



Hidden Apartheid – Voice of the Community

Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK

A Scoping Study

by



In collaboration with

**Dr Roger Green, Director, Centre for Community Research
University of Hertfordshire**

and

**Professor Stephen Whittle OBE, Professor of Equalities Law
University of Manchester**

and advice from

**Annapurna Waughray, Senior Lecturer in Law
Manchester Metropolitan University**

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A Scoping Study into Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK

Authored and published by:

Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA)

PO Box 7764

Derby

DE1 0SH

Great Britain

infoacda@googlemail.com

<http://www.acdauk.org.uk>

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Preface

The Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) is an independent, non-profit making voluntary organisation and is an alliance of like-minded organisations sharing a common goal and similar values. The work of ACDA is carried out by of a dedicated team of committed volunteers.

ACDA was formed in 2008 to promote an environment that respects and values individuals in society, irrespective of their colour, Caste, creed, gender, background, age, sexual orientation, race, or any other criteria encompassed in the current equality legislation in the UK. ACDA's specific aims and objectives enshrined in its constitution are:

- To monitor and oppose caste discrimination practices or policies, which result in and perpetuate caste prejudice in the UK and abroad
- To raise awareness of caste discrimination and its causes
- To take steps to involve all interested people in uniting against caste discrimination, including but not limited to provision of relevant education to those who need it.
- To plan strategies and help support groups to remove caste discrimination in the UK and elsewhere and work with them to achieve common goals for its eradication
- To provide moral relief through education to those who are victims of Casteism
- To lobby stakeholders, opinion formers and influencers in keeping with these objectives

Acknowledgments

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We thank the Executive Committees in the Shri Guru Ravidass Temples/Gurdwaras in Coventry, Southampton, Walsall, Bedford (including Valmiki Sangat, Bedford), Hitchin and Luton, the Ambedkar Centre in Southall, and the Nirankari Sangat in Hitchin. It is their proactive co-operation, support, and hospitality that created the right environment for over 200 people who took part in the focus groups to talk at ease about their experiences of the Caste system and the Caste Discrimination that they have faced.

We are very grateful to Dr Roger Green, University of Hertfordshire, Professor Gurharpal Singh, University of Birmingham, Professor Stephen Whittle, Manchester Metropolitan University, and Annapurna Waughray, Manchester Metropolitan University, for their unpaid support and advice. Their input into the online questionnaire, the format of the focus group sessions, and this report is invaluable and has allowed the voices of the victims of Caste discrimination (the hidden apartheid) to be heard.

We are also grateful to David Haslam, a founder-trustee of the Dalit Solidarity Network UK and the International Dalit Solidarity Network, for all the time he has made to comment on the draft report and the very many other people who supported the writing of this report.

We are also very grateful to David Richards Associates for printing this report.

Finally, we thank the many people who took the time to complete the online questionnaire and participated in the focus groups. Some of you spoke so candidly about your emotional experiences relating to Caste and Caste Discrimination. We are grateful to you for entrusting your feedback to us.

1 Foreword

I welcome this timely and detailed report by the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) which shows so clearly that caste discrimination really exists here in the UK, as well as in India and elsewhere. This is demonstrated in cases like the elderly woman needing home-care but being discriminated against by a care-worker due to her Caste, people from Asian communities being closely questioned by colleagues to discover their Caste origins, workers being discriminated against for promotion, and children at school or college being called 'chamar', the Caste equivalent of 'nigger'.



It is remarkable that ACDA has produced this report in a matter of months with only voluntary resources. It has captured with huge sensitivity the voices of a community that has, in the past, been ignored by Government and others. The findings of this study in which over 300 people participated during the summer, clearly support a case for the legal protection of victims of Caste discrimination in the UK. It confirms that it occurs in the workplace, places of education and the provision of services. Although many have argued that Caste discrimination exists in the UK evidence in this area has been limited, it is only now we have a picture of the large numbers whom it may affect.

As a Trustee of the Dalit Solidarity Network UK for almost a decade, I have been aware of the perniciousness of Caste discrimination around the world, particularly in India, but also in the UK. The report comes at a time of increasing international interest, when the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, herself from South Africa, has recently spoken out strongly, likening Caste to the apartheid system.

This report makes a number of very important and justified recommendations to Government Departments, the Confederation of British Industries (CBI) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC), the British Medical Association (BMA) and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). As a first step, the Government has a perfect opportunity immediately to provide protection for all citizens against Caste discrimination within the Equality Bill 2009, and thereby to deliver on its policies for a more cohesive society. Now we have heard the *Voice of the Community*, we all have a duty to take action, to ensure they no longer remain victims, but enjoy the full protection of British law.

Rodney Bickerstaffe, former General Secretary of UNISON and DSN-UK Trustee

“Having pursued respect and equality for a discriminated very minor minority group for over 30 years now, it has come as a real surprise to me, to discover a much larger minority group still being able to be legally discriminated against in ways which are completely unacceptable. I knew such discrimination was illegal in India, to imagine it is also not illegal here seems to undermine the meaning of race and ethnicity protection from discrimination completely.”

**Stephen Whittle OBE
Professor of Equalities Law, School of Law
Manchester Metropolitan University, November 2009**

“Caste discrimination like other forms of discrimination needs to be outlawed. This is the evidence that will prove the case for its inclusion in the Equality Bill.”

Lynne Featherstone MP, November 2009

“Protection from discrimination is a fundamental human right. It is essential to human dignity and guaranteed by international human rights law. Evidence indicates that discrimination on the grounds of caste exists in the UK, yet our anti-discrimination laws are lagging behind and do not provide the protection that is needed. Discrimination because of a person’s caste is inherently linked to discrimination on the grounds of race and no one should have to suffer the indignity of such discrimination. The Equality Bill is a perfect opportunity to address this.”

LIBERTY, November 2009

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1. This Report sets out the results of a scoping study conducted between August and October 2009 to establish how people know that the Caste system exists in the United Kingdom (UK) and, for those who had experienced Caste discrimination, the setting it had occurred in and the impact it had had on them. Over 300 people participated in an online questionnaire and nine focus groups in England.

2.2 Background

2.2.1. Over the last 60 years, there has been a gradual increase in the numbers of people in the UK from the Indian subcontinent. These communities have settled here and brought with them their own social habits, norms and religious customs including the Caste¹ system.

2.2.2. The Hindu Council UK and the Hindu Forum of Britain have both acknowledged in their reports² that the Caste system exists in the UK. However, both bodies argue that Caste discrimination is not endemic in the UK, and only plays a role in social interactions and personal choices like marriages, conversations and friendships. A number of academics and UK organisations, including the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA), Dalit³ Solidarity Network UK (DSN), Federation of Ambedkarites and Buddhists Organisations (FABO) and CasteWatchUK (CWUK), argue otherwise. They say that the Caste system and the discrimination associated with it impacts in some form or other on the two million or so people in the UK from the Asian Diaspora and extends beyond social interaction.

2.2.3. On 8 October 2009, Navi Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights publicly condemned Caste discrimination which affects 270 million people worldwide.⁴ Although other countries have laws to protect against Caste discrimination – for example, the Constitution of India 1950 abolishes the practice of Untouchability and makes caste discrimination unlawful⁵ – no such protection exists in the UK.

¹ 'Caste' from the Portuguese *casta* meaning 'species, race or pure breed, was first used in India by Europeans in the sixteenth century to distinguish between 'Moors' (Muslims) and non-Muslims and to denote birth-groups or communities. See Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in Modern India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) cited in Annapurna's Waughray, 'Caste Discrimination: A Twenty-First Century Challenge for UK Discrimination Law?' (2009) *Modern Law Review* Vol. 72/2, 182-219, 185, fn1.

² *The Caste System – A Report Presented by Dr Raj Pandit Sharma* (2008) and *Caste in the UK – A summary of the consultation with the Hindu Community in Britain* (2008).

³ 'Dalit' is a South Asian term of self-identification adopted from Marathi meaning 'crushed' or 'broken'; see Waughray, (2009) *Modern Law Review* Vol. 72/2, 182-219, 185.

⁴ [http://www.dsnu.org/Manual percent20Scavenging percent20Statement.pdf](http://www.dsnu.org/Manual%20percent20Scavenging%20Statement.pdf)

⁵ Constitution of India, Articles 17 and 15, at <http://lawmin.nic.in/coi.htm>. The Constitution abolishes "Untouchability" but not Caste or the Caste system.

2.3 Key Findings

- A preliminary search of the academic literature shows that this is an under-researched area. Both the online questionnaire and the focus groups confirm that the Caste system exists in the UK and the associated lack of Caste mobility is not consistent with the Government's position of encouraging a more cohesive society.
- A majority of the research participants identified negative experiences of the Caste system and Caste discrimination. For some, this had a traumatising effect on them resulting in low morale, low self esteem, depression and anxiety.
- 71 percent of survey responses identified themselves as belonging to the so-called 'Dalit' community. 58 percent of survey responses confirmed they had been discriminated against because of their Caste. 37 percent stated that this had occurred on several occasions. There are an estimated 175,000 Ravidassia people in the UK.⁶ Based on the survey data, over 100,000 of this population alone may be victims of Caste discrimination in the UK.
- The majority – 79 percent – of survey responses stated they believed they would not be understood appropriately by the UK police service if they reported a 'hate crime' incident based on Caste discrimination.
- 85 percent believed there was no legislation in place to protect them as victims of Caste discrimination.
- The government's decision to not include a clause in the Equality Bill 2009 to protect citizens against Caste discrimination in the UK seems mainly to have been informed by the Hindu Forum of Britain and the Hindu Council UK's reports and representations – and an unrepresentative and restricted sample of 19 replies.

2.4 Employment

- 45 percent of people who responded to the survey stated that they had been either treated in a negative way by their co-workers (20 percent) or had comments made about them on account of their Caste status (25 percent). 25 percent indicated that they had been informally excluded from social events, informal networks in the organisation or the 'grapevine' because of their Caste. Similarly, nine percent stated that they believed they had missed promotion at work due to their Caste, with a further ten percent stating that they had been underpaid because of their Caste. Nine percent stated they had experienced verbal abuse. Five percent had been subjected to threatening behaviour because of their Caste.
- Similar experiences came to light in the focus groups. For example, there was a case of a woman who believed she had been demoted from a good position at a local radio station when her line-manager discovered her Caste. Another workplace example was that of a manager of bus company in Southampton who had to re-organise the shift system so that a "higher Caste" inspector would not need to work with a "lower Caste" bus driver.

⁶ 'Sikhs in Britain' 2006 Singh and Tatla state that this is a substantial under-representation of Sikhs in Britain, and it is more likely to be around 500,000. One third of this number (at least 167,000+) are Sikhs who have traditionally belonged to the Dalit category.⁵ We believe it is up to 175,000 is based on the numbers of people visiting the 21 Guru Ravidassia Gurdwara in the UK.

- There are increasing numbers of Indian companies setting up in Britain. Such companies may inadvertently import Caste-based practices to the UK.

Recommendations:

1. Government to provide legal protection against Caste discrimination for victims (or possible victims)
2. The DWP, CBI, and the TUC to ensure that companies operating in Britain do not inadvertently import Caste-based practices, and put monitoring in place to support all workers and members rights.

2.5 Education

- Seven percent in the survey said that when they were under 12 years old they had been subjected to threatening behaviour and 16 percent to verbal abuse because of their Caste.
- 10 percent of the perpetrators of Caste discrimination for the under 12s were said to have been teachers, and 42 percent fellow pupils. These survey results were supported by the numerous examples that came to light in the focus groups including Caste-related bullying.

Recommendation:

Department for Education and Schools to provide guidance to statutory and voluntary organisations and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) for teachers in schools to improve their understanding and skills in recognising Caste-based bullying and discrimination.

2.6 Provision of goods and services

- Although the survey focused on the areas of provision of healthcare and social care services, other aspects of service provision including access to goods and facilities in places of worship (which often double as community centres) were highlighted during the focus groups.
- Of the 43 out of the 101 people who responded to the online survey question about healthcare provision, 25 percent stated their family doctor had asked them directly or indirectly about their Caste and 16 percent had experienced the same questioning from a nurse at their Doctor's surgery, and 13 percent from a community nurse. A significant number of doctors practising in the NHS are from overseas (the vast majority from the Indian subcontinent).⁷ This indicates a potential for Caste discrimination occurring in the healthcare sector which was highlighted in the focus group cases, one relating to an elderly woman's care worker discriminating against her because of her Caste, and the second case about a physiotherapist refusing to treat someone of a low Caste.

Recommendation:

The British Medical Association to review the Caste issue within its wider equality agenda for patients

⁷ *British Journal of General Practice* 2007 <http://www.library.nhs.uk/ETHNICITY/ViewResource.aspx?resID=273200>

2.7 Places of worship

- 18 percent of survey responses stated they knew the Caste system exists because of places of worship specific to particular Castes.
- In one focus group a man told ACDA about how he had booked his daughter's wedding to take place at a hall in a Sikh gurdwara, and a few days before the wedding he was informed by the gurdwara that he could no longer hold the wedding there. He believed this was due to his Caste. Another focus group attendee said, "*We had a photo of Guru Ravidass at a Sikh temple and they [the temple priests] repositioned it in front of the toilets.*" This caused considerable offence to the followers of the Guru in a Sikh place of worship, given that Sikhism is considered an egalitarian faith.

Recommendation:

The Equality and Human Rights Commission to commission an in-depth academic study into the Caste system, Caste mobility and Caste discrimination in the UK, and to research the associated impacts on the health and well-being of victims of Caste discrimination.

2.8 Conclusion

2.8.1. There is clear evidence from the survey and the focus groups that the Caste system has been imported into the UK with the Asian Diaspora and that the associated Caste discrimination affects citizens in ways beyond personal choices and social interaction. There is a danger that if the UK Government does not effectively accept and deal with the issue of Caste discrimination, the problem will grow unchecked. This will be against the Government's values of fairness and equality of treatment so robustly promoted here.

2.8.2. The following recommendations are made to Government Department's and representative organisations, in the context of the Government's policies on encouraging a more cohesive society and the increasing international interest in addressing caste-based discrimination:-

- i. **Government to provide legal protection against Caste discrimination for victims (or possible victims), we believe an amendment clause in the Equality Bill 2009 is the right vehicle;**
- ii. **Department for Children, Schools and Families to provide guidance to statutory and voluntary organisations and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) for teachers in schools to improve their understanding and skills in recognising Caste-based bullying and discrimination.**
- iii. **The Department for Work and Pensions, Confederation of British Industry (CBI), and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) to ensure that companies operating in Britain do not inadvertently import Caste-based practices, and put monitoring in place to support all workers and members rights;**
- iv. **The British Medical Association to review the Caste issue within its wider equality agenda for patients**
- v. **The Equality and Human Rights Commission to commission an in-depth academic study into the Caste system, Caste mobility and Caste discrimination in the UK, and to research the associated impacts on the health and well-being of victims of Caste discrimination.**

3. Background

3.1 Introduction

3.1. Over the last 60 years, there has been a gradual increase in the numbers of people in the UK from the Indian subcontinent. These communities have settled here and brought with them their own social habits, norms and religious customs including the Caste system. This has resulted in associated Caste discrimination.

