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INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**AN EXPLANATORY STUDY OF  
THE MEANING OF PURITY  
AMONG DALITS IN NEW DELHI, INDIA**

**By**

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## FOREWORD

Cultural anthropology has gotten its strength from diversity of practices and disciplines related with it. The scale of a study is not important for its contribution to theories. Therefore, cultural anthropology studies attract many social scientists to conduct inter-disciplinary studies.

I wanted to explore a discrimination with which more than 150.000.000 people, Dalits in India, face on their whole lives. Dalits receive attentions by United Nations Human Right Instruments. Discriminations in western world are usually between the poor and the strong, a rationalization process which pushes us to think of a claim on the Roman mind of us. There are other alternative thoughts, not Cartesian and not syncretic, which has been enlightened by cultural anthropology. One of them is Indian thought that exists more than 5000 years from which many civilizations have been spreading. These alternative thoughts and social patterns are a change to clarify what is lying under discrimination process. India by itself is not a major power but also it has enlightened our rationalized prejudice with its different values.

The present thesis was prepared in Republic of India and Turkish Republic from 2004-2007. Widely accepted beliefs among locals and Dalits, who are the outcaste, are that Caste system reflects the degrees of purity. The topic of the thesis is thus limited to the idea of purity among Dalits. With conversations with Dalit informants, I tried to collect their stories about purity.

The selection of the location of the fieldwork and the choice of the informants from Dalits were the keys to the research. New Delhi was chosen as the location. New Delhi is the capital of India, located in the northern part of India. Pahar-Ganj is the central place of the city which is near the train station and attracts all the immigrants in New Delhi. The network of social relationship and the mode of living of its inhabitants are created by migrations and small-scale trade. That part of the city is inhabited only by those belong to Backwarded castes. I was told that those belong to the upper castes even get close to this area. Pahar-Ganj's only foreign visitors are backpackers who stop before their destinations, mostly Nepal or Rishikesh. For these many reasons, Pahar-Ganj is an easy accessible place for me to do my fieldwork.

Culture is like air, so vital and so invisible. The thesis has aimed to demonstrate that discrimination is not related with bodily function in this invisible pattern. This pattern of behaviour may not be rational or accurate in itself but it is a reality and a

consistency. It is lasted 5000 years in one of the biggest civilization. Even though I prefer an interpretative paradigm, I had the conflict of discrimination on respecting a culture.

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Yeditepe University Anthropology Department gave me a scholarship and also gave me an opportunity to study cultural anthropology which gave me a good basis for my thinking. I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Akile Gürsoy, Head of the Department of Anthropology for her trust and encouragement for interdisciplinary studies.

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I am deeply indebted to Mrs. Ümit Kaya, my fellow, my ex manager who guided me to study anthropology under those hard conditions while I was working as an officer in Adana Turkish Airlines. We have lost her after many years of struggle against cancer and even in her difficult days she kept encouraging me to pursue a broader vision. I feel infinitive sadness that I am far to share all these good returning of my efforts. I will faithfully pray that she will rest in peace.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore the meaning of purity among Dalits in India, focusing on explaining a social relation between the meaning of purity and the scheduled caste. Purity and defilement has been studied from the eye of caste members and religious texts of Hinduism in anthropology. Western conceptualization of purity and defilement is related to hygiene and body care. In India, however, it is related to religious and economic factors. According to the idea of caste, separation is based on purity. Pureness corresponds to Brahmans, while defilement corresponds to Dalits themselves.

The fieldwork was done in New Delhi, which attract immigrants from all over India. In the fieldwork, subject-directed qualitative method was chosen. Open-ended, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten Dalit informants. Their individual stories were collected and then checked in terms of their variability with the current purity theories in anthropology.

The finding was against the common western view of purity. The term, purity, is not related to body hygiene and care. All informants consider purity as being connected to the mother cow. Defilement is related with the relation with mother cow and economic relations. In addition, all informants agree that discriminations are caste-based.



## ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Hindistan'daki Dalitler'in temizlik anlayışlarını incelemeyi amaçlamıştır ve, araştırma, aşağı kastlar ve bu kastların, temizlik anlayışları arasındaki sosyal ilişkiyi açıklamaya odaklanmıştır. Temizlik ve kirlilik anlayışı, kast üyelerinin gözüyle ve genel antropoloji çalışmalarında kullanılan, yazılı Hindu dini belgeleri yardımıyla çalışılmıştır. Temizlik ve kirlilik, batılı bakış açısına göre, hijyen ve vücut bakımı ile ilgilidir. Fakat, Hindistan'da bu konu, ekonomik ve dini nedenlerle ilişkilidir. Kastın anlayışına göre ayırım, temizlik üzerinedir ve temizlik, Brahmanlar ile, kirlilik ise Dalitler ile eşleştirilmiştir.

Araştırmanın saha çalışması, bütün Hindistan'dan göç alan, Yeni Delhi'de yapılmıştır. Saha çalışmasında görüşmecilere açık uçlu sorular sorulmuş ve nitel bir araştırma yapılmıştır. Yapılan görüşmeler ile, görüşmecilerin hayat hikayeleri toplanmış ve sonrasında da hikayelerin tutarlılıkları, temizlik üzerine oluşturulmuş güncel antropolojik teoriler ile kontrol edilmiştir.

Araştırmanın sonunda bulunanlar, genel batılı temizlik anlayışına karşıdır. Kavram olarak temizlik, vücut bakımı ve hijyen ile ilgili değildir. Bütün görüşülen kişiler, temizliğin inek ile ilintili olduğunu düşünmektedirler. Kirlilik de ekonomik nedenler ve inek ile ilgilidir. Buna ek olarak, bütün görüşmeciler, ayırımın kasta bağlı olduğunda hemfikirdirler.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

India has over a billion populations. India uses 18 national languages, 112 mother languages, and 1600 jargons. Much more than today's India and Pakistan are the geographies, which sprang out one the oldest civilizations, which affected the world culture.

India is in Southern Asia and borders the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and Pakistan. For 5000 years, Aryans, Persians, Chinese, Arabs, Mughals and Europeans had visited and a part of them had been settled in these lands. This helps the Indian Culture to diffuse.

Even today we attend in our daily lives the attributions of India; the decimal units we use, the chess and the dices we played, the pyjamas that we wear, soaps that we wash, the cotton that our clothes made of. Due to its geographic position, India is the meeting point of many immigrating communities. Thus, had shaped Indians and Indian also shaped the world? Indians have the probe of their old history.' Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people, dispenser of India's destiny': Indian's national anthem is even pointing the same proud.

Caste is a social force in India, not only among Hindus but also among other religions. A population, which is over a billion, has still hierarchical organization in a social system. Among this hierarchy, there is an outcaste population that called as 'untouchable'. Approximately 150 million people is called untouchable because the belief of their defilement. There are discriminations about their identity. Dalits, the name of 'untouchables' called themselves, can have education so that they have different professions in modern life but they cannot overcome the polluted image. Dalits also called by government as scheduled caste, politicians prefer to use Harijan<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Term introduced by Mahatma Gandhi for Untouchables. Literal meaning is children of God. Militant members of this group prefer to be called Dalit in self-recognition of their historical oppression

## 1.1 GENERALLY INDIA

Republic of India has a great diversity of land, language, religion and ethnics. It is a federal republic, which was proclaimed August 15, 1947 from United Kingdom. Their official name is a Sanskrit name; Bharat. Bharat is coming from the legendary king in the Mahabharata. The Indian Constitution adopted in 1949, uses the phrase 'India that is Bharat'.

The word 'India' derives from the Sindhu. Sindhu is a Sanskrit word means sea, great river, also known as the Indus that flows through the northwestern part of Indian subcontinent (Cohn, 1971). Sindhu was the name that first Persians called the subcontinent.

### 1.1.1 GEOGRAPHY

India lays 8°-37° north latitude and 68°-98° west latitude. India dominates South Asian subcontinent; near important Indian Ocean trade routes. India's total land area is 2,973,190 square kilometres. Total area, including territorial seas, claimed is 3,287,590 square kilometres. Topography consists of three main geological regions: Indo-Gangetic Plain and Himalayas, collectively known as North India; and Peninsula or South India.

Ten physical regions are Indo-Gangetic Plain, northern mountains of the Himalayas, Central Highlands, Deccan or Peninsular Plateau, East Coast (Coromandel Coast in south), West Coast (Konkan, Kankara, and Malabar coasts), Great Indian Desert (known as Thar Desert in Pakistan) and Rann of Kutch, valley of the Brahmaputra River in Assam, north-eastern hill ranges surrounding Assam Valley, and islands of Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal (Cohn, 1971).

Climate changes significantly from Himalayas in north to tropical south. There are four seasons: relatively dry, cool winter December to February; dry, hot summer March to May; southwest monsoon June to September when predominating southwest maritime winds bring rains to most of country; and northeast, or retreating, monsoon October and November.

### **1.1.2 DEMOGRAPHY**

Population 1,065,070,607 (July 2004 est.) estimated in July 2004. About 74 percent in rural areas Health: In 2004 life expectancy is 63.99; for men 63.25 years, for women 64.77 years. Infant mortality rate is 76.3 per 1,000 live births. Malaria, filariasis, leprosy, cholera, pneumonic plague, tuberculosis, trachoma, goitre, and diarrhoeal diseases all occur. In 1991 primary health centres, sub centres and community health centres at local levels included more than 10,000 hospitals, 24,000 dispensaries, and 811,000 beds (undp.org).

Education system is 12 years; mandatory primary and middle levels, optional secondary education. There is high dropout rate even at compulsory levels. National adult literacy rate is 52.2 percent in 1991 (male 63.9 percent, female 39.4 percent). There are more than 180 universities, some 500 teacher training colleges, and several 1000 other colleges (undp.org).

According to estimates India's population's 82 percent is Hindus; 12.1 percent is Muslim, 2.3 percent is Christian, 1.9 percent is Sikh, 0.8 percent is Buddhist, 0.4 percent is Jains, 0.4 percent is other, 0.1 percent is not identified. Ethnic Groups are mainly Indo-Aryan as 72 percent, Dravidian as 25 percent, Mongoloid and others as 3 percent. Caste system, although no longer sanctioned by government, prevails variously (www.cia.gov).

### **1.1.3 HISTORY**

Indians' the first established city is at 5000 years old. India's first major civilisation flourished around 2500 BC along the Indus River valley. India's history is strongly tied to its geography. Land is the meeting ground of the East and the West. In her history, she has Persians, Greeks, Chinese nomads, Arabs, Mughals, Portuguese, British and unknown raiders as guests. All of these local dynasties built upon the roots of Aryan culture. India has been described as always been simply too big, too complicated, and too culturally subtle to let even The Great Alexander dominate it for long (Mandelbaum, 1999). Life of India can be comprehensible in 5 periods.

### 1.1.3.1 Ancient Empires (2500BC-997AC)

Indian History is as old as the History of Mankind. Indus Valley cultures began production 2500BC. Harrapa and Mohenjadaro are, in the Indus Valley, first communities in India between 2500-1550 BC. By 1500BC, migrations of Aryan speaking tribes had begun. During Indus Valley having its own communities, Dravidians were establishing in Bengal, the South, and Centre of India in 1000BC (Flood, 1997).

The first group to invade India was the Aryans about 1500 BC. The Aryans brought with them strong cultural traditions that remain in force today. They spoke and wrote in a language called Sanskrit, which was later used in the first documentation of the Veda<sup>2</sup>s. However, warriors and conquerors, the Aryans lived in the Indus valley. They introduced inhabitants with the caste system and established the basis of the Indian religions. Aryans had their own gods, meat-eating traditions. Those years Aryans add many traditions but they are absorbed too (Harre, 2000).

The 8<sup>th</sup> century Aryans moved south and east after development of iron tools and weapons. They eventually settled the Ganges valley and built large kingdoms throughout much of northern India. Mahabharata, Vedas are composed and Caste system was established in 1000BC (Harre: pg35, 2000). Hinduism takes deep roots in India. In the 5th century BC, Siddhartha Gautama founded the religion of Buddhism. This was the beginning of one India's greatest dynasties, the Maurya. This dynasty causes the spread of Buddhism.

The Greeks in 150 BC conquered the Punjab, and by this time, Buddhism was becoming so influential that the Greek king Menander forsook the Hellenistic pantheon and became a Buddhist himself. The local kingdoms enjoyed relative autonomy for the next few hundred years, occasionally fighting invaders from the north and China, who seemed to come and go like the monsoons. Unlike the Greeks, the Romans never made it to India, preferring to expand west instead (Flood, 1997).

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<sup>2</sup> Knowledge

The second great invasion into India occurred around 500 BC, when the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius, pushing their empire eastward. They had conquered the Indus Valley. The Persians were in turn conquered by the Greeks under Alexander the Great and Greeks defeated King Porous with an army of 200 elephants in 326 BC. Alexander left behind garrisons to keep the trade routes open. While the Persians and Greeks subdued the Indus Valley and the northwest, Aryan-based kingdoms continued developing in the East. Chandra Gupta Maurya (300 B.C.) and establishment of the Indian Empire (Alam: Delyove: Gaborieau, 2000).

In addition, on the same period the great king Ashoka (268-31 BC), the Mauryan Empire conquered nearly the entire subcontinent. This time was the time that some of the most incredible temples in India were constructed in Bhubaneshwar, Konarak, and Khahurajo. Ashoka proved himself as a missionary of Buddhism than a conqueror. Ashoka brought Buddhism much to central Asia. The Maurya Empire had collapsed only 100 years after his death.

After the collapse of Mauryan Empire, a number of empires, including the Guptas, rose and fell in the north and Buddhism began to decline. The north of India broke into a number of separate Hindu kingdoms after the Huns' invasion. But the unification was succeeded with the coming of the Muslims in the 10th and 11th centuries (Metcalf: Metcalf, 2002).

### **1.1.3.2** Growth of Islam (997-1526AC)

Arab traders had visited the western coast since 712. But the Muslims knew India was still there, waiting with all its riches. Under the command of Mahmud Ghazi, in 997 Turkish armies raided just about every other year for 26 years straight. They returned home each time, leaving behind them armies (Alam: Delyove: Gaborieau, 2000).

When Mahmud Ghazi conquered Indian subcontinent from Afghanistan, the south economy was based on trading with the Egyptians, Romans and Southeast Asia.

However Islam had ruled more than 500 years, it did not threaten the Hinduism's expansion on the region (Alam: Delyove: Gaborieau, 2000).

### **1.1.3.3 The Mughal Period (1526AC-1800AC)**

Timourlang had conquered the Delhi in 1398 but after leaving Timourlang left Gurkanli's for to rule the north India. Babur, Akbar, Cihangir, Shah Cihan and Alemger had several successful reforms but they could not had a serenity because of the raids.

These Turkish kings ruled, as Delhi Sultanate, the Muslim acquisition from 1397 till the British existence. Although this period called Mughal, the dynasty was Turkish and the language was Persian. Moslems are the major structure in Sultanate (Burghart, 1985)

First political Persian theorists like Ziya'al-din Bahrain, famous poets Khusrau and Dehlavi , Indians architectural pride Taj Mahal are also the fruits of this period (Alam: Delyove: Gaborieau, 2000). Although the sovereignty of Turkish family is so powerful this period is historically called Mughal period due to the misconception of Portuguese traders (Ataöv, 2002).

### **1.1.3.4 The British Rule (1800-1900AD)**

When Britain came into South India, Portuguese had several citadels, harbours in India. Portuguese never struggled for settlement. However, After the Battle of Plassey in 1765, between Britain and Mughals entered Bengal, after than Portuguese traders left their harbours. Britain expanded iron and coal mining, developed tea, coffee and cotton plantations, and began construction of India's huge rail network (Norton, 1999).

The Uprising in northern India in 1857 led to the demise of the East India Company. Administration of the country was handed over to the British government. In 1858 India was under the British crown, the British Raj, begins with Government of India Act. It was the formal end of Mughal Period (Olson, 1982).

Resistance against British rule began seriously at the turn of the 20th century. The 'Congress' had been established to give India a degree of self-rule. In 1915, Gandhi returned from South Africa, where he had practised as a lawyer, and turned his abilities to independence, adopting Satyagraha <sup>3</sup>(Gandhi, 1928).

### 1.1.3.5 Indian Freedom Struggle (1900AD- )

Within India the large Muslim minority realised that an independent India would be Hindu-dominated. Muslims supported Hindus against Brits. Communalism grew with the support Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leader of the majority of Muslims. The Congress Party led Jawaharlal Nehru to representing the Hindu population.

In 1947 Viceroy Mountbatten decided to divide the country and set a rapid timetable for independence for to block a conflict among Hindus and Moslems. Pakistan and India are the new two countries. When the dividing line was announced, one of the greatest exoduses in human history took place (Metcalf: Metcalf, 2002).

Muslims moved to Pakistan; Hindus and Sikhs relocated to India. Over 10 million people changed sides and even the most conservative estimates calculate that 250,000 people were killed. The subcontinent was divided into the secular state of India and the smaller Muslim state of Pakistan.

India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was a secularist, socialist central planner and a strict policy of nonalignment. India elected to join the Commonwealth, but also increased ties with the USSR, partly because of conflicts with China. Muslims were still dominated in Kashmir (Alam: Delyove: Gaborieau, 2000).

India's next prime minister of standing was Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi, who was elected in 1966. She still held in high esteem but her Sikh bodyguards assassinated her in 1984 because of a reprisal for using the Indian Army to flush out

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<sup>3</sup>Means 'truth force': a policy of passive resistance for the politically weak or voteless but soul is strong.



armed Sikh radicals from the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The Gandhi's' dynasty on Indian politics continued with her son Rajeev.

