

CHRISTIAN NETWORK AGAINST CASTE DISCRIMINATION



GLOSSARY

BURAKUMIN (BURAKU PEOPLE)

The Burakumin (from the word buraku, meaning hamlet or community), are descendants of outcasted communities in Japan. There are approximately three to six million Buraku people living in Japan, and many face employment and marriage discrimination.

CARUR WARNA

This is the main caste system in Bali and was introduced by the Dutch in the 1900s.

CASTEISM

A form of prejudice or discrimination based on the social hierarchy which is determined by a person's birth.

CASTE SYSTEM

The caste system divides society into hereditary classes. How caste dictates a person's life can vary between cultures and communities. For many it can mean not being able to marry outside your caste, living in segregated colonies, ostracization and repressive sanctions.

CHATURVARNA/ VARNA SYSTEM

This is India's Hindu caste system, also known as Varnashrama. It is the most predominant and longest surviving forms of social stratification. Fundamentally, it is based on the concept of 'Purusha', which is understood by Hindus as the supreme being or original conscience that created all life. It was utilised and transformed by the Mughal Empire and immediately after, by British colonial rulers as a means of social control. While India has made caste-based discrimination illegal, discrimination remains prevalent.

DALIT

Dalit, from the Sanskrit for 'broken' or 'burst', also previously known as untouchable, is a name given to a person who is not recognised within the Hindu varna system. People who are Dalits often face marginalisation, stigma and violence. The word 'Dalit' refers to this pain and suffering but also echoes the hope for liberation.

DALIT CHRISTIANS

Dalit Christians, alongside being recipients of discrimination by those of other religions, they can also often face discrimination by other Christians such as having separate entrances for entering a church. Casteism is particularly noticeable among Catholic clergy and Religious, despite Dalits making up the majority of the Catholic population in India. Dalit Christians also face a third layer of discrimination as they are not recognised under India's Reservation Policy.

DALIT THEOLOGY

Dalit Theology emerged from South Asia during the 1980s. It is a branch of Christian theology that reflects on the theme of the suffering Christ and the role all have in opposing the structural nature of sin that is expressed via the caste system.

ENDO GAMY

The custom of marrying only within the limits of a local community, tribe or caste.

HOKOU

A system of home registration used in mainland China which divides people into rural and urban locations. Those of rural hukou are forced to do the most dangerous and lowest paid jobs and are excluded from some social welfare programs. While it is possible for Hukou status to be changed, there are serious barriers and risks to doing so.

JAAM

In Senegal, people who are considered Jaam (slaves) are considered to be outside the caste system. Though slavery has been outlawed, many still work as tenant farmers for their former masters.

MUHAMASHEEN

The Muhamasheen ('the marginalised ones') of Yemen are regarded as 'untouchable' by mainstream society, and they face continuous discrimination. In Yemen, they are previously and still commonly referred to as the Akhdam, which means servants. Figures for their population size varies greatly with estimates anywhere between 150k to 3.5 million being suggested.

NEENO

People attributed to the Neeno caste in Senegal can face discrimination. Their occupations are strictly governed by the concept of purity and pollution related to hereditary lines.

RESERVATION STATUS

This system of affirmative action in India aims to provide those of historically disadvantaged castes, some representation in education, employment and politics. However, Dalit Christians and Muslims are denied reservation status.

SCHEDULED CASTE

A number of Hindus belonging to the more oppressed castes have been given official status by India and are known as scheduled caste. Due to the social disadvantages they face, they are given specific help by the Indian government. Many scheduled caste groups prefer the term Dalit.

SCHEDULED INDIAN TRIBES

Similar to those designated as Scheduled Caste, the Scheduled Indian tribes are officially designated groups of tribal communities comprised of some of the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups in India.

SLAVE CASTES

The concept of a 'slave-caste' has existed in many parts of the world. Adults and children from what are considered 'slave castes' (such as those currently found in Mauritania and Madagascar) are often forced to work without pay.

VARNAS

The four varnas (Brahmanas, Ksatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras) is a Hindu belief that people can be divided into four groups, each with inherent dispositions based on karma.

VARNASHRAMA

See Chatuvarna