

# Vulnerability Due To Caste

Caste systems were established on the basis of the hierarchy of occupations where work related to leather, cleaning dead cattle from village grounds, work related to funeral ceremonies etc. were placed at the bottom. This article lists the untouchability practices, its origin, the problems associated with it, exploitation and measures taken by the constitution for their upliftment.

## Common Untouchability Practices are listed below

People or castes who were performing the task of eliminating the polluted elements from society were considered 'untouchables'. Due to the caste system, the ones at the lowest strata of society are forced to do the dirtiest, menial and hazardous jobs, forced labour and bonded labour. Due to such exclusion activities, vulnerable caste groups have limited access to resources, services and development which keeps them in perpetual poverty. Structurally the lower castes were economically dependent on the higher castes for existence. The Scheduled Caste (lower castes) remained economically dependent, politically powerless and culturally subjugated to the upper caste. This impacted their overall lifestyle and access to food, education and health.

The common untouchability practices are listed below.

1. Separating houses, schools and cremation grounds.
2. Prohibition of inter-caste marriages
3. Prohibiting ownership of land
4. Denying access to public services such as water taps, health care, and education.
5. Prohibition of access to public places like roads, temples.

Some of the **measures we can take to eliminate** caste discrimination are listed below.

1. Equal access to education in rural areas where the majority of the Indian population resides.
2. Better access to skilled jobs with adequate training
3. Provide housing facilities since many of them live in slum areas with limited access to electricity, water, sanitation facilities.
4. Completely eliminate jobs like manual scavenging
5. Create more awareness of discrimination using mass media.

## Manual Scavenging

To stop Manual scavenging Government of India has implemented Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act 2013. Various United Nations Organizations

UNICEF, ILO, UNDP are working with various stakeholders to end manual scavenging and rehabilitate communities with access to decent employment.

In December 2015, the Indian Parliament passed the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Amendment Act, 2015. This act aims to prohibit and punish for offences committed against members of SC and ST. It gives provision for the establishment of special courts to conduct trials of such offences and rehabilitation of victims.

### **Constitution of India - Articles for Upliftment of SC/ST**

1. Article 17 - Abolishes Untouchability
2. Article 46 - As per this article states will have to promote and protect the educational and economic interests of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes
3. Article 16 (4A) - In services coming under the states, they have to provide reservation to Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes in matters of promotion.
4. Article 330 and 332 - Provision for reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the Parliament, legislative assemblies of states, municipalities, panchayats.
5. Article 338 - Gives provision for the establishment of National Commission to safeguard the interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes