

Why and Why not Surname (s)? Understanding the Caste Discrimination in Linkage with Suffix Nomenclature Identity

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Abstract: *The Paper deals with theme of Surnames as source of identity of individuals in India and its linkage with the overt and covert form of Casteism and Discrimination people faces in their day-to-day life. Surname places a very effective role in the day to everyday intercourses of people within their social surroundings. There social locations are identified and through surnames and then they are treated in a certain way or other after getting information about their respective Castes. Paper also talks about the social mobility and its relation with the surnames in Urban as well Rural areas of the country.*

Keywords: Caste, Graded Inequality, Suffix Identity, Savarnas, Sanskritization, Nepotism

1. Introducing Caste, Its Components and Related Discourses

India is a Caste Nation¹ with a history of Caste based discriminations and reservations having their gnomes in Vedas and Smritis where the Castes are stratified on the basis of one's birth in a specific Caste group in descending order from 'Savarna Brahmins' to 'Avarna' Untouchables. Castes in Hindu Social order² is a phenomenon based on the Structure of Graded Inequality and Mechanized and Operationalised by the perpetuation of 'no Social intercourse/ Endosmosis policies enacted by the Brahmins. It slowly transmitted to the other Subordinate Castes through the Law of Imitation. Further, any type of Social mobility was declared prohibited due to the lack of Law of Motion of Caste³. Apart from the Historical Materialism⁴, It concretized the location of individuals in the society by reserving certain positions for specific castes.

Caste as a mechanical domain is Structured and operationalized by the identity based tasks performed by different Castes due to their association with that specific form task (Different task for different Caste). For Example, Brahmins voluntarily chose the work of getting and providing education, Worshipping, Ritualists and Policy Makers, the Kshatriyas were so called protectors of the land, the Vaishyas were the trading Castes to perform economic tasks and in the last, the Shudras were there to Serve the above Castes. Apart from this 4 Segment system (Savarnas), there was also a community of Untouchables (The Avarnas) and the Women (of all above Castes) which were not allowed to a part of any Socio-Political-Economic Intercourse of the Society. All the works which needs hard labour and less cognitive involvement were given to the Lower Castes (Shudras and Ati- Shudras).

Caste at theoretic level is defined by multiple thinkers and theorists with their own lenses and studies.

B.R Ambedkar⁵ describe the caste as 'A Society which is based on the principles of Graded inequality and the endogamous mingling mechanism which is developed deliberately to protect the skeleton of caste'

Risley called it 'a collection of families or group of families bearing a common name clamming their descent from a common ancestor.

H. Cooley says 'When the class if somewhat strictly hereditary, what may call it a caste'

Anderson and parker say that 'Caste is that extreme form of social class organization in which the position of individuals in the status hierarchy is determined by the descent and the birth.

Though the Origination of Caste as a mechanical modal is assumed to be gnomified in the Vedas and Smritis but there are some Parallel theories which have been invented and discussed by various thinkers. The 'Aryan Invasion Theory' is the Most discussed in the field of Science and Social Science as it carries multiple sources of information regarding the origination of Castes. It states that the Aryans Migrated to Indian sub continent some from somewhere in central Asia. They invaded the well established Harappa Civilization, defeated the local Diasporas and converted them into their Slaves (Dasas). The Migration theory is represented by a poet Firaq Gorakhpuri in his own words. He writes

6“ **SarZamin-e Hind Par Aqwam-e- aalamke, Firaq Kaafileateraheaur Hindostan Banta Gaya**

¹ (Aloysius, 2009) Dr. Ambedkars Views on Nation and Nationalism

² (Ambedkar D. B., Hindu Social Order, Its Essential and Uniques Features)

³ (Patankar, 2015)

⁴ (Marx, 2020)

⁵ Dr. Ambedkar, Annihilation of Caste, 1936

⁶ Good Reads online Portal

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/10075773-sar-zamin-e-hind-par-aqwam-e-aalam-ke-firaq-kafila-aate-rahe-aur>

(On this Soil of Hindustan, Ohfiraq Caravans from all over the world kept coming. And so was the Hindustan was made). The Origin of Caste was also linked with 'Race' by some western thinkers and a set of Indologists. They connected the Caste with the skin color of Individuals claiming that the Savarna Castes are Fairer in Color complexion and the Shudras are of Darker Complexion which was countered by Dr. Ambedkar by Stating that there is no linkage between the Caste and Race. To justify his argument he gave the Examples of South Indian Brahmins which are Darker in Complexion and the North Indian Dalits Which are comparatively fairer in Skin Color.

