Introduction

Caste discrimination affects an estimated 260 million individuals across the world, with the majority residing in South Asia across less economically developed countries of India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. Caste-based discrimination is also prominent in communities across Africa, the Middle East, and diaspora communities living abroad, although the meek scale of this discrimination is comparably less significant than that in Southern Asia. An example is the Baruku people of Japan, the Osu of Nigeria, and other oppressed minorities alike in Senegal and Mauritania. Smita Narula, a senior researcher for the Humans Rights Watch, stated that "Apartheid may have ended in South Africa, but at least 250 million people worldwide are still living in a situation of segregation and servitude", highlighting the severity and relevance of caste-based discrimination on the current everyday lives of people.

The caste system is widely associated with Hinduism both in terms of ideology and way of life embraced by hundreds of millions. Caste discrimination especially thrives in India, and in neighbouring countries, where this type of discrimination is immersed in many aspects of daily life including, but not limited to: segregation in housing, education and school systems, and cremation grounds, restriction or limitation of access to public areas such as temples, roads, tea houses, and de-facto prohibition of inter-caste marriages between individuals of two different classes or social hierarchies. Aspects of daily life affected by caste-based discrimination cause an ever-increasing rift in the society, which divides people into hierarchical categories, causing an array of complex discriminatory societal and social norms. Hence, the government of India officially recognizes this discrimination by designating "Scheduled Castes" (SCs) or "Scheduled Tribes" (STs) who are deemed historically disadvantaged peoples. During the period of the British regime in India 'Scheduled Castes' were referred to as 'Depressed Classes.'

This form of discrimination is often considered the world's longest surviving forms of social hierarchy, where major violations of civil, social, political, and cultural rights are carried out on a daily basis. Consequently, this leads a domino-effect in an increase of ethno religious tension and violence between individuals of different caste hierarchies/ backgrounds, which collude into racism, segregation,
and ethnocentrism, against the less socially and politically powerful 'lower' castes who are systematically exploited and oppressed as a result. Individuals born into 'higher ranking' castes are commonly positioned in high-paying and powerful jobs in governmental, private and police/military fields giving these individuals an upper hand in their quality of life, while those of 'low ranking' caste status are systematically exploited in undesirable (dirty, menial, and hazardous) and often low-paying jobs, which subjects many to bonded and forced labor. Individuals of a 'lower-ranking caste' are increasingly stricken in reduced economic leading to poverty and increase crime.

The issue at the end has been salient since the introduction of the caste system approximately 5000 years ago and has only gotten worse with the increase in population size and rise of nationalistic and racist ideology/sentiment between individuals of 'higher ranking' castes towards those of 'lower-ranking' castes. This discrimination issue has been addressed on multiple occasions by the United Nations, countries, political/Human Rights movements, and other nongovernmental organizations (NGO's). According to national crime statistics, the number of caste-based crimes has reached an all-time record in recent decades, as evident by a 25 percent increase since 2010, completing in numbers reaching a soaring approximate of 41,000 cases in 2016, the last year on record. Major humans rights, moral, and ethical codes are violated because of this complex system, negatively affecting historically marginalized lower-castes who are systematically given fewer rights compared to those of 'higher ranking' castes.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Caste**

The Hindu hereditary social class system which divides society based on differences in wealth, race, and inherited caste rank (as people are born-into their castes, it is inherent to their offsprings/family) which restricts ‘lower caste’ members of the same rights and opportunities of ‘higher ranking’ castes. Populations are therefore divided into groups, based on the caste they are born in, with lower ranking caste members considered ‘lesser human beings’, ‘impure’ and ‘polluting’ to other caste groups.

**Ethnocentrism**

When one culture (caste) judges other cultures based on exaggerated/false preconceptions, in this case how members of ‘higher ranking’ castes treat those of ‘lower ranking’ castes based on the belief that they are ethnically and inherently inferior to them.

**Exploitation**
The deliberate action of treating those less-powerful socially and economically in order to benefit from their work in an inhumane and unjust way. For example regarding the "untouchables" caste known as Dalits, 'higher-ranking castes such as Kshatriyas will often pay Dalits workers extremely low salaries for labor intensive, and dirty, jobs such as cleaning sewages.

**Segregation**

The systemic action or state of separation between ethnic groups, based on the ideology of social hierarchy deeming certain castes more superiority over others, causing a separation in terms of housing, with lower castes living in poor, slum-like and undeveloped neighborhoods separated from those of the higher castes population centers which are more developed and clean.