Rajeev brought new and pragmatic policies to the country. Foreign investment and the use of modern technology were encouraged, import restrictions were eased and many new industries were set up. Rajeev assassinated on an election tour by a supporter of Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers (Metcalf: Metcalf, 2002).

By April 1999 Prime Minister Vajpayee had lost his majority and was forced into a vote of confidence and he lost by one vote. Sonia Gandhi, Rajeev Gandhi's widow, was unable to secure a coalition and India was forced to the polls for the third time in as many years. The BJP was returned to government with a slimmer lead in 2004 elections. So successful was she that the dominant BJP were outstanding for the first time in almost 10 years. Perhaps concerned for her well-being, Sonia Gandhi declined the Prime Ministerial role. She assigned Ministry to her party companion first Sikh leader, an anti-corruption stalwart and economic reformist, Manmohan Singh, to lead the parliament.

## 1.2 CULTURE OF INDIA

### 1.2.1 LANGUAGE

India's ethnic, linguistic and regional complexity differs from any other nations. To understand the relationships of ethnic, linguistic, and regional groups, India should be visualized, as the seat of a major world civilization .It has never been a nation state all in her history. The languages of India belong to mainly four families:

- a) Indo-Aryan (a branch of the Indo-European family)
- b) Dravidian
- c) Austro-Asiatic (Austriac)
- d) Sino-Tibetan

Four major language families include officially 112 "mother tongues," each with 10,000 or more speakers; thirty-three languages spoken by 1 million or more persons. Indian languages exist in a number of different forms or dialects influenced by diverse geographic and social patterns. The constitution's Eighth Schedule lists eighteen official

or Scheduled Languages. They are Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. Exact numbers of speakers of these languages have not known but in total, the official languages, approximately about 43 percent of the estimated total 2004 population, speak Hindi as their mother tongue (www.cia.org).

Both Hindi and English are extensively used, and each has its own supporters. Native speakers of Hindi, who are concentrated in North India, contend that English, as a relic from the colonial past and spoken by only a small fraction of the population. Best and widely, spread schools in educating are Catholic schools and their education language is English so by the way elite Indians use English. English, they say, at least represents an equal handicap for Indians of every region. Today English continues to serve as the language of prestige (Sharma, 1995). Many Indian nationalists originally intended that Hindi would replace English, the language of British rule.

## **1.2.2 RELIGION IN INDIA**

It is necessary to understand religions, which have an oppressive impact on the public life. Indian religions' historical roots spring from the ancient culture of South Asia, which is going back at least 4,500 years. Many Hindu texts are formed in those years. The intellectual and philosophical contributions of conquerors and neighbours enriched the religious thought and symbolism. In addition, those contacts between India and other cultures had spread Indian religions to Europe and North America. A number of world religions originated in India, and others that started elsewhere found fertile ground for growth there (Morris, 1987).

### **1.2.2.1 Islam**

Islam has spread from the Middle East through to South Asia. In the 1750's Islam was the largest minority religion in India. Also with 140 million Muslims, India has at least the fourth largest Muslim population in the world. "The great majority of Muslims in India subcontinent are the descendants of the Hindu converts. In 1911, it was estimated that 85 percent of the Punjab Muslims were of native stock. In the rest

of the India, the proportion must have been greater. There were four major groups of Muslims according to the Cohn (Cohn,1971). These are:

- a) The Ashraf, who trace their origin to Arabia, Persia, Turkistan or Afghanistan
- b) The Hindus of higher birth who converted to Islam
- c) The clean occupational castes
- d) The converts from the untouchable castes such as Bhangi<sup>4</sup> , Mehtar<sup>5</sup>, Chimer<sup>6</sup>.

### 1.2.2.2 Sikhism

Sikhism had started in Punjab in the sixteenth century with Guru<sup>7</sup> Nanak (1469-1539), a member of a trading caste in Punjab. Nanak's reputation spread, and by the time he died he had founded a new religion of "disciples" (shiksha or Sikh) that followed his example. Sikhs has an importance far beyond their population because Sikhs have an enormously important role in the army (Chopra, 1982).

Most of the Sikh gurus were excellent musicians who composed songs as their message to the masses in the saints' own language. The belief system origins are Hinduism and Islam, but the formulation of Sikhism is unique. God is the creator of the universe and God is without qualities or differentiation in him.

The universe is not sinful in its origin but covered with impurities; it is not suffering, but a transitory opportunity for the soul to recognize its true nature and break the cycle of rebirth. The unregenerate person has dominated by self-interest and remains immersed in illusion, leading to bad karma. Meanwhile, God desires that his creatures escape and achieve enlightenment by recognizing his order in the universe (Venugopal, 1998).

As for domestic and life-cycle rituals, well into the twentieth century many Sikhs followed Hindu customs for birth, marriage, and death ceremonies, including

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<sup>4</sup> Scavenger

<sup>5</sup> Sweeper

<sup>6</sup> Tanners

<sup>7</sup> In the Sikh faith, one of ten spiritual leaders and teachers, the first of whom was Nanak Dev, the last being Gobind Singh. In Hinduism, a religious teacher or guide

readings from Hindu scriptures and the employment of Brahman<sup>8</sup>s. Reform movements within the Sikh community have removed many of these customs, substituting instead readings from the Guru Granth Sahib as the focus for rituals and the employment of Sikh ritual specialists. At major public events, weddings, funerals, or opening a new business, patrons may fund a reading of the entire Guru Granth Sahib by special recites (Chopra, 1982).

### 1.2.2.3 Christianity

The first Christians in India converted by Saint Thomas the Apostle who arrived on the Malabar Coast of India in A.D. 52. He was believed to have been martyred in Madras and buried on the site of San Thomé Cathedral. Members of the Syro-Malabar Church, an eastern rite of the Roman Catholic Church, with the missionaries during the British rule Catholic had expanded in India by schools, hospitals and other public services. Although their small numbers Christians are very oppressive in the government and the economic life (Burghart, 1985).

### 1.2.2.4 Zoroastrianism

According to the 1991 census, there were 79,382 members of the Zoroastrian faith. Some 79 percent lived in Maharashtra (primarily in Bombay) and most of the rest in Gujarat. Zoroastrians are primarily ancestors of tenth-century immigrants from Persia. Zoroaster is a prophet of Iran whose believers came to India in the sixth century B.C. Although the number of Parsis bit by bit declined during the twentieth century due to emigration and low birth rates, their religion is significant because of the financial manipulation power of this trading community. They represent the world's largest surviving group of believers in an ancient faith (Elidae, 1987).

Their religious texts called as 'the Avesta'. It includes a number of episodes in archaic language attributed to Zoroaster himself. Their focus ritual is the cult of the fire sacrifice. The supreme spirit is Ahura Mazda (or Ohrmazd), whose will is manifest in the world through the actions of generous immortals or good spiritual attributes that support life and love. Opposing the supreme spirit is the force of evil, Angra Mainyu

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<sup>8</sup> From the Sanskrit *brahmana*, one of four major caste groups (*varna*) or social classes. Brahmins are the highest caste group, traditionally made up of priests, philosophers, scholars, and religious leaders. Not to be confused with *Brahman*

(or Ahriman), which is the cause of all destruction and corruption in the world (Chopra, 1982).

People who choose to do good actions go to heaven, which commit evil go to hell. At the end of time, there will be a final judgment and a resurrection of the dead to a perfect world.

#### **1.2.2.5 Judaism**

Trade contacts between the Mediterranean region and the west coast of India probably led to the presence of small Jewish settlements in India as long ago as the early first millennium B.C. There are three basic locations of Jews. They are Kerala, Konkan coast and Bombay. In Kerala, a community of Jews tracing its origin to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 has remained associated with the cities of Carmagnole and Kochi (formerly known as Cochin) for at least 1,000 years (Chopra, 1982).

The Jews of Kochi, concentrated mostly in the old "Jew Town" and they were completely integrated into local culture, speaking Malayalam and taking local names while preserving their knowledge of Hebrew and contacts with Southwest Asia. A separate community of Jews, called the Bene Israel, had lived along the Konkan Coast in and around Bombay, Pune, and Ahmadabad for almost 2,000 years. Unlike the Kochi Jews, they became a village-based society and maintained little contact with other Jewish communities. They always remained within the orthodox Jewish fold, practicing the Sephardic rite without rabbis, with the synagogue as the centre of religious and cultural life.

A third group of Jews immigrated to India, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century, following the trade contacts established by the British Empire. These Baghdad Jews came mostly from the area of modern Iraq and settled in Bombay and Calcutta, where many of them became wealthy and participated in the economic leadership of these growing cities (Chopra, 1982).

#### **1.2.2.6 Jainism**

The oldest continuous monastic belief in India is Jainism. Jainism means the path of the Jinas or victors. This tradition has traced to Vardhamana Mahavira (The Great Hero). According to legend, Mahavira was born to a ruling family in the town of

Vaishali, located in the modern state of Bihar. At the age of thirty, he renounced his wealthy life and devoted himself to fasting and self-mortification in order to purify his consciousness and discover the meaning of existence. He never again dwelt in a house, owned property, or wore clothing of any sort. Following the example of the teacher Parshvanatha, he attained enlightenment and spent the rest of his life meditating and teaching a monastic group of disciples. After his life's work completed, he entered a fast and died of hunger.

According to the Jain vision, the soul is a living substance that unites various kinds of nonliving matter. In addition, human accumulates particles of matter that remains and determines his/her fate. All animals and plants attached in a variety of degrees to living souls. Any action has consequences that necessarily follow the embodied soul. The vital Jain discipline is ahimsa, absolute non-violence against any living so believers generally are vegetarians.

The Jains hold a number of ritual activities from Hindus. The Ceremonies are almost the same. Daily rituals may include meditation and bathing; bathing the images; offering food, flowers, and narrating mantra<sup>9</sup>s in Ardhamagadhi<sup>10</sup>. Many Jain laity engages in sacramental ceremonies during life-cycle rituals, such as the first taking of solid food, marriage, and death, resembling those enacted by Hindus.

Jains may also worship local gods and participate in local Hindu or Muslim celebrations without compromising their fundamental devotion to the path of the Jinas. The most important festivals of Jainism celebrate the five major events in the life: conception, birth, renunciation, enlightenment and death (Chopra, 1982).

### **1.2.2.7 Buddhism**

Buddhism founded by Siddhartha Gautama (563-483 B.C.), a prince from the small Shakya Kingdom located in the foothills of the Himalayas in Nepal. Brought up in luxury, the prince abandoned his home and wandered forth as a religious beggar, searching for the meaning of existence (Coomaraswamy, 2000).

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<sup>9</sup> Transcendental sound vibration that can deliver the mind from illusion

<sup>10</sup> An ancient language of northeast India related to Sanskrit

The stories of his search presuppose the Jain tradition, as Gautama was for a time a practitioner of intense strictness, almost starving himself to death but after he realized self-torture had weakened his mind and it caused him fail in enlightenment. Siddhartha turned to a midway. He reached the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths: 1- all of life is suffering; 2- the cause of suffering is desire; 3- the end of desire leads to the end of suffering; 4-to end desire is a path of discipline and meditation. Gautama became the Buddha (Coomaraswamy, 2000).

Buddhism had almost vanished from India because of Hindu monastic communities grew up with the same style of discipline as the Buddhists, leading to the combination of ideas and trends in the two religions (Chopra, 1982).

A major change occurred in 1956 after some thirty years of Dalit<sup>11</sup> protest when Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar announced that he was converting to Buddhism as a way to escape from the obstacles of the Hindu caste system. After Ambedkar, Dalits conversion to Buddhism had begun in nineties Buddhist population was more than 5 million in Maharashtra. Today 0,8 percent of whole population in India is Buddhist.

### 1.2.2.8 Hinduism

Hinduism denotes the religions of the majority of the people in Indus and Nepal (Bhatt, 2001). A simple definition is almost impossible for theology due to the vast and very long history. Even first Prime Minister of India Nehru said about Hinduism ‘all things to all men’.

Even the diversity, there is an ‘essence’. Most of Hindus believe samsara<sup>12</sup>, karma<sup>13</sup>, Vedas<sup>14</sup>, Upanishads<sup>15</sup>, Bhagavad-Gita<sup>16</sup> but the most important feature is their castes. Although law abolished the caste system in 1949, it is a significant power all

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<sup>11</sup> Sanskrit word meaning burst, split, broken, crushed, or destroyed but, since the nineteenth century, often taken to mean downtrodden; used in reference to Untouchables (Harijans.), outcastes, Scheduled Castes), and others living in a reduced social state

<sup>12</sup> Reincarnation

<sup>13</sup> The law that all actions have effects

<sup>14</sup> Means knowledge. A body of diverse sacred Sanskrit writings having its origins so deep in antiquity that its authors are unknown .it had passed through generations by oral tradition.

<sup>15</sup> The last four part of the each four Vedas. Western philosophers, especially Nietzsche, highly recommends for mental freedom.

<sup>16</sup> Means Holy Song in Sanskrit. It is the book 6 of the Mahabharata. It is dialog between Prince Arjuna and Gok Krishna before the battlefield before the climactic struggle between good and evil.

over India. Even castes had seen in other religions in India, thus became by the diffusion.

There are important differences between castes and there are a diversity of tribes that is different from the other but inspire of all there is a certain unity. They keep the sense of familiarity. On the other hand, some unpleasantness and discrimination is a feature today.

### **1.2.3 GENERAL PERCEPTION OF HINDUISM**

Hinduism is a term, which donates the religions of the majority of people in India and Nepal and some communities in other continents, who refer themselves as 'Hindus'. If we want to make a clear statement on Hinduism, it will be hard. Even Nehru said that Hinduism is all things to all men because the diversity of Hinduism is truly vast. Its history is long and complex (Coomaraswamy, 2000).

Most Hindu traditions respect Veda as sacred literature; some do not. Some traditions are regard certain rituals as essential, other do not. Hinduism often characterized as belief samsara<sup>17</sup> determined by the karma<sup>18</sup>. On the other hand, Jainism, Buddhism also believes the same. Definition is so hard because Hinduism does not have a single historical founder like other religions. It does not have a unified system of belief or a declaration of faith. It has no centralized authority and bureaucratic structure (Burghart, 1985).

One striking feature of Hinduism is that practise takes presence over belief. What a Hindu does is more important than a Hindu believes. Hinduism is not creedal. Obedience to dharma<sup>19</sup> is not an acceptance of certain believes. The social stratification organized according to these dharmic social duties (Burghart, 1985).

The boundaries of what a Hindu can and cannot do have been largely decided according to his/her particular endogamous social group: caste, jati or gender. The social hierarchy is governed by the distinction between purity and pollution. Higher castes are purer castes. The lowers or outcastes are polluted and polluting castes.

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<sup>17</sup> Reincarnation

<sup>18</sup> The law of all actions have effects parallel with its essence being good or bad

<sup>19</sup> True religious principles, the eternal function of a living being

<sup>20</sup> Refers to the duty of high-caste Hindus regard to social position



A Hindu is someone who born in an Indian social group and who performs its prescribed rituals which usually focuses on one day of the many Hindu deities such as Siva or Vishnu. One might be derived from the Vedas or any other religious texts, which can be written by an author (Chopra, 1982).

The actual term 'Hindu' first occurs as a Persian geographical term for the people who live beyond the river Indus (Sanskrit Sindhu). In Arabic texts, Al-Hind is a term for the people for today's India and Pakistan. Hindu or Hindoo was used during 18<sup>th</sup> century and land called as Hindustan. The -ism was added by Brahmans to define the religion (Flood, 1997).

It has been said that India is a country that has never distinguished philosophy from religion. Much of Hinduism tends to accept all different at the same time, claiming that they are all valid as different faces of a single truth, or ranks them as explanations with different levels of sophistication. Hinduism is a single belief system with one textual explanation of the origin of the universe or the nature of God, and a wide range of philosophies and practices can trace their beginnings somewhere in the hymns of the Vedas.

Many Indians has been dominated for thousand of years by The Vedas. Most formal Indian belief has consisted of commentaries on The Upanishads. Three main collections of the Vedas--the Rig, Sama, and Yajur--consist of chants that were originally recited by priests while offering plant and animal sacrifices in sacred fires. A fourth collection, the Atharva Veda, contains a number of formulas for requirements as varied as medical cures and love magic. Most of today's Hindus respect these collections as sacred sounds passed down to humanity from the greatest ancient times and as the source of Hindu tradition.

### **1.2.3.1 The Ceremonies of Hinduism**

The most notable feature in religious ritual is the division between purity and pollution. Religious acts assume some degree of impurity or ruining for the person, which must be rise above or neutralized before or during ritual procedures (Chopra, 1982).

Purification, usually with water, is thus a typical feature of most religious action. Hindus avoid of impurity. Taking a life, eating flesh, associating with dead things or body fluids, disobeying to caste distinction are main reasons for impurity.

In a social context, Brahman caste is the main authority to avoid the impure. Still another feature is a belief in the value of sacrifice, including survivals of Vedic sacrifice. Thus, sacrifices may include the performance of offerings in a harmonic style, with the preparation of sacred space, narration of texts, and manipulation of objects. (Burghart, 1985)

The concept of merit, gained through the performance of charity or good works that will accumulate over time and reduce sufferings in the next world. Merit should base on dharma.

Different castes have different dharma such as lower cast Shudra or outcaste dharma is karma. Brahmans dharma is Cnana<sup>21</sup>. Bhakti<sup>22</sup> can also choose for all castes (Chopra, 1982).

### **1.2.3.2 Social Systems in Hinduism**

India has a multipart social system. This divides India from other part of world. India is a hierarchical society. Within Indian culture, groups of people ranked according to various essential qualities. Although India is a political democracy, in daily life there is a high support of inequality.