3.2 The Caste System

“There is lots of discrimination in Hindu community, they ask what Samaj [society] you come from and make comments about you, I have been told that I come from lowest of the low and [am] an outcaste.” An online survey comment, September 2009

3.2.1. “The Hindu scriptures including the Veda and the Bhagavad-Gita make reference to what they call ‘varna’ or occupational duties based on the ‘guna’ or qualities and personality traits of an individual.”⁸ The four main *varnas* or occupational classes stated in the Rig Veda and the Bhagavad-Gita were:

1. Brahmanas (scholars and priests)
2. Kshatriyas (soldiers, administrators and warriors)
3. Vaishyas (merchants, artisans and cultivators)
4. Shudras (workers).⁹

3.2.2. “... *Though castes are often assumed to fit into the four varnas, jati, which means ‘birth, is a system of social divisions organized according to relative purity, with brahmins at one extreme and low caste and ‘untouchable’ people (who are considered impure and polluting to ‘higher’ castes) at the other. Although the caste system is not based on wealth, with those at the top being the richest, it is certainly the case that those at the bottom (the untouchables) have little access to resources. They rarely own land and have and have little economic power. Indians acquire caste status by being born into a particular caste group; they generally marry someone from the same caste.*”¹⁰ What is not made clear is that Dalits actually sit outside and below the Caste hierarchy.

3.2.3. Caste is determined by birth and prevents social mobility “*Uniquely in the annals of prejudice, it hamstring the individual’s ‘upward mobility’ from rebirth to rebirth in those religions where reincarnation plays a part, even at a distance as with Caste Christianity and Sikhism. ... Caste is absolutely nothing like class. The paralysis of religion denies all mobility, physical or upward. While non-Indians generally associate Caste with*

⁸ Hindu Forum of Britain *Caste in the UK* 2008, 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Kim Knott *Hinduism – A Very Short Introduction* 1998 r 2000, 22.

*Hinduism, Casteism [Caste discrimination] taints elitist sections of the Sikh, Muslim and Christian communities everywhere.*¹¹

3.2.4. Up to 270 million people worldwide¹² continue to suffer under what amounts to the hidden apartheid of segregation, exclusion, modern day slavery and other extreme forms of discrimination, exploitation and violence. However, the problem largely affects people of South Asian origin. Discriminatory, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment has been justified on the basis of Caste for untold generations in the Indian subcontinent, the Indo-Pakistani Diaspora, Nigeria, Japan and elsewhere.¹³

3.3 The Caste system and Caste Discrimination in the UK

“Some people said to me, ‘Why don’t you go to old people’s home to pass your time?’ I said I have tried there. When I go there, all the old heads just start talking about the Caste system – ‘what Caste you are?’ And I don’t like this idea and that’s why I don’t go to these homes. This happened six months ago in Hayes. The people who organise this old people’s home, they don’t mind. But the Sikhs or Hindus, they just want to know what Caste you are. If I am their Caste they will talk happily; if not they will talk in a very funny way. I went twice and did not go anymore.” Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009

3.3.1. Over the last 60 years, there has been a gradual increase in the population of those who have arrived in United Kingdom from the Indian subcontinent. These communities have settled here and also brought with them their own social habits, norms and religious customs such as the institution of Caste.¹⁴ Eleanor Nesbitt in her research on Dalits in Coventry observed that *“the Sikh emigration has been from villages within a small area in Punjab, Jullundur district. This makes it possible for the Punjabi immigrants to Britain to keep track of, and know each other’s family and Caste background.”*¹⁵

3.3.2. The 2001 census stated that there are 1.6 million Muslims, 558,000 Hindus, 336,000 Sikhs Singh and Tatla state that this is a substantial under-representation of Sikhs in Britain, and it is more likely to be around 500,000. One third of this number (167,000) are Sikhs who have traditionally belonged to the Dalit category.¹⁶ Then there is a further 149,000 Buddhists affected. Caste manifestly plays a part amongst adherents of Hinduism and Sikhism and caste-type stratification also exists among South Asian Muslims. Amongst some groups, Caste exists in the form of clan rivalry and *biradari* (kinship group), and manifests itself at its most extreme in honour killings where social rules are breached. Although no quantifiable research has been carried out on Caste discrimination in the UK, it is thought that over a million people may be affected.

¹¹ Ken Hunt *Reaching the Untouchables New Humanist*, Vol.119/4, July/August 2004
<http://newhumanist.org.uk/757/reaching-the-untouchables>

¹² http://www.unitetheunion.com/sectors/finance__legal/finance_sector_campaigns/campaign_against_caste_discr-1.aspx

¹³ DSN website <http://www.dsnuk.org/>

¹⁴ Sat Pal Muman, *Caste in Britain*, 2000

¹⁵ <http://www.dsnuk.org/other/Submission%20to%20Equalities%20Review.pdf>

¹⁶ Singh & Tatla, 2006, 60.

3.3.3. In their reports on the Caste system and Caste in the UK, The Hindu Council UK¹⁷ and the Hindu Forum of Britain¹⁸ have acknowledged that the Caste system exists in the UK. However, they argue that Caste Discrimination is not endemic in British society and there is no role for Caste in the provision of education, employment or goods and services. They accept that due to cultural practises and tradition, Caste can play a role in social interactions and personal choices like marriages, conversations and friendships. They further add that respondents to the Hindu Forum of Britain have categorically requested that the Government should not interfere in personal choices and matters of social interaction.

3.3.4. A number of organisations formed in the UK, including the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA)¹⁹, Dalit Solidarity Network UK (DSN), Voice of Dalit International (VODI)²⁰, Federation of Ambedkarites and Buddhists Organisations (FABO)²¹ and CasteWatchUK (CWUK)²² argue otherwise. For many years, they have been raising awareness that the Caste system is taking root in the UK and describing through case studies and reports the impact of this on the victims of Caste discrimination. Furthermore, their reports and submissions cite example of Caste discrimination taking place in the UK – which extend beyond social interaction and personal choice and into areas of employment, the provision of goods and services, education, including detailing systematic bullying and harassment – drawn from various case histories and testimonies. Alongside this, Caste Away Arts²³, a Midland-based theatre company, for example, has used its play *The Fifth Cup* (2007) drawing on real life cases to raise awareness of the issue, as did Naresh Puri's BBC Radio 4 documentary *The Caste Divide*.²⁴

3.3.5. One commonplace example is name calling related to Caste. Two common examples are *Chuhra* and *Chamar* – names as derogatory as calling a black person a 'nigger', anyone from the subcontinent of Indo-Pakistani diaspora 'Paki' or someone of Jewish extraction a 'kike'. 'Chuhra' and 'Chamar' are occupation names given to Dalits, the former so-called Untouchables, especially by those Hindus and Sikhs who wish to perpetuate the prejudice, social control, stigmatization and intolerance endemic in the Indian subcontinent. Although some people in the UK feel that they still have to identify themselves as belonging to these hereditary groupings (as highlighted by the responses to Q11 of the questionnaire at Annex B), these names are associated with hereditary work such as scavenging and working with leather – occupations regarded as beneath 'Caste Hindus'. These names are deliberately used to offend and provoke. They are hurtful and exceedingly offensive.

3.3.6. Evidence submitted by a number of organisations to Government has highlighted the impact of Caste discrimination in the UK. They argue that the Caste system continues to exert unfair influence in people's everyday lives. Whether grandparents or grandchildren, it adversely affects basic rights such as how they are treated in the workplace, within their community, in places of worship and education, in short, in all areas of their life.

¹⁷ *The Caste System* – see N 2 above.

¹⁸ *Caste in the UK* – see N 2 above.

¹⁹ www.acdauk.org.uk/

²⁰ DSN – 'No escape, Caste Discrimination in the UK' 2006 report

²¹ Chanan Chahal *The Evil of Caste*, January 2009

²² Press Release – "CasteWatchUK under attack from Hindu Council UK for leading Equality Campaign", March 2008
www.castewatchuk.org.uk

²³ <http://www.casteawayarts.com/>

²⁴ First broadcast April 2003. <http://castewatchuk.org/Documents/Radio4CasteDivide.pdf>

3.3.7. Inevitably this problem will increase in the UK. Certainly, based on the experiences of the post-war Diasporas, it has shown no signs of going away. The Caste discrimination problem (if no protection is provided) will continue to grow in the private and public sectors.

3.3.8. There is a plausible, if specious, argument, that claims that Caste and Caste discrimination will disappear as economic factors change with people going to where jobs are, achieving promotion or securing new jobs based on their particular skills set and on merit. A corollary is this is that economics will do more to level the playing field than more prominent or high profile initiatives may achieve. Although on the face of it, these appear to be credible and strong arguments, improvements in the economic conditions and changes in the past 40 years in the UK do not appear to have shifted the attitudes and perceptions of those who persist in practising descent-based discrimination on Caste grounds.

3.4 International Laws on Caste discrimination

“In our Indian office we discovered that there were mainly people being recruited from a particular background – high Caste Bengali; this came out in our diversity audit. The lower Caste people were either drivers or gardeners. Then we [in the UK] changed our systems in India – so when they recruited people, they cannot recruit from just one agency but we listed which agencies they should recruit from. When we audited them two years later – the mixture was a lot more even.”

Hitchin Nirankari Temple Focus Group, 16 August 2009

3.4.1. Article 2 of the United Nations’ 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”

3.4.2. The 1965 UN International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, to which the UK has been a party since 1969, defines racial discrimination in Article 1(1) as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”

3.4.3. In 2002 the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which monitors States Parties’ implementation of the Convention, affirmed in General Recommendation 29 that “discrimination based on descent includes discrimination against members of communities based on forms of social stratification such as caste and analogous systems of inherited status which nullify or impair their equal enjoyment of human rights” and strongly condemned “descent-based discrimination, such as discrimination on the basis of caste and analogous systems of inherited status, as a violation of the Convention.” States Parties were recommended, *inter alia*, to review or enact and amend legislation in order to outlaw all forms of discrimination based on descent in accordance with the Convention.

3.4.4. In 2000 the former UN Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (now the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee) passed Resolution 2000/4 declaring that discrimination based on work and descent – of which

caste discrimination is a sub-category – is a form of discrimination prohibited by international human rights law.

3.4.5. Article 17 of the Constitution of India abolishes the practice of Untouchability while discrimination on grounds of caste is prohibited under Article 15 of the Constitution of India, and under Articles 26 and 27 of the Constitution of Pakistan (in respect of access to public places and employment in the service of the government), while in Australia 'descent' forms part of the definition of racial discrimination under the Racial Discrimination Act 1975.

3.4.6. In 2005 the UN appointed two Special Rapporteurs to investigate the phenomenon of discrimination based on work and descent worldwide, and to produce a set of Draft Principles and Guidelines for its effective elimination. These are contained in the Special Rapporteurs' Final Report on the topic of discrimination based on work and descent, which was published by the Human Rights Council on 18 May 2009. The current version is a draft text published by the International Dalit Solidarity Network in September 2009. This document has received backing from a number of people including the Government of Nepal, the EU President and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the Swedish Presidency.²⁵

3.4.7. More recently on 8 October 2009, Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, published an opinion piece on Caste discrimination stating that "the time has come to eradicate the shameful concept of Caste" and calling on the international community to come together "as it did when it helped put an end to apartheid". She argued that "other seemingly insurmountable walls, such as slavery and apartheid, have been dismantled in the past" and concluded that "we can and must tear down the barriers of Caste too."²⁶

3.5 The UK's Equality Bill 2009

"Nobody would listen because there is no law against it [Caste Discrimination]." An online survey comment

3.5.1. For a number of years, the UK Government has been lobbied to provide the same level of legal protection for victims of Caste discrimination as it does for other forms of discrimination in the UK. The Equality Bill in 2009 has been seen to be the perfect and timely vehicle to implement this.

3.5.2. Although Government has recognised that Caste discrimination is unacceptable it has decided not to extend protection against Caste discrimination: *"While recognizing that Caste discrimination is unacceptable, we have found no strong evidence of such discrimination in Britain, in the context of employment or the provision of goods,*

²⁵ IDSN, Draft Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent, <http://www.idsn.org/international-advocacy/un/un-principles-guidelines/draft-principles-and-guidelines-for-the-effective-elimination-of-discrimination-based-on-work-and-descent/>

²⁶ <http://idsn.org/news-resources/idsn-news/read/article/un-high-commissioner-tear-down-the-barriers-of-caste/128/>

*facilities or services. We would, however, consult the Equality and Human Rights Commission about monitoring the position.*²⁷

3.5.3. To date, there has been no meaningful evidence presented by Government for the exclusion of clauses in the Bill to extend protection against Caste discrimination. Nor have they defined what they mean by the lack of “strong evidence” in this regard. There is also no published evidence to date that the UK’s Equality and Human Rights Commission has proceeded to monitor the position.

3.5.4. On 9 June 2009, an amendment clause put forward by ACDA was tabled by Lynne Featherstone MP and Dr Evan Harris MP during the Equality Bill Committee stage. Essentially, the amendment sought a change to the definition of ‘Race’ contained on the face of the Bill:

“Currently Race (Part 2 Race, page 7) includes: (a) colour; (b) nationality; (c) ethnic or national origin.

ACDA asked that (c) be amended to read ‘(c) ethnic, national origin or Caste.’

Caste’ would then be described within the Explanatory Notes to include varna (four distinct social groups within Hinduism, outside of which sit Dalits (formerly known as Untouchables), jati (locally defined groups within which the Caste ranks are organised and coupled with one’s occupation) and biradari (brotherhood, especially encountered in a clan or a tribal context).

*These terms are ones that people in this country understand when they are either subjected to, or subject people to, Caste discrimination.*²⁸

3.5.5. The above amendment clause would have ensured that UK’s Equality Legislation captured discrimination against person A by person B on grounds of A’s Caste or *jati*. This would cover discrimination between any persons on grounds of the victim’s Caste irrespective of the Caste of the perpetrator, at any level of the hierarchy.