**Diaspora communities**

A community who live outside of their shared country of origin, where they can trace ancestry from, although these communities maintain active connections with their specific country in terms of culture, language, religion and traditions.

**Honor Killing**

Is when a family or relatives kill a member of the family due to the belief that that member brought shame and dishonour upon the family, in this case honor killing take place when a member of a higher caste marries a member of a lower-caste (such as Dalits) without the approval of the family

**Societal & Social Norms**

Unwritten rules in a society that are considered acceptable, which also provide order. For example, in many societies in the Indian subcontinent, it is the societal norm for members of lower-castes to stray away from being in public spaces such as hotels, shops, cinemas, etc.

‘Scheduled Castes’

Are known as historically disadvantaged people in India, recognized by the Indian constitution and known as the Dalits, the 'untouchables'.

**Social hierarchy**

Refers to the rank of positions of authority within society, specifically the caste with some castes (higher-castes) at the top of the triangle with the most power and influence, and the lower castes in the bottom with the least power and influence.

**Background Information**
Structure

Traditional Hindu scholarship, which dates back to 2,000 years, describes that the caste system is laid out in a specific structure where castes are split into four principal categories/groups, called varnas, in hereditary order. Those at the top of the caste system are Brahmins, known as the ‘teachers’ and ‘priests’, following are the Ksyatriyas who are said to be the ‘rulers’ and ‘teachers’, succeeding are the Vaisyas who are recognized as ‘merchants’ and ‘traders’, below them are the Shudras, described as occupying ‘labor’ and ‘artisan’ work. A fifth category precedes below these four castes, who are often referred to as the outcastes and the ‘untouchables’, they are collectively known as the Dalits, hence this marginalized group are often tasked with jobs deemed ‘too ritually polluting’ such as cleaning sewers. An almost identical structure is also present in Hindu communities across the Indian subcontinent in countries such as Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Although neighbouring countries in the Indian subcontinent do not follow the exact same caste system used in India, most sentiments are similar, even if the caste based system in secular such as that of the Sinhala community in Sri Lanka, system of hierarchy still exist in which a certain group is marginalized and discriminated against.

Caste & Marriage

Societal norms based on complex ideals of ‘purity’ and ‘pollution’ are socially enforced through strict prohibitions on marriage or even social interaction between castes, especially between those of ‘higher’ castes and ‘lower’ castes. Although there are economic and social factors at play which allows marriage between ‘higher’ ranked castes, in many countries where the caste system is present there are also strong social barriers that are against and therefore prevent marriage between ‘lower’ and ‘higher’ castes.

In India, societal norms can be severe, occasionally leading to violence. One recorded instance occurred in August 6, 2001 in the state of Uttar Pradesh, in northern India, where an upper-caste Brahmin boy and a lower-caste Jat girl were found to be dragged on the roof of a house and hanged in public by their own families, resulting in hundreds of spectators to witness. This was done in retaliation for refusing to end their inter-caste relationship, which resulted in a public lynching. Inter-caste marriages can also lead to violence and attacks against memebers of ‘lower’ castes and their subsequent communities, as what occurred in May 2000 in Uttar Pradesh, specifically Hardoi district, where a police man was allegedly enraged by his daughters marriage to a lower-caste man, a Dalit, which prompted the father and other relatives to shoot and kill four memebers of the son-in-lwas family. In Nepra, Dalits who manage to marry high-caste individuals have been reportedly imprisoned by local authorities based on false cases filed against them by unapproving members of the upper-caste families. Additionally, Dalits are banned from performing marriages, or funeral rites in public areas, or in some areas from even speaking to members of higher castes.
In Sri Lanka, both in Tamil and Sinhala communities, intermarrige between upper-caste and lower-caste is strongly condemned and discouraged from a social standpoint, to the extent that matrimonial ads in Sri Lankan newspapers specifically targeted towards Tamils and Sinhalese communities specify the caste background of the match/suitor that the family is looking for.

In Japan, the Buraku people face discrimination in marriage. If suspicious arises that a person of Buraku background married into a upper-caste, often leads to private investigations by families on the said persons background. These background investigations are accessible and relatively easy as family restores are obtainable, and Baraku are distinct and easily recognizable from other caste names. Upon discovery that a bride or groom comes of Baraku background, the marriage plans are reportedly canceled or severely condemned.