Castes<sup>23</sup> and caste like groups ranked. In villages or towns, everyone knows the relative rankings of each locally represented caste, and people's behaviour toward one another is continuously shaped by this social rule. Castes are principally related with Hinduism other than also it exists among other religious minorities.

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<sup>21</sup> Knowledge way. The most strictest way among dharma, true religious principles and eternal function of a living being

<sup>22</sup> Way of loving and obedience. Devotional service to the Supreme Godhead.

<sup>23</sup> Caste is originally from the Portuguese. It is for the prevalent social order in India as well as the component groups within that order. However, it refers to Varna in Indian. Varna literally means colour.

Castes are not the only ranking among Hindus. Within families and kinship relations, there are many features of hierarchy. Men outrank women of the same or similar age, and senior relatives outrank junior relatives. Several other kinship relations involve formal respect. For example, in northern India, a daughter-in-law of a household shows deference to a daughter of a household. Even among young brothers in a household, there is constant acceptance of age differences: younger brothers never address an older sibling by name, but rather by respectful terms for elder brother or elder sister. However, an older brother may address the younger by name.

### 1.2.3.3 Life Passages

In India, the ideal stages of life have four stages after childhood. These are: Brahmacharya undergoing religious initiation and becoming a student of religious texts. Discipline and Education are the main features. It is hard working period in which each Hindu should learn *Cnana* and *Yoga*<sup>24</sup>. Young students should learn the world and the sacred.

*Garhsthya* is getting married and becoming a householder. Marriage is the greatest event in a family. Dramatically it evokes every possible social obligation, kinship bond, traditional value, impassioned sentiment, and economic resource. Weddings are the complex permutations of Indian social systems. Young married couple begins to accept adult responsibilities such as working inside and outside of the home, child bearing, developing and maintaining social relationships, fulfilling religious obligations, and enhancing family prosperity and prestige as much as possible.

*Vanaprasthya* is leaving home to become a forest hermit after becoming a grandparent. Whatever successes the human had in *Garhasthya* passage, it is not enough for salvation. The person should weaken his/her boundaries with the social community. Because main duties had successes, identity is completed. Human should look for inner self. Meditation is the main activity during *Vanaprasthya*.

*Sannyasa* is becoming a homeless wanderer free of desire for all material things. Hindus believe reincarnation but if a person reached *muhkti*<sup>25</sup>, will be free from reincarnation. He/she can finally find never-ending serenity. If a human cannot reach

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<sup>24</sup> Body and Mind Treatment, spiritual discipline to link oneself with the Supreme

<sup>25</sup> Salvation

muhkti, as well as his/her karma he/she can be in a better caste or from a bad karma, he/she can be a lower caste or animal. Kismet<sup>26</sup> could be considered relevant to the course of life. Muhkti is the synonym of nirvana in Buddhism.

#### 1.2.4 CASTE SYSTEM

There is no single accepted definition of caste system but there is a wide spread agreement on its attributes. The caste consists of four groups; recruited by birth. Membership determines human access for statuses and activities in society of Hindus. There is strict hierarchy in this system among ranking groups.

Caste status is a descriptive and unchangeable. System is endogamous. (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967). The main difference among castes is purity. Hindu sacred law contains an implicit opposition of pollution (defilement, impurity) and purity. But purity degrees are accepted among Aryans. Non-Aryans indigenous people are outcaste.

Social scientists have long used the word 'caste', which is not an Indian word but a word first used by the Portuguese to mean 'breed, colour or type'. In Vedas caste is synonym of varna (Gupta, 1991) conceptually caste is being used to describe any closed stratification system which comes by birth and in which little movements are rarely possible with marriage or individual mobility (Cohn, 1968).

Castes are relating with profession, such as high-ranking Brahmans; reign members, warriors and nobles are Kshatriya; middle-ranking farmer, artisan groups, such as potters, barbers, and carpenters are Vaishya and workers, farmers and servants as Shudra. There is an outcaste group known as untouchable": leatherworkers, butchers, launderers, and bathroom cleaners. Although they can often be called, 'Harijans' means "Children of God." which is firstly used by Gandhi. After 1990's, many politically conscious members of these groups agreed to label themselves as Dalits. Work-related specialization has been believed to be in accord with the divinely ordained order of the universe.

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<sup>26</sup> Kismet is a widely known word. Jews, Indians and Turks use on the similar meaning.

Each caste had a function in sustaining the life of society--the social body. Brahmans, or priests, was created from the mouth. They were to provide for the intellectual and spiritual needs of the community. Kshatriyas, warriors and rulers, were derived from the arms. Their role was to rule and to protect others. Vaishyas sprang from the thighs, and were entrusted with the care of commerce and agriculture. Shudras came from the feet. Their task was to perform all manual labour.

"Untouchable" relegate to carrying out unskilled and polluting work related to bodily decay and dirt (Gupta, 1991). The castes are referred to the "clean castes," with Dalits considered "unclean." The top three castes, except Shudra, are "twice-born," means as holding a ritual initiation.

As we can see, there is a positive correlation between ritual rank and prosperity. Non-Aryans are even out of it. Members of higher-ranking castes are more prosperous than lower-ranking castes. Part of Shudras and Dalits mainly live in conditions of great poverty and social disadvantage. Although caste discrimination was banned with the Laws of Indian constitution, caste is still powerful.

In daily life, members of a caste are spread out over a region, with members. In any small village, there may be lineage of castes more than five. This is essential for economic life but their social lives are separate, especially from Dalits. Although economic activities need Dalits, for example washing clothes, cleaning toilets, Dalits obliged to live an outside part of the village.

These inequalities among castes are considered by the Hindu to be the part of the holy order. Within a village, rank is strongly expressed at a wedding or death feast. At the home of Brahman prepares food because all can accept cooked food from them and they can have a meal. Diners are seated in lines; members of a single caste sit next to each other in a row, and members of other castes sit in at a 90-degree angle or parallel rows at some distance. Members of Dalit castes may be seated far from the other diners- or seated in the outside of the garden. Farther away, at the edge of the feeding area, a Sweeper (also Dalit) waits with a large basket to receive leftover. Generally, feasts and ceremonies given by Dalits are not attended by caste members.

Each caste has its own dharma, or divinely ordained code of proper conduct. for that reason there is often a high degree of tolerance for differing way of life among different castes. Brahmans are usually expected to be non-violent and spiritual, according with their traditional roles as vegetarian teetotaller<sup>27</sup> priests.

Kshatriyas are supposed to be strong, as fighters and rulers should be, with a taste for aggression, eating meat, and drinking alcohol. Vaishyas are stereotyped as adept businessmen, in accord with their traditional activities in commerce. Shudras are often described by others as tolerably pleasant but expectably somewhat base in behaviour, whereas Dalits are often regarded by others as vulgar life-styles

The chastity of women is strongly related to caste status. The higher ranking the caste, the more sexual control women are expected. Brahman brides should be virgin, loyal to one husband and never new marriage if she becomes widow. By contrast, a Dalit bride may or may not be virgin, extramarital affairs may be tolerated, and, if widowed or divorced, the woman is encouraged to remarry. Control of female sexuality guarantees purity of lineage.

Within castes, clear standards are preserved. Castes in settlements have councils to normalize the caste in itself. Each caste has responsibilities towards other castes. Meeting periodically to give a ruling for the issues are relevant to the caste. Councils are preferably formed of male elders of caste. Punishments can be enforced. The existence of rigid ranking is supernaturally validated through the idea of rebirth according to a person's karma, the sum of an individual's deeds in this life and in past lives.

### **1.2.5 DALITS**

That was the main problem setting the term of Dalit. Literature written by the Indians, there are many terms as Scheduled Caste, SC, Harijan, Untouchable, Depressed, Avarna, Outcaste, Pariah. They do not set the termination clearly. Also most terms and abbreviations are not explained in the books. Indian scholars consider that its well-known terms. There is a really chaotic situation.

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<sup>27</sup> Teetotalism is the practice and promotion of complete (or T-total) abstinence from alcoholic beverages

The most time spending work was for to define terms and match with other documents. Mostly neither Indian nor foreign scholars the government define these terms with a clear statement. Indians scholars use English commonly in their studies and papers. Libraries are mostly consists of books in English. As known as Indians created a different dialect. As I will widely notify latterly only a few of scholars estimate the necessity of terms.

According to Social Action Editor Rodrigues Dalit identity consists of 2 fragments. During explaining the term there is a synonym usage of Untouchable and Dalit.

1-Untouchables as sharing the common lot of deprivation and exploitation: it includes the prohibitions in terms of dress and appearance

2-Untouchables as an Ethnic Constituency

This jogs our memory. Marx did not give the definition of class. But he gave the brief examples of class (Dandekar, 1995).

They may also be labelled as the First Dravidians, which became slave after the Aryan invaders. Hindu society set them free but set them also as out caste. They have been oppressed economically, physically and ideologically.

In past decades, Dalits in certain areas (especially in parts of the south) had to obey extremely degrading rules for caste people. Dalits must not touch or even their shadow should not pollute other castes. Some villages may oblige them to wear neither shoes nor any upper body covering (even for women) (Cohn, 1971). In some places, Dalits had to jingle a little bell in warning of their polluting while they are in the public. Dalits were prohibited from entering temples, using wells from which the "clean" castes use or attending schools (Charsley, 1998).

After Mahatma<sup>28</sup> Gandhi and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar protested against degrading discrimination, Dalits had the right to enter Hindu temples and to use village

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<sup>28</sup> Means Great Soul

wells. After independence, Ambedkar was the main figure during writing the India's constitution. He struggled and succeeded to include key requirements excluding caste-based discrimination.

On the other hand, discrimination remains a factor in daily life, especially in villages. Even in the cities tea stalls and restaurants serve Dalits who can pay but generally keep two sets of glasses, not to “pollute” the glasses used by others (Louis, 2000). Educationally, Dalit students have benefited from scholarships, and literacy rate had increased (from 10.3 percent in 1961 to 21.4 percent in 1981) (Kumar, 2000). Improved access to education has resulted in the emergence of a substantial group of educated Dalits able to take up white-collar occupations and fight for their rights.

They have been oppressed economically, physically and ideologically. Mixed marriages of Dalits with other castes are rare in town. They would not be accepted in the villages. Although discrimination is religious, they are also victims of violence. The burning alive in 1969 in Kilvenmani (Thanjavur district) of 42 Dalits, including children, was a response to a strike. They had requested better wages and they buried themselves to attract attention their poverty (Louis, 2000).

According to the Memorandum of Dalit Writers Forum in 1996 Dalits are the main targets of what are termed "caste-related crimes". Over 2000 Dalits died in the three years between 1989 and 1991 as a result of "atrocities against Harijans". In the rural countryside, stripping, hacking to death, massacres and lopping off heads are the marks of a horrific bestiality inspired by the unshakeable taint of dirtiness. One of the worst massacres of Dalits took place in December 1997 at Lakshmanpur Bathe village in Bihar, where 67 Dalits were slaughtered by the upper-caste Ranvir Sena.(Pathak, 1998).

In modern times, as in the past, it is nearly impractical for an individual to raise his own status no one would dine with or intermarry with a person whose breed was not validated through kinship. Rising on the ritual hierarchy can only be achieved by a caste as a group, over a long period, principally by adopting behaviour patterns of higher-ranked groups. This process, known as Sanskritization, has been described by



M.N. Srinivas (Sharma,1985). For example some Leatherworkers, who are Dalits, adopted a policy of not eating beef, in the hope that increase their castes' status(Kumar, 2000).

Increased economic prosperity always does not work to improve rank such as Leatherworkers. Even they earn more than some castes; they regarded still the polluted (National Geographic, June 2003).

72 percent Dalits are landless agricultural labourers at a charge of daily eating. They are working for peanut harvest, paddy transplantation; cutting sugarcane and so on ...Dalits who own land have very small plots. 90 percent of rural Dalits are still illiterate; the literacy rate for non-Dalits is 10 percent (Louis, 2000). The vast majority of them remain poor; but poverty is an economic, not a caste, condition. The problem of poverty in India cannot be reduced to caste and one finds poor people basically in all caste groups: according to the various estimates, between 30 and 60 per cent of the Indian population live under the so-called 'poverty line', whereas Untouchables are only 15 percent.

The Dalits are largely poor but not poorer than other Indians are. Dalit movement changed a lot although there is still discrimination. For example according to the memorandum that the 3 million teachers are employed in 256 universities and 11,000 colleges in India, only 2 percent are Dalits. In 1993, 14 Dalit judges served on the Delhi High Court and several hundreds were in the lower judiciary (Kumar, 2000).

There is discrimination but as Dumont pointing the discrimination is religious. I am agreeing with Dupont. The explanation of the Dalits debased status must be in religion, and not in the political or the economic spheres: the carrying out of the dirty tasks by one group is necessary to maintaining the purity of the others.

The impurity of the Untouchable is conceptually inseparable from the purity of the Brahmin. Untouchables are therefore the social categories whose task it is to clean up society, to remove its organic wastes and to keep away all sorts of dirty influences. The cow, which, as we know, is the object of religious respect, indicates the religious basis of the Untouchables' position: in effect, it is always the task of Dalits to arrange

of dead cattle; they do the leatherworking, the drumming, and the shoemaking. Their members are also the street-sweepers and the night-soil removers.

### 1.2.6 PURITY AND DEFILEMENT

The purity in anthropology derives from Douglas who see the possible medical benefits to be derived from religious rules against defilement. Purity is related with hygiene which see the possible medical benefits to be derived from religious rules against defilement.

The symbolic interpretation

A contrary interpretation rejects out of hand any comparison between religious rituals of purification and the hygiene measures of our own culture, seeing the former as purely symbolic and the latter as purely practical. Douglas cautions against this approach too. In this context she looks particularly at Hindu practices, such as a type of ritual bathing.

This time, the anthropologist's reasoning is retrievable. The grounds for rejecting the disputed interpretation is that a false contrast is involved, that between the religions and ourselves. It is not that rituals of purification are not symbolic, but rather that our own attitudes are not necessarily practical, based on medical considerations: our hygiene too can have a symbolic element.

Dirt

Turning to our western notion, Douglas (2002) argues that our association of dirt with bacteria should be discounted on account of it being a recent development. In European culture, dirt is essentially a question of 'matter out of place' [pg 36], of that which we find inappropriate in a given context. It is concomitant with the creation of order.

Ambiguity and Anomaly

Douglas now effects a transition in her discussion from dirt to ambiguity and anomaly, the latter two being the same for practical purposes. As an example of the way we find it difficult to handle anomaly, Douglas refers to Sartre's analysis in *Being*

and Nothingness of the experience of viscosity, an intermediate state between liquid and solid.

Cultures have a range of tactics for dealing with phenomena perceived as anomalous or ambiguous:

With respect to the topic of purity, we may ask that why only Dalits are separated from caste. Is it due to hygiene or smelling bad? Hygiene can call up purity but this purity is deeply taken from the religious texts. Many other Hindus have contact with cow gaitas or urines in daily lives (Dumont, 1980).

Hindu sacred law contains an implicit opposition of pollution and purity. Pollution signifies connection with life substance and process, which is to be avoided. Polluting things or processes include birth, death, sexual intercourse, bodily excretions, harmful actions and so on.

Purity means perhaps 'spiritually'; in any event the non-attendance of biological involvement. Polluted things defile pure ones and exposure to the latter removes the effect of the former (Cohn; Pg 115, 1971). There are two dimensions we can understand pollution, relational vs. act pollution.

Relational pollution can be understandable by examinations. If a very young child dies, if an abortion occurs in the kin group, the relatives are subject to a relational pollution. He is ruined for specific period of until his genealogical distance deceased or newborn. Defilement is believed to spread through the kin group. In the Vedas, they are the connected particles of the same body. (Cohn, 1971).

Act pollution can be divided in two because pollution occurs by a contact of a biological reason.

(a) Internal pollution is the pollution which the believer is the subject and acts upon polluting subjects. When an individual is killed, the murderer polluted according the caste and the rank of the victim. (Cohn, 1971)

(b) External pollution occurs when the object is the believer. The object was polluted internally by injuring living things (Cohn, 1971).

But the ancient literature confirms that temporary and permanent impurity is identical from the nature (Dumont, 1980). Deaths, births and other events are generally accepted dangerous which can leave permanent effects in human lives. In case of deaths in a Hindu village, we will see that notion of impurity is different from the notion of danger because impurity applications are contradictive such as in whole India except Maratha, washer man is responsible for washing the soiled linen at times of birth and menstruation but they have been serving these people temporarily even in the bath. Bath is a place to become externally pure. Therefore, it is contradicting in our minds that between pure and impure, the religious division of labour acts together for a level of purity (Dumont, 1980).

The impurity of untouchable will not disappear unless the purity from Brahman will separated. It is remarkable that the essential development bears on the cow. Cattle an especially cows are the objects of respect. Cattles were not killed without reason, but sacrificed animals were eaten and sometimes cows can sacrifice. Among Hindus the killing of a cow is a serious crime. There is a social connection here exists in this point. Murdering a cow is the same sin as assassin a Brahman. Cows' products are powerful purification agents. Dalits are generally having the job of disposing the dead cattle and working their skin. This is the main reason for untouchability (Dumont, 1980).

### **1.2.7 ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES OF INDIA**

The development of social sciences corresponds with the development of modern industrial capitalism in Europe. This relationship between social science and industrialization is inter-reliant (Scupin, 2000).

Modern capitalism expanded its' borders by the imperialism and not only the spread of European armies but also the western ideas and problems on colonized societies. Imperialism exchanged poverty with economic resources with colonized countries such as India. Classical political theory<sup>29</sup>, Liberian theory, accepted for the societies founded on industrial capitalism.

