

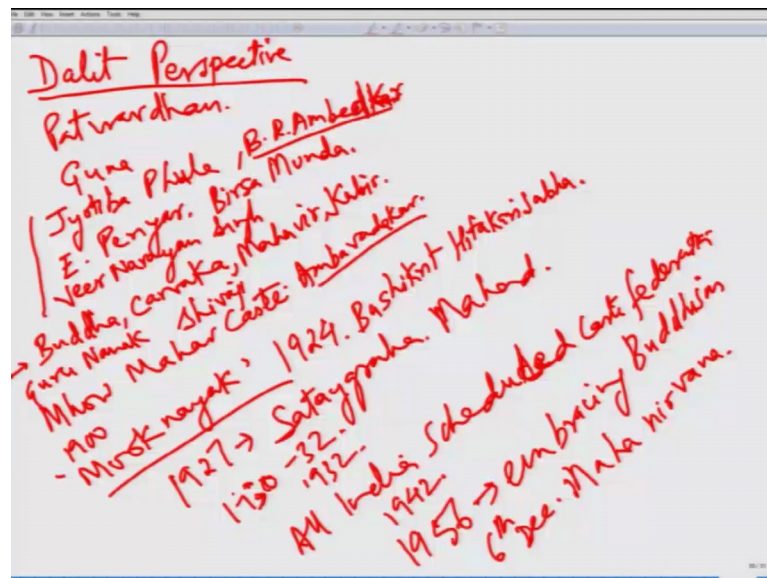
Development of Sociology in India
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Lecture – 19

So, friends we have discussed about the various perspective in the understanding of Indian society. And in that framework I think we want to add another layer to the understanding of the social phenomenon especially the perspective, which we are referring to is trying to see the history or may be the discourse in a new way.

And here as we discussed in subaltern perspective if you can recall, that subaltern perspective it tries to understand the society the history in a specific way. But the subaltern perspective was trying to rework more on the past or past written documentation. And we today are going to speak about a perspective which of course, is nearer to the subaltern perspective; it can fall in to the domain of subaltern perspective. But it has to be treated separately and that is why we are putting it as a important perspective in the Indian framework that is this Dalit perspective.

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Now the Dalit perspective if you try to see and what Dalit mean to say [FL] how we try to understand the notion of Dalit. I think many question comes in a mind and as we say that perspective definitely has its own way of looking to the world. So, we can see that

this discourse that we are trying to generate. It may have certain issues first of all we have to understand about the meaning of the Dalit in that sense as such, then we also have to evolve that how the trends of the Dalit perspectives were visible in the Indian society.

And finally we also try to understand the contribution of the significant people and within that we have at least documented two prominent people in that sense one of course, is BR. Ambedkar and another of course, is Gail Omevedt. And both the people in that sense they have their own relevance with regard to the understanding of the Dalit perspective. But before talking about the Dalit perspective, we have to really see that to what extent we can speak about.

The Dalit as a natural discourse or we can see the Dalit perspective as a meaningful perspective for analyzing the society, because somewhere when whenever we are trying to speak about the Dalit perspective. I think we have some understanding that it has a reductionist understanding towards looking to the society like when. We try to speak about the brahmanical perspective in a sense not brahmanical perspective, but the indological perspective which was based on literature written by the Brahmins and then trying to understand the Indian society.

So, the Dalit perspective is also to be seen from the Dalit view point. So, I think we try to see that these are the two perspective which has to be seen as a polar opposite. Trying to see history and society from a specific view point from the upper caste view point, and then we try to see the Dalit perspective, which has to be seen in terms of view which has to be seen from the lower caste view point.

And both the perspective definitely whenever wherever we try to speak about from one angle definitely it will lead to certain problems, because it may ignore the other side. So, first of all we have to see that how we try to see the understanding of Dalit's. And in that framework I think whenever we try to speak about the term Dalit, the Dalit represents a politically cautious group of people who are aware of their right and assert for their dignity.

Now, when we see that there the political conscious group of people. So, the Dalit has to be seen in the political framework that of course, is one thing which we can generate in that sense as such. Saying Dalit means that a group of people who have certain amount

of solidarity integrativeness with regard to a specific agenda or assertion which has been there for a specific cause. And if you try to see it was basically the Patvardhans understanding that Patvardhan was basically trying to see with regard to the Pune context.