In Africa, marriages between the upper-caste people, known as geer, and someone from lower-caste is socially condemned, often an upper-caste family would not allow or would react negatively to such marriages. In parts of southeastern Nigeria, marriages between Osu and non-Osu is also socially condemned and discouraged by society, resulting in children from these marriages being severely mistreated.

Caste & Labour

A fundemental factor of caste based discrimination is how labor is allocated to a person based on their caste, resulting in lower-castes restrcited to physically tedious and dirty tasks and occupations that other higher-caste communities deem too ‘dirty’ or ‘polluting’.

This concept is evident as most sanitation jobs such as street cleaning, handling human waste and animal carcasses were done specifically by Dalits in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. In Bangladesh, the Dalit community originally migrated from India under the colonial British regime and remained in Bangladesh after the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. They worked as municipal cleaners, domestic wokers, and other jobs alike which was shunned by the countries majority Muslim Bengali population. In the capital of Bangladesh, Dalits comprise of the majority of the 5,500 cleaners that are employed for the Dhaka City Corporation, where they live in small, often suffocating, quarters where no gas or electricity are provided. In addition they are paid less than $1 a day, other Dalits live in similar conditions breeding pigs for the minority population of Hindus and Christians.

In Sri Lanka the Tamils, who originate from India, also face severe social discrimination. The lower-caste Tamil people were originally brought over from southern India as captive labor to work on plantations and to work as city cleaners, little has changed from the eighteenth century till this day. As they continue working in labor, they are socially considered to be at the bottom of the caste hierarchy deemed at the ‘untouchables’ in the Indian Tamil community. Castes known as Pallas and Nalavas are
given the opportunity to work on upper-caste land, Paraiyars are often restricted to ‘polluting’ and ‘dirty’ sanitation work. Discrimination disadvantages plantation workers from economic, social, and educational standpoints as well as poor health care and misrepresentation in politics.

Similarly in India, Dalits live in extreme poverty due to their low-income and rigorous occupations working as removers of human waste and dead animals, leather workers, street sweepers, and cobblers without land or opportunities for better work profession or education. As a result, Dalit children are repodly sold into bondage by their families to pay off debts taken from upper-castes. About on million Dalits work as ‘manual scavengers’ who are tasked with picking up feces and disposing animal carcass. Across Indian states, the same exist for castes under different names: namely the Bhangis in Gujarat, the Pakhis in Andhra Pradesh, and the Sikkaliars in Tamil Nadu. These castes handle human waste, deemed too ‘dirty’ and ‘polluting’ by other castes, resulting in these castes placed at the bottom of the hierarchy. Their jobs consist of using a broom, tin plate or basket to clear feces from public or private areas and to carry this waste to disposal sites, though outlawed this continues to occur in most Indian states.

In Japan, according to Buraku civil rights groups, a high profile case in 1998 revealed that seven hundred companies were alleged to have hired private investigators to discover if job applicants or employees were of Buraku background, or if they shared any national sentiment, ideology, political affiliation or religion. Any persons found to be connected to the Baruku was consequently not hired.

Caste socio-economic disparities

Due to lower-caste communities having low literacy levels, toped with a lack of access to healthy care and education, as well as discrimination, effectively prevents them from seeking employment and a high quality of life. The lack of effective enforcement of protective laws/legislation towards these oppressed castes does not stop or prevent the system of caste-based employment

In Nepal, there were repodly only two Dalit medical doctor and only fifteen engineers. Life expectancy of Dalit were five years less than the national average of 55. Dalit children faced severe malnutrition, and the general Dalit population lacked access to clean drinking water or proper health services.

According to a 1999 report submitted by Nepal to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), economic disparities present between low and high caste population were highlighted: “The people of backward communities have felt discriminated against and could not believe that the Government was doing anything for their welfare and development. The main reasons for this are: lack of integrated programmes, weak implementation and sustainability, failure to mainstream
backward communities and repressed people into the national development process, centre-oriented/based programmes rather than community-based/participatory programmes, little attention to human resource development and lack of encouragement to the development and modernization of traditional occupations and skills, lack of effective institutional mechanisms, etc.”

Caste system regarding education

Lower-caste communities face difficulty with education due to a high rate of drop-outs, as the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes’ 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 Report indicated that the the national drop-out rate for Dalit children was a staggering 49.35 percent at the primary level, 67.77 percent for middle school, and 77.65 percent for secondary school.