3.5.6. On 11 June 2009, during a discussion on the amendment clause tabled (paragraph 3.5.4 above) the Government’s Solicitor General said that Government has stressed that, apart from the odd piece of anecdotal evidence, none of which the Government say have been able to drive down to a factual basis, no evidence exists that the areas which can be covered by anti-discrimination legislation to do with Caste. Government said that The Hindu Forum of Britain and the Hindu Council UK were the two largest and the best, Government said, it could find in terms of representative organisations in that field – “Both organisations remain totally against the introduction of Caste legislation.” Government said it also consulted a variety of predominantly Hindu groups and some Sikh and Muslim groups.²⁹ A reply to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request indicates that Government may be referring to its two-week consultation during August 2008³⁰ – see Annex D and paragraph 3.5.10 below – which resulted in just 19 replies. The government’s decision to not include a clause in the Equality Bill 2009 to protect citizens against Caste discrimination in the UK seems mainly to have been informed by the Hindu Forum of Britain and the Hindu Council UK’s reports and representations – and an unrepresentative and restricted sample of 19 replies.

²⁷ The Equality Bill – Government response to the Consultation – July 2008

²⁸ *Hansard*, 11 June 2009, Public Bill Committee Column no 178, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmpublic/equality/090611/pm/90611s06.htm>

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

3.5.7. John Mason MP took the government's point that there was very little evidence at the moment but asked that the Minister at least give the assurance that, if evidence comes to light in the future, she will look at this issue again. Government agreed to this and said that officials from the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Equality Office (the Departments that sponsor the Bill) were continuing to monitor the situation and to meet representatives of interested parties.

3.5.8. Government appeared, however, convinced that it was not getting any evidence. Lynne Featherstone MP accepted the reassurance given by Government on 9 June 2009 during the discussion on the amendment to the Bill which she had tabled and then withdrew the amendment clause.

3.5.9. The discussions during the Bill Committee stage of the Equality Bill on 11 June 2009 indicated that quantitative and qualitative research was required into both the perceptions and experiences of Caste discrimination in the UK. This would support the legal case for protection against Caste discrimination in the UK.

3.5.10. Furthermore, in response to an FOI request made by ACDA which sought details about the consultation that Government conducted on the Equality Bill in 2009, and the evidence which led the Government to exclude a clause on Caste in the Bill showed that Government (See Annex D):

- a. Consulted over a peak holiday period (mid-August)
- b. Consulted for two weeks only. This cannot be considered to be a reasonable or prudent length of time for meaningful responses
- c. Used a very brief, inadequate and poorly drafted questionnaire totalling ten questions for what should be regarded as a complex subject.
- d. Appeared to ignore the fact that a majority of the organisations it consulted do not deal with Caste discrimination
- e. Based its decision on 19 replies to the questionnaire.

3.5.11. This information leads us believe that the Government has not complied with its Code on Consultation and commitments to proper evidence based policy making.

3.5.12. It might be argued that caste discrimination is a form of religious discrimination and that therefore the Employment Equality (Religion and Belief) Regulations 2003 and the Equality Act 2006 Part 2 provide protection against caste discrimination. This is not necessarily the case:

"Discrimination on the grounds of caste will fall within the ambit of religious discrimination legislation only if considered a form of discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. This depends on whether a person's ascribed caste status [can be considered] as 'part of' or integral to their religion, or belief, or a characteristic distinct from religion or belief. Leslie contends that Dalits in Britain are 'invariably defined by caste' rather than by membership of a wider religious tradition, or else are 'marginalised as a [caste-based] sub-category of the religious tradition in question'.³¹

³¹ Annapurna Waughray, 'Caste Discrimination: A Twenty-First Century Challenge for UK Discrimination Law?', (2009) 72(2) *Modern Law Review*, 182-219, 212, citing Julie Leslie, *Authority and Meaning in Indian Religions: Hinduism and the Case of Valmiki* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2003), 69, 71.

3.5.13. During this scoping study a number of focus group members raised the issue of Caste status and the associated discrimination within Sikhism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. These people believed they were being discriminated against because of their Caste status – not necessarily because of their religion.

“The new Sikh Singh Sabha temple in Southall - we went to Matha tekh [to bow down in front of the Guru Granth Sahab] and we then came down and sat in the hall. I touched one of the glasses and it was immediately put in for washing because the ramaal [a headscarf] I had on my head said Guru Ravidass.” Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009

3.6 Why research is needed

3.6.1. Since the Bill Committee discussion on 11 June 2009, a number of MPs have indicated that any legislation in respect of Caste discrimination in the UK would need to be supported by evidence. They stressed that the evidence needed to go beyond the anecdotal evidence presented to Government by a number of organisations and captures discrimination having occurred in the provisions of the Equality Bill.

3.6.2. The lack of independent and academic research in this area has contributed to the Government’s lack of action to provide protection against the Caste discrimination that a number of academics and organisation have been calling for. The prime driver for this scoping study is to gather evidence to convince Government that victims (and future victims) of Caste discrimination must be protected in the UK.

4. Findings

4.1 Key messages - General

4.1.1. This scoping study's findings present a unique picture of Caste discrimination in the UK in 2009 which merit further academic investigation. However, some themes have clearly emerged:

- Both the ACDA online questionnaire and the focus groups confirm that the Caste system exists in the UK and it continues to exert different types of influence in people's everyday lives – namely how they are treated in the workplace, within their community, in places of worship and education.
- A majority of the research participants were acutely aware of the existence of Caste practice and identified negative experiences of the Caste system and Caste discrimination. For some this has had a traumatising effect on them, resulting in low morale, low self esteem, sometimes depression and anxiety.
- 58 percent said they had been discriminated against because of their Caste
- 37 percent stated that this had occurred on several occasions and 63 percent stated it had occurred a few times.

4.2.1. There are an estimated 175,000 Ravidassia in the UK. Extrapolating the survey data, if 58 percent of just this community were to be discriminated against on the basis of their Caste, that could be over 100,000 Ravidassia persons on the receiving end of Caste discrimination in the UK. A clear majority – 79 percent – of the survey said they would not be understood appropriately by the UK police service if they reported a 'hate crime' incident based on Caste discrimination.

4.2 The Caste System

“My daughter just recently started a new job. This girl, wanting to know what her Caste was, pointedly asked her, ‘Which Gurdwara do you go to?’ My daughter replied that she went to Foleshill Road Gurdwara. The girl was none the wiser; on this road there are a number of Gurdwaras. The girl asked which particular one. My daughter replied [this one]. Instead of asking directly they go about finding the Caste in a roundabout way. The Caste system is here and does exist.” Coventry Focus Group, 16 August 2009

4.2.1. A majority of the participants in each of the focus groups and the online survey were of a so-called Dalit background – from the Ravidassia³², Valmiki³³ or Ambedkarite³⁴

³² Ravidassia are followers of Guru Ravidass, a 14th Century mystic whose teachings form part of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. They are classed as a low Caste (Dalit or Untouchable) within Sikhism.

³³ Valmikis are followers of the Bhagwan Valmiki, the author of the Hindu epic *Ramayana*, consisting of 24,000 verses and believed to be the author of Yoga Vasistha, a text that elaborates on a range of philosophical issues written approximately 500 years ago.

A Scoping Study into Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK

communities. (How they described their faith/religion is broken down in Table 1.) 49 percent said they were identified with the 'Chamar' Caste (Table 2). What is worth noting is that almost half of the people who responded felt they had to associate themselves with the term *chamar* even though it is an offensive and derogatory term. This might be because it is so rooted in the South Asian culture that many bear it like a yoke while others wield it as a badge of politicised awareness. This needs further research.

Table 1

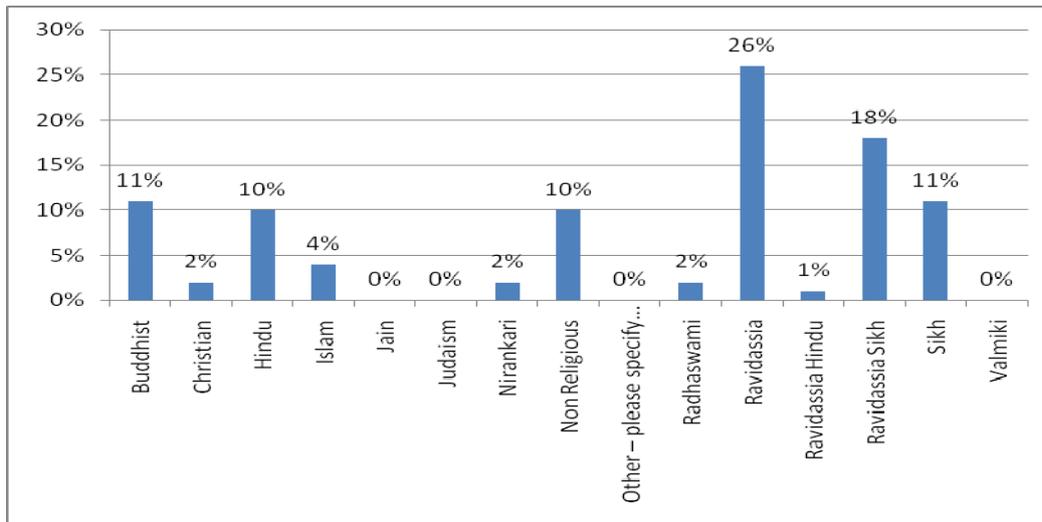
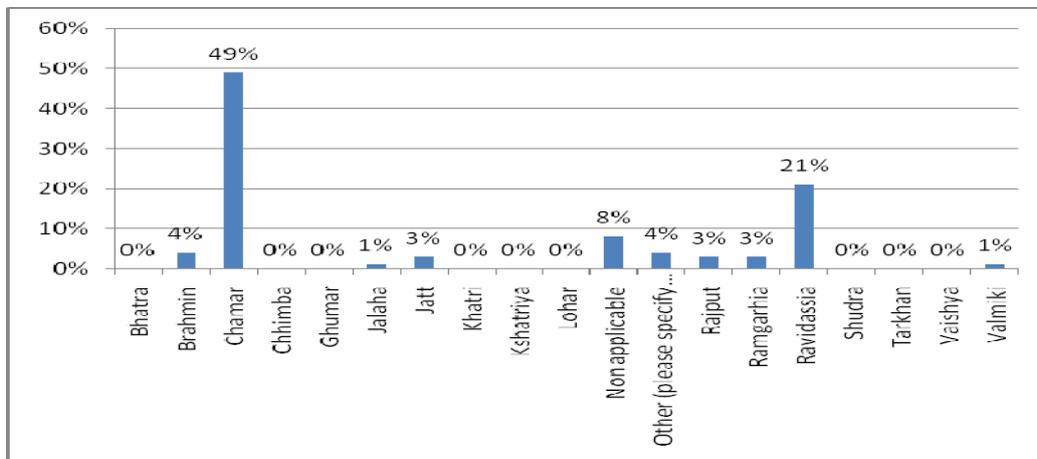


Table 2



4.2.2. 78 percent of the people who responded were aged 25-59 (Table 3). 80 percent of those surveyed said they knew they knew what Caste meant (Table 4).

³⁴ Ambedkarites are followers of Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1881-1956). Chief architect of the Indian Constitution, he was an Indian nationalist and legislator, a civil rights leader, politician, prolific writer, economist, a convert to, and champion of Buddhism in India and a Dalit. He is the anti-caste discrimination movement's Martin Luther King.

Table 3

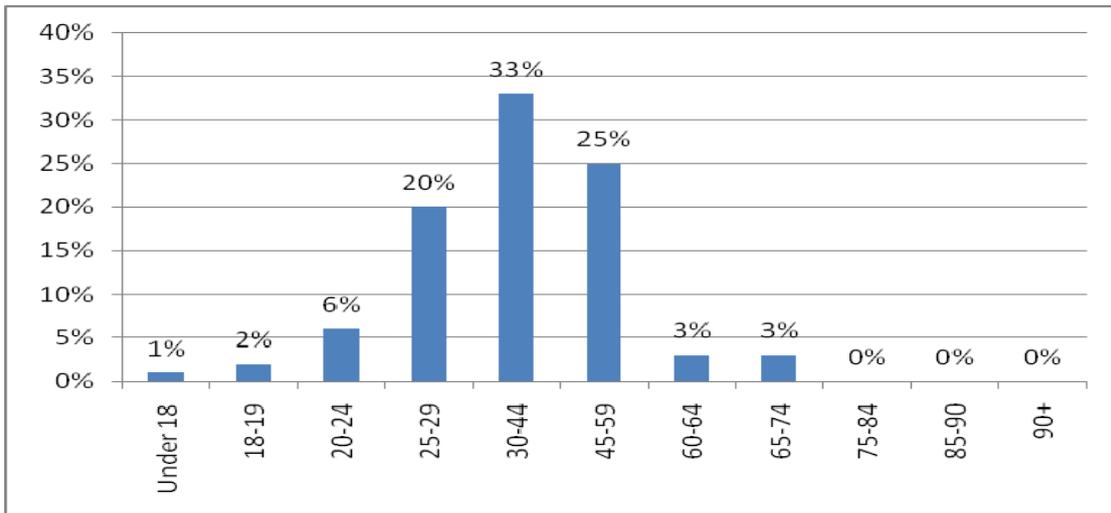
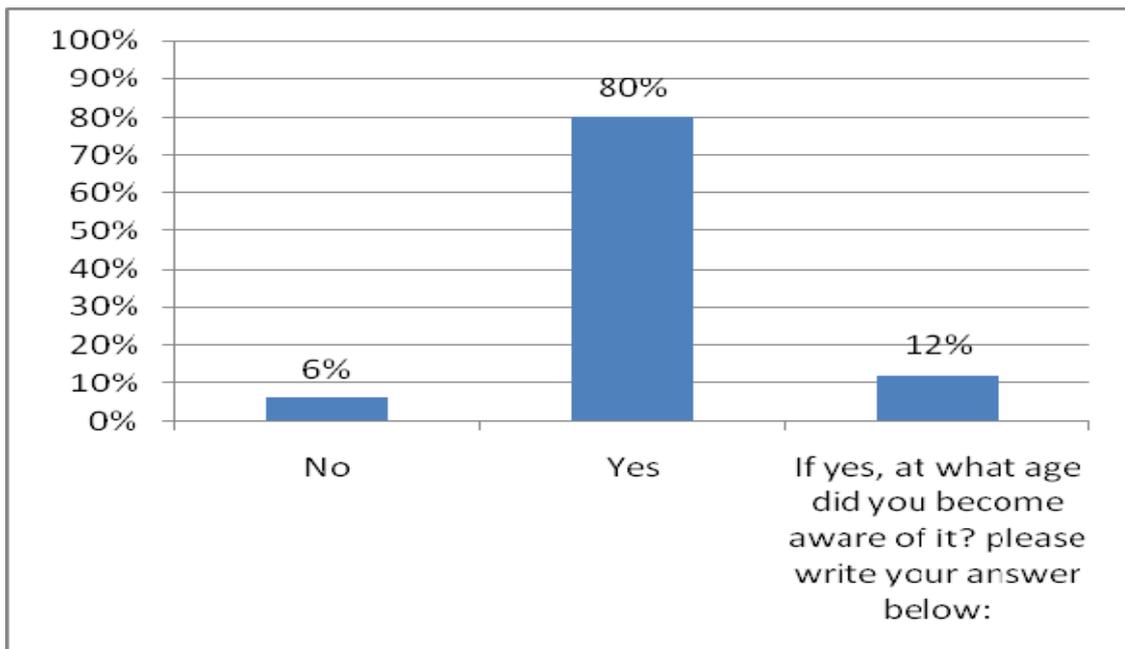