That how in 1960s and 70s we saw the assertion of the political rights which was been associated with the Dalit panthers in the part of Gujarat and Maharashtra. And in that way we see the categorization of Dalit in a specific sense that is the politically charged group of people for their own assertion for their own rights for their own claim. So, the term Dalit to some extent reflect those people sub subordinate people subjugated people, who are coming or speaking about themselves in an assertive way and trying to challenge the existing order.

That of course, is the political connotation and in that fashion we can look into the things here of course, I think we have to recall famous Dalit scholar that is Guna. And Guna in his writings has try to speak about that what the Dalit scholar does or what the Dalit does it tries to put forth the alternative interpretation of the Indian identity.

Now, in that way we can see that the understanding of Dalit has to be seen as an alternative view point and the alternative interpretation of the Indian identity. And if you try to see in terms of the specific categorization, we say that they have been socially based lower caste. Dalit and the non-Brahmins all of them are going to be the part of this particular broader gambit of the Dalit's.

And we try to see that the present traditions in the southern India and in the western regions are basically the group of people from where we have the emergency of the Dalit perspective. And in the contemporary times that is speaking about the permanent leadership in the historical framework. We have n number of people who try to work for the Dalit perspective in a specific fashion and to name a few we have Jyotiba Phule.

The of course, is an important contributor in the field of Dalit perspective we have BR. Ambedkar that we have already stated. Then also we have Periyar whose contribution also is going to be significant with regard to the understanding of the south Indian Dalit leadership. And apart from that it also incorporates the contribution of the heroes of the revolt like Birsa Munda that is another and then we have veer Narayan Singh.

So, that is contribution also is going to be important, so this is of course, one understanding about the popular people who has or who can be labelled in the category of the Dalit perspective. Now apart from these categories of people we also have certain planes in terms of the traditions, which can also represent the Dalit perspective like we have the tradition of Buddha.

We have the tradition of Carvakas and also we have the tradition of Mahavir then Kabir and Guru Nanak. So, these specific traditions which are part in parcel of the Indian society can also be seen as representing the Dalit perspective in a specific framework. And apart from that we have the heroic figures like Shivaji who also can be seen in the similar jacket. So, in contrast to the secularist opposition to hindutwa the so called Dalit perspective it proclaims new politics of radically transformed non Hindu identity.

So, it is basically a new politics of the non-Hindu com composition which tries to represent their identity in the specific fashion. And they define Hinduism as an oppressive caste or an oppressive class or an oppressive patriarchal force. Indeed the impeders to challenge the hegemony and the validity of these is the main concern for the Dalit perspective. And we try to see that this is basically the main logic which is behind the Dalit politics, but here one thing that has to be kept in mind. That when we try to speak about the Dalit perspective in this particular fashion, then can we say that anything against Hinduism is going to be part of the Dalit perspective.

If the answer is yes then I think we can have n number of things which has to be part of the Dalit perspective, like if you try to speak about the Islam or we try to speak about the Christianity. So, they can also be part of the Dalit perspective, but that is not true. The reason being that anything, which is against the so called Hinduism may be seen as Dalit perspective assumes to be wrong, because we are talking about the Dalit perspective in terms of an assertion of the group of people or the specific categories of people against their own system.

So, the context of what I can say Jainism is the context of Buddha the context of Mahavir, they can very well figure in to the idea of the Dalit perspective because their concern was to fight against the Hinduism right. It was not to be seen in a fashion that they are antagonistic to the Hinduism, but a group of followers a group of thoughts or the group of ideology, which tries to fight against the hegemony of the Hinduism the wider

Hinduism is the main concern of the Dalit perspective, like when we try to speak about Hinduism itself has to be seen as having multiple facets.

As we know that Hindus has many ups and downs with regard to rotation with regard to rein configuration or with regard to adjustment with the different settings. And in that way we try to find out that many such forces which were working against Hinduism in that sense as such does not make it to be a Dalit perspective. So, I think somewhere this is the check rider, which we just trying to propose that anything intuitive Hinduism cannot seen as Dalit perspective. Rather its basically the subordinate within the Hinduism or may be the people who are part of the Hinduism has been what you can say been antagonist to or having a sort of a dis agreement with the ideology of Hinduism of that Hinduism that specific Hinduism I think can be seen as part of the Dalit perspective.

So, in a way we can say that this Dalit politics and the Dalit (Refer Time: 13:40) it requires to go beyond even the term Dalit. That of course, is what I am trying to make out that in the last decade we try to see that most widely accepted word was for the most oppressed and exploited action of the caste system. And some of the most profound expression of the Dalit reason has come from the Dalit themselves like the Phule the Periyar, Kabir, Tukaram, Buddha all of them have represents the starting point of a long journey towards the social equality and social justice.