Lower literacy rates which is a direct consequence of poverty and development that many of these communities are facing, despite the Indian constitution promising free, compulsory, primary education for all children up to the age of fourteen. The constituion also highlights that there would be special care and consideration to be given to promote the educational progress of scheduled castes (such as the Dalit). However illiteracy is still prominent with almost two-thirds of the Dalit population as compared to about one-half of the general population.

Discrimination and mistreament of low-caste children in schools, by teachers and students, also attribute, although to a lesser extent. Similarly in Sri Lanka, lower-caste Tamil who originate from India suffer low literacy rates, and only 65 percent can read or write compared to the high national average of 90 percent. High drop out rates are also prominent due to children working as domestic workers, sanitation cleaners or hotel workers.

In Japan, the Baruku community suffers from low levels of higher education compared to the national average, and higher rates of dropouts. The Dalits in Nepal are at a significantly low literacy rate of 10 percent, and 3.2 for women compared to the national literacy rate which is well above 50 percent. The government of Nepal reported to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) that “The lowest literacy is among the occupational castes. Women constitute more than two thirds of the illiterates”.

Access to Land

Dalits constitute the backbone of the agrarian economy in India, as the majority work as landless agriculture labourers with a reported 86 percent of Dalit households landless or near landless as land ownership is statistically very little. Owning land is a mark of an individual's standard of living and social status, especially in rural areas where land is a prime assent, meaning landless low-caste population like the Dalits can easily be exploited by high-caste population due to their economic
vulnerability. Statistics show that landless agricultural labourers get paid less than $1, ranging from (US$0.32 to $0.75) a day, well below the minimum wage in most Indian states, and as a consequence many owe debts to their employers or members from high-caste communities. Indian laws that prevent alienation of Dalit land have largely been ignored, or in some cases manipulated by higher-castes in collaboration with local district officials.

Similarly in Nepal, only a startlingly low rate 3.1 percent of Dalits, who form the backbone of the agricultural sector, own land, collectively only owning less than 1 percent of Nepal's total cultivable land. About 90 percent of the Dalit population lives in poverty, compared to the national average of 45 percent, with their per capita income amounting to $39.60 while the rest of Nepalese average $210 per year.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

United Nations

A United Nations study on discrimination based on work and decent revealed that caste based discrimination leads to a plethora of violations in humans rights such as: The right to physical security and life and the right to be free from violence, The right to equal political participation, The right to fair access to justice, The right to own land, The right to equal access to public and social services, The right to freedom of religion, The right to marriage on free will, The right to education, The right to cultural identity, The right to equal opportunity and free choice of employment, The right to equal, just and favorable conditions of work, The right to be free from forced or bonded labour, The right to be free from cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, The right to health, The right to adequate food, water, sanitation, clothing and housing.

Often these human rights abuses are not reported, investigated or the perpetrators are not punished accordingly due to the justice force (Policemen, lawyers and judges) originating from higher-castes and therefore having bias or unwillingness to prosecute, hear or investigate cases of crimes against low-castes communities, which leads to few convictions.

The United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD) recommends with specific reference to caste-affected communities that all states “take the necessary steps to ensure equal access to the justice system for all members of descent-based communities as well as ensure the prosecution of persons who commit crimes against members of descent-based communities and the provision of adequate compensation for the victims of such crimes.”

India
Despite an official constitutional abolition of the caste system in 1950, the practice of declaring a certain caste (Dalits) as ‘untouchable’ remains prominent in rural India, where over 160 million or 1/6th of India's population who are Dalits experience harsh social ostracization, barring them from many privileges enjoyed by other castes. Instances of social segregation is when the ‘untouchable’ caste, Dalits, are highly dissuaded and cautious not to enter into neighbouring villages inhabited by ‘higher ranking’ castes, to the extent that they cannot and it is not socially acceptable for Dalits to use the same fresh water wells, visit the same temples, or drink from the same cups in tea houses or stalls. In education, Dalit children are placed at the back of the classroom, and experience less care than children of higher castes.

