Easy Revivability of Caste Fundamentalism: Internet Era

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Abstract: Caste has been defined variedly in the context of its many functions and dysfunctions. Caste is said to have performed various functions in the past but relevance of caste in the present era is a disputable premise. In the present era where people are fact-connected through internet, sending and receiving information, messages along with pictures and videos of incidents has become feasible. Alongwith this, spreading of propaganda material through the same medium has also become easy and economical. There is no effective way to control such spreading of propaganda material without affecting lawful connectivity. A propaganda video or some concocted information in the form of a message can be transmitted, shared and forwarded among lakhs of people within no time. Such use of fast connecting devices such as internet applications, social media platforms have become a tool in the hands of divisionist forces for easy revivability of fundamentalism in Caste.

Keywords: Caste Fundamentalism, etc.

Introduction: Caste has many associative as well as dissociative functions. The ancient premise that stood for functionality of caste has long become obsolete. Vested interests have made use of caste according to time and need. Whether there be political alliance among different castes for their mutual benefit or there should be conflict among them is decided in closed quarters of the political gallery. Propaganda comes in to fulfill the chosen role for caste. This chosen role would either be associative or dissociative thus bringing social harmony or disharmony in society. Thus caste is being used as a tool in the hands of political masters to influence the middle class people who are numerically preponderant and ideologically opiate i.e. easily divisible along caste lines due to prevailing and long rooted ideology. Various devices are used as auxiliaries to make use of caste as the main instrument of social disorganization, apathy and thus create law and order situation.

Easy Revivability: Just as Marx said "Religion is the opium of the masses", caste and jati differences are viewed seriously by many middle and lower class people. This section of population takes it very seriously and are easily influenced by slightest of incitement. Easy revivability also means when the source of incitement is available, the need to go into its root cause is hindered by the rigidity in the belief in caste differences as well as caste ideology. Thus, in a time when internet and social media platforms were not available, it was the word of mouth that was believed and rumors would have caused tremendous influence on the mind of the caste afflicted people. But the speed and the scope of spread were limited. Now the situation has changed, easy availability of propaganda news, pictures, videos, and messages have led to easy

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revivability of caste fundamentalism. The fake pictures, videos etc. dwell upon the mind of the viewer and scope for logic and reasoning gets limited by visual impulse giving way to fundamentalism.

Caste fundamentalism: It would be wrong to say that caste has become irrelevant in the modern context. Caste has found modern tools to reinforce itself upon sections of masses who are easily influenced by the propaganda tactics used over internet by morphing images and making fake videos. Today people can make their propaganda messages reach unknown people connected via internet, through vast distance, with no or little liability for their actions. It can clearly be said that internet and social media platforms have provided a safe vehicle to spread propaganda more easily and inflict damage on a vast scale now, than it was earlier. Government has to resort to stop internet services to thwart such evil designs.

Review of Literature: Even the most isolated and closed communities cannot prevent their members from frequenting the cyberspace. Studies show that members of even the most orthodox communities use the Internet worldwide for various purposes, ranging from e-commerce, requests for information, entertainment, debates, virtual pilgrimages, dissent against their own community and social engagement with outsiders (Spigelman, 2000, , Dawson, 2001, , Dawson, 2000, , Dawson, 2004 forthcoming, , Dawson and Cowan, 2004 forthcoming, , Hojsgaard and Warburg, 2004 forthcoming, , Rafaeli and Sudweeks, 1998). Technology, and specifically the Internet, serve the hierarchical realm well by means of personalization and contextualization tools (Barzilai-Nahon, 2004). The expansion of the community through IT also increases its transparency to the general public. For example, once these communities are on the net, statistics and other information regarding their online behavior can be gathered and ana lyzed. Therefore various identity groups may generate more secular pressures on the community. Additionally, members of the community may use the Internet anonymously in platforms that are not supported through their communities (Lee, 1997).

Objectives : To find out the causes for easy revivability of caste fundamentalism in the present era and the role of internet and social media platforms.

Methodology: An exploratory and descriptive research design shall be followed to carry out this study to analyze the causes for easy revivability of caste fundamentalism in the present era and the role of internet and social media platforms . The data will be collected with the help of secondary data collection techniques. Secondary data will be used in this research and is collected through published and unpublished sources which include books, journals, articles, reports and other sources like the internet, magazines, research publications and so on.

Misuse of Internet to Circumvent Law

More specifically, we argue that Internet applications are subject to cultural modifications and localization processes through networks, discipline and regulations within various local communities. These processes work two ways: while the community localizes the technology, the community itself is reshaped to become a part of a globalized world. Cultured technology becomes a requirement for religious fundamentalist communities in order for them to exist within their traditional internal and external boundaries. We argue that the extent to which technology can be culturally modified creates opportunities for community members to express themselves. These cyber-activities are not taken "as is" from the secular world. IT and information are transformed and modified through processes of localization1 to adapt to the specific characteristics of the different communities. Even under the harshest conditions of communal surveillance, individuals find ways to circumvent censorship, access forbidden material and employ applications that might contrast and challenge the community's character and basic principles. For example, the elite may utilize various technologies and information systems to disseminate personalized information to targeted users for purposes of communal socialization and mobilization.

Conclusion

Ultra-orthodox society does not encourage debates about its fundamentals as a religious collectivity. Conversely, the Internet, through its applications, enables debates among and between communities. Hence, from the communal perspective, not only should accessibility to the Internet be restricted and partly blocked, but also its content should be filtered before utilization. The level of communal discipline among ultra-Orthodox users is significantly higher even on secular platforms. We have witnessed an interesting phenomenon where ultra-Orthodox anonymously use secular applications, to discuss communal and external issues. Anonymity may lead to less discipline, since the user is less fearful of being exposed and punished. Anonymous forums are outside the scope of the tight supervision of the religious fundamentalist authorities, and therefore, the debates may be more pluralistic and incite dissent against the community. In most religions, technology itself is perceived as a potentially friendly tool, or at least as a must, in order to disseminate religious texts and religious studies internally and externally. Additionally, it is being utilized for political purposes of mobilization and for economic reasons of more interactions in what seems as a global market. Cyberspace is dynamic in nature, fast and easy to access, providing users with more discretion, power and wealth of communication possibilities. Its use should be properly channelized for growth aspects and not to spread divisive propaganda.

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