Almost all the Religions of the world have tried their best to eradicate the evil of Caste from the Indian Society but Castes as a Legal, Normical and Penal phenomenon changed its Shape with all the Religion it had Encounter with. Starting from Buddhism which was established in 6 Centure B.C by 'Tathagat Gautam Buddha' and was said be a Religious cum Socio-Political revolution which ones turned the whole Asia into a Buddhist worlds. Buddhism⁷ gave a new way of living to the people of Asia which some set of rules like 'The Panchsheela' and 'The Ashtangik Margas' through which one can attain Boddhisatva i.e. Enlightenment. It was attacked by Brahminism in the form of Counter Revolution where all the Shudras who converted themselves into Buddhism were termed as "Asprashya (Untouchables)". Later Buddha was called the incarnation of the Hindu god 'Vishnu'.

Like Buddhism, Islam and Christianity also tried at to eradicate the problem of Caste from India (Obviously there main purpose was to spread their Religion throughout the globe and these reforms were needed for that). The offered the Untouchables Food, Education and freedom from Caste on the terms and Conditions that they have to Convert into their respective religions. But the Brahminically Operated forces attacked them in their own manner. They came forward for the parallel conversions of Savarnas into both Islam and Christianity. By doing this, the whole syllabus of Caste was automatically transferred to both of them.

A memorandum submitted by the Christian Depressed classes⁸ of south India to the **Simon Commission** clearly stated that 'though the 60 percent of depressed classes have shown their inclination and interest in converting to Christianity in south India, but the people who already converted are facing the same form of caste based exclusion and untouchability. Within the Christians, there are Brahmin Christians and Non Brahmin Christians and in Non Brahmin Christians, there are Maratha Christians, Mahar Christian, Mang Christians, Bhangi Christians, Malla and Madiga Christians. They don't inter-marry, they don't inter-dine. They are Christians on papers by their minds and thought process is still driven by the Savarna and Brahminical ideology.

⁷ Buddha or Karl Marx, Dr. Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Volume-3

⁸ Christianizing the Untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches, Volume 5, pp427-476

⁹ Similarly, the process of Conversion which was undertaken by Muslim missionaries in all parts of the country was followed by the parallel conversion of Savarnas and other upper classes into Muslim religion. The main motive behind there conversion was to get all the Educational and reform based benefits from both Christians and Muslim missionaries and deprive the Untouchables from all facilities provided by them. Basically Savarnas never wanted the structure of caste to be demolished by any outside or inside force, so they forwarded their volunteers to hegemonize and patronize the religion, sects and all the attached practices performed under the umbrella of both these Religions.

Origin of Surnames and Suffix Identity

¹⁰ What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other word would smell as sweet.

William Shakespeare

Surnames or Suffix identity throughout the globe have different originations like Religion, Philosophy, Race, Place of Birth, Sect, Family, Association with particular Community or Tribe, linking parents/Ancestors name and so on.

Works of P.V. Kanne¹¹, V.S. Aggarwal¹², Prof. T.R. Shanna¹³, H.D. Sankalia have extensively dealt with the study of personal names; these scholars have classified the personal names as follows:

- 1) Vedic Period: Where more than One name was given to the child out of which one is the secret name (which was known only to the parents) and three or four other names linked with the Gotras and lineage.
- 2) Sutra Period: In the Sutra vedic naming culture people used to follow the extensive rules, normal or general procedures and rituals which were to be conducted by the Brahmin priests.
- 3) Nibhanda Period: In this period, the suffix was derived by the Astrological
- 4) Sciences (Jyotish Vidya) possible to draft other way of illustrating names from Nakshatras. For instance, Aswani as Chu, Che, Cho, la, is described to spot each Nakshatra. Hence any one of these letters a quantity be used for denoting the child genesis in that particular Nakshatra.