Table 4

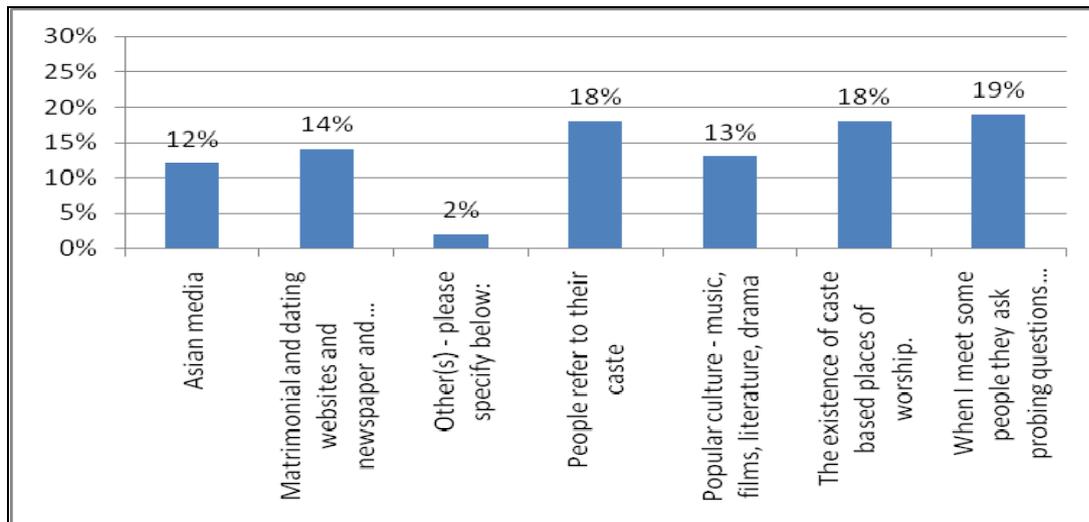


4.2.3. When asked about what made people believe that the Caste system exists in the UK (Table 5), 19 percent cited the main reason as being:

“When I meet some people they ask me probing questions which make me believe that they are trying to find out which Caste I might be,” and

18 percent offered, *“the existence of Caste-based places of worship”* and *“people refer to their Caste”*.

Table 5



4.2.4. The focus group discussions supported the survey results for the above question and cited a number of examples of the existence of Caste system:

“Some people said to me, ‘Why don’t you go to old people’s home to pass your time?’ I said I have tried there. When I go there, all the old heads just start talking about the Caste system – ‘what Caste you are?’ And I don’t like this idea and that’s why I don’t go to these homes. This happened six months ago in Hayes. The people who organise this old people’s home, they don’t mind. But the Sikhs or Hindus, they just want to know what Caste you are. If I am their Caste they will talk happily; if not they will talk in a very funny way. I went twice and did not go anymore” **Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009**

“You get gangs in places like Southall and you get stabbings and it’s related directly to Caste.” **[Name and focus group removed]**

“I remember when I used to work for the council many years ago and used to deal direct with the public and I did my job as usual and used to see people from all cultures. I remember on one occasion I saw a Punjabi woman and she started asking me what my Caste was and I was quite shocked; she started at the top of the hierarchy and assumed I was Jatt for some reason as she assumed I looked like a Jatt Sikh to her and when I said I wasn’t, then she said are you this...and I just kept on saying ‘No’, ‘No’, ‘No’. Because to me it did not matter what Caste you were. Eventually she got to a certain level of the hierarchy and said ok then and just left. But I was quite surprised that they are still asking those questions and [it] should not really matter to a lot of people. I don’t know why she was asking me the questions ... Maybe she was interested in me for her son... I don’t know... You just don’t know what’s going through their mind. She obviously liked me as a person as I helped her and I was just doing my job but then why should Caste come into it and affect the way you look at me and the way you feel about me? You should like me as a human being and that should be it.” **Hitchin Ravidassia Centre Focus Group, 16 August 2009**

"This is how far the Caste system will go indirectly. Last week we had a meeting at the [Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha (location removed)]. The local MP [name removed] said, 'You know I am pandit [learned man]. Wherever there is food and Pandit is invited, he will stay. And [the host] said tea and samosa so I will stay.' That means he is presenting himself as Brahmin – so is that not indirectly carrying [on] the Caste system? If he does not believe in Caste system why does he not remove Caste system from his name?" **Southall Focus Group, 6 September**

"I was working; a lady came and started work. I was working in a different room because I was a senior operator. I came out of my room and she said, 'What is your name?' She wanted to try and find out my Caste. She didn't say anything else, like 'good morning', 'Sat Sri Akal' [A standard Sikh greeting]. Then she said, 'Which gurdwara [do] you go to?' I said I don't go to any gurdwara. I am a Buddhist, I don't believe in the Caste system. Even though I am Buddhist, she still found out I'm a low Caste." **Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009**

"In Bedford there is pub called 'the Chamar pub' because the majority of the people who go there are from low Caste." **Bedford Focus Group, 6 September**

"My daughter is living in Wolverhampton and her daughter faced this discrimination. I am Buddhist and my children don't know anything else but Buddhism. Because they know that all the Buddhists are converted from the low Castes, so the children here say you are Buddhist but you belong to this Caste - to a lower Caste. She does not know anything because she only knows Buddhists; she does not know low Caste. All I want to say it is happening there." **Southall, 6 September 2009**

"Recently, a khatri [the word Kshatriya is sometimes pronounced in this way] Caste was in love with a different Caste girl. They decided to get married at the 11th hour. The girl's parent, the parents said, 'If you marry this boy we are going to kill ourselves.' I've so [seen] this happen to others." **Hitchin Ravidassia Centre Focus Group, 16 August 2009**

"I have Brahmin friend. I have known him for the last 35 years. He used to be in [my] college. We see each other on regular occasions. What has happened ... I got few other Gujarati friends. One day my son came and informed me that one, his friend, who's also Gujarati, said his dad [who was my friend] told him that [my son] was Chamar. The boy's dad had told his son that my son was Chamar and they should not mingle. Both boys were upset. I was really shocked. Since that day [I] had a resolution in my mind and visits to my friend have reduced. I'm not on bad terms with him but there is question mark about attitude." **Coventry Focus Group, 16 August 2009**

“I’ve got lots of friends across all Castes – they don’t seem to think I am from Ravidassia community. They talk to me openly sometimes. I had a fellow accountant she was trainee at the local authority and we were talking about marriage. She said [her] mum said she could find anybody but whatever you do not find a chamar. I just looked at her, went, ‘hmmm.’ Again, it is the parents coming down in terms of their wisdom for whatever reason.” **Coventry Focus Group, 16 August 2009**

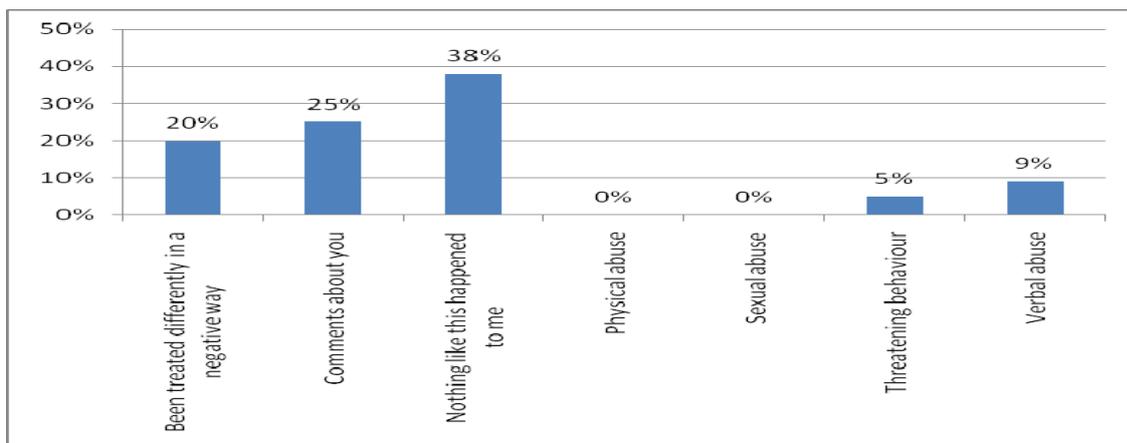
“I have a colleague – electronic engineer just like me. He saw me in this temple on occasion. He questioned me [about] this and that next at work. Up till then, from my name he thought was Pandit [Brahmin in the context]. I was happy with that illusion. He referred [to] ‘your biradari’ – means ‘your community’. I didn’t take any notice of him. After that he started to use the term biradari frequently whenever religion was discussed. I sensed change in his attitude towards me. I had ill feeling why people behave this way.” **Coventry Focus Group, 16 August 2009**

4.3 Employment

“My manager paid me low rate that they said I deserve, when I complained after two years, company paid me £700 and changed my job location.” An online survey comment in response to Question 25 (have you been underpaid because of your job?)

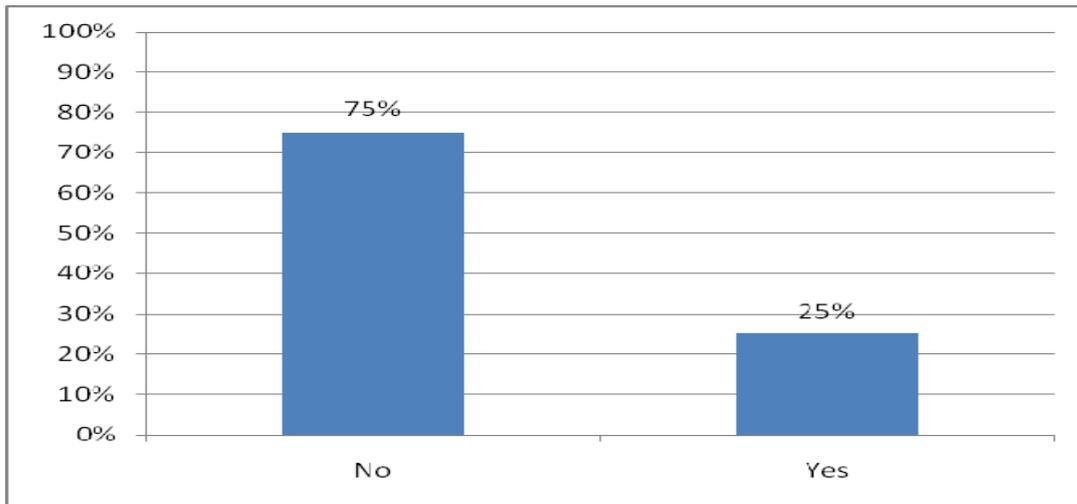
4.3.1. The majority of the people that responded had been treated differently and had negative comments made about them. Five percent had been subjected to threatening behaviour (Table 6).

Table 6



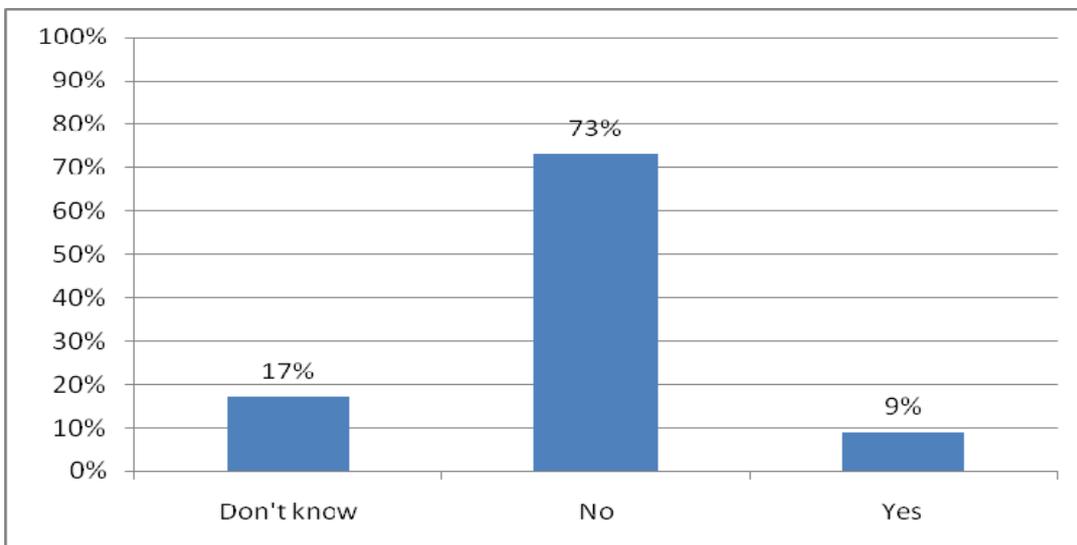
4.3.2. When asked if they had been informally excluded from social events, informal networks within their work place or the ‘grapevine’ because of their Caste, 25 percent of the survey replies stated they had (Table 7). This may have an impact on these people’s career progression.

Table 7



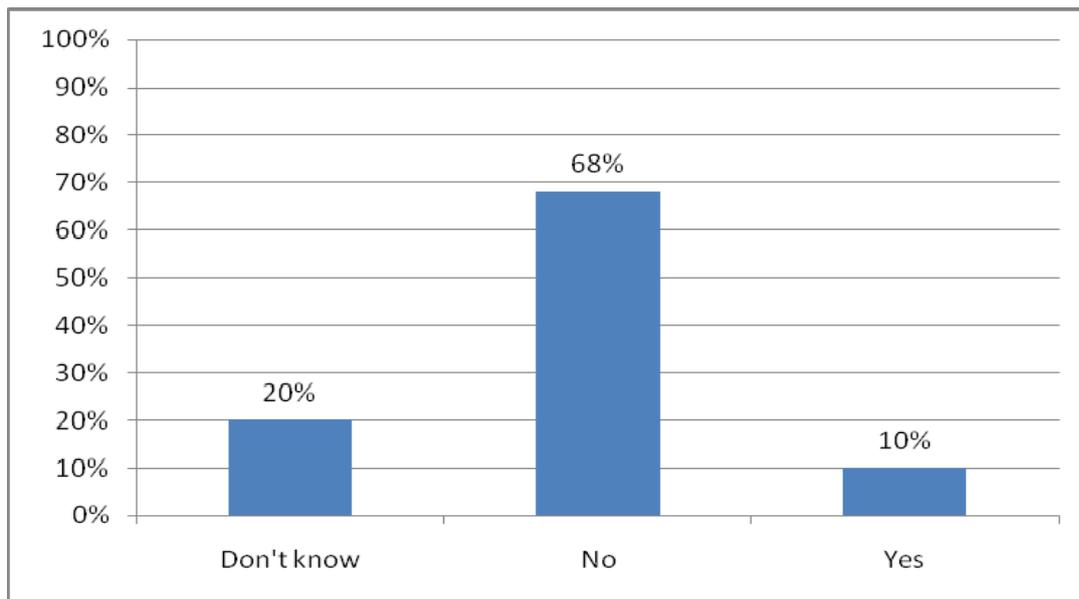
4.3.3. 9 percent believed they had missed a promotion at work because of their Caste (Table 8).