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<sup>29</sup> Laissez-faire and utilitarian principles

Marxist-socialist thought aimed to eliminate the offensive features of capitalist society. Marxists concentrated effort on class, class conflict and class struggle. After the 1850's European Marxists focused on the links between theory, ideology and praxis. Colonized India cannot be analysed without examining the growth of Liberal and Marxist thought (Roy, 1970).

#### **1.2.7.1 COLONIAL TAKE OVER**

Western ideas were bound for conflict with the colonized traditional societies such as India. Parents of sociology and social anthropology are the colonial administrators. Indian society and culture were very unfamiliar to the colonial authorities when Britain occupied India.

The castes, religious sects, beliefs, rituals, the tribal world, many languages, numerous dialects, village communities, and land occupancy system in India were too complex to comprehend and to rule on for United Kingdom. They faced with inadequate, inaccurate understanding of local customs, traditions and institutions. They misjudged institutional arrangements and disturb social order (Sharma, 1995).

Britain found social anthropology for to solve multiple problems. Social anthropology became a useful tool to make smooth running of colonial domination in India. Multiple works were done by British aristocrat social scientists. These works supplied basic data and information required by the colonial administration. These works are; Francis Buchanan's famous travelogues, written in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, B. H. Baden Powell's pioneering work on 'Land System of British India', Risley's 'The Peoples of India', studies on castes and tribes by Nesfield, W. Crook, E. Thurston and J.H. Hutton, work on the village communities by Henry, Maine and Baden-Powell, Grierson's monumental 'Linguistic Survey of India' (Roy, 1970).

#### **1.2.7.2 INDIGENOUS SOCIAL THOUGHT AND RENAISSANCE**

In the 19th century there are Indian philosophers, reformers, politicians and activists who support an Indigenous social thought. Raja Rammohun Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar were the leading religious and social

reformers. Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Vivekananda were the social and moral philosophers. Dabadhai Naoriji, B.G. Tilak and G.K. Gokhale were the political thinkers and freedom fighters and R.C. Dutt and M.G. Ranade were the economists in that period. They were all the first generation of intellectuals who had Westernized education in colonial India. They all understood systematically the different structural and cultural peculiarities of India. They tried to offer some solutions within the framework of colonial administration. R. Mukherjee defined them as 'pre-sociological reference groups of Indian sociology and social anthropology' (Mohanty, 1997). They create an interpretative scheme for a accurate evaluation of Indian social reality.

Some of these thinkers were liberal-reformist and secular, some of advocate revivalist rejection of the colonial domination with all western education, science and technology. The indigenous pre-sociological intellectual tradition was advanced on a kind of mosaic theory of Indian culture. They were commonly accepting multiple identities in one India. Cultural diversity was more widely accepted than unity of India.

Even this indigenous intellectual tradition, national movement developed opposed to it. Nationalist movement was a reaction to colonialism and cultural diversity. Nationalist movement was constructive and creative identity and self consciousness but on the other hand nationalists brought this terminology from the west also. Concepts and idioms are translated to Hindi but the structural and cultural features were totally different and inappropriate.

Because of the colonization, modern sociology and social anthropology came to India as a package. It includes a commitment to positivism, methods of empirical observation and verification. These were totally foreign to Indian traditional thought. But latterly it was indianized by Indian scholars (Rudoph, 1967).

The indigenous sociology and social anthropology indianizing brought up different spectrums between nationalism and liberalism. Liberal spectrum were friendly to western concepts, models and analytical categories but wanted an Indian cultural setting. They were far from determining the facts of colonial rule, officinal patronage (Unesco, 1985).

This liberal work was heavily focusing on adopting westerner items instead of labelling Indian traditions, practises and codes. The indological approach is another spectrum. They assumed that Indian society and culture as unique. This contextual details of Indian social realities could be grasped better through the texts of the indological side; S.V. Kentar, B.N. Seal, B.N. Sarkar, G.S. Ghurye.

The end of the spectrum is expressed by A. K. Saran in 1960's. Saran was total rejecting and western ideas and world views. He accepted a total alienation to West for to keep Indian intellectual heritage. Even his lecturer D. P. Mukherji was more tolerant of western ideas, concepts and analytical categories.

The history of the early development of sociology and social anthropology was a period in which multi-level synthesis are founded but not theorised and practised.

### **1.2.7.3 INSTITUTIONALIZATION (PRE-1950 PHASE)**

The institutionalization and professionalisation and widely acceptance of social sciences began on 1950's. The pre-1950 sociology and social anthropology began in Mumbai and Calcutta. These two cities also represent symbolically the colonialism. At the beginning, sociology and social anthropology were treated as the same category (Mohanty, 1997).

Social anthropology and sociology were reduced in importance to a subordinate position in the organizational structure of the university. These two disciplines included mostly in economic departments. Even at University of Bombay where sociology and social anthropology registered a steady progress, they formed as an integral part of School of Economics. Later same pattern was adopted by Lucknow university and Delhi university. Sociology and social anthropology courses were subject to M.A. students, can offer as a part of philosophy, political science and economics.

Depending upon their association with other disciplines, these disciplines regarded as a conceptual apparatus by their tools and methodologies. Also their research themes are shared among other social sciences such as economic and philosophy (Pathak, 1998).

In Indian academic milieu kept sociology and social anthropology in a symbiotic relationship in the early phase of their development. Pre-1950 main figures were B.N. Seal, B.K. Sarkar, Radhakamal, Mukherjee, D.P. Mukerji and K.P. Chattopadhyay. Their intellectual interests, methods of data collection and their interpretations of Indian features were strongly influenced by the style and content of the ethnographic works of colonial period. Their studies were on caste, family, marriage, kinship, social stratification, tribal communities, rural and urban societies (Mohanty, 1997).

In Mumbai Ghurye was dominant with his structural functional approach. Ghurye's academic interests are infinite mines. He studied on caste, races and tribes. His works are still a reference and a guide for Indian studies. His books are 'Mahadev Kolis'-a monograph (1963), 'Indian Sadhus'-a monograph (1964), 'Religion Consciousness' (1965), 'Gotra and Charan as two Brahmanical Institutions'(1972) and his field survey about the sex habits of middle class people in Mumbai, conducted in 1930's. He is the first Indian anthropologist who entered the field and studied empirically (Mohanty, 1997).

Ghurye's strictness and discipline is still legendary in Indian social science history. In the application of theories to empirical exercises and in the use of methodologies for data collection that legendary strictness is not reflected. Because Ghurye was not dogmatic, he preferred eclecticism and new structures for each study. His flexible methodological approach chased his students in university.

Another important centre is Calcutta University by K. P. Chattopadhyay. He was following B. N. Seal and B. K. Sarkar's studies on ethnicity, religion and culture. But Chattopadhyay's perspective and methodology was different. He was combining diffusionism and structural functionalism with Marxist dialectical approach. He has a Cambridge study like Ghurye. He worked on large scale surveys to make known the conditions of peasantry, working class and the tribal communities in Bengal (1946-1952). Their acquired identity and their political awakening were reflected by Chattopadhyay's empirical studies. The growing poverty in rural Bengal and the disturbing impact of Bengal food shortage (1943) were subject to his studies (Mohanty, 1997).



Ramkrishna Mukherjee's initial study on rural Bengal about economic structure and dynamics (1949-58) were credited to Chattapadhyay's portraying Bengal's social dynamics. Lucknow University was another major centre of sociology and social anthropology. Radhakamal Mukherjee, D. P. Mukerji and D.N. Majumdar were all educated in economics (Mohanty, 1997).

Radhakamal Mukherjee had training in Social Anthropology in India. After that he focused on micro-level empirical field investigations such as inter-caste tensions, urbanization in cities of transition, and his works are focused on predictions about empirical realities. He is the pioneer of a trans-disciplinary approach in Indian social science which has a meta-physical and multidimensional philosophical view of societies and institutions.

Majumdar had ethnographic studies on various races, cultures, villages. He was structural functionalist. He was intensive on fieldwork and efficiently used observational data even in his large scale surveys. But he has not very distinctive features such as Mukerji and Mukherjee.

Mukerji was never involved in any empirical exercises of data collection or surveys. He preferred to be an arm chariost. His academic interests were diverse from music to fine arts, from Indian culture to modernity and so on...

His intellectual and inspiring papers created a powerful legacy that influenced on his works. In his works he has two standing points

1. He was against rigid barriers between one social science discipline and another.
2. He believed in social transformation by historical perspective. He called himself Marxologist and attempted a dialectical interpretation of the connection points between the Indian tradition and modernity (Mohanty, 1997).

Mukerji focused more on the historical identity of Indian culture and social transformation. Even his Marxist side he defines as value assimilation and cultural synthesis from tradition to modernity instead of class struggle.

He explored the 'value-freeness' of the social sciences. A. K. Saran, Yogendra Singh, S.P. Nagendra, Indra Deva and more of them are all his students. None of them supported Marx. This shows his high value on intellectual freedom.

In that period David G. Mandelbaum held significant studies with Guggenheim Foundation support. But as a sum of all he wrote 'Society in India', a widely accepted book is still a reference for social anthropology. Mandelbaum's and other scientist studies were usually about caste, class and village.

#### **1.2.7.4 POST 1950 (EXPANSION ON TEACHING AND RESEARCH)**

In the pre-1950 phase Lucknow, Mumbai and Calcutta were the centres of social anthropology and sociology. In 1939 department of social anthropology had established in Deccan College by Irawati Karve. But by 1952-53, department became productive on social studies. Karve was Ghurye's student. She followed Ghurye's structural-functional concerns and methodology. She had interested in kinship structures, ethnic groups, castes, and peculiarities of the regional culture in Western India. She carried out numerous studies on physical anthropology using anthropometric techniques of measurement. Like Ghurye, Karve reinterpret the Indian society, social institutions, symbolism of ritual and values (folk songs, legends, epics).

When Y. B. Damle attempted to Deccan College, sociology and social anthropology departments' diversification had begun. Till 1952 there was not a clear taxonomy among these twin disciplines. Also by 1952, the first Five Year Plan started. The Government of India had officially undertaken programmes of planned development. Sociology and social anthropology were seen as sources of possible expertise on social aspects of development.

The Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission provided most of cost for research projects of social scientists. It created a considerable increase in the demand for the trained personnel in sociology and social anthropology. The growth in general awareness was brought up new departments and expanding of grants on social anthropology.

In this expansion Indian social anthropology looked primarily to Western theoretical and methodological orientation. Conceptual and analytical models were freely borrowed and applied.

Indian social anthropology had followed the trends in British Anthropology. But with 1950's American rural anthropology became more important for Indian scholars. The change deeply related with the programme of community development by Indian Government.

Between 1951 and 1970 Ford Foundation in India transplanted the idea of 'community development'. Into Indian planning, it is a crucial instrument for social reconstruction. Rural areas were accepted as an agency of development. By Ford Foundation social scientists secure funds for research projects to study Indian Villages. They investigated the impact of the community development programmes. Large scale surveys had been made.

For those large scale surveys, foundation helped social scientist to learn and apply new methods and research technology. Some Indian scientists had specific programmes in USA by support of Ford Foundation.

Community Development Programme helped Indian scientists to learn techniques but they failed to create their own sense and studies. Government patronage was harmful to the quality of Indian social science. Research priorities were practically dictated by the Indian Government or Ford Foundation (Bhattacharya, 2000).

There is another significant effect. The degree of the closeness to the state and governments policy formulating bodies became an index of academic status and recognition. This new criteria was almost a pathological for power of scientist and disciplines. Interdisciplinary works were strongly reduced among sociology, economics, social anthropology, philosophy and political science. Symbiotic relationship between sociology and social anthropology cut down (Bhattacharya, 2000). Even their research interests are similar they prefer to isolate the other discipline still.

### 1.2.7.5 RESEARCH TRENDS

In the pre-1950 phase social anthropology studies were specialized on caste, family, kinship, race, culture, religious beliefs, value practices. Colonial administrator scholars influenced researchers' themes. Theoretically Malinowski's functionalism and cultural anthropological perspective was widely accepted. Survey research was less common (Bhattacharya, 2000).

With 1950's new trends and new arguments applied. New arguments are caste & social stratification, family & kinship, religion & ritual, village social organisations & urban life. But caste and social stratification has been the most popular topic up today.

Studies after 1950's are qualitatively different especially Srinivas studies of caste and religion are the top of all time in Indian studies. He enlightens the dynamics of the caste system in rural settings. He offered conceptually new tools like 'Dominant Caste', 'Sanskritization', 'Westernization', and 'Secularization' (1952-1966). These terms were the key factors to comprehend the inner-caste relations (Bhattacharya, 2000).

After Srinivas, Y.B. Damle had advocated Dominant caste theory while explaining caste mobility and dynamics. Also Andre Beteille studied in a Tanjore village and explained dynamics in a Weberian framework of caste, class and power (Bhattacharya, 2000). Complexities of changing social stratification in Indian villages could be explained by dominant caste. According to Beteille, movements and new conditions could only be usable by determining the constant axes of the structure.

Louis Dumont, 1980's 'Homo Hierarchicus' (1970) was another great study. He opened the debate of the ideology of caste is a need. He is explaining why human is establishing hierarchy. Also interprets the old Manu texts to maintain why the discrimination exists by a structuralist approach.

B.S. Baviskar (1968-69) observed the political changes in local level. How castes become a topic for politics. This topic lately took the interest of Yogesh Atal, Srinivas, Andre Beteille, A. C. Mayer, Kathleen Gough, F.G. Bailey, Harold Gould, Mc Kim Marriott, and several others.

Anthropological studies did not always hold by scholars. M. S. A. Rao (1968-69), Anil Bhat (1970) studied undertaken by professional political scientists and social anthropologist (Bhattacharya, 2000).

S. K. Lal (1974) and Sachidananda were interested in elites at different levels of the power-structures. S.C. Dube's Indian Village was a significant work in 1955. Dube explained rural social structure and institutions by a model of descriptive study. Dube's other pioneering is 'India's Changing Villages' (1958). This study was edited by mc Kim Marriott and M. N. Srinivas.

A large number of scholars undertook the village studies. These studies were useful for generalizations but all studies may have different structures for example B.R. Chaunan (1967) had a Rajasthan Village. Yogesh Atal (1968) had a comparative study on Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. On the other hand K. S. Mathur (1964) investigated the ritual aspects of caste in Malva village where T.N. Madan (1965) had studied the structure of the function of domestic groups within the wider kinship network of a selected caste group in that setting. Srinivas, Rampura, Dube , Shamirpet, Beteille, Sripuram, Ishwaran, Shivapur became legendary by their village studies(Bhattacharya, 2000).

With 1950's when industrial sociology become popular, Indian social anthropology was converting to urban studies. City studies and surveys became important after 50's. The Research Programmes Committee was funding studies on growth and development of specific cities.

It was widely studied the nature of urban-rural contact, influence of the city on its hinterland and social-cultural connections of urbanizations. The analytical framework had mostly drawn by Chicago School tradition. Robert E. Park, Burgess, Robert Redfield, Louis Worth and Oscar Lewis had swaying works for Indian scholars(Bhattacharya, 2000).

Gouranga Chattopadhyay (1969) conducted a study test about values and behavioural norms of tribal groups are more in conformity with non-tribal groups. Also Brij Raj Chaunan (1972) had studied towns in tribal setting in the Banswara<sup>30</sup> region.

L.P. Vidyarthi (1967-70) had works on tribes in relation to the process of urbanization. Chandigarh and Victor D'Souza focused on the impact of planning and designing architecture of physical environment on urban. A. Bopegamage's (1955) work on Delhi, N.K. Rose's study of Calcutta (1968) and C.P. Rajagopalan's work (1960-1962) on Greater Bombay were other notable contributions.

Yogendra Singh carried out a marvellous work in 1973 where Srinivas worked previously. After 25 years, in a diachronic frame Singh highlighted the nature of social change in that village. Urbanization of India brought social change as an important topic. This topic is still an important theme on studies. Deviances are under the branch of sociology in India like criminology. Also statisticians and demographers dominated demographic studies. There are large studies help about demography and population but never accepted as a part of social anthropology.

Till 1950's philosophical theoretical approach, structural-functionalism and culturological approach was popular but after 1950's they were left aside. Dialectical historical approach came up with rise at 1950's and it is highly popular still. Marxist methods and propositions are widely accepted. On the other hand oriented Marxist dialectical in structural approach is still adaptive and innovative. Cybernetic approach is not popular but used by P.N. Rastogi after 1975's.

There are two main professional associations of sociologists and social anthropologists. The Indian Sociological Society founded in Mumbai in 1950. It publishes its own journal 'Sociological Bulletin'. It has many professional social anthropologist members. The second association is 'Ethnographic and folk Culture Society'. It establishes Eastern Anthropologists which is recognized by international standards. There is also a third association 'Indian Anthropologist', established by L.P. Vidyarthi. It published 'Indian anthropologists'.

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<sup>30</sup> A region on the south part of Rajasthan

Also there are other research journals published by universities and institutions such as: *Man in India*, *Indian Journal of Social Work*, *Journal of Social and Economic Studies*, *Social Change*, *Social Scientist*, *Social Action* and so on (Bhattacharya, 2000).

## 2. AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore the meaning of purity among scheduled castes<sup>31</sup> in New Delhi, India. Scheduled castes are determined by the 'The Backward Classes Commission' in 1980. According to Mandal Commission report of the Backward Classes Commission there are 36 backward castes in New Delhi and 82 castes in Delhi district and 40 backward classes are depressed. They called Scheduled Castes. Research focused at explaining a social relation between meaning of purity and scheduled castes in New Delhi India. It is aimed to advance knowledge about the social structure of scheduled castes, processes of purifying and linking factors and elements of issues of purity into general statement of being back warded. Thus may help test the current purity theories of anthropology.