So, in that way I think now we have to be more fact by saying that anything which is going beyond the understanding of Hinduism. Rather which tries to contribute towards making the Hindus towards equality or towards the social justice can be seen as part of the Dalit perspective. It indicates that the voices from within which tries to raise up and also assert themselves to fight the evils of Hinduism can be treated as part of the Dalit perspective. So, in that way I think these are certain things which has to be kept in mind when we try to move further.

Now we try to see that the Dalit politics simply can be seen also as a challenge, which has been posed by the militant organizations. I think the most vibrant militant observations, which has to be seen is the Dalit panthers, Dalit panthers which were been seen as the volcanoes which are trying to resist the upper caste hegemony. We have the Republican Party which have their own way of looking in to the society in terms of a

constructive social order or we try to see the contribution of the VSP as a party or we can even include in a broader jacket of the Dalit perspective.

The attempt by the naxalite especially the low caste based naxalism and the activities associated with them can also be part of the Dalit perspective. So, in that way the Dalit perspective is not region specific it is not caste specific, sometimes the ideological what you can say ups and downs and the ideological difference is how they have to be represented and asserted is part and parcel of the Dalit perspective.

And the Dalit perspective see seen as a challenge to the brahmanic hegemony and it has been thought of debate. Since nineteen seventies and eighties that how we can see the Dalit perspective, which is basically seen as a fight against the brahmanical hegemony. I think at this juncture it is interesting to focus and point out that when we try to speak about the Dalit perspective in the Indian history if we try to go back.

We try to find out that we had the two categories of the people the Aryans and the Dravidians. And both the categories of the peoples have their own differences basically we say that the Dravidians which has been seen as the original inhabitant of the Indian society in the southern India or in the different parts of the India. But with the advent of the Aryans they have been put to the south and with the hegemony of their own rituals or with the amount of domination the Aryans they could super seeds the so called Dravidians.

And to some extent one ways says that the so called Aryan are to be seen as a representative of the Brahmins and gradually we have the emergency of the specific caste system. We have the Brahmins were seen as the creator of caste and also trying to have the hegemony over the entire caste system. And trying to have their own upper edge and then source of exploitation many others.

Now these things are there which can also speak about that how we can have the sort of discrimination when we have the formation of the Hinduism. In that sense as such we try to find out that how the Hindus has been presented people who have been part of the Hinduism has been put off and then they have been put at the other side the Dravidians in that sense as such. So, I think its question of challenging the hegemony of the brahmanical ideology that of course, is a sound ground for understanding the Dalit perspective.

And so it is not a fight against the Hinduism in general, but the brahmanical tyranny and also the prevalence of the typical upper caste hegemony also is a bone of contention which the people the activism or of the Dalit they try to project upon.

And as I said that within the Dalit perspective we had a two people whom we are going to discuss in detail. Especially we have the contribution of BR Ambedkar, BR Ambedkar who has contributed significantly in the understanding of the Dalit perspective or may be his contribution can be seen as representing the Dalit perspective. Either we can see, but before going in to the detail let us speak about Ambedkar a bit Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on a April 14 in 1891 in Maho town. And it was a small place in Madhya Pradesh province which is now Madhya Pradesh, but earlier it was the Madhya Bharath.

And he was born in the Mahar caste he was born in a Mahar caste and if you try to see historically the Maharashtra was basically the common place and the native villages of con of the Maratha region were called Ambavade. And his real name was Ambavadekar it was not Ambedkar rather it was Ambavadekar in the name of the village where he lives and later in 1900 he has got the name of Ambedkar from a Brahmin teacher who was impressed by his intellect that he has given the name Ambedkar to him.

So, his name from Ambavadar to Ambedkar was basically the contribution of Brahmanic teacher who has tries to impress by his intellect has a put given the name to him. Now Ambedkar who was born as and sometimes have been a commonly called as Baba sahib was a Indian nationalist. He was a jurist, he was a Dalit political leader also was been seen as the chief architect of the Indian constitution. He was the chairman of the drafting committee of the constitution of India. And that was his significant contribution his journey towards the Indian nationalism and also the Indian politics, but if you try to see his initial life struggle we try to find out that.

He was born in a poor untouchable family and he is spent most of his life in fighting against the social discrimination especially the fighting against the system of this Chaturvarna the four Varnas that is the Brahmin Kshatriyas Vaishyas and Shudras and also in a way fighting against the Indian caste system. He also has been seen as significantly contributing towards the understanding of the Dalit Buddhist movement.