The state reinforces sentiments of segregation by deliberately allocating certain resources and facilities to certain castes, providing separate facilities for separate caste-based neighborhoods, often excluding ‘lower’ ranking castes. In the event that Dalits are provided with resources and facilities, they are evidently given less funding and as a result are neglected by authorities. Throughout India, ‘higher’ caste villages are provided with installation of electricity, water pumps and sanitation facilities by the state administration, however the same is not done in neighboring Daltis neighbourhoods, who are segregated from ‘higher’ caste villages and cannot access their privileges despite the close proximity/distance to them. Essential medical facilities, and thatched-roof homes are present only in ‘higher’ caste villages, in contrast, ‘lower’ caste villages lack basic amenities such as water taps and wells, which are limited, often poorer in resources and segregated than those of the ‘higher’ castes.

Public schools in lower-caste neighbourhoods are most often underdeveloped in terms of infrastructure, teachers and under equipped in necessary education equipment such as whiteboards and desks. The majority of students in these underdeveloped schools are Dalit.

A historic example of caste-based segregation based on state activities, is the devastating earthquake in the northwest state of Gujarat which occured on January 21st, 2001 in India. This natural disaster resulted in the forced migration of over one million people due to homelessness, and the tragic death of over 30,000. In the leading months after the earthquake, residents who reside in the state of Gujarat first-hand witnessed caste and communal discrimination in the distribution of aid, relief and rehabilitation, in addition to rampant corruption in the handling of aid and political issues, which ulitamely did not help the need victmns of the earthquake. The Humans Rights Watch visited five towns in the most affected district of the state Kutch; Bhuj, Bhijouri, Khwada, Anjar, and Bhachau six weeks after the earthquake. The Humans Rights Watch reported that the Muslim and Dalits populations lived seperately from ‘higher’ ranking caste neighbourhoods.
Despite an effort by the government to allocate equal amounts of monetary compensation and food to all communities, access to shelters, electricity, running water, and other supplies were not immediately accessible or available to the Dalit or Muslim population, despite ‘higher’ castes having full access. Specifically in cities such as Bhuj, Anjar, and Bhachchau the discrepancy was apparent, as the government provided better developed shelters and basic amenities to ‘higher’ ranking caste population, whilst systematically neglecting Dalits and Muslims.

**Nepal**

Across the Indian subcontinent there are many parallels of the caste system inherent in India, in countries such as: Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Nepal has a Dalit community, which non governmental organizations (NGOs) estimate to be around 21 percent of the Nepalese population, equivalent to 4.5 million people. Despite their significant portion of the population, the Dalit community faces discrimination otherwise not witnessed by other caste groups. The Dalit population in Nepal are split in into complex groups, consisting of eight major groups and twenty-five sub-castes, which are in hereditary order.

In spite of a 1990 constitutional prohibition of discrimination based on caste, religion, ideology, race or sex, a unique exception was created for pracitcers of Hinduism. This exception created a free pass for ‘higher’ ranking castes to legally exclude and prevent Dalits from entering or participating in Hindu temples and religious ceremonies. Social examples of discrimination is observable from the public prevenation of Dalits from entering public areas such as shops, hotels or homes, and as famously reported: excluded from entering cowsheds or farms to due the belief that Dalits will ‘pollute’ the milk produced by cows. In the year 2000, a well known public scandal, known as ‘Gaidakot Milk Scandal’, went viral where ‘higher’ ranking castes working in Gaidakot Multipurpose Milk Production Co-operative Institution Limited refused to operate and sell any milk from an animal raised by Dalit. Pressure in the form of protests and intervention from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations resulted in Dalits being permitted to sell their milk to the institution.

**Sri Lanka**

In Sri Lanka, the majority of the population are known as the Sinhala community, from which it consists of the Rodiya population who were historically disadvantaged by Sri Lankan societies. Rodiya would exclusively wear caste specific attire, that differentiated them from other castes, they would be restricted from entering schools and public facilities, public graves would often segregate graves of Rodiya from those of other castes, most notably Rodiya would be made to drink from coconut shells from local tea shops, that could be disposed thereafter, instead of regular glasses in an effort to ‘not contaminate’ the glasses of others. This segregation continues till this day, where Rodiya continue to
reside in segregated communities which have little to no connection or interaction with nearby communities of ‘higher’ castes. Prejudice against the Rodiya population gave them no option but to street beg and scavenge in an attempt to improve their relatively poor living conditions.