Dalits<sup>32</sup> are the political term of scheduled castes, classes, and tribes. There is discrimination among scheduled and other castes. The reason for discriminating scheduled castes is belief on the defilement of Scheduled. According to Dumont's idea of purity is matching with Brahman<sup>33</sup>s, and the defilement is matching with Scheduled, called Dalits themselves. Dumont also provides us strong evidences to prove the idea of purity is not related with hygiene (Dumont, 1980). This study's topic is to explain the meaning of purity among Dalits.

According to the Human Rights Watch Dalits face `discriminatory and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of over 165 million people in India has been justified on the basis of caste. Caste divisions in India dominate in housing, marriage, employment, and general social interaction—divisions that are reinforced through the practice and threat of social ostracism, economic boycotts, and physical violence. This report focuses on the practice of “untouchability”—the imposition of social disabilities

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<sup>31</sup> Citizens of India otherwise defined as members of Scheduled Castes , Scheduled Tribes , and other low-ranking and disadvantaged groups (sometimes referred to as Other Backward Classes). Discrimination against the Backward Classes is prohibited by Article 15 of the Indian constitution. The Backward Classes reportedly constitute an estimated 52 percent of India's population. The Mandal Commission identified 3,743 Backward Classes

<sup>32</sup> Sanskrit word meaning burst split, broken, crushed, or destroyed but, since the nineteenth century, often taken to mean downtrodden; used in reference to Untouchables (Harijans.), outcastes, Scheduled Castes and others live in a reduced social state.

<sup>33</sup> The varna or status category identified in the classical Sanskrit tradition as most pure and entitled to perform priestly duties



on persons by reason of their birth in certain castes. This practice relegates Dalits, or so-called untouchables (<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/india0207>).

This research is an explanatory study on Dalits in New Delhi-India. This study's aim is to fill in two major shortcomings on purity and defilement:

- a) Western conceptualization of purity and defilement is related to hygiene and body care. But in India as Dumont pointed it is related on religious and economic reasons (Dumont, 1980).
- b) Purity and defilement has studied on the eye of caste members and religious texts of Hinduism. The object of Dalits will become the subject and eye holder.

Although Dalits are equal in citizenship, there is still discrimination even they are Hindu, Moslem or Buddhist. Even the Indian Constitution and many NGO's have not yet successfully resolved the problem of discrimination in the different areas, there is a strong social and economical movement among Dalits (Kumar, 2000).

The agreed discrimination reason is the idea of purity and defilement. The meaning of purity and defilement should be explored with an analysis of Dalits own descriptions. We need to discuss this idea from another point of view.

According to Dumont caste has 3 components. Gradation of status and hierarchy, detailed rules aimed at ensuring their separation and division of labour are the connected together for to maintain caste. Lately Dumont, 1980 is agreed with Bougle that these are all in one rule 'the opposition of pure and impure' (Dumont, 1980, pg43). There is a certain superiority of pure to the impure. We should understand the body, spirit and mind for to understand this purity.

According to Kolenda, unlike Westerners who think in terms of duality of separable body and spirit or body and mind, Hindus think monastically. Hindus believe that a person accedes to a unitary coded substance. The code was programmed into the body with sex and Varna by creation. Marriot and Inden explain that there is a sacrificial superior human found in the Rig Veda. He is code man from whom Varna is derived (Dumont, 1980).

Larson finds notable that the classical Indian Philosophical schools did not for the most part make an ontological separation between mind and body or thought and extension. It is different from Aristotelian and Cartesian sense of distinction. Occidental philosophy is foreign for Indian thought (Venugopal, 1998).

Kolenda offers another point of view: Biological substantialism. Stevenson has a 'Hindu pollution concept'. But Kolenda has a wider explanation by using philosophy and myths. Kolenda's Hindu view can explain what defiles water for a higher-caste person when it comes from the hands of an Untouchable (Dumont, 1980). Even though accepted as rational, later then we realise that we are trying to encode a culture to a structure which does not have a direct response.

There are features of the coded-substances that explain the process of pollution. First of all, Code man is consisting of coded particles, pindas. Bits of hair, sweat, saliva and etc. may be shared or changed with others. These particles can mix into food, water and other things transferred in interpersonal transactions (Gupta, 1991). One gives coded particles and others gain coded particles. Each should try to gain suitable or purer particles. Each human can get better particles by 'right eating', 'right marriage' and other right exchange actions (Marriott, 1965).

Second important feature is some particles can be loosened to separate or combine with other coded substances. For example heat is a catalyst of all kinds of changes. Sexual intercourse, cooking, and digestion require heat to transform. So in many religious practices Hindus use heat to purify prayers. For Kolenda, heat is recombining particles into each other. Apparently some of coded-substance is actually transferred to the lower caste person's coded-substance is actually transferred to the higher caste person through food, water, touch or contact (Gupta, 1991).

At first this theory seems completed but not so. This dividable part of human is totally different than the individual assumption of human in western thought. This is the agreement point. But what we should differ the exchange part of these particles. An exchange is a reciprocity fact (Mauss, 1964). Anyone who gives should receive something, a good, a trust, or a fair look of God. In every exchange directly or non-

directly there is reciprocity. That is the point that castes do not share their cooked food, water, fire, relationships, monks and etc with Dalits.

In addition, this research is also a response to the general deficiency in the qualitative research into Dalits. By exploring the vision of purity, there may be another story. The research project I am proposing will involve having the figure of meaning from Dalits view. Do they pay much attention on being pure or they have no single agreement on purity? According to Mary Douglas, purity is wholeness which demands two things: every individual should be a complete and self-contained specimen of its kind. There is nothing like as absolute dirt. It exists on the eye of the beholder. Thus, bodily discharges, childbirth, alteration to the body, disability, a skin condition all cause the state of uncleanness because the wholeness of the body is violated. The study will explore the term purity from the identically polluted's eye (Douglas, 2002).

Due to these facts, questionnaire had been prepared at 4 parts. In the first part questions are prepared to give general details about informant. These questions are easy to answer, fitting and they do not create any conflicts for the informants. Also this helps us the informer to get use to the interview. There is no in-dept questions in this parts. Questions are such as:

- WHAT IS YOUR OCCUPATION?
- WHAT IS YOUR CIVIL STAND?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY CHILDREN? IF YES, HOW MANY?
- WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND?

On the second part of questionnaire we were having more information such as their homeland, family histories such as migrations, caste and religious views. Caste, Hinduism and religion are different terms. These are identical pronouns that each informant may have different expressions and during conclusion we will gather these data in a complete statement. Also while they are giving information about their religious attitudes, we required them to explain their behaviours such as their practices. Belief in religion, being religious and practices are asked differently. Also in Hinduism the one of the biggest dirt is meat eating. It is asked whether did they ever eat meat or still eating and under a different question we ask for cow meat. Another

polluting act in Hinduism is using leather which related with corpse of cow. I also checked if there is a difference on their behaviours in Delhi city and their hometown.

- ARE YOU IN NEW DELHI BY BIRTH? WHERE ARE YOU COMING FROM?
- WHAT IS YOUR CASTE?
- ARE YOU HINDU?
- DO YOU BELIEVE IN RELIGION?
- IF YES, WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION?
- IF YES, DO YOU CALL YOURSELF RELIGIOUS?
- IF YES, HOW OFTEN DO YOU PRACTICE?
- DO YOU EAT MEAT?
- DID YOU EVER EAT MEAT?
- DO YOU EAT COW MEAT? DID YOU EVER EAT COW MEAT?
- DO YOU USE LEATHER IN YOUR HOMETOWN?
- DO YOU USE LEATHER IN NEW DELHI?

On the third part questions were related with discrimination. While asking, there is no word used related with caste and Hinduism. It was an open question which can reflect the paradigm of discrimination. Then a question asked if they have any experience, this will supply us real life stories of the eye of the beholder. After this question, we asked their attribute to pilgrimage, which is the highest attempt for becoming pure. Related with discrimination we asked if they have a mental pattern about the origin of caste. I checked if it is created by folklores and how the belief is. At last I asked about their health. The aim is to learn their living conditions by this hidden question. Their opinion about illness is also a reflection of their rationality. How do they judge their illnesses? Is it a punishment; is it due to condition or a fate?

- DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANY DISCRIMINATION?
- DO YOU HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE?

- DID YOU EVER GO TO PILGRIMAGE?
- DO YOU WISH TO GO TO PILGRIMAGE?
- DO YOU KNOW THE BEGINNING OF CASTE IN HINDUISM?
- HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET ILL?
- WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE REASONS OF YOUR ILLNESS?

In the last part of the questionnaire, we asked the informants their opinions about utter world . Is there a belief after death reflects their purity idealism and punishment? This part has the asking open ended questions for informants to express their beliefs. Last question was related by the Hindu belief which levels concepts among purity (Douglas, 2002).

- DO YOU THINK THERE IS A LIFE AFTER DEATH?
- DO YOU BELIEVE IN PUNISHMENT?
- DO YOU BELIEVE IN PURITY?
- WHAT IS PURE FOR YOU?
- DO YOU SEE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT & LEFT HAND, MORNING & NIGHT, BEFORE BATH AND AFTER BATH?

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.1 RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The field research was chosen for data collection to understand the perspectives of Dalits. It's assumed that naturalistic inquiry provides more holistic picture. Being in the field allowed not only to make interviews but also to observe the multifaceted, social context in which they are living. The research was aimed at providing in depth descriptions and analytical understanding of the meaning of purity in their routines.

Subject-directed qualitative method is directed towards interpreting interview and elaborating theory of pollution and purity. It stresses the significance of the informant Dalits and their approach to understand the world.

The cons are that language obstacle and physical appearance problem. I was not able to have a one by one dialogue in the interviews so I had to use an interpreter. It was really hard to have interview with an unfamiliar look. An open-ended, in-depth interview had is the form of questioning this study. The structure was prepared and open-ended questions will be asked. Klening's spontaneous receptive interview is the appropriate interview method. The active listener is also the researcher (Sarantakos,1993). During interviews informant Dalits may need to be encouraged and respond emphatically.

I learnt at the field on my first attempts that I had prepared overarching questions in Istanbul. I realized that a part of these questions are not acceptable in many manners. The technique was correct but did not suit. In some of the situations, previously prepared questions were not practical, some are even rude to ask. So the structure of questions had been changed in the field.

The hardest and most time consuming problem in the field was questions that were not practically answered or even correctly answered. Questions had to be changed under that circumstances. Informants are not pleased to hear caste related questions. None of them call herself/himself as Dalit or Harijan or Scheduled Caste. But only

some can tell their stories about discrimination. In the field there were many attempts to make interview or many interviews are done but the problem is that some are inaccurate and some were cut due to many reasons.

The choice of the field of study could be made only after considering several factors. The researcher had to keep in mind the limitation of the time and resources at her disposal. The most limiting factor is the self-financing and time. The researcher herself, being employed on a full time basis and entitled only to a limited period of leave, could not afford to spend too long time on field work.

The researcher could not spend more than 24 days in New Delhi. It was felt that informant interviews would give reliable results because the field was easily accessible by transportation. Even researcher contacted with more informants only 10 of the informants were reliable with their caste and home-land information. All interviews made in Hindu language with an assistance of Hindu interpreter and a recorder was used and at the end of the day the interview is transcribed with assistant.

### 3.2 INFORMANTS

For some cultural reasons there were some informants gave wrong caste information so all the information checked from Mandal Commission Report. Because of these, 10 informants was the limit of this study.

The accidental sampling method was used as it is subject-directed. The interviews were semi structured. My aim is to get insights into their experiences and beliefs. Their life experiences, conditions and ideas about purity was asked. Their ideal purity and defilement terms were questioned. The informants are ten Dalits. They were not chosen on gender or age.

There are certain reasons why accidental sapling is chosen. Accidental sampling is very useful for in qualitative research especially in social anthropology where the representiveness is not an issue. For the interviews there is a very specific time to come in contact with the informants. So accidental sampling method will enable the

researcher to study a relatively small number of informants and supplies more detailed information on a high degree of accuracy (Sarantakos, 1993).

### 3.3 ETHICS AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

During the study, I have three major responsibilities in ethical standards. One of them is my responsibility about professional practise. Accuracy in data gathering and processing, relevant-research methodology, appropriate interpretation of the data and accurate reporting are the main standards. In addition, as I researcher I agree not to use any findings that I did not collect.

The second and the major responsibility is to my informants. I clearly identified myself to the respondent. During interviews, I limited the degree of question, considering their sensitivity or stress, so as not to harm informant. I tried to avoid causing any embarrassment, guilt, discomfort, hazards or risks to the informants. I am agreeing to respect informants' privacy and to keep my informants' documents anonymity. In the finding there appear with 10 nicknames each starting from A to M.. I took the pictures with personal permission. Laws or regulations do not restrict gaining access to Pahar-Ganj. As a respect to their cultural values, photos of the holy places were not taken. Efforts were made not to disturb people during interviews. Even it was a tradition to give money for taking pictures or having interviews, no money or financial support was given to the informants.

One of goals was an ethically well grounded research. Although I learnt to predict all of the ethical issues that arise, I tried to minimize such problems by following certain approved ethical rules. The topic was suitable for completing without deception. Also keeping their personal information is not illegal. Confidentiality is not an obstacle in this research . There was no conflict about confidentiality while conducting this research.

The third ethical consideration is my own personal safety. My gender and physical appearance was increasing risk to be harassment which is warned by the Indian embassy in Istanbul. During my first trip, with a female companion, I realized that a blonde hair and white skin is making me an outsider. In order to do fieldwork I



bought lousy long skirts and darkened my hair. Trousers and middle length skirts are not common among Indians. Also because of my fair appearance, many Indians took my pictures and some even paid me few rupees against my will. I regard my personal safety as one of the ethical issues.

### 3.3.1 PERSONAL DECLARATION

Before the interview I asked them if they have free time to make an interview. If they accepted, we introduced ourselves in Hindu:

“We require having interview for a cultural study for a Turkish University in Istanbul. All your personal information will be kept and all person names will be changed.”

### 3.3.2 SCHEDULED PLAN

As seen in the schedule, there is a two year shifting due to personal reasons.

Activities	
Literature Review	January2005
Preliminary Research	January 2005
Preparing the Interview Questions	January.2005
Conducting Interviews	February.2005
Decoding the Tapes	15.March.2005
Data Analysis	05.April.2005
Processing the Photographs	01.May.2005
Writing the Findings	01.September.2007
Final Jury Reading	30.September.2007
Reviews	15.October.2007
Photocopying/ Binding	30.October.2007

Table 1-Scheduled Plan

### 3.3.3 BUDGET

Budget is limited by personal income. The transportation, accommodation and literature reviews expenses are supported by the researcher. Accommodation and food supplied in Pahar-Ganj. So these were not costly but had some health problems in New Delhi due to bad weather. This is also supplied from local apoteks<sup>34</sup> in Pahar-Ganj.

ACCOMMODATION IN NEW DELHI (24 DAYS)	168USD
LITERATURE REVIEWS	200USD
TRANSPORTATION TO/IN NEW DELHI	450USD
ASSISTANCE COST	200USD
OTHER EXPENSES (FOOD, HEALTH etc.)	350USD

Table 2- Budget of the research

The budget of the research did not exceed 1368USD in all terms.

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<sup>34</sup> To buy medicine there are two kinds of places. First one if apotek which sells mostly alternative medicines, medicines without licences. Apoteks are commonly preferred due to low prices and belief in traditional treatment. Second one called pharmacy which is selling licensed medicines which are relatively expensive.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1 TRIP TO INDIA

In 2004 summer before monsoon, I was in India for a touristic purpose. On the day I left India, monsoon had begun. My journey was so hard so I was dreaming to arrive to Bangkok for more comfort. But with luck, my flight delayed. No accommodation supplied and it is not advised for the tourists to leave the airport before 0900 am so I spend a whole night in the airport hotel which is toughly advised not to stay alone. I had to stay there because I was deadly tired.

When I went to the hotel, I realised that I was the only female with all those Pakistani workers who are working in the construction of the new terminal. It was too late to return. I spent the night there and in the morning rushed to the airport. Air India announced that delay is still uncertain. Plane departed 23 hours after the schedule. Generally we call this flight cancellation, not a delay. At the custom saloon an Air Indian officer had asked me if I will ever come back to India. I am usually afraid of big ideas and decisions but I was so sure. I said ‘Completely no, never. Why will I ever return here!!! ?’

People cannot concurrently evaluate events and happenings. After a while, the books that I bought from India, gave me a passage to India. A part of them were Mandelbaum's ‘Society in India’, Gandhi’s books about satyagraha<sup>35</sup> and a complete Mahabharata. After readings, I find an inner power to deal with unbelievably bad traffic<sup>36</sup>, moving up sick cows that are lying in front of the doors and eating only fruits all days.

Not for long, 7 months later I am applying for Indian embassy for visa. I had experienced before so my baggage was full of canned food, home made breads and

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<sup>35</sup> Method employed by Mahatma Gandhi and his followers to secure socio-political reform by non-violent, passive resistance and no cooperation; the individual following the method is called a satyagrahi.

<sup>36</sup> Except the high-income settlements, on every road there are only two traffic rules.

1-Horn Please (or Blow Horn)

2-Use Dipper at Night

wet towels. In addition, I had changed my hair colour from blonde to dark brown. Blonde hair is too much attractive as women, if any woman needs a quiet trip, she should make the colour darker.