Table 8



4.3.4. When asked if they whether they had been underpaid because of their Caste, 10 percent said they had (Table 9).

Table 9



*“My daughter graduated with a degree and was working in a radio station but not as a presenter but as a secretary. The surname of my daughter is well known amongst the Hindus. No-one can even imagine she belongs to the untouchable class. He recruited her as a secretary. After two years he [her boss] started to smell something – she is not in high Caste. He started investigating behind the scenes. He [she] never told him she was from Chamar community of untouchable community or whatever you want to call it. He never rested until he found out she was from the Chamar community. When he found out, he was talking there in the office and my daughter was there behind the door. He was talking to a client. He said I was talking to your secretary – he said don’t worry about that – she’s only a Chamar. She heard something and she didn’t say anything at the time but when the client was gone she told him that his behaviour was wrong. She told him that though you are the owner of this radio station she had guts to tell him off. After six months she left the job and now works at the airport. What was the reason that she left – because he moved her from the secretary post to another building just to look after as a security guard. Can you believe it? She was shocked to know that we are Untouchables, oppressed. I said look, I did not tell you so much because I have suffered. I can’t tell you [the full story] without crying. And if I tell my children who are educated they are Untouchable they will be similarly hurt in their mind. She said I will leave the job as quickly as possible. She said, ‘He throw me in the rubbish bin.’ She was in a dominating position, everybody- all the actors and actresses used to come to the station – they used to see her first. She used to organise all the meetings speeches here and there.” **Details removed at informant’s request***

*“My [relative] [specific relationship type removed to protect identity] manages the bus company operating in Southampton. He has had lots of issues with his Indian staff over this and had to completely reorganise the shifts system so a “lower Caste” driver would not drive with a “higher Caste” inspector. He also had similar trouble when testing drivers in that higher Castes would not like being analysed by lower Castes. There are many examples. I was speaking to someone in the food manufacturing industry who has had similar problems.” **Online survey***

“Two months ago we had some guests and they said some ladies were working in a factory – Jatt ladies and Chamar ladies. The Jatt ladies told the managers that the Chamar ladies used to do the menial jobs in India – cleaning etc. They asked managers not to give them work next to us but give them jobs like they used to have in India. The managers put a few people on cleaning jobs; the other ladies realised that this is very wrong and they had a meeting with management. We said that we have a mind too and can also think for ourselves – what is going on here? Then they changed things. This was a factory in Birmingham.” **Luton Focus Group, 16 August 2009**

“I am self-employed. I am a builder and I was doing some quotes for an English person. He gave the contract of the job to me. A Jatt builder asked the English man, ‘Why didn’t you give the contract to me?’ He told him that he was high Caste and I was low Caste. I was very annoyed about it.” **Southampton Focus Group, 8 August 2009**

“In Bedford there is a factory in Ampthill, a Dutch company, an electronic company where there are production worker ladies; there is a mixed cross-section of society – Indian community. My son works there, my sister works there. The incident happened two months ago. An English man works there, and he was using the language ‘Chuhra’ and ‘Chamar’, and some people approached him to stop and he continued to use it; it was not just passing comments, it was insulting comments. When he was challenged, it transpired that he was married to an Indian lady who is a Jatt; so it stems down from one generation to the English person and then to us again. And when we challenged him, he was taken to the managers, and they wanted to know, ‘What is Caste?’ If he calls you a black person I can understand. What does this all mean? They called the Director. There was a simple disciplinary on a piece of paper saying ‘don’t do it again’ – because there is no law protecting them.” **Bedford Focus Group, 2 August 2009**

I had problem at work with them [Jatt] and I sorted them out. I was working at a conveyor belt with him, off loading jars. We had to work together but he was not doing his bit. He thought he was superior and did not need to do as much work as me. I kept asking him, ‘What do you think you are doing?’ He would just shrug his shoulders. One day I had had enough and got him by the thought, What else could I do? A number of fellow workers gathered around said, ‘No, no!’ I said, ‘What does he think? Chamars are push over?’ The other stopped me, otherwise I would have sorted him out proper. It was not the first time he annoyed me; he had done it several times before. Management was not around and my fellow workers said I could get sacked. He had also been picking on my younger brother. Next day we were called in and the Manager asked what the problem was. I told my side of the story but he just stood silent.” **Guru Ravidass Temple Walsall, 23 August 2009**

“There was a job for supervisor and one day I was reading the advert for the supervisory job. The superintendent said, ‘Did you apply for this job?’ I said, ‘I stand no chance. Some people are more educated local people.’ And he said, ‘You never know.’ And he laughed and he walked away. And it was the last day on that day. So I thought, why did he laugh? Maybe I stand chance. I got application and I put in his office. The interviews came along – there were two people applying and one was acting supervisor for one year so I was thinking he is going to get it. So notice came on the board, after such and such date [Name removed] will be supervisor from shifting dept. So one day we used to have speakers over. The Personnel manager rang me and I was a union shop steward before that. She said to me, ‘I was very surprised to hear that people came into my office and said he is going to be our supervisor when his forefathers were working in our fields. So we feel, do you still want to go ahead with it?’ I said, ‘Of course.’ The next day I took four speeches of Dr Ambedkar and said, ‘You read this and you will understand.’ So anyway I took over the job. Within four weeks the man was being awkward with me because he was working under my supervision. I suspended him. The other person who was supposed to get the job – he left the job. For ten years I was a supervisor there.”

Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009

4.3.4. Other countries have laws in place to curb Caste discrimination but no such protection exists in the UK. India is one of the other countries that has laws to outlaw caste discrimination. This allows for an individual to be protected in one country but not in another. This may be particularly relevant in the case of the multi-nationals based in the UK with dealings with India.

Members of focus groups gave the following examples of the existence of this problem:

“In our Indian office we discovered that there were mainly people being recruited from a particular background – high Caste Bengali; this came out in our diversity audit. The lower Caste people were either drivers or gardeners. Then we (in UK) changed our systems in India – so when they recruited people, they cannot recruit from just one agency but we listed which agencies they should recruit from. When we audited them two years later – the mixture was a lot more even.”

Hitchin Nirankari Sangat Focus Group, 16 August 2009

“My brother used to get sworn at because [of] his Caste when he was at work – with comments [like] ‘You are not even equal to our shoes.’ This was only three years ago. He stopped working and said I did not even used to get these comments in India. There is more discrimination in the UK, even compared to India.”

Southampton Focus Group, 8 August 2009

“I was working in a factory. I was in a queue and one boy said to me, ‘Stand in the back of the queue.’ I said, ‘Why?’ He said, ‘You know why.’ I said, ‘I don’t know.’ The other queue belonged to low Caste – he should be on the back side. On that day I swallowed – I didn’t say nothing. On the second day I knowingly stood at the front, he said, ‘You standing still there?’ I said, ‘Yes.”

Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009

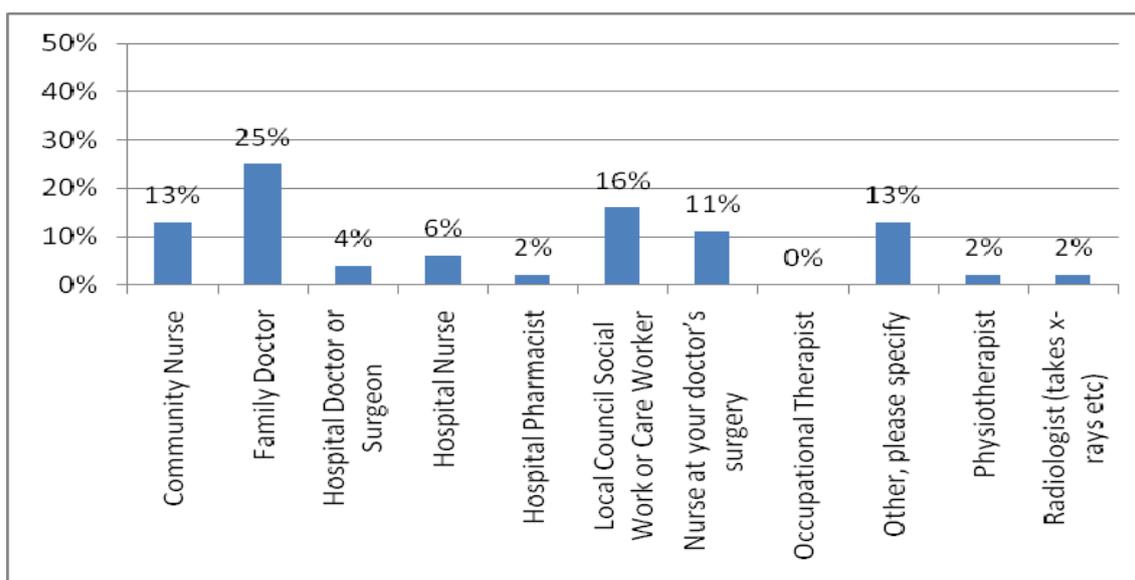
“We used to work in a laundry in England. When ladies of other Castes used to sit in the canteen they did not sit with us and ate separately. This happened about 20 years ago. We realised that they thought we were low Caste. They used to rush to get the water first from the jug so it is not contaminated by [low Caste people’s] touch.”
Southampton Focus Group, 8 August 2009

4.4 Provision of Goods and Services

“My daughter was sick, I reported to the local surgery, [name of surgery removed]. Nobody contacted me over four days. When I reminded them, they forward me appointment. I took my baby to surgery, they told to my baby, ‘Your dad cancel this appointment.’” An online survey comment

4.4.1. Although for the survey we focused on the areas of provision of healthcare and social care services, other aspects of service provision including access to goods, and facilities in places of worship which doubled as community centres was picked up in the focus groups. Of the 43 out of the 101 people who responded to the online survey question about healthcare provision – ‘Which of the following healthcare providers have asked you directly or indirectly about your Caste?’ – 25 percent stated their family doctor had asked about their Caste, 16 percent had experienced similar questioning from a nurse at their Doctor’s surgery, and 13 percent from a community nurse (Table 10). A significant number of doctors practising in the NHS are from overseas (a vast majority from the Indian subcontinent)³⁵. This may suggest potential implications for Caste discrimination occurring in the healthcare sector.

Table 10



³⁵ *British Journal of General Practice* 2007 <http://www.library.nhs.uk/ETHNICITY/ViewResource.aspx?resID=273200>

4.4.2. This may have the potential for Caste discrimination to take place similar to examples shared in the focus groups, some of which are shown below:

“My mother is an old lady receiving daily care in the home. She gets visit in the morning and evening from care workers. One of the care workers who turned up, I know she is the sister of a university colleague of mine. So I know that she is Hindu. She came to the house and quizzed about my mother’s name. She said [first name] is Hindu, [second name] is Sikh, and who are you? She was having difficulty in identifying us. She asked my wife what religion we were. My wife replied that we were not religious. In the end she found out anyway, when she went to mum’s bedroom, after seeing Guru Ravidass’ picture on the wall. My mother is supposed to be helped to have a shower every day. This is part of the instructions given to her by the care authorities. This girl refused to give her the shower. She made all sorts of excuses that the shower is not safe, she [mum] could fall, all that. And yet the other care workers had no problem giving my mother a shower. So we complained and said that this girl is refusing whilst the others seem to have no problem. She was taken off my mum’s calls.” **Coventry Focus Group, 16 August 2009**

“I had an accident at work with a forklift so the specialist who was treating me he said it would be a good idea if we had physiotherapy. There was one physiotherapist in Hayes. So he was treating me and said it would be a good idea if you went to a hot country. And I said can you phone my wife and tell her? Jokingly. I am finding every excuse to go to India. I said I am working for the Mission [Dr Ambedkar Mission]. He said, ‘What mission?’ I said, ‘Against the Caste system.’ He said. ‘I know.’ I said, ‘How do you know?’ He said. ‘I used to have a lady working here. One case came to me as the owner. I said I gave the file to the lady and said can you treat that patient?’ She took the file and she said, ‘No, I can’t treat him. I am high Caste and she is low Caste and I am unable to touch her.’ I said, ‘Are you willing to come forward to give us evidence?’ He said, ‘Any day, any time.” **Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009**

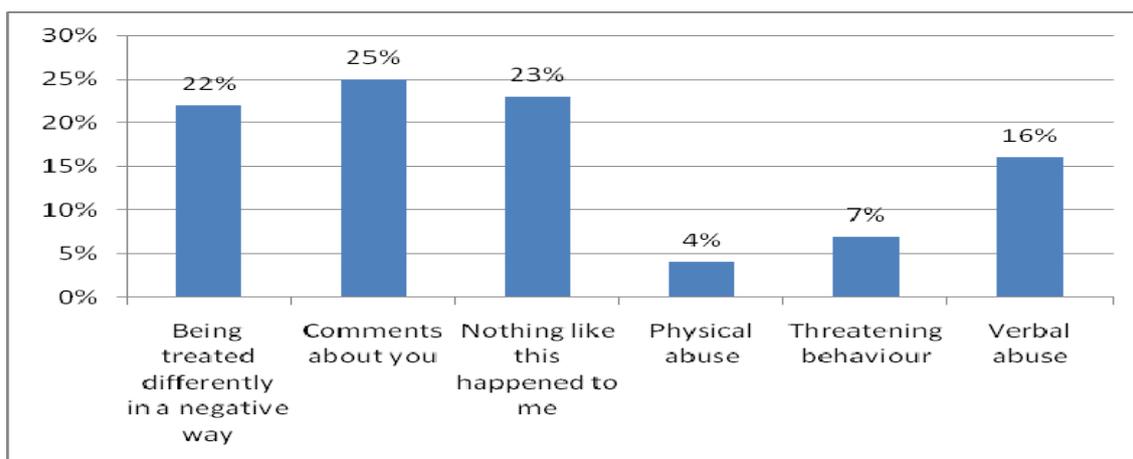
“We feel we are treated differently in shop when buying things.”
Southampton Focus Group, 8 August 2009

4.5 At school and university

“It affected my studies as you would avoid going to the library where large groups were present.” An online survey comment.