In India, Apart from the above references given, the Surnames/Suffix identities are basically the byproducts of Ones birth into certain Caste (s) Group and all the tasks which he/she supposed to do in his life channel are decided at the time of birth only. The Surnames are devised in such a way that one can identify the immediate identity of an individual by looking at his/her Surname. For Example, The Surname of 'Brahmins' should be indicative of Intellect, Education and Beauty, The Surname of 'Kshatriyas' should projects the Power, Prestige, royalty and Strength. The nomenclature of 'Vaishyas' should indicate their Richness,

⁹ Christianizing the Untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar's Writings and Speeches, Volume 5, pp-427-476

¹⁰ Kelly Snyder/All Names Are Not Equal: Choice of Marital Surname and Equal Protection

¹¹ P.V. Kane, "Naming a Child", in EG, Vol.15 (1936), P.224-44.

¹² V.S. Agarwal, CPNPBK, 1947

¹³ Prof. T.R.Sharma, PGNGI, Delhi, 1978 P.302

wealth and Economy. Lastly, the names of 'Shudras' were kept degraded and indicative of their lowliness deliberately.

'Brahmins acquire their Surnames from various sources like place, ancestors, Social task, Vedas and Smritis. For example, the Surname Aitraye, Parashar, Vashishtha, Agnimitra, Chaturvedi, trivedi, Pathak, Upadhyayetc are taken from the Brahmin ancestors, the Vedas and the Education they got and give. The Surname Pandey is derived from Panda (the person who performs worship rituals). The 'Kshatiyas' adopted their Surnames from the clans they are belonged to, like Singh, Maharaj, Scindia, Holkars, Chauhans, Ranas etc. The 'Vaishyas' used the Surnames related to their social tasks, geography and Religious. The most prominent Surnames are 'Gupta' and 'Aggarwal' which are the products of Gupta dynasty and the land acquired by them. Lastly the 'Shudras' were generally left without surnames in most of the part of Country. For their Social Identification, their immediate Caste identity was attached with their names like, Chamar, Dhanuk, Bhangi, Dhobi, Khatik etc. these nomenclature were used to make them realize their social positioning and to maintain the existence and operationality of Caste within the Hindu Social Order.

Surnames in their operational forms are basically the set of privileges attached with someone's identity. In Hindu Social Order, the Surnames based on the Castes to a person belongs decides his/her location at a particular place. Some Surnames carry huge respect and prestige even if the carrier is a Criminal. On the counter side, some Surnames are used as a symbol of Disrespect, abuse and Filth attached with them. They are designed in such a way that untouchability in its normical form is maintained.

YashicaDutt, A journalist by profession (Delhi University, St. Stephens Graduate) in her book ¹⁴'**Coming Out as Dalit**' admitted about the fear she was carrying with her throughout her career about her identity as girl From Scheduled Caste and **Bhangi Caste** specifically which made her so unconfident everywhere even after securing good scores everywhere, she always hide her identity in front of her friends to escape from direct or indirect castism and lastly ended up openly disclosing her identity through a face book post. She illustrated many living examples of caste based atrocities / harassment / Discrimination people of marginalized sections face in every phase of their life.

A student of Delhi University Arun (Name Changed) shared his first encounter with Caste based abuse he faced in his college where his classmate called him " Saale Chamar" (Bloody Skin Charmer) during some conversation and later when he objected to it, he replied by saying that " Majak me Bola tha" (It was just a part of fun). Arun is not able to forget the humiliation which he faced among his own classmates.