Flight approximately took 07 hours but plus 03 hours delay. This time my luck was that the flight was arriving at daytime 12:30; I was able to take a government taxi and go to Pahar-Ganj without waiting till morning. Pahar-Ganj is the main bazaar.

In India there is no middle class and there is no middle class service. I wanted pay 50USD per night with an airline staff discount for a five star luxury or 3-5USD for a guest house. I gave 7USD for Royal Guest House Inn. At least it is the place that I know. Strangely when I enter Guest House, They yelled 'Elcin, Welcome'. They remembered me, I felt tenderly happy.

Also Pahar-Ganj is where the fair, better-income Indians do not even put a step into. All kind of narcotics are free. In some guest houses with a 3USD you can have an accommodation, plus free smoke, plus free lizard on the wall. In Pahar-Ganj any illegal item can be supplied easily on the street. Also all kind of occult items are sold here. Most of the back packers are moving to Rishhikesh or Nepal from Pahar-Ganj train station.

There are two universities in New Delhi. Delhi University is in the north east border, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) is in the southwest border of the city.

My second step of the literature reviews had been made in these universities' libraries. During my literature review I find my translator Nichu in JNU. At the evening I was in Main Bazaar talking with artisan. I was trying to learn from where they immigrated or what their beliefs are. Every conversation was happily welcomed till I asked question about caste. During literature reviews, I was spending my time on the back side of Pahar-Ganj. I realised that nobody calls himself/herself as Dalit, Harijan, Scheduled Caste or Avarna. It was the red line that I learned.

After a few practice of conversation I began to ask their castes, they were replying honestly and when I check later from the list of People of India, all of them were among Scheduled Castes. I decided not to ask them if they called himself/herself Dalit, Harijan, Scheduled Caste or Avarna. It was stressing informants.

During interviews it was obvious that language was an obstacle so I met Ishwar. He is a student in JNU. He accepted to be my assistant for 2 weeks during the interviews. He has translation experience before. Also he was punctual and tidy.

Questions are prepared under these circumstances. Questions are never about they are from scheduled or oppressed caste or do they call them Dalits.

#### **4.1.1 INTERVIEW DATA OF THE INFORMANTS**

##### **4.1.1.1 INFORMANT A**

He is 27 years old, a Ph.D. student in JNU. He is from Andhra Pradesh. His caste is Adi Andhra. They are four children. He is the third and the only male child. He is the only person who has a bachelor degree. His family is proud of him.

His caste is sweepers but they are seasonal workers in the farms. They have poor conditions but his luck is his sister married with a man from a big village so he could stay with them till graduation of his high school. After acceptance to JNU he moved to New Delhi. He can rarely visit his family.

He has a religious personality but he cannot call himself purely Hindu. During his university years, he got used to going to churches on Sundays. He has not yet converted to Christianity. However, he believes there are great similarities between early Christians and Dalits. “Christ born on the poorest side of the Bethlehem. The Roman King and rich Jews rejected and laughed at him. Even when crucifying him, they laughed saying ‘look at King of the Judas’”. History is

repeating itself in new forms, such as Dalits and Early Christians but God saves his children. He is not practicing any of the Hindu practices. He only goes to churches. “All people, also Harijans, are marching down together. It is a good way to pray.”

He is facing discrimination in his village but not on the campus or the church. “In JNU communists do not allow anyone to discriminate anyone”. But some invisible discrimination can occur such situation as selection an assistant. He wants to be a fulltime assistant but lecturers are supporting and preferring their own family and caste members. He thinks that is reasonable because it is very prestigious to be an assistant in the faculty of International Relations. So lecturers prefer their own family members.

In his village Adi Andhra, they are using a common well separate from the others. Other castes are looking down on them and they are also jealous about his success. Using a separate well is a situation that they got accustomed to but during the drought they need to use the other well so they are requiring help from Moslems or the upper caste families. They are taking the water from their wells and giving to Dalits.

All his relations outside JNU and the society of church he remembers that he is a Harijan. He thinks that cows are vital for the Indian society and they are great kind gift of god. Milk, butter, dung, curd are important gifts. He is using leather in his village but in JNU, it is not a respected behaviour. Even in the church, it may cause a problem to wear it. Christian leaders do not want any conflict.

He has no wish for any pilgrimage. Neither his family nor he ever goes to a pilgrimage. In their villages, there is no allowance for them to enter the temples, if they want to pray, they can pray outside unless they cannot step into it. So none of them goes to temples.

He is sick almost every winter. He gets seriously cold each year. His lungs are not healthy for the wet air of New Delhi. He thinks that illness comes from natural reasons.

He has contradicting ideas about life after death. He believes in punishment and gifts of God but he could not set his mind about religion. “I am a bit confused. There should an after life but how will it be? It is a dilemma. I think that life after death could a new life that we are beginning under the conditions that our sins and good will. However, not so sure.”

He believes in purity. He thinks that his mother is pure and clean. She is much a respected woman. She has all kind of virtues even she does not know to read. She speaks very carefully to keep herself from hurting anyone. He said that he has never eaten meat but he noted from Bible ‘hear and understand: Not what goes in the mouth defiles a man. Out what comes out of the mouth this defiles a man.’ He is bathing or cleaning his body with a wet towel every morning. It is what he learned from his parents. Even in the cold days every morning, all family is bathing. It is hygiene.

He thinks the most important time in a human’s life is self-realisation. He was 5 years old when he realizes that he is living. He thinks marriage is essential for next generations. Although people do not act as he is a Harijan, he prefers to marry from his caste or a Christian girl. The Christian girl should be converted from outcaste to Christianity. Otherwise even she respects him, she may not have a respect to his family, or girl’s family will not respect him or his family.

These are all possible things but even he is at the age of marriageable, he cannot marry because he does not have a steady income. A girl with a salary can cause stress in the house so he will prefer an educated house wife to share his life.

#### 4.1.1.2 INFORMANT B

He is a laundry man. He is 26 years old. He is married and he has two sons. He earns enough for his children and family. He is from Ayahdya District<sup>37</sup> of Uttar Pradesh state. He is Hindu. His caste is Dhobi (washing and pressing clothes). He did not want to talk at first but after we explained that, we are neither from a government university nor from a government office, he accepted to talk with us. However, he did not want to give a photo.

At the beginning of our conversation, he was not very comfortable but the reason he accepted us is his curiosity. He wanted to know about me. He asked many questions especially when he learned that I was Muslim. He did not believe much that I am Muslim and Turk. Therefore, he even asked me about Galatasaray<sup>38</sup> and Hasan Sas<sup>39</sup> to check my honesty. He offered Chay<sup>40</sup> and we accepted pleasantly.

‘I am a religious man’ he says but he is not going to temples. He has a small worship of Krishna<sup>41</sup> in his store. Although there are water and flowers in front of Krishna, he prefers to offer cow milk and fruits. He uses leather in his home village but in Delhi, it is not a good idea. Therefore, Hindus may be disturbed.

He had education until 4th grade. By birth, he is in New Delhi that he did not face with discrimination but there is a conflict among Hindus and Muslims in his father’s village. His father has escaped because of bloody conflicts. He is proud of doing the same work as his ancestors although he is literate. However, he hopes that his sons will have better working conditions.

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<sup>37</sup> There is a long lasting bloody conflict among Muslims and Hindus especially every Kurban Bayrami.

<sup>38</sup> One of the biggest football club in Turkey

<sup>39</sup> A popular soccer player

<sup>40</sup> Locally they call tea as Chay. It is the same word in Turkish ‘çay’. However, they are putting cow milk into tea to minimize their protein and calcium needs.

<sup>41</sup> In Vedic tradition, the principal name of the Supreme Godhead



He eats goat meat but never a cow but he points that his religion forbids the meat but according to him, they should feed themselves. Meat gives power and help children to get taller so if they are available, they are having meat every two week.

Pilgrimage is important for him. In Ayodhya, there are sacred places for pilgrimage but it is not always possible to visit. Even army protect holy places, there is unstoppable conflict. Nevertheless, he tells that the cause of the conflict is the main interests of the religious leaders. Leaders should discuss this matter together by seeking interest of social peace. They should build temples and mosques.

He felt sick almost two months, three months a year due to the change of weather and his living conditions. He thinks that if he can eat better and have less cold, he can be less sick. In addition, he is working almost every day in laundry. Store is completely open on the street. While ironing, his front side is always warm and his backside is always cold. I think that is the main reason to get ill regularly. He once went to a doctor when he was a child.

He also does not know the origin of the caste but as ancestors were practising so they do. I asked what he is doing for caste. He said 'If an upper caste is coming, I am standing up.' I asked that does he have any upper caste clients. He said that he does not think so. In addition, he has no other practices for to respect the upper castes. He says that even he respects upper castes because they are all citizens. Harijans are not slaves anymore.

Although he is coming from a religious family, he does not believe life before or after death. "I believe in religion whether it is a power or not. It is a thing if you believe. If you believe, it is a God. If you do not believe, there is no God". "Hindu goes to temple. Moslem goes to mosque. Sikh goes to Guru Shankar. I am doing what my caste offers me but it is just because of my earnings. This is my work just because my father taught me and I can earn money. I hope my boys will have an upper life". He believes only purity is on the peoples wish. If a person's wish

something, it is pure. However, in his view cow is pure and she should has be respected.

The most important event in his life is the birth of his sons. He sees no difference between morning& evening, right hand & left hand. However, there is only a big difference between a bath and after. The big difference is relaxing.’’.

#### **4.1.1.3 INFORMANT C**

His age is 50, rejected to give his name. He has three boys and three girls. All of them are married. He does not know about his caste and origin. However, he is from Simaria Ghat. Simaria Ghat is near Ganga. His occupation is Julaha. It means weaver. He is repairing bags, carpets and other kind of things. He gave permission to photo. His occupation was defined under the scheduled castes.

He says that he is religious. He believes the necessity of the religion. Religion gives a set of the rules for his life. Religion is very sacred. He wants that religion should have been taught in schools. Children should learn to respect and understand the sacred but new generation is far.

He never went to school but he says that he knows how to respect. He visits the sanctuaries every morning but not temples. He especially wants to offer cow milk and flower, but he generally offers drink water. Flowers have a beautiful look and scent. Flowers are gentle and clean but mostly he cannot afford to buy. Also cow milk is very scarce so they can scarcely offer milk in the sanctuary.

He thinks that cow is sacred, beautiful and gentle. She is the mother of earth. He does not know the origin of the cow and the caste system but he knows how precious she is. Milk is very essential because he and his wife are vegetarian. They do not eat meat. He should use the leather often while weaving. Leather is only used in weaving bags. And these bags are generally sold to tourists in Pahar Ganj.

In his village, he is facing with discrimination. I insist to learn if it is due to the caste system and he said 'People of the upper caste always prevail. They think that we are lower castes and even in praying, they discriminate us. They sit in front. They make us to sit at the backside of the temple, sometimes even they do not allow us enter temples'. I asked how they could understand your caste. He said 'Just look at me and see my poverty. I am not lack of any essential things but I am poor clearly'.

He is proud to go to pilgrimage every year. His village is Simaria Ghat, near to River Ganj. He goes with his wife every year to dip in the river. In addition, he is staying there two months. During his stay, he is helping his brother's land. He is returning with food. He says he is a happy man because he has his earnings and not his all children are lack of labour, food and essential materials of life.

After two months working, he is sick one month always. He never went to a doctor. He is not planning either. He thinks that being sick is 'because of natural reasons'. According to him, these natural reasons are bad weather of New Delhi and being old. He asked that did not I recognize the bad weather we breathe. He is right. In first week, I begin to cough regularly. Before the evening there is a fog occurs. I lately learned that it is not a metrological fog, because of carbon dioxide heating and smoke.

'What will happen after death is above me. I do not know how to read even. How do you expect me to know the invisible life?' He laughed and he said that he does not believe a past life or punishment. If he believes, it will not change the reality. 'An educated man can tell you the origin of the caste. But I know what caste is.'

He believes in purity because he believes in God. He always uses his right hand for good things. Left hand is for touching dirty things like toilet. He thinks mornings are holy hours of the day and ideal hours to pray in the sanctuary. The most important event in his life is his birth and after marriage. He got married when he was 17 in his village. After marriage, he immigrated to New Delhi.

#### 4.1.1.4 INFORMANT D

He is from Uttar Pradesh, Ayodyha. He is also Hindu and 42 years old. He is married. He has 5 boys and 2 girls. None of these children had finished elementary school. They are tella<sup>42</sup> like him. He is also from Tella caste. He did not give permission to take photo and tape recording. He is a bit aggressive and curious about tape recorder and photo machine.

When we are talking, he was always playing with the recorder, recording some his voices (not a word even, just voices), and listening them repeatedly. Lately he did not want to give the recorder but when I insist on receiving back, he gave with an unpleasant speech.

He says that he believes in religion. He believes the power of Gods and Goodness's so he goes to sanctuaries when he is clean. He means cleaning as bath. He offers water. If he had money, he would offer milk. He believes that milk is the favourite delicate of Gods. He explained that being cleans means for him after the bath. He can eat meat but not a cow meat but anyway meat is expensive for him.

He asks who will discriminate him. He is at the bottom of a life. He is old (he is only 40) and he is illiterate and hungry. I stopped and looked at his face when I heard the translation. Then he laughed.

If he would have two cows, life can be fair. 'I am not sure is it about the cow or the milk but cow is a wealth if you have seven kids. However, cow is very sacred especially in Ayodhya. If any one will kill a cow, he is guilty as murdering a Brahman in Ayodhya.' Government will not do anything but he explains that public reaction will be very dangerous. He knows many conflicts among Moslems about cow. He is not using leather because leather is expensive for him.

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<sup>42</sup> sweeper

In his village there some sacred sites for pilgrimage but he is not going his village for many years. Sacred sites around Delhi need money to support pilgrimage. He replied that he is just a poor man. In addition, he noted that he did not care them at all.

He is generally sick. Every month he becomes sick. He is hardly coughing and has fever. In addition, he is generally feeling tired and sleepy. He thinks the main reason is his oldness and the air pollution in New Delhi. He does not see any other reason for his sickness because he knows that if he returns Uttar Pradesh, he will be stronger and healthier.

He says that he believes there is a punishment after death for every human. He thinks that a previous life is possible but how can he know. He does not believe in caste system. He says that 'varna' is the holy song of Brahmins. I lately realize that he said Holy Song. It is Bhagavad-Gita (The Holy Song). Caste is the Bhagavad-Gita. He uses cleverly strong impressions.

He does not believe in purity. If something is pure, it could only be a mother cow. "But none of the human is purer than any other. They can only be cleaner than I can. I am dirty". Yes, sincerely he was dirty. There is not any important moment in his life because his father and him and his sons are living the same life but if he will ever have two cows, it would be an important event. I asked why just two cow, he said 'One will not enough, house is crowded and there are many grandchildren in the house, three cow is more impossible than two cow.'

#### **4.1.1.5 INFORMANT E**

He is 20 years old student in Delhi University Medicine Sciences. He is single, Hindu and he specially required from me to define that he is a communist. His family is in Kashmir, from Ramdasia caste. He is very thin, a bit short and he speaks English fluently.

He is not a religious person. He is not applying deep ceremonies but he reads Bhagavad-Gita in his free times. He was visiting temples and sanctuaries with his family before coming to New Delhi. With his parents, he offers flower and water.

Since 2 years, he did not visit his family but if it is possible to honour his parents he would join religious occasions. He thinks that this is more than religion; he thinks that this is an identity and it is his culture against imperialism. For summer times, he is working in laboratories for to support his education.

He is sharing his room with two upper caste students. They are Jats. In the village it is a problem, it is almost impossible to sit on a charpai<sup>43</sup> that Jats' sitting. In dormitory, there is a strong goodwill community. However, he is using the Dalit's kitchen. Some students are not making problem and if only a few of them will annoy or argue, it will make him irritated so he does not feel any need to use other kitchens. Nevertheless, in the cafeteria it is not a problem.

Lecturers, students mostly know and easily understand what his caste is. However, it was never a subject of conflict. In his village and his education in high school, there is discrimination.

During school years, he was used to play and sit with Dalits. Sometimes with upper castes, he can play but avoid not touching. Therefore, he was more confident among Dalits. He has a Brahman teacher. All those years he never touched any of Dalit students. Their homes and wells are separate then other families. They were not invited to marriages. However, after his success some families' behaviour is changed. They can invite to meals even. He does not prefer to join in because anyone can protest it. Anyone will reject to sit with him, eat with him. However, he gets accustomed to it.

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<sup>43</sup> coach

‘I can hear the talking about me. They are angry because they think government is spoiling us. Government is giving quota for each school to protect our education rights. I even enter the high school with a lower grade than upper castes. I have taken under provision. However, in high school, my grades were good but again I need the Scheduled Caste quota for the Medicine Faculty.

Quota is very essential especially on oral exams. I do not think that I steal their education right. They are saying that ‘Chamar become Sahib<sup>44</sup>.’ A few groups in the university agree with my villagers. It is funny that they think that we are spoiled. Although the quota they think that we cannot be as good as them.’

He thinks that cow is sacred mother of India. Although respect to cow is generally accepted, he is pointing a contradiction. People uses cows milk but do not allow them to feed their babies in the villages. For that reason, all cows are weak and ill. He never eats meat. He would eat meat in the city but it is expensive for him. However, he never will eat cow meat. He agrees that cow have been respected like a mother. He said that he uses the leather in the village. Nevertheless, in the campus he does not want to have a conflict.

The government does a few things but people are not sincere about mother cow. Instead of giving flowers to mother cow cult, people can feed the cows with the leftovers in the city. Indian economy can only develop by the support of mother cow. Cow milk and butter is vital for Indian food regime. Cow dung is important for the agriculture and heating but they do not have any other utility in the eye of our informant.