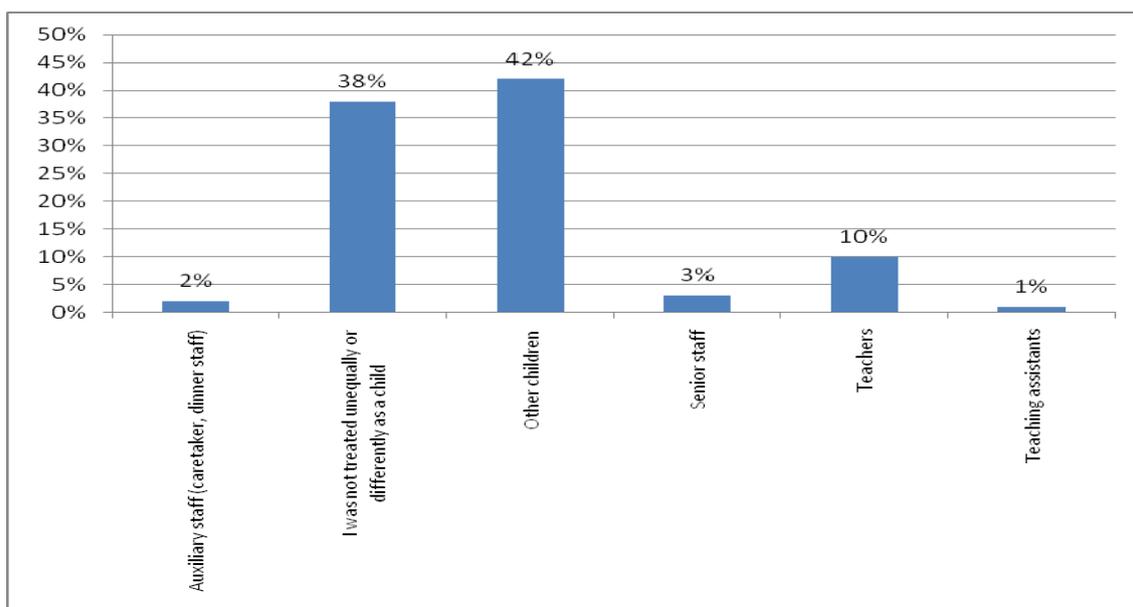
4.5.1. A disturbing number of responses which related to childhood experiences up to the age of 12 years said that 47 percent of them had comments made about them and been treated differently. Seven percent had been subjected to threatening behaviour and 16 percent subjected to verbal abuse because of their Caste (Table 11).

Table 11



4.5.2. Ten percent of the perpetrators of the Caste discrimination against the under 12s were said to be the teachers and 42 percent fellow pupils (Table 12).

Table 12



4.5.2. The following experiences came to light at the focus Groups which support the survey responses:

“I was called things like ‘Shoemaker’ in college. This happened quite often at college.” [Do you think it affected your wish to stay in that college?] [In response]: “Yes, I think it did. It’s mainly Jatts who were doing it.” [Did it affect your performance at college?] [In response] “It probably did. At school I went to a mainly white school – I didn’t grow up around Jatts. Caste came up in the college on a daily basis and you would find that people would group together. The name calling happened every day especially when the cricket’s on – that’s another thing. It just made you feel very different but you just want to get on with things. You think there is something wrong with you – why am I being treated very different?” **Bedford Focus Group, 2 August 2009**

“This example relates to the London School of Economics. There is a Hindu cultural society and what not, and when people tell us what is happening, they have cultural institute where some of the boys’ behaviour cannot be tolerated. They defaced Dr Ambedkar’s statue and we wrote to the LSE and told them this is what is happening – you can see how they disrespect Dr Ambedkar as he is symbol of destroying Caste system; for him, India wanted a Caste-less society. And these people even have all the privileges of coming into a world class institute and still they can carry on with their narrow-minded... that sort of inferiority conflict they imported with them. Wherever they have gone, they carry it with them, never mind how educated or intellectual they are.” **Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009**

“My nephew, about five years ago, goes to ...school, basically got bullied at school. He came home and asked his dad about chamars and chuhras. Obviously some of the kids were taunting him because of his Caste. This happened about five years ago.” [What action did you take?] “We did raise it with the headmaster, whether my brother mentioned the cause being Caste relatedit was taken to bullying. In the end we eventually moved him to a different school”. [Do you feel they [the school] had adequate awareness?] “On bullying they are aware and take that on board quite. By Caste I don’t think they are quite aware of which Castes people belong to. I’ll add another note. The reason why we have different temples is Caste-based. If there wasn’t any Caste then we wouldn’t have [different] temples. We associate with Ravidassia ...low Caste, whatever, but all the temples are based on Caste discrimination....committee members, presidents ...are elected based on Caste. The proof is the number of gurdwaras we have by different communities basically says Caste discrimination exists. That is very interesting point because we got nine Sikh Temples here in Coventry.” **Coventry Focus Group, 16 August 2009**

“Being at College, some people tease others about Caste; 3-4 of my friends got into an argument and fight and got suspended and dropped out of college as a result and I know three cases that went to court as well. I know the guy who was calling names, he had his chin broken. Our boys and children are not scared but they are being picked on.” **Bedford Focus Group, 2 August 2009**

4.6 Places of worship

“Probably the place where you find the most discrimination is in the temples – it should be the one where you don’t find it but it’s where you do find it.”

Hitchin Nirankari Sangat Focus Group, 16 August 2009

4.6.1. 18 percent of online survey responses indicated that they knew the Caste system existed in the UK, because of Caste based places of worship. This was picked up further in the focus groups.

“One of the ladies from our community used to do seva [give time voluntarily to helping out at a religious place of worship] at another Sikh temple. One of the Giannis [Sikh priests] at the other Sikh temple remarked she come here from a low Caste; my point is she is a human being as well and soon as they find out your Caste they start discriminating.” **Luton Focus Group, 16 August 2009**

“We have four temples here because of Caste. They used to call us ‘chamar’ and say they did not wish to eat rotis [Indian flat bread] at the temple because chamar ladies had cooked them.” **Southampton Focus Group, 8 August 2009**

4.7 The UK Government’s commitment to end discrimination

“The main issue with caste stems within communities as the system exists within. The western world does not show any of this and everything is to one as an individual. For example a group of Sikh lads at school would refer to you as low caste chamars.” Online survey comment

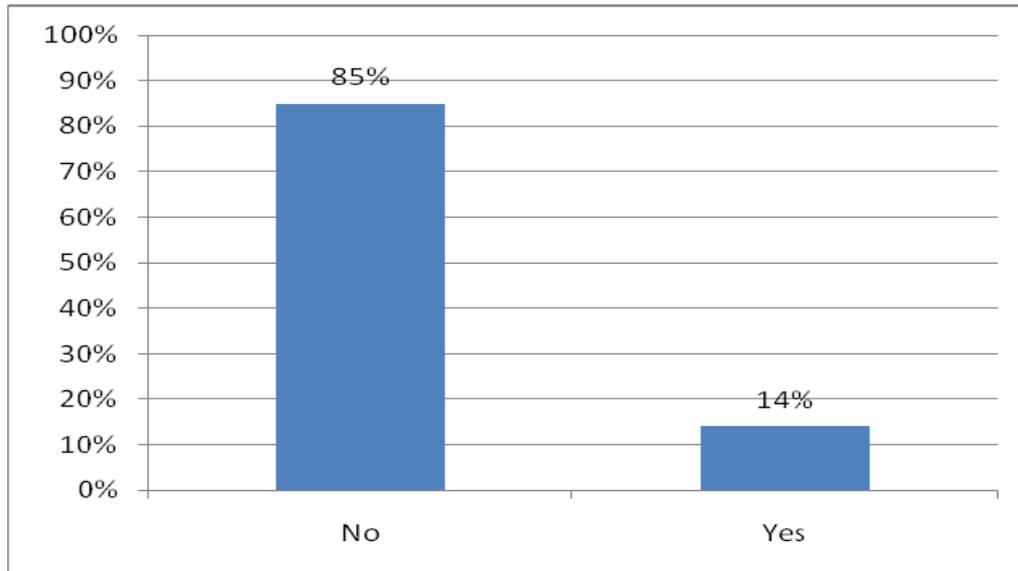
“Three relationships broke down and turned to violence due to caste – I was treated poorly, because the men believed they could do so due to my caste.” Online survey comment

“If someone calls a black person ‘nigger’, that person can take action. If someone calls us ‘chamar’ we can’t do anything.” Walsall Focus Group, 23 August 2009

4.7.1. A number of participants in the focus groups talked positively about the UK Government having a genuine commitment to diversity and to equality of opportunity. It was in this context that they said they could not understand why Government did not wish to provide legal protection against Caste discrimination that they had experienced and knew that they would continue to experience. Nor could they understand why Government had appeared to adopt the views of the Hindu Forum of Britain and the Hindu Council UK – the two largest Hindu organisations – and ignore the voices of the organisations that had formed to support them and raise awareness of Caste Discrimination the UK.³⁶ 85 percent of the survey responses to question 51 (see Annex B) believed that there was no legislation in place to protect them (Table 13).

Table 13

³⁶ Equality Bill – Bill Committee Hansard 11 June 2009.



4.7.2. The lack of independent and academic research in this area has contributed to the Government's inaction to provide protection via the Equality Bill 2009 to date. This study confirms the existence of Caste. There is clear evidence from the survey results and the focus groups that the Caste system has been imported by the Asian Diaspora to the UK and the associated Caste discrimination takes places beyond personal choices and social interaction. Independent research in this area would assist in promoting Government's commitment to diversity and to equality of opportunity for all its citizens in the UK.

4.7.3. Examples of Caste discrimination do not appear to be well documented, cited in clearly signposted locations, nor made available in a user friendly way.

4.7.4. A recent Caste-based murder that took place in Vienna in May 2009 is referred to here, as its impact extended to the UK:

"Several thousand Sikhs from the Ravidassia Community around the country (and a group from France) marched through central London on Sunday 13 June, 2009 to the Indian High Commission, calling for an end to all Caste-based discrimination."³⁷ The issue of Caste identity is also raised on the same internet page "Despite the teaching of the Guru Granth Sahib, Caste-awareness has remained strong among many Sikhs, and with it Caste discrimination by those who consider themselves higher Caste. It remains powerful despite being illegal in modern India, where the former 'lower Castes' generally refer to themselves as 'Dalit' but are officially known as 'Scheduled Caste'."

4.7.5. This was a high profile murder and assassination attempt by Sikh militants and although not in the UK, there is no doubt of the scale of the impact of this on many nations. In the UK the protest march that took place in London had an estimated 7,000 participants, not just the "several thousand" mentioned above and photos from the day taken by an independent journalist and photographer can be found on <http://www.demotix.com/news/sikhs-march-london-against-discrimination>

³⁷ Internet 1/10/2009 <http://www.wwrn.org/article.php?idd=31080&sec=67&cont=5>

4.7.6. There are around 175,000 estimated Ravidassi people in the UK. The national Valmiki and other Dalit communities have not been included in this figure but in any case, form a substantial proportion of the 2001 census figure of 336,000 Sikhs in the UK.

4.8 Employment and the Work Environment

4.8.1. The success of India as an industrial and technological powerhouse is fast being recognised and with its success, it has been able to extend its operation around the world. Virendra Sharma, MP Ealing Southall, points to fears that the increasing number of Indian companies setting up in Britain may inadvertently import Caste-based practices.³⁸

4.8.2. With this comes the increasing risk of importing work practices which systemically introduce and embed Caste and therefore may apply practices which are Caste discriminatory. It is clear that monitoring of such companies needs to be carried out with a clear focus on those that employ managers, senior managers and directors from countries which practise the Caste system.

4.8.3. It would also help if measures could be taken to extend this monitoring to British-based companies who have operations in India and rely on local managers and senior managers for their work practices to be set up and maintained. It would be relatively easy for lower Caste people to be directly discriminated simply because they do not have the required knowledge, skills or expertise to be able to perform the tasks required. As they may have been denied opportunities to gain such education, training and development for a whole variety of factors, this is a tragedy being perpetuated systematically. For these reasons the Dalit Solidarity Network UK have lobbied to prevent this happening, even undertaking visits to companies in India to raise awareness at very senior levels.

4.9 Healthcare

4.9.1. With the increasing numbers of the elderly in the UK population, there will need to be a strengthened provision of care in all areas for this same target audience. One aspect of which is an increase in the number of nursing homes, domiciliary care, or elderly care homes required for an aging population from the Asian Diaspora. Alongside this will come a possibility of Caste-based discrimination hidden behind closed doors as elderly residents may be subject to Caste discrimination by higher Caste staff and feel too afraid or unsure to speak out. The response to question 37 of the online questionnaire provides an indication of the number of respondents seeking access to healthcare who had been asked about (either directly or indirectly) about their Caste – 25 percent of the respondents indicated that their family doctor had enquired about their Caste.

4.10 Conclusion

4.10.1. There is evidence that the Caste system has been imported to the UK by the South Asian Diaspora in the last 60 years or so. There is also evidence that associated Caste discrimination takes places in the UK and is not just limited to personal choices and matters of social interaction as argued by the Hindu Council UK and the Hindu Forum of Britain.

³⁸ Internet 1/10/2009 <http://www.ucanews.com/2009/08/04/rights-group-urges-action-on-caste-discrimination-in-uk/>

4.10.2. It is clear that Caste discrimination is apparent in the areas covered by the Equality Bill which sets out reducing socio-economic inequalities harassment and victimisations and eliminate discrimination in access to services and goods.

4.10.3. This scoping study has gathered further examples of Caste discrimination as well as quantitative data to support those already presented to Government by organisations like ACDA, CWUK, DSN, and FABO. There is a real danger that if Government does not deal with the issue of Caste discrimination within the Equality Bill 2009, the problem will grow, as it will have been left unchecked. This will be against the values of fairness and equality of treatment that are robustly promoted by the Government in the UK.

5. Recommendations

5.1. The following key recommendations are made to Government and representative organisations to be explored in the wider context of the Government's policies on encouraging a more cohesive society:

- i. Government to provide legal protection against Caste discrimination for victims (or possible victims), we believe an amendment clause in the Equality Bill 2009 is the right vehicle**
- ii. Department for Education and Schools to provide guidance to statutory and voluntary organisations and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) for teachers in schools to improve their understanding and skills in recognising Caste-based bullying and discrimination;**
- iii. The Department for Work and Pensions, Confederation of British Industry (CBI), and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) to ensure that companies operating in Britain do not inadvertently import Caste-based practices, and put monitoring in place to support all workers and members rights;**
- iv. The British Medical Association and the Department of Health to review the Caste issue within its wider equality agenda for patients; and**
- v. The Equality and Human Rights Commission to commission an in-depth academic study into the Caste system, Caste mobility and Caste discrimination in the UK, and to research the associated impacts on the health and well-being of victims of Caste discrimination.**

6. Methodology

6.1 Our approach to this scoping study

6.1.1. This scoping study was designed to establish if the Caste system and Caste discrimination exists in the UK and to collate examples of Caste discrimination and document the impact on its victims.