In a working paper specialized in work and descent-based discrimination, The U.N. Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights' identifies that there are two main caste systems in Sri Lanka, one for Sinhalese peoples and one for the Tamils, with both having origins from India. The Sinhalese caste system in particular does not have any connection to Hinduism as the caste system is a secular hierarchy, where social distance is observant although the notion or use of ‘pollution’ to refer to ‘lower castes’ barely existed, unlike in the Hindu caste system in India. The society was divided according to one's hereditary role or function. An American scholar concluded that "The absence of the Hindu concept had rendered the Sinhalese caste system mild and humanitarian when judged by Indian standards."

The only exception to this are the Rodiyas, whose name literally translates to ‘filth’. Historically many folklore and legends state that the Rodiyas have an origin of banishment from committing heinous crimes, and were punished to a life of begging. As a result, they were denied land, work and were subjected to degrading treatment. This discrimination was further exacerbated when the British colonial regime migrated Tamil communities living in India to work as plantation workers in Sri Lanka, where caste differentiation occurred as an immediate result. Tamilk Christian and Muslim converts, as well as other minorities, experience caste-based discrimination, which are further exacerbated by conflict-derived displacement, which results in groups of varying caste backgrounds to be in close proximity of each other.

**Timeline of Events**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>1200 - 900 BC</td>
<td>The ancient hymn called Purusha Sukta found in Sanskrit, which is believed to be the earliest form of Hindu tradition, explicitly describes that the formation of the world resulted in four classes, varnas, in society. This is the first written evidence of societal hierarchy, known today as caste, in Hindu tradition and communities.</td>
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<td>200 BC - 200 AD</td>
<td>A set of influential laws in Hindu tradition called Manu DharmaShastra describes the privileges and disadvantages of castes based on their hierarchical level, with the lower castes identified as “untouchables” who are so despised that they are beneath the original four varnas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th Century</td>
<td>Hsuan-tsang, a Buddhist monk, travel journal shows evidence of segregation in India during the time, specifically the ‘untouchables’.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1206</td>
<td>Muslim kings rule large portions of South Asia for the following six</td>
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centuries, known as the Delhi Kings and Mughals. During this time the caste system becomes less prominent in areas of Muslim rule, as culture and tradition from immigrants from Arabia and Persia dominate over this system.

1757 The British rule over the Indian subcontinent, starting from the British East India Company and later the British Crown in 1858, took advantage of the caste system by favouring castes such as Brahmins, whilst doing nothing to end discrimination against ‘untouchables’.

1918 Colonial British rule attempts to introduce reforms by banning practices of ‘untouchability’, and by allowing lower-castes to have places in government despite being traditionally excluded.

1950 The Indian jurist, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, writes the Indian constitution and formally bans discrimination based on ones caste. This ban meant that 22.5% of the population were allocated

1970 A movement inspired by the American Black Panther Movement, called Dalit Panther is founded, which pushes for equal rights and an end to discrimination. This movement causes a new emergence of Dalit literature.

1995 The first ever Dalit to be elected into a high ranking job, Mayawati, becomes chief minister of India’s most populated state; Uttar Pradesh. Her party called Bahujan Samaj Party, which is mostly headed by Dalits, gains political power in northern India.

2005 Dozens of NGOs and human rights organizations publicize more than 100,000 reports of hate crimes and attacks against Dalits and lower castes in 2005 alone, these crimes include rape and murder in Dalit communities, despite clear evidence the Indian government only arrested less than 1% of culprits.

**Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

- The European Parliament on the Human Rights situation of the Dalits in India 1 February 2007 ([A/RES/2/40](#))
- United Nations report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, 24 May 2011 ([A/ART/17/40](#))

**Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**
While the issue at hand has been prominent for centuries in areas around the world, and despite major campaigning from humans rights and non governmental organizations, little has been done in terms of governmental enforcement to effectively end caste based discrimination. It is evident that this issue is deeply rooted within societies, and ingrained in many aspects which affect the way of life of millions such as religion, traditions and the culture which act as a catalyst for caste based ideology, and subsequent discrimination. However there has been clear initiatives to end caste based discrimination from countries affected by this issue.

In 1998 in India, where the caste system is prevalent, an Independent Downtrodden and Oppressed Community Council was established with the initiative of coordinating policies and overseeing programmes that would support the Dalits. This is seen as India’s previous attempt to commit in developing social and economic policies to help Dalits. Similarly, Nepal announced its Ninth Five-Year plan which seeks to enforce certain policies and programmes that would help Dalits in socio-economic terms, in areas such as health, sanitation, education, employment and training. The prime minister of Nepal announced on August 16th 2001 that the government would ban all discrimination against 'lower' castes and promised to pass new laws that would criminalize ‘untouchability’ discrimination and segregation, additionally the prime minister reituted that pre-existing laws on caste discrimination would fully and effectively be enforced. However, as of writing this report, no specific legislation has been proposed yet.

