

## 2020 Pandemic and a lesson on untouchability

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Discrimination based on caste, creed, colour, sex or religion is strictly prohibited by the Indian Constitution. Can we really say that these provisions do help us in reality? I doubt. Because still there are places, cities, and even states where people are being differentiated on various grounds, and this is creating a gap of inferior superior strata of population which is clearly not serving in any way to contribute to the developed India based on the principle of equality.

Only by increasing our exports or profitability of companies or by a huge thrift in the GDP of the country, we cannot achieve the aim to be a developed nation. Because along with economic growth, we also need to address issues of social nature which acts as roadblocks in the path of development. Truth is that we are still trying to improve economically, and we do somewhere lag behind on societal and social aspects of growth. If we somehow find solution to this we can improve rate of our growth at a much faster rate.

So addressing one of the core issues in our Indian society, which is untouchability, is very important for us today. The reason why this issue is important is because now it seems as if we have resolved it but truth is still very different. These issues are kept suppressed and never come to news because we and also those who are the victims have accepted this as it is. It seems as if people who belong to small villages where untouchability is still there, have accepted this and if not they are not empowered enough to come forward and take a stand on this. It is so harsh to even write that class divisions in the society have been created so much that one group of people hesitate even to use things which have been touched by someone called lower caste.

This is untouchability. Nobody ever gave importance to it because maybe we never understood how it feels to be an untouchable. These people whom we call untouchables are actually the people we cannot even imagine our life without. They clean our sewerage, do animal farmings, tow our luggages on railway stations or are mostly involved in activities which we consider to be inferior. But imagine if they stop doing these things how would we be able to cope with our lives. The things which we consider bad or dirty are all natural and

inevitable. And we treat such people as untouchables who do the bravest of work, without which we cannot even think of a stable life. This all is now normal from the last decade.

But it is said that you cannot feel the pain of what someone is going through until you feel the same. Year 2020 has come to let all us feel the pain that we always ignored. Ignoring sweepers, ignoring torture that untouchables feel, ignoring people who always cleaned your public places, and ignoring what differentiations feel like because we are privileged enough to never come across such situations. The corona virus pandemic hit the world in the year 2020 when it caused so much ruckus that people could not even touch each other because of the risk of the virus that can spread from anywhere. It is just three months, and we get irritated to be cautious about what to touch or what not.

We miss greetings with hand shakes and hugs so much. We feel so bad when there are restrictions on even a touch. And now think about those who are going through this from decades and centuries, that too not because they cause spread of virus or something but because they are born in a particular caste ,or they are engaged in some activities which according to us are dirty. There is a thing called mental injury and torture, people go through this when they are called untouchables or are neglected from being normal. This needs to be looked into as it is high time we address this or it will become a never-ending taboo for our society which will never allow us to grow, and prosper because a big portion of our country's population is this class of people. If we cannot involve them in the growth process, we can never ensure that India will be a developed nation or a super power because power comes from unity. It is ironic that maybe we needed a global pandemic to understand this. Now we all are untouchables.

We cannot touch each other, cannot touch a thing at some public place, and even we can be charged for touching someone as it goes against the health guidelines. These instructions sound ruthless and irritating but still we are following them because it is a big issue and because we know in a few months this all would be over, and everything will be back to normal. But what will the same as before is the condition of untouchables who have suffered enough of discrimination on innumerable grounds. It is a great opportunity for us to understand the pain of them. After everything, we all are humans, and our minds have been set as per practices going on our society from years. But if even after feeling the truth and going through the same, we are still not able to understand it then I doubt if we are human enough to be given the privileges with which we are blessed right now.

The corona virus pandemic has caused much damage to the country in all the aspects possible. People have lost their jobs, economy has come to a halt, school, colleges have been shut, production is completely off. We need great courage and faith to pass through all this. Also, we'll need twice the efforts to take everything back to what it was back then. We all would have to contribute to this if we wish to revive our economy. It is great opportunity for us to take this pandemic as a lesson for all the deeds that are going on and serving negatively for us.

This also includes the practice of untouchability, let us all pledge that once this pandemic gets over we all will condemn the discrimination on any basis. And how we all are being turned into untouchables, we will hug out all the differences. From this ground root level we can eradicate this social evil. But still we all are advised to stay physically distanced from each other until all this corona virus pandemic ends, and after that we all will be humans and not some people of a caste or gender or state because humanity can only serve humans with infinite opportunities to create a happier cosmos. Boundaries and restrictions are set by us only, and it is only us who can remove them. It is all present in our head, and a mere realisation is all what required to end them. I guess all the suffering we went through during this pandemic is big enough to realise our mistakes and I hope that we can, and we will be more humans once we solve these social evils of the society.

“Everyone is a human and deserves dignity,

What prevails above everything is humanity.” Name- Sparsh Sharma

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