6.1.2. In view of the limited time to conduct the research we used the following research methods:

a. A **Questionnaire** that covered both perceptions and experiences of Caste discrimination (see Annex B). Due to the shortage of time we decided to provide this Questionnaire online. This had the added benefit of improving its accessibility and reach. 101 questionnaires were completed online via the ACDA website. The software package counted the data and the information (including the comments posted) was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. This data was later translated into graphs and the relevant comments were included in as part of the analysis.

b. **Focus groups**. Nine focus groups were conducted in various geographical locations (Bedford, Coventry (2), Luton, Hitchin (2), Southampton, Southall and Walsall) where large populations of the Asian Diaspora live.

6.1.2. In this research, we investigated people's beliefs and experiences of Caste discrimination.

6.2 The perceptions of Caste discrimination

6.2.1. Previous research conducted by the Hindu Forum of Britain³⁹ and Hindu Council UK⁴⁰ concludes that the Caste system exists in the UK. However, both organisations argue that Caste discrimination is not endemic in British society and there is no role for Caste in the provision of education, employment or goods and services. They accept that due to cultural practises and tradition, Caste can play a role in social interactions and personal choices like marriages, conversations and friendships. They further add that respondents to the Hindu Forum of Britain have categorically requested that the Government should not interfere in personal choices and matters of social interaction.

6.2.2. A number of organisations formed in the United Kingdom, including the ACDA, DSN, VODI, FABO and CWUK, argue otherwise. For many years, they have been raising awareness of how the Caste system is taking root in the UK and have described

³⁹ *Caste in the UK* – see N2 above.

⁴⁰ *The Caste System* – see N2 above.

through case studies the impact of this system on the victims of Caste discrimination. Reports and submissions from these organisations cite examples and evidence of Caste discrimination taking place in the UK which extends beyond social interaction and personal choice to the areas of employment and provision of goods and services and systematic bullying and harassment.

6.3 Gathering perceptions and experiences

6.3.1. Over 300 people took part in this research. The nine focus groups comprised people of a varied age and gender. They belonged mostly to the so called Dalit background from the Ravidassia, Ambedkarite, Valmiki and Buddhist communities. The focus groups took place during August-September 2009 to gather perceptions and experiences of:

- The Caste system in the UK
- Caste discrimination in the UK
- The impact of Caste discrimination on victims.

6.3.2. Critical Incident Analysis was used in the focus groups to provide a variety of different ways in which to elicit the information required, recognising the sensitivity of the subject matter and the potential reluctance of participants to talk openly about their experiences and their perceptions and beliefs.

6.3.3. Questioning of the participants during the focus groups was open and guided by the topics set out in the outline of how the focus group sessions would be conducted (see Annex D). The participants were only made aware of the types of questions that would be raised at the beginning of the focus groups which each lasted between 60-90 minutes.

6.4 Sampling of participants

6.4.1. Participants were invited to attend the focus group sessions. This approach was adopted to obtain quality examples of Caste discrimination, as the main focus of the research was qualitative and required the identification of a wide range of attitudes and perceptions. Selection of participants to represent each group was itself random and covered all areas of employment, age, and gender. Privacy of their feedback and data was guaranteed.

6.5 Thematic Analysis

6.5.1. The qualitative information gathered from the focus groups was analysed through a series of stages using a thematic analysis approach which analysed the data by identifying, coding and categorizing patterns found in the data.

6.5.2. Using such a qualitative research approach results in large amounts of contextually laden, subjective, and richly detailed data. This data originating from the focus groups transcripts were pared down to represent major themes or categories that describe the phenomenon being studied. Data reduction facilitates communicating findings simply and efficiently.

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Annex A: Academic advisers and collaborators

Dr Roger Green, Director, Centre for Community Research, University of Hertfordshire
CQSW, Cert. in Community Work, BA, MA, PhD, FRSA
Email Address: R.D.Green@herts.ac.uk



Memberships and Appointments:

Currently Associate Editor, Youth and Policy Journal; Member, British Sociological Association; Trustee, Concorde Youth Centre; External Assessor, Big Lottery, Research Grants Programme.

First developed an interest in communities after spending a number of years working in London firstly as a youth worker, then as a community development worker, followed by retraining as a qualified social worker. A sociologist, specialising in applied social research, and community activist for over 25 years, Roger is best known for his work on socially excluded, and marginalised groups and communities, in particular his pioneering participatory action research project on the Kingsmead Estate in Hackney, East London for the past twelve years.

A regular contributor to academic and community publications he also disseminates his work at community forums and meetings, and presents papers at international and national conferences. He is a trustee and advisor to several community projects, and regularly provides expert advice to Government Departments, Local Authorities, NGOs, and Housing Associations on community development issues.

Current research projects include: A British Council three-year funded UK-India Educational Research Initiative. A collaborative research project, *Widening Participation: Diversity, Isolation or Integration in Higher Education?*, with academic partners at the TATA Institute of Social Sciences, and the Guru Nanak College of Education and Research, Mumbai, India. The UK research team comprises academics from the University of Hertfordshire, University of Bradford, and the University of Cambridge. The research aims to explore the nature of social cohesion, integration, diversity, equality and discrimination experienced by disadvantaged and under-represented groups in Higher Education Institutions in the UK and India.

15-month project funded by the National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease, examining social exclusion/inclusion issues relating to young people aged between 16-21 years of age from Black and Minority Ethnic groups who are experiencing either Colitis or Crohn's disease, entitled, 'Social Inclusion and Inflammatory Bowel Disease: The Experience of Young People from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities'. Research partners, Royal London Hospital, St. George's Hospital, Tooting, London, Royal Children's Hospital, Bristol.

Recent publications include: Cox P., Geison T., and Green R. (eds.) (2008) *Critical Reflections on Theories, Methodologies and Methods: Connections Between Research and Social Change*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Green R. and Curran B. (2008) Young People and Poverty, in Jeffs T. and Gilchrist R. (eds.) 100th Edition of Youth and Policy, *Youth and Policy*.

Green R., Dicks S. and Buckroyd J., (2009) Counselling in Culturally Diverse Inner-City Communities: The Rise and Fall of the Kabin Counselling Project, *Journal of Social Work Practice*.

Professor Gurharpal Singh, BSc. Economics, M.A., PhD, University of Birmingham, Nadir Dinshaw Professor of Inter-Religious Relations.



He has held academic posts at Birkbeck College, De Montfort University and the University of Hull. At Hull he was the C.R. Parekh Chair of Indian Politics before joining the University of Birmingham in 2002.

Since 2005, Gurharpal has been the Deputy Director of Department for International Development (UK) funded research consortium on Religions and Development Research Programme based in the International Development Department at the University of Birmingham. This research programme is an international research partnership exploring the relationships between several major world religions, development in low-income countries and poverty reduction. It has country partners in India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania and has thirteen individual research projects that range from religion and governance to the role of faith based organisations in service delivery and post-conflict reconstruction.

Prof Gurharpal Singh is Deputy Director of the Religions and Development Research Programme. He is a political scientist trained at the London School of Economics and has specialised on India politics since the early 1980s. His research interests include: ethnicity and ethnic conflict; religion and politics in South Asia; the Sikh Diaspora; multiculturalism; and political corruption.

He is the author of a number of publications including *Governance in Multicultural Societies* (co-edited with John Rex) (2004) and *Sikhs in Britain: The Making of a Community* (with D.S.Tatla) (2006).

Professor Stephen Whittle OBE, University of Manchester, Professor of Equalities Law



Research Interests

Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, Transgender, Feminist and Queer theories, Employment Law, Pressure Groups.

Other Information:

President-Elect of WPATH; the World Professionals Association for Transgender Health (formerly HBIGDA) – www.hbigda.org Vice-President of Press For Change – www.pfc.org.uk
Editorial Board of the Journal of Gender Studies

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09589236.asp>
Editorial Board of the International Journal of Transgenderism
<http://www.symposion.com/ijt/index.htm>

Annapurna Waughray, Manchester Metropolitan University

Annapurna Waughray, Senior Lecturer in Law, Manchester Metropolitan University;
former practising solicitor.

Research interests:

Caste and the law; human rights; discrimination law; human rights, discrimination and the law in South Asia.

Other Information:

Member of the Ambedkar Memorial Lecture Committee; Refugee & Migrant Forum
Manchester, Basic Rights Group, Strategy and Advisory Board.

Member of the Law Society of England and Wales; International Law Association; Society
of Legal Scholars; Socio-Legal Studies Association; British Association for South Asian
Studies.

Editorial Board, Journal of Islamic State Practice in International Law.

Annapurna Waughray is the author of 'Caste Discrimination: A Twenty-First Century
Challenge for UK Discrimination Law?' (2009) *The Modern Law Review* 72(2) 182-219.

Annex B Online Survey about Caste and Caste Discrimination

SECTION 1: About you

1) Please confirm: I live in the UK or have recently lived in the UK.

- Yes – Please proceed to the survey
- No – please DO NOT continue with this survey

2) I am a:

- Female
- Male

3) My ethnicity is

- a) WHITE British
- b) WHITE Irish
- c) WHITE Other White background
- d) MIXED White and Black Caribbean
- e) MIXED White and Black African
- f) MIXED White and Asian
- g) MIXED Other Mixed background
- h) ASIAN or ASIAN BRITISH Indian
- i) ASIAN or ASIAN BRITISH Pakistani
- j) ASIAN or ASIAN BRITISH Bangladeshi
- k) ASIAN or ASIAN BRITISH Other Asian background
- l) BLACK or BLACK BRITISH Caribbean
- m) BLACK or BLACK BRITISH African
- n) BLACK or BLACK BRITISH Other Black background
- o) CHINESE
- p) OTHER ETHNIC GROUP

4) I describe my faith/religion as:

- Ravidassia
- Ravidassia Sikh
- Hindu
- Sikh
- Buddhist
- Radaswami

- Valmiki
- Narankari
- Muslim
- Christian
- Other – please specify

5) My age, in years, is:

- under 18
- 18 – 30
- 31 – 50
- 51- 60
- over 60

6) My current social class is: (if retired please tick which applied to your area of work)

- I Professional etc occupations
- II Managerial and Technical occupations
- III Skilled occupations
- (N) non-manual
- (M) manual
- IV Partly-skilled occupations
- V Unskilled occupations

7) The name of the town I live in is:

8) The first part of my home post code is:

9) The educational level I have reached is: (please tick the highest level)

- No qualifications
- GCSE or equivalent
- A level or equivalent (e.g. NVQ)
- Degree

Higher Degree

SECTION 2 : About Caste

10) Do you know what the word or term Caste means?

No

Yes

If yes, at what age did you become aware of it?

**11). Which of the following (Caste (jati, Varna, biradari) are you identified with?
Please note- it is not our intention to offend anyone with the questionnaire wording**

Dalit (Sikh, Christian, Buddhist)

Chamar

Valmiki

Ravidassia

Ramgaria

RajPut

Jat

Brahmin

Tarkhan

Lohar

Kumar

Shimbhay

Other

12) Do you let people know which caste you belong to?

No

Yes

13). If not, what is preventing you? Tick all that apply:

my job or workplace

my family or partner

my home or social life

I do not want tell people about my caste

I am the caste I am and do not wish to share it in public

Other

14) Have you been discriminated because of your caste?

No

Yes

15) If yes, how often has this discrimination occurred?

less than 5 times

between 6-10 times

11 times or more

16) What makes you think that the Caste System exists in the UK?

People refer to their Caste

. When I meet some they ask probing questions which makes me feel that they are trying to find out which Caste I might be

Matrimonial websites and newspaper adverts specify the Caste of the person looking for a partner and what Caste that person needs to be

Punjabi Bhangra music often sings the praises of the 'Jat' Caste

SECTION 3 : Form of Caste Discrimination

Childhood and Adolescence

In the following questions, you may tick **any or all** of the responses that describe what has happened to you.

17) When you were a child – up to the age of 12 yrs did you experience any of the following because of your caste difference at school? Tick all that apply

Being treated differently in a negative way

Comments about you

verbal abuse

threatening behaviour

physical abuse

sexual abuse

nothing like this happened to me

18) In School, Did you experience any of the above from any of the following? Tick all that apply

- Other children
- Teachers
- Teaching assistants
- Auxiliary staff (caretaker, dinner staff)
- Senior staff
- I was not treated unequally or differently as a child

19) When you were an adolescent – from the ages of 12-18 did you experience any of the following because of your caste difference at school? Tick all that apply

- Being treated differently in a negative way
- verbal abuse
- threatening behaviour
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- nothing like this happened to me

SECTION 4 : Work

20) My employment status is:

- the Public sector, e.g. central or local government, hospitals, schools, HMRC etc.
- the Voluntary sector e.g. charities, religious organisations
- the Private sector: any other non local or central government, or voluntary sector employer
- Self-employed

21) If you work in the public sector, please say which e.g. primary education, HMRC, local authority social services etc

22) My contract at work is:

- Permanent
- Fixed term
- Temporary
- I am self-employed

23) Do you feel you have ever missed promotion at work as a consequence of your caste?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

24) Have you ever been asked to do a job that you are over-qualified for as a consequence of your caste?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

25) Have you ever been under-paid for the work that you do as a consequence of your caste?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

26) if you answered yes to the above question, please give example/s:

27) Have you ever been put in a less visible position at work as a consequence of your caste?

- Yes – I requested this
- Yes – I did not request this
- No
- I don't know

28) Have you ever experienced any of these things by your co-workers because of your caste? Tick all that apply

- Been treated differently in a negative way
- comments about you
- verbal abuse
- threatening behaviour

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- nothing like this happened to me

29) Do you believe that your current co-workers regard you as equal? For example do they verbally address you with the correct name etc.?

- Yes
- No – but they are making a good effort
- No – they don't seem to be trying
- They don't know about my caste

30) Have you ever felt informally excluded at work as a result of your caste? For example not being invited to social events; not being part of informal networks in the organisation or 'grapevine'?

- Yes
- No

31) If you answered 'yes' to the question above, please describe an example below:

32) Have you ever been through, or are you in the process of, a formal grievance procedure taken by your employer which you feel is related to your caste?

- Yes
- No
- No – but there have been many 'off the record' complaints made about me or my work

33) If you have been through a completed formal grievance procedure taken by your employer what was the outcome?

- The outcome was in my employer's favour
- The outcome was in my favour

34) Have you taken a grievance about Caste discrimination to the Trade Unions?