He had never seen a use of the pilgrimage. He does not think that is important but maybe pilgrimage could be a reason to travel.

He is healthy but he is not pleased about his thinness. For the police academy, he could not pass the exams cause of weak bones. He wants have more weight. But

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<sup>44</sup> Sahib means the upper man. Sabiba is used for upper woman. It is a local idiom to give a prestige. In the past Turkish, it is synonym with Mister or Misses.

he is healthy. The only reason for sickness is natural reasons. He is not accepting the accuracy of the supernatural reasons.

He does not believe a past life or a life after death. He does not believe God or supernatural forces. 'Heaven and hell are creative propagandas.' He knows the reality of caste so he believes that it exists. He does not know an exact story about origin of castes. Nevertheless, he thinks that utility of caste pass over. Society needs new structure, such as communism.

He only believes in hygiene. 'I believe in dirtiness only, I object dirtiness not a Varna.'

#### **4.1.1.6 INFORMANT F**

She is 24, single and Hindu. She is from the caste of 'Balmiki'. All family are making tabla for auspicious occasions such as birthday and marriage and etc.

She is doing her work in the house. The house is with two rooms. There is no kitchen. They are cooking meals outside the house and there are 6 people living in that house. She is by birth living in New Delhi.

She believes strongly in Hinduism and she is religious. But most of her caste does not believe in religion deeply. Maharishi Balmiki is the founder of the castes among Chamars (leather workers). The aim is to change the conditions of chamars and to supply them a more prestigious life. For instance in Balmiki caste there is no diving for purification. They do not need these types of ceremonies. They are rejecting the defilement of their caste. This caste mostly works as leather workers and tabla makers.

Tabla is made of wood and cow leather. Although she is religious, she is just visiting temples. She rarely goes to temple. This temple is also in Pahar Ganj. She is



offering cow milk, flowers, water and fire. Water and fire are vital necessities of human and flowers are offered because of their beauty.

She is paying too much attention to prayers on morning. Although she graduated high school, she is not reading Bhagavad-Gita or other religious books. She says that religious books language is hard to understand. But she is keeping the picture of Balmiki and symbol of Sad Guru.

'There is no discrimination on the basis of caste around here. Only discrimination could be about money. There is no support of discrimination. All people are equal in New Delhi. Caste system is totally vanished'. But she knows that there were some extreme cases of discrimination in the old days.

She said that she does not face with any discrimination but she noted that she had her education around Pahar Ganj. This point is important because Jats (upper castes) are not living around Pahar Ganj. She is always living among scheduled castes. I asked here that does she ever walk around Noida, Chanakyapuri or Gurgaon. She said she saw those places while passing by bus. Places that I ask are all rich families living area. In those places traffic rules are even different. Such as in the poorer parts of town, you will see the sign of 'Horn Please' but in the rich parts it is forbidden to horn.

She is vegetarian for to respect the cow. In her home family often eat pork or goat meat but she is not eating. 'I do not eat meat. Meat is impure. Killing an animal is evil.' Then I ask how about the canvas. She explained that canvas is a gift of mother for religious ceremonies. Therefore, they are making tabla.

Balmiki advices them not to feel shame for the gifts of a cow. Cow is mother. She is very gentle, generous and kind to all people. Cow milk and buttermilk is very big gifts of cows. Mother cow feeds the infant cow and the people. She respects the canvas of the cow. It shows how generous the mother cow is. They are doing tabla with that canvas and tabla is the main drum in all celebrations.

She does not want to go to River Ganj. She wants to see a holy place but it is not a wish or a desire. She thinks pilgrimage to holy places is fine but she and her family has more important problems, such as poverty and hunger.

She hardly gets sick. Around her environment being sick could only be burden by the air pollution and lack of nutrition. Nevertheless, a hard sickness could be punishment for bad people.

She is expecting a life after death. 'If we do evil kind of work, we will be punished after death.' She has suspicious about past life. She is not so sure but she believes there is a punishment and justice in the world but she does not believe in the caste system. She thinks that caste should be scraped out totally. Caste is just a boundary for people.

She believes in purity. According to her cow and flowers are pure. In addition, babies are pure by the birth. She also thinks that right hand is purer than the left hand. In addition, there is the same difference between morning and evening. Therefore, she prefers praying in the morning. She is going to a sanctuary around her house because she cannot leave the house.

She should cook and work for tabla. She is saying that even when she is sick she should work otherwise, home would get dirty and her brothers and father will stay hungry. The most important event is birth and death. I asked how about marriage, she said it is a destiny and a dowry.

#### **4.1.1.7 INFORMANT G**

He is 35 years old and single. His village is in Rajasthan. He is from Patelia caste. He is Buddhist. He is homeless. He is begging if he could not find a work. I asked what kind of work he can do. He laughed and answered that there is no work that he is fond. He usually begs and he is going to the inns. He sleeps near the Bangla

Sahip Marg<sup>45</sup>. He always asked questions about me. He was unbelievably dirty. He was always coughing. Possibly, he got cold or worse.

He is not religious. He does not practise any belief. He has no will to visit any temple or sanctuary. However, he waits in front of the sanctuaries. He faces with discrimination. Nobody allows him to enter anywhere. He is not visiting any of his relatives. He is not sure even his mother and father are alive.

He thinks that cow is holy. Having a cow means wealth. You can have milk, butter and dung from a cow. Even she died her leather can be sold preciously. He thinks that leather is not good but he can sell if he finds a dead body of a cow. A few time he found dead cows. It worth lot money he said.

He had never a wish like pilgrimage. He had never been in condition of pilgrimage. If he has better conditions, he can be more grateful. Only better conditions can motive him for pilgrimage. He also does not practice and he does not preach. He believes in Buddhism but Buddhism only helps him while he is begging.

He is healthy as much as he finds food. He thinks that only relation is food with health. Many people disturbed by polluted air. I asked him that could it be the weather. He answered 'the only matter is good food. In New Delhi rich people breathe the same but they eat different.' About his health if he can find meat, he can also eat meat but not beef. Cow should be respected.

He thinks that a life after death is possible but he is not confident. I asked that his life could be punishment or not. He answered that is possible also but it does not help him. In addition, he is expecting a better life after death.

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<sup>45</sup> Marg means street.

#### 4.1.1.8 INFORMANT H

He is 27 years old. He is married. He is a driver. He is from Punjab. His caste is Singhikut. It is a nomadic caste. Caste members travel from village to village for work. They make screens out of bamboos. If there is a need for repairing houses or any other thing, they can do to earn money. They use donkeys and horses to carry themselves. They have a permanent village they return to spend winters. Each village consists of 15-20 families and most of them are relatives.

His parents are Hindu and illiterate. He is literate and Moslem but not fluently. On the other hand, he knows a bit Russian, Japan, French and English. He is hundred percent sure that I am not a Moslem and not a Turk. He also asked about Hasan Sas<sup>46</sup>.

He believes I am Russian. When I spoke a few words in Russian, he had laughed. After I explained that, my ethnic background is Caucasian, not Russian. I have the same roots with Aryans. He got disappointed. He could not believe in me. He has not familiar feelings against Aryans. In addition, he said that he could not match Islam, Aryans and me. He thinks that I am a free and a independent woman and alone came to India. How can I be Moslem? Also according to him all Aryans are Hindu but I am Turk. I could not make him believe in me. He thinks that I am joking or misinformed.

Informant H is Moslem but he cannot pray regularly. He can go to mosques on every Friday. He became Moslem in New Delhi. In Punjab, Moslems and Hindus have great conflicts but Moslems protect his caste. He had a love about Islam so when he met with Moslem friends in New Delhi; he finally decided to become Moslem. However, his parents are not aware of his religion.

Informant H thinks that they may strongly disappoint. 'They are old. I do not want to hurt them'. I asked that if a man believes a religion, he would call others for

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<sup>46</sup> A Turkish famous football player

their good. He said that if they are younger, he may offer them. However, his parents are both old and ill. Nevertheless, no class difference in Islam and its equity is fair for him. Then I asked “how about Ashraf?”. Informant H answered that “I am agreeing that between Ashraf and my life there is a great distinction. But we can clean ourselves in the same place and we can pray in the same mosque. Also on Fridays, we can talk. Only they are more educated and wealthier”.

“I never dreamed to go to Hajj but I wish that I had a chance. However, this is just a dream. I demand possible things, like a better house and more money. My father and my mother are both ill and I cannot even see them. I want to bring them to my house but we have only two rooms and I do not have conditions to support them. So before Hajj, I have many dreams. ”

Informant H is eating meat if he can buy. Also during our interview, he wore a leather coat. I asked that his leather coat is a problem or not. He said that in Pahar Ganj no one cares about. I asked that is he eating beef. He said that beef could raise Hindus temper so he is preferring goat meat. But a few times he ate beef. I asked that in his village did he eat meat. He said while on the road, they were eating what they are hunting. However, in the villages they were working in, they were all vegetarians. Otherwise, Hindus may never accept them. He is not feeling any guilty about cow or egg etc.

He is 3 months sick in every winter. He thinks that only reason is the polluted air of New Delhi. He is not seeing any punishment about his illness.

He believes life after death strongly. Heaven and hell are the places for punishment punished or honouring. He believes that he is a nice person. He is kind to his wife and children. He is not stealing and lying. He thinks that he should preach more but he has to work more than twelve hours a day to earn his day.

#### 4.1.1.9 INFORMANT L

She is a laundry woman and her age is 50. she has 6 children. Her husband has passed away 15 years ago. She is Hindu and she proud to earn the livelihood of her family. Her caste is Kannauji. She is in Delhi since her birth. The translator remembered me that there is no caste as Kannauji. She lately informed us that she is a Gharrami.

Lately I checked the caste, tribe list of Census of India. Yes, there was no name like that. Possible she is trying to erase her past, and she is trying to have an upper low-caste. After the conversation, we had about her. The reason could be her daughter's marriage or her profession. She is a laundry woman. It may be an obstacle for her if she is coming from the lowest scheduled castes.

She is religious and she has many items that she is caring for such as the praying days and astrology she goes to temples every Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday. According to astrology, these days are good for Mahaveer (praying). She goes to with her children to offer flower, cow milk, water and coconut. She is especially praying for Krishna. She thinks that Krishna loves milk and coconut.

She told that she had no discrimination. It is very old but often it can be in small villages. However, in Delhi, everyone is equal.

She eats pork and goat meat but not on Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Cow is like a mother. They worship cow. They do not use the canvas of a cow for anything; she and her children never touched a canvas of a cow. I asked did not she drum a tabla, she said she does not know to play. It is not her profession. In the city, they are not using cow urine regularly, but for the bad magic cow, urine is useful. They are washing anyone or anywhere with a mixture of cow urine and cow milk.

She wants to go to River Ganj after her all children's marriage. She wants to dip in that holy river of life. She said she never get out of the city of New Delhi for thirty years.

She gets sick once a year and it is generally before monsoon. The heat can up to 44 Celsius degrees. In those hot days, ironing makes her sick but she never gave up working. She told me to look at her lazy brother. All family needs money.

Her first daughter once gets sick when she is an infant. She was breathing hardly. Her fever was high and there were money for doctor so she prepared cow urine to drink all week. I thought that it was a joke but all of them were serious. She thinks that illness can be natural reasons such as air pollution or bad eye or bad wish and behaviour.

She believes a life before birth and after death. She believes the punishment and award of the behaviours. In addition, she believes in caste system but in her opinion, Hinduism never supports violence for any kind of creature so the Harijans should not been oppressed. 'The way we should live our live is the Hinduism. Hinduism teaches us the lessons of brotherhood.' she thinks that people are not equal like brothers and sisters. It should not disturb the peace.

#### **4.1.1.10 INFORMANT M**

Informant M is a teli (selling with a car by yelling), but they are pronouncing as thella<sup>47</sup>. He is Hindu and 45 years old. He is married and he has two children. While we are interpreting, he asks for to continue his work. It was the morning time, so it was too early to sell for fruits so he was repairing the plastic bags they have with a friend of him.

My translator told 'Look how Indians are hard-working. He is kurmi. He gave permission about his photo. He did not just answer the questions but asked many questions about me.

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<sup>47</sup> 'Thella' is a push cart used for carrying goods and selling vegetables from a cart.

He strongly believes Hinduism. He consider cow as sacred mother because religion says so. He has no opinion why. Although he is Hindu, he is eating meat once a month. Nevertheless, he is not eating cow meat. He is not feeling bad about eating meat, because his parents also eat meat but rarely. However, he never eats a cow meat. He is eating generally pork, rarely goat and sheep meat. In addition, he uses the leather in daily life. It is not a problem for him. He is from the Kurmi castes. He has no jati. As I checked from Mandal Report, Kurmi is on the list of depressed scheduled castes' list.

He says that here in New Delhi there is no discrimination. Every one is the same. They can eat from the same plates; they can use the same glass. And I asked 'What about your home village?' He stopped and looked for a while 'not to much in these days but in the past there were many restrictions for us. We cannot play with Brahmin children. We cannot use their wells. Even if we become close, they do not accept our buttermilk. They accepted milk and ghee but not buttermilk.''. "Ask to them why they do not accept, but milk and ghee are not cooked by us. I think this was the different. Still they do not allow us to give offerings in the temples."

He strongly desire to go to Ganj<sup>48</sup>. However, Ganj is far and he has not that much wealth. However, his village is near Ganga, Begusarai is in Baihar State, he is going to his village every year. In Begusarai there are important temples so its in an pilgrimage place also. Then after I asked that which season is he going to his village and how long is he staying. He is going after monsoon, for the crop agriculture and he is staying one month.

According to him, Begusarai is very sacred and during crop, he is visiting relatives. His parents are still leaving and they do not have any illness another than being elder. He had migrated New Delhi for to earn the livelihood after marriage but he is still returning to his village ever year once a month. Neither he nor his family do not have land, they are workers. He thinks pilgrimage is good just for praying in that pure place.

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<sup>48</sup> River Ganj is known among Indians as Ganga. If you will use River Ganj, they cannot understand the questions. I think its like Blue Mosque and Sultanahmet Camii.



Every six month he felt sick. Sickness is like a fever and cough. He thinks these illnesses are because of their poverty and chinta<sup>49</sup>. He after explained that ‘I am not a doctor that’s why I do not know the sickness physical or natural.’ He is reacting that ‘A poor man has many problems and have no chance to know the reason feeling sick. It may be a bad air that I feel sick’. He had never go to a doctor, he is using pharmacists to have cheaper and traditional drugs.’

He does not think that there is a world after death. If it is so, he is just a poor man to earn his family’s life. Therefore, he does not believe a past life. However, he believes in punishment in a man’s life. He says ‘Every act has a returning for this time or in the future’. But his capability of doing good and bad things is limited. The reason is answered very fast ‘Because I am a poor man.’ I knew that some scheduled castes are shifting to Islam or Buddhism. I asked that did he ever think about it. He said ‘No, from earlier time it’s practised in our society, which is why I am accepting and practising this thing with full loyalty.’

He believes in purity of things such as fire and cow milk and butter. His first choice for the offering is fire. ‘Fire is great. In winter, it helps us to sustain. Fire gives hotness and food. Also sun is fire.’ He was jumping over the fire when he was kid during the celebrations and fests. He is not able to go to temple everyday. Once or twice a week he is going the sanctuaries. He believes the power of mantra. He does not have any mantra because he said he is a simple man. The most important events are ‘of course birth, marriage, and death’. His both son and daughter are. According to him anyone should marry after age 20 because marriage is essential for existence.

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<sup>49</sup> Chinta as he explained a kind of disorder of human existence. My translator said that is like a stress but because of inner reasons.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The age range was between 20 and 50. All informants have different occupations. Only two of them are women. Six of the informants are married. Each married informant has at least two children. None of the singles is a parent. Like a diversity among ages, there is a great diversity among education also. Mostly the education criteria regarded as literate and illiterate. The most well educated informants are Informant A, Informant E made the interview one by one in English, and both were university students. Only the two informants were in New Delhi by birth. Both are literate. Among the immigrants, there are differences such as Informant A is a Ph. D student, and Informant G is a beggar.

Even atheist informants and Moslem informants both answered the question about caste. Their replies prove that caste is not a pattern among Hindus. In addition, one of the informants declares himself non-Hindu. The most educated two informants have no faith in a specific religion. Informant E calls himself atheist but Informant A is confused about Christianity and Hinduism. Informant A regularly goes to church and pray but he does not call himself Christian. Caste is not a definition of religion anymore.

Every religious informant prays at least once a week regularly. During prays the most common offering is flower and milk. There is also offering of water, fruit and fire. Six of the informants have eaten goat and sheep meat and they can eat continuously unless they can afford to buy. None of them has ever eaten cow meat. They point out the respect to cow. Eight of the informants can use leather products in their hometowns but seven of them can use leather products in New Delhi Pahar-Ganj. The reason is not to have a possible conflict due to respect to cow.

It is asked to informants were their thoughts about discrimination without directly implying caste and related topics. All answers were about caste discrimination. Only two female informants agreed that there was no discrimination and they do not have any discriminative experience. All male informants agreed that

there was discrimination and they shared their personal experiences about it. They have stories and they have a view about discrimination. Among the informants, only Informant C went to pilgrimage because his hometown has holy places for pilgrimage.

Every informant get ill at least once a year. They do not have a superstitious explanation for these illnesses. Seven informants agree that the main reason for illness is air pollution. Among these seven informants, two of them agree that the main reason is lack of nutrition. In addition, other two informants believe that they got ill due to working conditions. Only Informant M thinks that main reason is poverty and chinta. Chinta is a term, which, denotes that there is a serious problem in the circulation of body energy. I regard this answer as not a superstitious but a traditional point of view.