¹⁴Yashica Dutt/ Coming Out as Dalit/ 2019/ Story of a Girl(Yashica Dutt) who used to hide her identity from everyone for the fear of being excluded suddenly took a stand and Came out with her Dalit Identity through a facebook post.

Surnames/ Suffix Identity in Post Independent Modern India

India got independence in 1947 and became a Republic in 1950 by adopting the Constitution of India. The COI (Constitution of India) came out as a source of Equality, Liberty and Justice for all the citizens of India. Opportunities for getting education and employments were opened for all (By providing Affirmative Actions to the SCs/STs which were later extended to OBCs) through which some people got into higher education and employment sector with a tag of Reservation on their record. The people who were the main in charge of administration in the British India continued their works in the same places. They helped their own people to get into the main services from lower clerical levels to upper Bureaucracy. Similarly the Academics and Judiciary is also captured by the people of Upper Caste Surnames.¹⁵ In year 2010, T.S Thakur, the then CJI (Chief Justice of India) rejected around 11 applications of senior advocates of Supreme Court who have applied for the post in the same Court. A separate list was prepared later in which it is alleged that the names if the brother-in-law of a sitting supreme court judge and first cousin of another judge, sons and nephews of other judges were included. This is the reason why every 3 judge in the higher judiciary is related to the first one and they both share the same Suffix identity.

Recently on Nepotism debate, a bollywood Actor Abhey Deol Said that ¹⁶"Nepotism is nothing but Castism" which unwrap the untouched part of the phenomenon where people of the same Castes and Surnames get into the system bypassing the others having comparatively low or no surname.

Sukhdeo Thorat and Paul Attewell (2007)¹⁷ through a study on job discrimination in India examined the prevalence of discrimination in the job application process of private sector enterprises in India. They Submitted application forms with only name (Without identifiable Surnames) and required qualifications of the candidates for some random jobs in private enterprises. It was observed that the firms have eliminated majority of the candidates even after possess equivalent qualifications for the respective job. They further pointed out that like public sector jobs, the private sectors are also negatively biased towards the candidates who are not carrying any identifiable Suffix identity attached with them and reject them in the first stage of application process.

Ashwini Deshpande (2011)¹⁸ shared a series of studies which shows the type of biasness the panels are loaded with while taking interview of candidates of different Social

¹⁵(Journal, 29, May, 2019)

¹⁶ Abhay Deol Syas Nepotism in India is Backed by Caste Based Discrimination/ 2020/<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.india.com/entertainment/bollywood-news-abhay-deol-says-nepotism-in-india-is-backed-by-caste-based-discrimination-and-you-should-read-the-entire-post-to-realise-its-importance-4081613/amp/>

¹⁷ The legacy of Social Exclusion/Economic and Political Weekly/October/2007

¹⁸ The Grammar of Caste/Merit Mobility and Modernism/2011/Oxford

backgrounds. They deals with the “General” candidates by providing them a more comfortable environment in which they ask them their hobbies, skills, reason to apply for the course/Job etc. In the same line, the students who are not carrying that Caste based privileges and Social capital are asked about their family backgrounds along with the profession to which their parents and ancestors belonged to. They deliberately ask about the take of candidates on reservation policy and why it should not be there. By using such methods of interviewing the Backward students, it becomes easy for them to reject them by coming out with a tag of “Not Found Suitable”

Caste and Nepotism Debate

Nepotism as a phenomenon which came into the limelight through some contemporary debates is related to offering opportunities of getting admissions; Employments and career push to known ones. Globally it has gnomes in Class, Race, Ethnicity, Family lineage, Friendship and other social relationships. In India it is seeded and operationalised in the Caste based suffix identity through which one can identify the others and count them in “Our People” and help them getting into the system through different channels. By looking at the most powerful places in Indian administrative structure, one can clearly infer the Caste based positioning of the people in Grade A services. An RTI tells that out of 81 Secretary rank officers of GOI (Govt. of India), Only 2 are from Scheduled Castes and 3 are from Scheduled Tribes and remaining posts are filled by the UCs (Upper Castes). This starts from the very initial process of selecting the Reserved Category Candidates at a comparatively higher age than the other candidates, also during the whole service; there service records are deliberately tampered by the officers who are still loaded with their ‘Upper Caste’ identity. The lower Cadre services (Group B,C and D) are operated by the ‘JI’ Culture where the Suffix identity is used by the Upper Castes to Deliberately assert their Caste Superiority (Sharma ji, Chaubey ji, Dubey ji, Gupta ji, Singh Sahab jietc). This is nothing but Nepotism with a Nomenclature where the people sharing the Common identity traits provide benefits to each other keeping their Castes in mind.