Because of his inclination towards the understanding of Buddha disciple of Buddha he also has been seen in that particular fashion he has been the recipient of the Bharath

Ratna that of course, is an important honor, which has been given by Indian society to him. So, in that way we try to see that Ambedkar was seen as a personality the Indian personality which has its name and also which has contributed significantly both as a Dalit leader.

And also as a nationalistic leader now if you try to see a brief profile initially he has a training from elphinstone high school at Bombay later on of course, he was entered into this self elphinstone college of Bombay. And he got a scholarship at the Columbia University in the New York, where he has done his ma examination in economics with sociology in history philosophy and anthropology as the other subject for study.

He also has left Columbian university and has been confirmed with PhD degree from there returning to India; he has contributed significantly in terms of publications. Especially some of his writings are reflected in the weekly that is called as the Mook Nayak. Mook Nayak basically the leader of the voiceless Mook Nayak which basically represents the voices of the voiceless.

And it has been found in 1924 with the contribution of Ambedkar and later on in extension to that he has also formulated the Bahishkarith Hithkaari Sabha Bahishkarith Hithkaari Sabha, which was also seen as an important organization which was working to uplift the depressed classes and his contribution also is seen in 1927 when he has led an important science revolution that is called as the Satyagraha Satyagraha that has been done the Mahard.

That is this we call as the Mahard Tank Satyagraha were he tries to touch upon the watcher as a token of resistance against the untouchability for the lower caste which are not been allowed to have the water from the common pools. And this satyagraha was meaningful at which was done on the gandhian lines as a source of satya nonviolence he tried to represent himself and his cognitive that why the people of the lower caste are not allowed to take water from the common places. Even the dogs and the animals can take water from can drink water from there, but the men the lower caste are not going to be allowed.

So, that is how he tries to put a plea for the masses that what amount of tyranny the lower caste people are facing when they are trying to speak about their representation in the Indian Hinduism in that sense in the caste system. And apart from that his

contribution also is seen very significantly fighting against Gandhi also especially he was been part of the delegate of round table conference that was in 1930, 1932.

There of course, he had a strong fight with Mahatma Gandhi and to some extent there was certain amount of tussles which were being going on especially the puna pact which are being there in 1932 where he had to have arguments, which Mahatma Gandhi did not like especially the provision for electorate which has been proposed by Macdonald communal award. So, instead of refraining from it Ambedkar try to put that particular agenda and Gandhi was trying to oppose it.

So, in that fashion we tried to see that there was a certain amount of political rivalries which have been there on certain issues Ambedkar which was been seen as not representing British, but somewhere trying to adjust with the policies of the British. And which has not been liked by Gandhi and many other leaders and apart from that his important contribution is also seen in terms of all India formation of all India scheduled caste federation. All India scheduled caste federation which has marked its presence especially we try to see it in 1942.

And also we try to find out that he was the first law minister of the independent India. And later on of course, is the responsibility which has been given to him in terms of the formation of the Indian constitution is again remarkable. And talking about his end life I think that was again a sort of mysterious in a sense that Ambedkar has in 1956. Adopted and embraced Buddhism embracing Buddhism is significant act which has been done by Ambedkar in a very judicious way he was keen and sometimes it was been seen as a symbol of moving away from the Hindu social order.

Especially when he was trying to embrace this Buddhism there was a strong opposition, but at the end of the day he had embraced Buddhism and somewhere here we have said that born has a Hindu, but I will not die as a Hindu. And at the end of his life he tries to prove that and in 1956, he after embracement of Buddhism he has been put to death on sixth of December, we have his death which is been seen at as a maha nirvana day. So, that is how we try to see is life trajectory and this life trajectory itself speaks about the very fact that what so ever act and what so ever issues which has been raised has been projected by Ambedkar.

They are seen as reflecting certain amount of what you can say assertion and also argumentation against the tyranny of Hinduism. Especially Brahmanical hegemony which has been proposed and propounded by Hinduism also have been strongly opposed by Ambedkar. Now if you try to see either it is the question of the satyagraha on the Mahar Tank which was very genuine concern. In terms of representation of the Dalit masses were not allowed from the assessment from the approachability towards the very natural resource.

A basic resource in that sense as such is the very significant act and that also try to take it up in a very peaceful way. So, if you try to see this style of reaction of his resistance I think that also has a democratic mode. In a sense in a very constitutional way or rather in a very democratic way he is trying to represent his resistance and that is the art which makes him a prominent leader.

Thank you.