

CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY OF IDENTITIES

Polarisation of Identities

In today's world we can witness how identity discourses polarise the political arena, be it in the US or Great Britain or France or India or Thailand or Venezuela. Sharpening of such polarised formations could be observed in the construct of social and class formation based on social status, creed, colour, gender, sexual preferences, religion or faith, region, language, development ethics and identity. These aspects get reflected in social spaces, economic relations, work places, religious orders, cultural formations and patterns of governance.

Such an enforced process also gives birth to an enforced identity, particularly among the historically oppressed, strategically marginalised and systematically exploited social groups. They find its reflection in multiple forms. Identity has emerged as a systemic method of discrimination, exclusion and execution of atrocities. In fact the idea and spirit of any nation state is to provide equal opportunity to every citizen to grow and attain their potential, irrespective of identity, class, religion or gender. A nation should be able to help her citizens overcome the entire phenomena of identity crisis. However, educated men and women from oppressed, marginalised and exploited backgrounds engaged in business, jobs, occupation or profession still live with this identity crisis. This denotes that polarisation on identity basis could create huge gaps amongst different sections of citizenry.

Defeated Identities and their Struggles

Sociological there cannot be a context of equality where social mechanics of discrimination is actively operational. Globally the persistence of oppressive structures as the most powerful institution in the making of modern world is the biggest threat to the democratic fabric. The situation in certain parts of the world is too critical where oppressive social structures continuously interlink with power structures in governance and development patterns; specifically in the laboratory of neo-liberal experimentation alongside the communal and fascist forces. Thus the social system gets crucially assimilated into the political, administrative and psychological frameworks, which easily get synchronised. This completes the hypothesis of social power and its relationship with the process of oppression. Under such contexts the *Aadijan* (First Nations) are not only the victims of atrocities and discriminations, but also are at the verge of a complete crumple. This is virtually an undeclared war on discriminated identities that stand on the margins.

Undoubtedly this divine alliance of 'holier than thou' occupy an important niche in contemporary discourses of sociology, anthropology, political science, gender studies, development studies and postcolonial studies. However there are many efforts and movements by those who have been victimised across nations and nationalities. Over the past four decades there had been several movements in and around the question across the world. While many of the movements for national liberation of erstwhile colonies of European power hubs addressed such questions, some liberation movements deliberately avoided the identity questions of oppressed, marginalised and exploited sections. Despite the opportunity to address such issues, many national liberation movements purposely omitted more ingrained and

historical form of slavery since it would lead to challenge the power access mechanics of dominant sections in that particular nation. In a way the purpose was to keep them perpetually defeated. Under such respective circumstances, the defeated identities built their own movements on multiple aspects that continued after the national liberation too.

Contrary to these circumstances, suppressed identities in many nations arose naturally without any such efforts for national liberation. These could be observed from the Black movement, the Indigenous People's movement, Dalit movement, Adivasi movement, Women's Movement, Ethnic Minority movement, Religious and Linguistic Minorities movement, Working Class movement, movement of Sexual Minorities, Ecological movement, and movements to protect natural and productive resources. Both these paradigms of identity struggles in addition to their immense contribution in affirming the human rights and universal fundamental rights of any human being, has build strong theoretical propositions from within.

As a discipline social science and particularly sociology has a lot to learn and contribute from these identities as many of the aspects are hardly found in academic discussions, despite the efforts put in by some scholars. As current social science discourses of intersectionality of identities demonstrate, identities in a globalised world cross boundaries and perceptions. Such academic discussions across the globe are not just objective in nature, but subjective in its innate character. Therefore, it is essential to recognise that people unite in a multiplicity, and at times emerge into a complex set of identities. Sociological studies on oppressed, marginalised and exploited identities have established that identity questions closely interlink with the notion of human rights, justice, peace and harmonious engagement or even disengagement. Such discourses demand higher degree of academic investigation, which could lead to a better understanding of the social, cultural, political, economic and religious landscapes.

Under these contexts there is urgency for initiating a sociological analysis of the existing paradigm of identities – which needs serious restudy and introspection, particularly in the context of it's aftermaths of multi-tiered citizenry. JPS believes in going beyond the episteme of social science discussion and therefore bring new value to the existing premises of research applying scientific tools. In this issue these key aspects are critically addressed. Apart from the thematic papers, the section on special articles brings in perspectives on pertaining questions of the sociology of Dalit women's experiences. The documents section has a write-up on the personal experience of a riot victim and the reflections she brings in. The review section consists of a film review as well as the scientific review of two festivals. I wish and hope, in this edition, the readers find new meaning and reason on the interconnections of various nuances of the identity politics and its sociology.

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