During the Admission process in Central Universities across the country, The Candidates of Reserved Categories (Especially SCs/STs) faces lots of problems by the administration of the respective colleges and Departments due to the Caste and Surname Biases they carry with themselves. The Students having Surname Kumar, Gautam, Sagar, are ill treated due to their Surnames which doesn’t sounds ‘Savarnic’. They are told that their documents are not appropriate, Their time is deliberately wasted, They are demoralized for getting lower grades (in comparison to Upper Castes) and still getting admission into a Central University, Making them Stand in Separate queues and calling their names disrespectfully is a common practice in almost all the Universities. There is a Separate group of Upper Caste Candidates either having no Surnames or Carrying the Surnames same as Lower Castes (Its happened after the Naxalbari Movement when the Upper Castes of UP, Bihar and West Bengal attached an extra name to hide their identities and get killed by the So called Lower Caste Naxalites.), Also due to “Progressiveness” of their parents.

The most interesting part in this phenomenon is that they mention the full names of their parents in all the necessary documents required for getting into system along with their names either having no Surnames or having one like the Lower Castes. Here they get the privilege of Caste based suffixes by mentioning the Surnames of their parents so that the people sitting in front of them can identify them with their parents Surnames and Identities.

The Indian Judicial System is dealing with the same issue of repetitive culture of Nepotism where some families are ruling the Judiciary from 70 years by countering and By passing the idea of NJAC (National Judicial Appointment Commission) which was introduced to make appointments into upper judiciary through open Competitive Exams (like the lower judiciary) rather than the Collegiums System which is highly biased in nature. This shows the biasness of Upper Judiciary towards their “Own” people while making appointments. This is the reason due to which the representation of the people of Lower Castes in tends to zero in Upper Judiciary due to its highly Castist and Biased nature. There is no proper data available on this due to lack of proper transparency in this channel. Recently this issue came into light when honorable president Ram Nath Kovid raised the issue of low representation of Lower Castes in the Upper Judiciary. One who look at the Surnames of the People in the Upper Judiciary can easily identify the Caste to which all of them belongs and the inter/a relational intercourses.

Suffix identity and Social Mobility

Social mobility is a phenomenon in which the people of ‘lower strata’ try to imitate the life styles of the people of ‘upper strata’. It is called ‘Sanskritization’¹⁹ in Indian context where the lower Castes people in some parts of Karnataka (Coorg) started imitating the lifestyles of Brahmins. They left the work associated with their Castes and started acting like Brahmins by following the same attire and fooding behaviour. Historically, only the ‘Savarna’ Castes were the carrier of Surnames due to their social control and ideological hegemony. Later the Social mobility in Surnames became visible in the lower strata’s of Hindu Society. The exact time frame is not traceable but it can be assumed that the ‘Lower Castes’ of the Country came out with Surnames after they got some access to Economic resources. For Example, The Lower Castes of Punjab Province (Including Haryana) adopted Surnames after getting some access to lands on their names (After the Land reforms on the Five year plans). Similarly in Western Uttar Pradesh, the lower Castes Came out with new Surnames which were not common like, Neem, Pipal, Nigam, Bharti, Singh, Gautam etc. It can be inferred from here that the Origination of Surnames in these Geographical belts are the byproducts of Economic Upliftment at some extend. Moving towards the Eastern part of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, it is found that people still don’t have Surnames attached with

¹⁹ The Word is coined by the renowned Indologist, Prof. M.N Srinivas after his intensive study in the Coorg District of South Karnataka. For him Sanskritization is a phenomenon in which people of Lower caste change their living pattern (Fooding, Clothing, Worshipping) and imitate the upper Caste brahmins by changing the social customs.

their identities due to lack of Social and economic resources. Caste based 'Surnames' are still prevalent in some areas like Rajak, Khatik, Jatav, Musahar, Bhangi, Koli, Pasi etc.