At the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Nepal has provided detailed accounts of specific problems that countries faces in terms of caste discrimination in several reports submitted to the CERD. Moreover, Nepal clearly acknowledged in its fourteenth period report to the CERD that “for an overwhelming majority of people the caste system continues to be an extremely salient feature of personal identity and social relationships and, to some extent, determines access to social opportunities.” Nepal also stated that “[R]acial discrimination in the society, especially in rural areas, is still in existence. So-called untouchables cannot even enter the houses of the people of so-called higher and middle-class castes. On one hand, they are socially suppressed by the upper classes and, on the other hand, they suffer from poverty; the intensity of poverty seems to be higher in socially backward people”. However India has had a previous history of persistantly arguing that “policies of the Indian Government relating to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes do not come under the purview of Article 1 of the Convention [on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination]”.

During the Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which was hosted in Feburary 2001 in the Iranian capital Tehran, Nepal declared that the problem of casted based discrimination should be urgently addressed.
Possible Solutions

Possible solutions to end caste based discrimination is for governments, whose countries are affected by the caste system, to establish a comprehensive and clear program(s) aimed at abolitioning caste based segregation, such as ‘untouchability’, on a soceital and cultural scale through educating children of different castes about the impact of this system and its practices, and the negatives associated with caste. These negatives include abuses such as child labor, land reform, manual collection of human and animal waste, bonded labor and other unethical and illegal practices, which said goverments should tackle by entacing and fully enforcing laws that aim to directly address and end these abuses. One specific way in educating is by having human rights education in schools as a mandatory subject for all caste communities, bias should be eliminated from textbooks which often interpret stereotypical and prejudicial portrays of caste affected communities. Social constructions of the caste system such as ‘untouchability’ and segregation should directly be addressed and condemned.

The government should monitor these laws, and make necessary changes in a unilateral and democratic way, so that all members of government and society; who come from different caste backgrounds, should have a say in what laws would be effective in tackling these issues. After a considerable amount of time after anti discrimination laws have come into fruition, the aformentioned governments should seek to publize about the effectiveness of these laws to concerned citizens, NGOs or humans rights groups in case of any constuctive critisim that would be used to improve the effectiveness of the laws. These laws should continously be monitered and implemented fully, including appropriate penalties for caste-based discrimination. Law enforment involved should recieve adequate and professional training to identify cases of caste-based discrimination, especially violence. Protocols should be enacted and developed to quickly respond to victims of caste based discrimination, including effective and unbias investigation. In case of bias, criminal penalties should be established for law enforments suspected of deliberately neglecting cases of caste based discrimination, including intentionly ignoring or not acting on complaints filed by ‘lower’ caste members.

Funds should be collected to establish progammes supporting communities affected by caste based discrimination, these progammes would provide educational and socio-economic support. These progammes could include those established by the United Nations, which governments should provide political and finifation support for to assist in eradicating caste discrimination. Comprehensive action should be taken on a national scale, including plans and budget allocation to target caste based discrimination, which must be developed urgently. Poverty, employment, health, housing, education and accessibility to basic services such as water and sanitation must be prioritized. Local organizations and
affected caste members should be directly involved in funding and supporting the tackling of issues related to caste-affected women.

Since it is the civil administrations resonsiblity to deter and punish those involved in caste-based discrimination and violence, there should be participation of members of opressed castes in police and judiciary institutions. It is important for oppressed caste members to have political representation and say in key governing bodies.

Public awareness campaigns should be created educating the public on legal consequences of discrimination on the basis of caste, these campaigns should be clear and cohernt to all audieces involved in the caste system, it should effectivly send the message about what actions are legally prohibited and what means of justice victims of caste based discrimination and abuse may pursue.

**Guiding Questions**

How can governments effectively address and tackle corruption motivated by caste discrimination in security and law enforcement?

Can social media be used as an effective tool to educate and raise awareness of caste based discrimination?

How can cultural and societal norms that discriminate and segregate communities based on caste and descent be eliminated/reduced in rural and developed areas?

What are some appropriate platforms that can be used to educate younger generations about caste discriminations and consequences related to the system?

How can the economic gap be bridged between higher and lower castes in communities?

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