Four of the informants are agree that there is a life after death. Four of them believe a life after death in many aspects such as Buddhism and Islam. Two of the informants are not sure about life after that. They have uncertain ideas. Six of the informants agree that there is a punishment. One informant does not consider as a value. Three of the informants believe that there is no punishment. Two of the informants who consider that there is no punishment, also think that they are religious.

When it comes to the purity, one of the informants did not consider about it but when we ask what is pure for him, he thinks that cow is pure and should respected . Other informant is atheist, he did not believe in purity, and he thinks nothing is pure. Eight of the informants believe there is a term of purity. Three of the informants agree that there is a difference between night & day, left hand & right hand, before bath & after bath. Six of the informants agree that there is only difference between before bath and after bath. One of the informants thinks that there is no difference among them. There is no relationship between their ages and their views. Informant F is a religious girl but both female informants are religious and accept that there are differences and both female informants are the only ones who

did not face with discrimination and both believes that in their life there is no discrimination.

This is one of the hardest results during interviews. There is no clear statement can make but it is known that in India, women are separated from social life. On the streets of many parts city, there is a significant quantitative difference among sexes. In addition, Informant F does not eating meat like her family members. Informant L was giving contradicting answers about her origin. These can be examples for sankritization as Srinivas defined (Sharma, 1985).

The most important result is that all informants agree that cows are precious. There are atheist, non-believer, who collects dead cows and meat eaters among the informants. Even though half of them did not agree about the purity of cow, all of them agreed about giving respect to vital power of cow.

The three informants believe that there are differences with right and left hand, night and day, before bath and after. All these informants call themselves religious and all were praying at least 3 times a week. This is also a significant difference in the group.

But none of the informants said that they know the origin of castes. I think this is the weak part of the interview. There should be more questions asked to clarify whether they do not know or recognize the folk story's message. The other point is that all informants' answers about their illnesses were rational. There was no savage belief, as Levi Strauss mentioned in the *Savage Mind*, punishment in their comprehensions.

As a conclusion of discussion, the respect against cow and the caste identity was accepted among all informants. All informants related discrimination with caste status. This proves that the caste and discrimination is still a major topic among Indians. On the other hand, all female informants declared that there is no discrimination in the city life. However, this is quite disturbing. It is known that

Indian women have not so free space in the public areas. Therefore, we need to check these female informants relation with public areas other than Pahar-Ganj district. All male informants agreed that there is discrimination and each had his own stories.

On the other hand, none of the informants has any stories to tell about the origin of caste. During the analysis of the answers, this common detail has brought me multiple questions such as “Do they really did not know ” or “they did not recognized their folks and inner messages ”. However, this question only answered by a detailed analysis of Indian beliefs.

Although most of the informants informed me that even they do not eat meat, there is an eating meat tradition. This is quite surprising that at my first trip I travelled by public busses between cities so we stopped steadily and waited on villages 20 minutes for the other passengers apart from our breaks. I see pigs, zebus, cows, water buffalos and chickens. However, I indeed very rarely see goats. This seemed a bit contradicting. Even we look at the figures of FAO in India that is also clear. However, this point needs more data to clear the fact.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In the conclusion, we have to identify whether there is a caste still. I will overview the different and contradicting definitions of Dalits and discriminations against Dalits. Then we should discuss the reason of discrimination.

Caste is a phenomena related with religion. Is religion strong in India? According to Smith (Smith, 2003), religious fervour is still alive and propagated. On the 21 September 1995, a miracle took place. The image of elephant-headed Ganesh drank up the milk offered to him in worship. News of this event spread through out India and reported worldwide the next day. Headlines were 'Ganesh Hysteria Peters Out', 'Have the Gods Had Their Fill', 'Temples Deserted' and 'Rationalists Prove Capillary Action Work Always'. Strength of traditional belief (Smith, 2003) is widely accepted.

Also in 2006 we have all informed by media that famous British actress Elizabeth Hurley got married with an Indian man in Rajasthan. During the wedding ceremony they wore leather shoes and they drank alcohol. So then, they were sued to the State Court that they have insulted the Indians ([www.khaleejtimes.com](http://www.khaleejtimes.com)).

Castes in India have had their boundaries marked by certain normative restrictions. Caste is still a social power in India (Venugopal, 1998). Sharma also asks questions about the socio religious pattern of caste. Caste is a religious based but a social task. It is a generally accepted a truth of caste. Scholars are still arguing about caste problems and government of India is keeping special acts to balance the castes.

Government defines two groups. There are backward castes, which have poor conditions as income; health education etc. government also defines the Scheduled Caste. Schedules castes are backward and also discriminate by the majority. To heal

their conditions government put quotations for the acceptance on all education institutions and government duties (Khan, 1980).

The term Scheduled caste has not been defined anywhere in the constitution. This term denote the law castes from time to time give an impression that all these terms are synonymous (Khan, 1980). This positive discrimination rule also involve that there is a depressed minority among Indians. This depressed group is approximately 15 percent of the total India. Even though Scheduled Castes are regarded as Caste by Constitution, politically they regarded as Dalit, traditionally they are Avarna.

Informant M noted that they could not use the same wells with Brahmins. But Moslems can bring water from those wells water for them. Even Brahmins can accept uncooked milk and ghee from them but not butter milk. Heat is the catalyser and the purifier unless heat does not used by an Avarna.

In addition, Brahmins did not allow Avarna to give offerings in temples and sanctuaries. Informant L stated that they clean sanctuaries, temples by cow milk and cow ghee after pollution such as a crime. Dalits are forbidden from fire, close relations, water, any cooked (boiled milk) or transformed item (buttermilk). Nevertheless, not all these can clarify why Hindus banned their offerings in sanctuaries.

This is a relation between Gods and man because they are not any part of coded man. Their body is separated form Hindu morality. In Hindu thought Marriott and Inden claimed ‘...the players have at stake also the preservation and transformation of their own nature’ (Kumar, 2000).

On the other hand sanctuary, monk or temple is the place where should be kept separate from the sacred codes from such as Avarna (Dalits). Avarna do not include any participle of coded-man. If that is the reason then why they are allowing them to wash their clothes, ironing clothes and work in their farms. In addition,

Informant F, she was from Balmiki caste. Balmikis are responsible to make tablas for religious occasions.

*What will happen after death is above me. I do not know how to read even. How do you expect me to know the invisible life?*

*Informant C*

Why all these discriminations are bounded with cows? Is there a specific relativity of power of cow and discrimination? The discrimination against Dalits can be based on utility. It is combined with folklore and religion. 'India has %3 of the world' land area but India has one third of the world's cattle population. The estimated 180 million cattle form the largest concentration of domesticated animals anywhere in the world and. As might be expected, cattle are an important element in the Indian agricultural economy. The cow contributes to the 18.8 million tons of milk produced annually in India' (Deryck, 1981).

In the country areas cows have many utilities. Not only a tractor but they are pulling the cart and plough and draws water from the wells of irrigating the fields. Also these highly useful animals also produce dung for fertilizer the field and fuel. According to the study of National Council of Applied Economics Research indicates that some 25, 5 percent of all energy consumed in rural India comes from dung. Used mostly for cooking in the form of dung cakes (Deryck, 1981). Wood is scarce in agricultural areas. Fuel is expensive.

On the other hand, Ford Foundation had a study on 1959 in India about the economic value of cow. Half of the cows in India have no economic value. An economic study of Pennsylvania University notes that there are 30 million useless cows in India (Harris, 1995).

Still in 2000's on the streets of New Delhi cows are a big crowd. Especially in Pahar Ganj they were becoming majority after sunset till sunrise. Most of them are sick and thin. There is not enough green for them inside the city. They are generally



eating garbage on the street. They can eat plastics and papers even. But few of them are giving milk but not much milk. However, it is very valuable in Indian dietary. Their dung is collecting in the early morning by people. Dung is usable for Indian cooking. Slow burning, cheap but constantly burning of dung is essential to cook vegetables (Deryck, 1981).

A zebu (Indian cow) is approximately giving 250lt milk every year. An average Netherlands's cow is giving more than 4000 litre a year. In India, half of the cows are not producing milk. Every year total production of is 18,8 million lt. %60 of this milk is produced by water buffalos (Deryck, 1981) . However, even their huge amounts of milk production water buffalos are less prestigious. Almost in every house, there is picture of mother cow. A white beautiful cow picture is keeps at the head up.

Even the water buffalo has more capacity to produce a fattier milk and much more better butter, cow is sacred. A cow has more effect on daily lives of the Indian villagers. Water buffalos only can be used on rice farms but they demand fresh grasses. But zebus have more resistance for the dry environment and zebus are more powerful on dry solids. They can stand on lack of water. Thus means a constant contribution to Indian life.

Zebu's dung is very useful. It burns cooks slowly the vegetable meals. This keeps the vitamins and gives chance for the house woman to take of her children and house. Dung is used for constructing the houses in the villages. The grounds are generally made with dung. So ground can easily be brushed.

The common usage of the tractor is not possible. Agricultural agenda is simultaneous with monsoon. Monsoon is the main water source for agriculture. So all farmers need pulling the cart and plough at the same time. In addition, cows that can give milk is added value for the family (Harris, 1995).

Zebus have little bodies but they stock energy on their hump. When they got ill, till her death they can work. A veterinarian Stuart Odendhal from John Hopkins University, enlighten that zebu can work before 2 hours before their deaths. Their body is so resistant that they can work under every condition. For the villagers dung is so special about zebu's life cycle. When a zebu stops dunging, it is a sign for her unavoidable death. Dung is the proof of her health and villager's food (Harris,1995).

*'Just look at me and see my poverty. I am not lack of any essential things but I am poor clearly.'*  
*Informant C*

As a note; in the early morning times, most people, even some people on the street, are having a simple shower with a bottle of water. With one bottle they are firstly cleaning their body with a wet tissue (generally tissue is wet with a sabun<sup>50</sup>) and they are washing their teeth, some have simple toothbrushes and then they are pouring the rest water to their body. After the bath, who can afford, apply olive oil to their hairs. Men' and women' hair look so black and oily.

Indians in general take a bath in the morning and if they have enough money, they use olive oil to enrich their hair. Bathing is a general rule because I talked with many Indians and walked at the dirty streets of Delhi but strangely, most of the people do not smell. I have to impress that my nose is so sensitive. I can even smell an apple in a cupboard but in these dirty streets, with this hot weather, people do not smell. Their hands can be dirty, because sabun is expensive. I did not witness the use of a detergent in Pahar-Ganj but only two of my informants were dirty. This is a real and huge success under these circumstances with a 30USD income per month. India is a place where only deadly hunger means poverty. Two of the informants are dirty, one of them was sweeper, the other one was a homeless beggar.

'Caste' term is not used among Indians. They use Varna, means colour. It is believed that Dalits are darker. Also there are other prejudices. Indians believe that they can distinguish a Dalit and an upper caste. It seems to me a bit funny because

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<sup>50</sup> Sabun is another similar word to Turkish. It means soap in English.

they are all dark in the eye of me. They call whiter skins as 'fair'. Dalits are believed to be dark, short stature, flat nosed and ugly. During my stay I can see that it is invalid.

The reason for discriminating scheduled castes is belief on the defilement of scheduled castes. This defilement is not related with body hygiene due to multiple reasons. If the defilement is related with body hygiene, then why it is assumed to transfer by birth. It is explained before that this idea of defilement is pushing people having endogamy. And this defilement is transferred by birth.

If the defilement would be related with body hygiene, how can be that most of the professions are held by Dalits, Some mason labours, all cleaning and washing works, agricultural labours are held by Dalits. The strong defilement does not pollute their works. On the other hand not only prestigious jobs but also cooking is the limit for Dalits. Because there is a general perception of the catalytic power of fire among all Hindus.

If the defilement is a conflict due to economic share, then why street beggars and shop owners regard the same level of defilement? Many Dalits have their professions in big cities. They own shops or they are having trade. Or they are becoming police or army member. All these professions are respectable but being a Dalit is an obstacle still.

During my visits to university and shopping centres, I observed that it is not possible to distinguish Dalits from Varnas by neither their colour not their bodily hygiene. This is a strong opposition based on biase of Dalits are dirty.

One of the critiques to Dalits is their meat eating behaviour. As informants confirmed they accept that they are eating goat meat but not cow, It is known that richer Indians who had lived outside India, tried eating meat. Gandhi (Gandhi, 2003) ate meat for a short period of time when he was a student in Britain and he also confirmed that most of the Indians ate regularly. In previous years, during hard

droughts and hunger, there are records that people ate cow meat. But the contradiction is about this meat eating behaviour ([www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)). Even they have goats and sheep cattle in India, there are four times more cow than goat and two times more cow than sheep. In addition, mostly butchers do not allow me to take photos. Nevertheless, I have one photo in the appendix. According to off-record conversations, there is a strong belief that other people are eating cow meat. However, no one accepts to eat cow but goat meat is alright. This point is contradictorily, and needs extra studies.

For these reasons, it is obviously essential to make further research on Indian behaviour in relation to cattle and meat. Due to the limited time and financial resources, the further research was not be possible. Dumont's view (Dumont, 1980) about pollution is more consistent with the field study but further questions should be asked for caste.

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## APPENDICIES

### APPENDIX A- PICTURES



I. Appendix -An altar prepared for celebration among women before wedding by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India,



II. Appendix - A celebration among women before wedding  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India





III. Appendix - A Warning in a temple in New Delhi

by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



IV. Appendix-One the healthiest cow in Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



V. Appendix -A store in Pahar-Ganj

by Pinar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



VI. Appendix - A zebu in Pahar-Ganj  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



VII. Appendix –A Stationer's Shop

by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



VIII. Appendix -Delhi University's Central Reference Library  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



IX. Appendix - Beawers

by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



X. Appendix -Entrance of one the temples at the back streets of Pahar-Ganj  
by Pınar Elçin Atıcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India





XI. Appendix --Entrance of a temple at the back streets of Pahar-Ganj  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XII. Appendix -An altar in a tailor's Shop  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XIII. Appendix -A dry cleaner woman

by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XIV. Appendix -A souvenir, by Pinar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XV. Appendix -Night time garbage are put on corner's of back streets. It is meal time for cows on the streets

by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XVI. Appendix -A butcher's Shop on the back streets of Pahar-Ganj  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XVII. Appendix - A young woman  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XVIII. Appendix XIX-Two children while playing in front o their houses in Pahar-Ganj  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India





XIX. Appendix -Back streets of Pahar-Ganj after the garbage left out, by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XX. Appendix -A child

by Pınar Elçin Atıcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XXI. Appendix -Elder people while chatting

by Pınar Elçin Atıcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XXII. Appendix-A panorama from my window to Paha-Ganj  
by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India



XXIII. Appendix -Pahar-Ganj after a rain

by Pınar Elçin Atcı in 2005 at Pahar-Ganj in New Delhi, India

## APPENDIX B-QUESTIONNAIRE

- i. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
- ii. WHAT IS YOUR OCCUPATION?
- iii. WHAT IS YOUR CIVIL STAND?
- iv. DO YOU HAVE ANY CHILDREN? IF YES, HOW MANY?
- v. WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND?
- vi. ARE YOU IN NEW DELHI BY BIRTH? WHERE ARE YOU COMING FROM?
- vii. WHAT IS YOUR CASTE?
- viii. ARE YOU HINDU?
- ix. DO YOU BELIEVE IN RELIGION?
- x. IF YES, WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION?
- xi. IF YES, DO YOU CALL YOURSELF RELIGIOUS?
- xii. IF YES, HOW OFTEN DO YOU PRACTICE?
- xiii. DO YOU EAT MEAT?
- xiv. DID YOU EVER EAT MEAT?
- xv. DO YOU EAT COW MEAT? DID YOU EVER EAT COW MEAT?
- xvi. DO YOU USE LEATHER IN YOUR HOMETOWN?
- xvii. DO YOU USE LEATHER IN NEW DELHI?
- xviii. DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANY DISCRIMINATION?
- xix. DO YOU HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE?
- xx. DID YOU EVER GO TO PILGRIMAGE?
- xxi. DO YOU WISH TO GO TO PILGRIMAGE?
- xxii. DO YOU KNOW THE BEGINNING OF CASTE IN HINDUISM?
- xxiii. HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET ILL?

- xxiv. WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE REASONS OF YOUR ILLNESS?
- xxv. DO YOU THINK THERE IS A LIFE AFTER DEATH?
- xxvi. DO YOU BELIEVE IN PUNISHMENT?
- xxvii. DO YOU BELIEVE IN PURITY?
- xxviii. WHAT IS PURE FOR YOU?
- xxix. DO YOU SEE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RIGHT & LEFT HAND,  
MORNING & NIGHT, BEFORE BATH AND AFTER BATH?

# CURRICULUM VITAE

## IDENTITY

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ADANA-12/05/1976  
TURKISH

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

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- ☀ ÖZEL GÜLEK LİSESİ-1994
- ☀ ÇUKUROVA UNIVERSITY, BUSINESS ADM. (BA)-1999

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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- ☀ 1996 HABITAT II, UNDP Public Affairs Assistantt
- ☀ 1996 HABITAT II, AISESEC International Student Assemble
- ☀ 1999 TURKISH AIRLINES-Sales and Traffic Officer, Adana
- ☀ 2001 TURKISH AIRLINES-Officer, Istanbul
- ☀ 2005 TURKISH AIRLINES- Accounting Officer of Finance and Accounting, Denmark
- ☀ 2006 TURKISH AIRLINES-Chief of Finance and Accounting, Sweden
- ☀ 2007 TURKISH AIRLINES- Finance and Accounting Manager of Northern Italy and Milan