There are many Surnames in this channel which are common among many Castes which sometimes creates the state of Confusion among the 'Savarnas' during identifying the individuals. Surnames like 'Singh, Verma, Chauhan, Chaudhary, tends to infinity. Narender Singh, A PhD Student told that his Surname "Singh" (which is not ancestral) helped in getting access to some upper Castes Academic Groups in which generally Non Savarnas are not allowed (covertly). He further extended his words by telling that "they were confused with my identity because I was a healthy and good looking fellow which was enough to confuse and convince them that anyhow I am an Upper Caste". Yashica Dutt writes on the Caste + Color prejudice people carry with them in which Upper Caste=Fair Skin=Touchable, Lower caste= Dark Skin= Untouchable. Even the Nandita Das "Dark is Beautiful" campaign was only covering the Debate of Color in linkage with beauty. Its either knowingly or unknowingly ignored the relation of Caste with Color which is misunderstood by Indians. Some Indologists created a Caste model by connecting its Origin with the Skin color. Dr. Ambedkar Countered their approach by stating that there is no linkage between Caste and Skin color. By putting the examples of 'Savarnas' of Southern States (Which are Darker in skin tone) and the Dalits of Northern States (Which are comparatively fairer) he made it clear that Skin Color is an output of Geography and intermixing of blood which generally took place with migration.

Social Mobility and Surnames/ Suffix identities are connected with thread of Economy and they operate on the pace of economy itself. 'Dalits' who are economically sounds either comes out inventing their own Surnames of sometimes adopting the powerful Surnames. It can be seen in the 'Yadavas' in which their Surnames varies (Rao's-Yadav's- Ahir's) with the amount of property they accumulate with themselves.

Contemporary 'Surname' politics and its impact on the ongoing "Bahujan" Movement (s)

Locating the position of 'Surnames' in power Structure, it is clearly visible that from the highest position of the State to the lowest contractual jobs, 'Surnames' (Caste/s) plays a very prominent role. Starting from the Upper to the lower judiciary, the over representation of 'Savarnas' is clearly identifiable, especially in the Upper judiciary where the appointments are made on the basis of direct interviews or collegiums system. In the legislature, all the important portfolios are always controlled by 'Savarnas' and Lower Castes are given the responsibilities of some petty departments. In bureaucracy, there is no proper representation of lower Castes on the posts of Secretary because they are not given points by their Upper Caste/s seniors in the ACR (Annual Confidential Reports) Reports due to their Caste Biases towards the lower Caste officers. In the "main stream media", the representation of lower Castes is tends to zero. No one can locate a single news anchor with no Surname or with 'Kumar' as Surname (Not Ravish kumarpandey). An IIMC alma mater (Who also worked with

some famous news channels) ones shared through a platform that media houses are the hubs of Caste-ism and Caste-ists. He further shared his experience with a very famous news anchor who used some Caste based abusive terms to tell his colleagues that "These Chamars (Lower Caste) are good for nothing. They always make mistakes and are useless"

"Savarnas, Savarnas Everywhere... Not a bit of Emancipation"