- Yes
- No

35) If you have answered yes, to the above, please give examples below:

36) If you have answered no to question 34 (Have you taken a grievance about Caste discrimination to the Trade Unions?), please describe what prevented you from doing so, below:

SECTION 5 : Healthcare

37) Which of the following healthcare providers have asked you directly or indirectly about your Caste? Tick all that apply:

- Family Doctor
- Hospital Doctor or Surgeon
- Community Nurse
- Nurse at your doctor's surgery
- Hospital Nurse
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Radiologist (takes x-rays etc)
- Hospital Pharmacist
- Local Council Social Work or Care Worker
- Other, please specify

38) Have you ever been refused any treatment or felt that your treatment could have been better, because a doctor or nurse did not approve of your Caste?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

39) Do you believe that your Caste adversely affects the way that you are treated by healthcare professionals?

- Yes
- No

40) If you answered 'yes' to either of the previous questions, please describe a fairly recent example of how you have been treated differently:

41) Do you feel that your caste has ever affected the way you can access routine treatment on the NHS?

- Yes
- No

42) Have you ever experienced the following while being treated in hospital or accessing healthcare? Tick all that apply.

- Being treated differently in a negative way
- comments about you
- verbal abuse
- threatening behaviour
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- nothing like this happened to me

43) Was this from any of the following healthcare professionals? Tick all that Apply

- Family Doctor
- Hospital Doctor or Surgeon
- Community Nurse
- Nurse at your doctor's surgery
- Hospital Nurse
- Physiotherapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Radiologist (takes x-rays etc)
- Hospital Pharmacist
- Local Council Social Work or Care Worker
- Other, please specify

SECTION 6 : College or University

44) Have you ever experienced any of the following from your fellow students because of your caste? Tick all that apply

- Being treated differently in a negative way
- verbal abuse
- threatening behaviour
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- nothing like this happened to me
- I was/am not as my preferred/acquired gender

45) Have you ever experienced any of the following from your tutors/lecturers because of your caste? Tick all that apply

- Being treated differently in a negative way
- comments about you
- verbal abuse
- threatening behaviour
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- nothing like this happened to me

46) Do you/did you ever feel informally excluded in your college/university as a result of your Caste ? For example not being invited to social events; not being part of networks or a 'grapevine'?

- Yes
- No
- To my knowledge, no one appears/appeared to know anything different about my caste

47) Overall, how discriminatory do you think the colleges or universities where you have been are/were?

- I feel/felt most tolerated and understood when at my college/university
- Less discriminatory than anywhere else
- Quite discriminatory
- Very discriminatory

48) Did the university or college have anti-discrimination policies which took into account the issue of Caste – especially for example in counselling young people over relationship break-ups, negative stereotypes and so on:

- Yes
- No
- Not to my knowledge

49) If you believe your colleges/ university did not have anti-discrimination policies which took into account the issue of Caste –how did that affect your studies and your performance or course results? Please give your example(s) below:

SECTION 7 : Police and the Criminal Service Justice System

50) How confident are you that you would be understood appropriately by members of the police service you reported a Caste discrimination case?

- Not confident at all
- Quite confident
- Very confident

51) If you were discriminated on the basis did you believe there was legislation (laws) in place to protect you? :

- Yes
- No

SECTION 8. Home and social life

52) Has your caste ever contributed to a breakdown in your relationship with a girl/boyfriend, partner or spouse?

- Yes
- No

53) Have you experienced any of the following with a partner or spouse because of your caste? Tick all that apply

- Being treated differently in a negative way
- comments about you
- verbal abuse
- threatening behaviour
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- nothing like this happened to me

54) Has your Caste contributed to a breakdown in your relationship with your family or any of its members?

Yes

No

55) Has your caste contributed to a breakdown in your relationship with your close friends?

Yes

No

My close friends do not know about my Caste

56) Have you experienced any of the following with your close friends because of your Caste? Tick all that apply

Some do not speak to me any more

None speak to me any more

comments about you

verbal abuse

threatening behaviour

physical abuse

sexual abuse

nothing like this happened to me

57) Have you ever felt informally excluded in your local community as a result of your caste? For example not being invited to social events; not being part of networks or a 'grapevine'?

Yes

No

Sometimes

No-one in my local community knows about my preferred/acquired gender

58) If you answered 'yes' or 'sometimes' to the question above, please describe how:

56) Have you experienced any of the following while out in your neighbourhood while out as your Caste? Tick all that apply

- Being treated differently in a negative way
- comments
- verbal abuse
- threatening behaviour
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- nothing like this happened to me

60) Has it ever been suggested or have you ever been restricted from contact with children because of your caste in the following: Tick all that apply

- Children in your work
- Your own children
- Neighbours children
- Children of other members of your family
- To my knowledge I have not been restricted from contact with children

61) Have your children been bullied at school because of your Caste?

- Yes
- No
- No-one at the school knows about my Caste

62) Do you believe that your child/children have been denied entry into a State independent school (for example a Hindu, Muslim or Sikh school) because of your Caste?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please explain below:

Not applicable

63) Have you ever had to move to a different area because of your Caste?

- Yes
- No

64) Are there some social spaces (for example pubs, bars, social clubs that you used to go to) that you avoid now because of your caste?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain why

65) Have you ever experienced the following while out in social spaces that you felt were because of your caste? Tick all that apply

comments about you

verbal abuse

threatening behaviour

physical abuse

sexual abuse

nothing like this happened to me

66) Have you ever been refused service in a pub, restaurant, hotel or any other place providing leisure services, such as a gym, because of your caste?

Yes

No

If yes, please describe what happened

66) As an adult (over the age of 21) did you ever attempt suicide, or self harm, because of your caste or because of other people's reactions to it?

No

Once

Twice

More than twice

SECTION 10: Additional comments from you

SECTION 10 : Additional comments from you This next section gives you the opportunity to give other comments If you know of anyone else who might be interested in completing this online questionnaire, ACDA would be very grateful if you please bring it to their attention and encourage them to complete it. We thank you so much for your valuable time. If there is anything you would like to add to this survey that you believe has not been covered, please add your comments below: It may be easier to type it up in word first and then copy.

Annex C Focus Group – Outline for the sessions

Introduction

- Provide background on the Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance and its overall aims and objectives.
- Explain that from each focus group session, ACDA hopes to:
 - a. establish if Caste Discrimination exists in the UK (including perceptions and experience
 - b. in cases where it does occur, identify in which settings (social, employment, religion, provision of care and services for example) it occurs
 - c. the impact of the Caste discrimination on the victims.
- Explain what will be involved in the focus group exercise including logging names and contact details of participants; their agreement for any follow up if further clarification needed. Inform participants that the discussion will be sound recorded for further analysis and evidence purposes and that ACDA needs their permission to use the outcomes of the focus groups to compile a report and to support the work of the ACDA.

Key Questions to stimulate discussion

1. What do you understand by the word caste?
2. Have you ever experienced caste discrimination in the UK? (Draw out many examples as possible; refer to being treated in a different way, comments, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, physical abuse, sexual abuse; aim to find examples in employment, education, service sectors)
3. Why do you think caste discrimination occurs?
4. How would you describe your religion/faith?
5. Have you ever experienced caste discrimination outside the UK? (draw out examples, but not too much time on this)
6. How do people know your caste?
7. If you think caste discrimination exist do you think there is any difference between caste discrimination outside the UK (e.g. India) compared to that in the UK?
8. Is you have experienced caste discrimination
 - a. how did it make you feel?
 - b. did you take time off work?
 - c. what did you do about it?
 - d. where do you think you can go for help?
 - e. how would it affect your family?
 - f. Contributed to a breakdown in your relationship with friends?
9. Do you think you have ever missed promotion at work because of caste discrimination?
10. Have you ever experienced caste discrimination at work by your colleagues?
11. Have you ever felt excluded from any activity because of your caste?
12. Have your children ever been bullied at school because of your caste?
13. Have you ever been refused entrance in a pub, restaurant, hotel or any other place because of your caste?
14. Do you think the Police are able to recognise and cope with problems of caste discrimination?

Annex D – FOI responses from Government

Mr Pashori Lal

Chair, Anti Caste discrimination Alliance

02 July 2009

By E-mail: plga.co.uk

Dear Mr Lal,

I am writing in response to your request of 10 June 2009 for information about Caste discrimination and the Equality Bill, which Communities and Local Government received on 11 June 2009. Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that CLG does hold the information that you have requested and that I am able to provide you with the following information:

1) *a list of those organisations you consulted on the issue of Caste and Caste discrimination that you refer to in your email [dated 09 June 2009 from Kate Stasik (Government Equalities Office)].*

Questionnaires were sent to the organisations listed in **Annex A** (attached)

2) *date(s) of when CLG consulted the organisations you refer to in your email and the amount of time you allowed for responses*

CLG sent the questionnaires on 15 August 2007 and asked for replies by 29 August 2007. Organisations that asked for extensions in order to consider the matter further were all granted extensions.

3) *a copy of the questionnaire you refer to in your letter*

Please refer to **Annex B** (attached)

4) *copies of responses from the organisations you refer to where they have indicated that they are happy for responses to be made available to the public*

None of the organisations that replied to the questionnaire indicated that they were happy for their responses to be made available to the public.

5) *the number of responses CLG received in response to the questionnaire you refer to in your email*

CLG received 19 responses to the questionnaire.

A Scoping Study into Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK

6) *correspondence CLG has received and exchanged with any organisation on the issue of Caste and race in the Equality Bill*

Apart from questionnaire responses, CLG has exchanged or received correspondence with or from the following organisations on the issues of Caste and race in the Equality Bill:

Anti-Caste discrimination Alliance;

Catholic Association for Racial Justice;

Federation of Ambedkarite & Buddhist Organisations;

Hindu Human Rights;

Indian Christian Concern;

Voice of Dalit International.

7) *dates and details of any meetings the CLG or the Equalities Unit have had with any organisation on the topic of the Equality Bill and Caste*

The then Government Equalities Office Minister Barbara Follett MP met Jeremy Corbyn MP and Rob Marris MP in January 2008 to discuss the issue of Caste in relation to the Equality Bill.

Officials from CLG and the GEO met representatives of the Hindu Forum of Britain and Dr Gautam Sen (Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha) in June 2009 to discuss the issue of Caste in relation to the Equality Bill.

8) *what your definition of strong is in relation to your statement "strong evidence of Caste discrimination"*

This part of your request falls outside the parameters of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Section 1 of the Act confers a general right of *access to information* held by public authorities. You have asked a question rather than requested access to information. Your question will be dealt with separately by officials in due course.

Communities and Local Government as an organisation aims to be as helpful as possible in the way it deals with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If, however, you are not satisfied with the way in which your request has been handled or the outcome, you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. Information about the Department's review procedures and how to apply for an internal review of your case is contained on the Department's website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/foi>. This also explains your right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision in the event that you remain dissatisfied following the authority's review

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Abu Ahmed

Communities and Local Government

Annex A

Hindu Council UK;
Hindu Forum of Britain;
National Council of Hindu Temples;
Aga Khan Foundation;
Ahmaddiyya Muslim Community UK;
British Muslim Forum;
Fatima Women's Network;
Henna Foundation;
League of British Muslims;
Muslim Council of Britain;
Sufi Muslim Council;
Women's Relief (connected to East London Mosque);
Young Foundation;
British Sikh Consultative Forum;
Jain Samaj Europe;
National Council of British Indians;
Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK);
Network of Sikh Organisations;
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe;
Caste Watch UK;
Dalit Solidarity Network;
ACAS;
Trade Union Congress.

Annex B

QUESTIONNAIRE

What is your understanding of what is meant by terms like 'caste', 'caste system' and 'caste discrimination'?

Do you believe that the 'caste system' is a continuing social phenomenon within British society?

What is the nature of the 'caste system' within British society?

Do you believe that a distinction should be made between the presence of 'caste' in the 'private domestic sphere' and its existence in the 'public sphere'?

What is the impact of the 'caste system' within British society?

A Scoping Study into Caste and Caste Discrimination in the UK

Do you believe that individuals or communities in the UK have been discriminated against on the grounds of their 'caste'?

Are there any specific instances or examples of 'caste discrimination' that you are aware of? If so, please provide details separately.

What do you believe are the remedies to addressing any instances of 'caste discrimination'?

What do you believe the role of the Government should be in countering any instances of 'caste discrimination'?

Do you have any other comments about this issue?

Mr Pashori Lal

Chair, Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance

Our Ref: F0003291

14 August 2009

By E-mail: plga.co.uk

Dear Mr Lal,

I am writing in response to your request of 17 July 2009 for information about Caste Discrimination and the Equality Bill. The Government Equalities Office transferred your request to Communities and Local Government on 17 July. Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We had responded to a previous request for information under the FOI Act made in an e-mail dated 10 June 2009 by e-mail on 02 July 2009.

I can confirm that CLG does hold the information that you have requested and that I am able to provide you with the following information in response to your query:

Q1. Which of the 23 organisations you consulted on the issue of Caste and Caste Discrimination that you refer to in your email [dated 09 June 2009 from Kate Stasik (Government Equalities Office)] did not respond to the survey.

A1. Communities and Local Government no longer holds this information.

Q2. A copy of the report which you produced for this survey

A2. No report was produced.

Q3. Any details relating to the meeting held with Jeremy Corbyn and Rob Marris by EO Minister Barbara Follett i.e. discussion points and conclusions.

A3. I am unable to provide you with the information you asked for as Communities and Local Government does not hold this information.

Q4. Which representatives of the Hindu Forum and which officials of the CLG met in June 2009 and details of discussion points and conclusions for this meeting.

A4. At the meeting between representatives from the Hindu Forum of Britain and Communities and Local Government, Bharti Tailor (Secretary General) represented the Hindu Forum of Britain. Neil O'Connor represented Communities and Local Government. Warwick Hawkins and Abu Ahmed from Communities and Local Government were also present. The discussion points were as follows:

- HFB's view was that Caste should not be included as a ground of discrimination in the Equality Bill.

- CLG explained that the issue regarding Caste had arisen again on the introduction of the Bill in Parliament. Government was therefore meeting various interested parties to discover whether there is any new evidence on the subject. This would include organisations who are arguing that Caste should be included in the Bill.
- HFB said that they are opposed to discrimination based on Caste. They would be interested in seeing evidence of Caste discrimination given that they had not encountered it.
- There might conceivably be some sort of prejudice in the area of marriage and relationships. A person might stipulate that they sought a person from the same Caste as themselves, but that was no different to a person stipulating in a matrimonial advertisement that they sought someone who was the same race as they were.

Q5 Details of any further research carried out or sponsored by CLG or any other Government department on the issue of Caste and Caste discrimination after your 2007 survey.

A5. No other research has been carried out following the survey in 2007.

Communities and Local Government as an organisation aims to be as helpful as possible in the way it deals with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. If, however, you are not satisfied with the way in which your request has been handled or the outcome, you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. Information about the Department's review procedures and how to apply for an internal review of your case is contained on the Department's website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/foi>. This also explains your right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision in the event that you remain dissatisfied following the authority's review

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Abu Ahmed

Communities and Local Government