data

A crucial measure of the shifting social dynamics between Dalits and non-Dalits is the acceptance of food in Dalit households. Approximately 63.33 percent of those who are not Dalit often participate in get-togethers centered on food. It's encouraging to see that 92.11 percent of respondents said that non-Dalits now embrace ready-made food goods. To know for sure whether Dalits are behind the cooking of these dishes, further research is needed. During the poll, we tried to get a sense of how long this shift has been going on so that we could look into what caused it. The past 10–20 years have seen the most significant change due to the current socioeconomic conditions. The improvement of the Dalit economic position, the expansion of Dalit educational possibilities, and the empowerment of Dalits politically were seen as the most critical drivers of change by those questioned.

The practice of ostracising those of lower social status, or "untouchables," is central to caste-based discrimination. The foundation of this theory is the belief that members of various castes have different levels of purity. The impurity of Dalits may taint other groups. Dalits have campaigned against this barbaric practice in various contexts and periods, sometimes in the face of heavy punishments and social boycotts. Discrimination based on Caste, including casteism, persists in modern society.

Based on this information, researchers have tried to learn more about the extent to which Dalits are subject to discrimination and lower castes. In this discussion, we asked how much people thought prejudice towards Dalits had decreased.

Eighty-five point seven percent in affluent communities and sixty percent in less developed villages reported that discrimination towards Dalit subcastes had diminished. Contrarily, 15.33% of affluent communities and 42.00% of impoverished ones responded negatively. In addition, the participants were asked what they think is most important in the struggle against Dalit subcaste discrimination. The majority of respondents (71.02 percent) cited improvements in education as the most significant achievement, followed by increased political engagement (up to 12.5%), development work (6.54 percent), a reduction in reliance on conventional labour (6%-8 percent), an improvement in economic conditions (3.27%), and higher living standards (3.27%). It has been shown that members of the Dalit subcaste face substantially higher rates of discrimination in economically depressed regions.

Conclusion

- Two-fifths of village residents think Dalit Sub-castes are prejudiced against because they are considered lower-class.
- Eight percent of Dalits said that they were not invited to social functions because they weren't Dalits.
- Sixty percent of non-Dalits were instructed to avoid eating with Dalits.
- The majority of Lower castes (28%) were not welcomed to a social or religious gathering that did not include their group.
- Non-Dalits declined attendance at 19% of social and religious gatherings hosted by a Dalit family.
- As much as 31.33% of non-Dalit people turn down Dalit hosts' offers of food.
- A fresh style is emerging. Untouchability occurs among Dalit subcastes since 12% of Dalits are not admitted to Lower Dalit sub-castes.
- 14.67% of lower Dalit subcastes are forced to eat in separate lines because of cast system and casteism.
- Only 9.33% of Dalits think they should be subject to the same restrictions on entering temples as other groups.

- A large majority (84.67 percent) of respondents said that discrimination against Dalits had reduced in the research area.

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