Suffix identities (Surnames) were/are/will be used by the Caste Hindu 'Savarnas' for their personal benefits and privileges in all the sectors they have hegemonized till now. In the contemporary state, Caste has become a part of Global discourse and it is taught and learnt all across the world by people of multiple ethnic identities. It is somewhere going through its dilutional phase in India due to the over involvement of 'Savarnas' and some distracted Dalit leaders in it. They are driven by the 'n' number of ideological forces which makes them hegemonize, manipulate, misinterpret and patronize the contemporary 'Dalit' discourse, Movements and politics. Some left inclined groups try reduce the 'Identity discourse' to merely income based 'Class' discourse. In the same manner, so rightly bent groups projects the identity of 'Hindu-ism' to dilute the 'Dalit idea' and merge it with the Hindu idea. The common thing in both the groups is that they try to cover a large population within an "Umbrella term" which is Proletariat/Labor for left and Hindu for the Right. Obviously both of them ideated it to capture more votes in the elections. The results of every election comes with giving important portfolios to the 'Savarnas' and some petty departments to the lower Caste (s) leaders.

It is a well known fact that Caste is always used as an electoral tool by the political parties where they normally approach the so called lower Castes before elections. But In today's context it is used by the 'Savarnas' for their long term politics by including the lower Castes in it. By looking at almost all the National level parties (So called Savarna Parties and Backward Group parties) of the country, one can easily locate the 'Savarnas' in all of them at important positions and decision making power structure which ultimately ends up making vague political manifestos and policies (After getting the power). The so called "Progressive Savarnas" have no solutions for the problems of the Backwards of this country and they continue to secure the powerful posts in all the parties. The question remains the same. How? It is because of the "True Caste Consciousness" they are loaded with a tagged Suffix identity (Surname) which ultimately helps the fellows to identify and help each other even if they are a part of opposite party or even ideology. They establish their Socio-political relations on the Platform of 'Aristocracy' which helps them in executing all the personal to professional tasks. The matrimonial linkage between the families of opposite Parties/ideologies is very common in this channel. The only ideology which works at that point of time are 'Aristocracy' and 'Surnames'. Recently there is trend visible in Academia and social media as well where the "Upper Caste Progressives" are putting only their first name on the place of full name to just project that they have rejected their Surnames and are moving forward with their self identity only. When we look at their official documents along with

original identity proofs, their ‘Surnames’ will always be there in Bold letters. What is the need of doing this? They are doing it to maintain their Privilege and Progressive politics simultaneously through which they get into the good books of everyone related to them personally, professionally and politically as well. There are some exceptions in this chain that can't be counted in examples but the majority of ‘Savarna Progressive folks’ are using the same line of identity tool to establish their “productive” and “constructive” politics by taking the ‘Dalits’ with them to justify their progressive politics which is ultimately pointless at operational level.

Why and Why not Surnames?

The identity discourse is part of intersectional school of thoughts and attached with multiple inter /interconnected ideational frameworks. By studying the ‘Surnames / Suffix identities’, we can understand that ‘Suffix’ identity is important to pin point one’s gnomic location in terms of Birth/family/place/Country/religion etc but it acts as a oppressive and regressive idea when we look at it beyond the visible spectrum. Suffix identity is misused by the privileged people to give access to their “Own” people into the system and to further discriminate the Down trodden population which struggles everyday for their existence and livelihood. The Caste Hindu ‘Savarnas’ first need to understand that Being “Progressive” is not a Tag/label they need to carry with themselves every time when they talk or preach Caste. They should first start working on their own identities before putting themselves into the issues of Caste/s among Lower Castes. They should either conceptualize a new normative framework of identity along with the lower Caste/s if they are really interested in eradicating the notion of Caste from India. Caste/s as a norm at ideational and operational level is carry forwarded by the medium of Suffix identities/ Surnames. All the “Progressives” should take a lead by themselves to eliminate the idea of Surnames and replaced them by some new and random identity nomenclatures through which their immediate identities becomes invisible for the rest of the world. Some examples of self constructed identities are Firaq ‘Gaurakhpuri’, Rahat ‘Indori’, Johnny ‘Liver’, Rajni sheel etc. Human Solidarity in Indian society is possible only and only when we eradicate the problem of Caste. The problem of Caste will be there till the time we are using Caste based ‘Surnames’ as a Source of Identity and Privilege.

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