

Atrocities on Dalits in Maharashtra

Fact finding report

Year 2008- 2009

Manuski Centre, Pune

Atrocity means series of an offence against Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribes which is gross violation of Human Rights
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Prologue:

Caste system is the bane of Indian society. In no other society the inequality is so graded that it gives no opportunity for the oppressed to rise against the oppressor in unison, in no other society it is sanctioned by the religion so that it prevents the freedom of mind to strive for liberation. The dalits, who are at the lowest rungs of society, are the most oppressed people in India. The condition of dalits living in villages is worse than ever. Land is the source of power in Indian villages. Without land, they work in the fields of upper caste people exposing themselves to all the sorts of exploitation by the dominant caste people. Few in number, they don't have the power to raise their voice against injustice and tyranny. If they try to assert their constitutional right to live as a human being, they are humiliated, beaten and eliminated. If they try to rise and seek economical or political power, they are exterminated in most barbaric manner. In most of the cases of dalit atrocities, women are the first victim. To terrorize the whole community, the women are abused and humiliated, stripped and paraded naked, raped and gang-raped. The police connive with the culprits by sometimes remaining a mute spectator or not registering the cases giving the full scope to the accused to save themselves from the clutches of law.

The fact finding team led by Manuski Advocacy Center, Pune tried to find the truth behind the gory acts of violation of human rights. They found in all the cases the ingredients of hierarchical, inhuman social order called caste system which is rooted in inequality, injustice, hatred and repression. Take the case of Baban Misal, a promising young dalit politician. He was killed in the brutal manner since he challenged the monopoly of caste people. Sahebrao Jondhale, a taxi driver, surviving on his sole livelihood was charred to death by the caste people for taking the recourse to independent means of livelihood. A dalit woman Mrs. Sushilabai Pawar was beaten to death for denying forcible physical relationship with her daughter in law by the caste people. The houses of dalits were burnt by the caste people just because a dalit head of the village hoisted the national flag. The dalit teenage girls were abused and assaulted by the caste people because the girls were educating themselves and did not respond to the lewd remarks of upper caste youths. A dalit youth was mercilessly beaten to death by the caste villagers just because he happened to love an upper caste girl. Such cases of atrocities are daily committed on hapless dalits. In India, every day three dalits are killed, four dalit houses are burnt and three dalit women are raped.

Glossary

SC/ST (POA) act, 1989	:	Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe (Prevention of Atrocity) Act, 1989
Atrocity	:	Offences against Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe u/s 3(1) and 3(2).
Dalit	:	Scheduled castes.
Caste system	:	Hierarchical social order based on graded inequality.
Marathwada	:	Region in Maharashtra state of India.

Major Atrocity cases in Maharashtra in year of 2008 to 2009

Case No.	Title of atrocity	Time of incident	Form of violence	Name of victim	Sex, Age	Caste/ religion
1	A dalit young activist murdered by dominant caste people in Ahmadnagar	6 pm 5 th July 2008,	Murder	Mr. Baban Misal	Male, 32	Mang, Hindu
2	Dalit beaten and burnt alive in his own car	3.30 am 16 th July 2008	Murder	Mr. Sahebrao Jondhale	Male, 40	Ex- Mahar, Buddhist
3	Dalit women killed by dominant caste Hindu when she denied physical relationship	8.00 pm, 1 st January 2008	Murder	Mrs. Shushilabai Pawar	Female, 42	Pardhi, Hindu
4	Dalit houses burnt by caste Hindu in Khadki ghat village	5.30 am, 26 th January 2009	Mass attack	1: Hirabai Pandurang Waghmare 2: Mahadev Yadav Waghmare and Family	Male, 56 Male, 21	Ex-Mahar, Buddhist.
5	Dalit girls (sisters) abused and assaulted ruthlessly by people from dominant caste	5.45pm, 19 th January 2009	Merciless beating and paraded in village	Ms. Diksha Shinde Ms. Panchasheela Shinde	Female, 18 and 19	Ex-Mahar, Buddhist
6	Murder of a dalit youth in Aurangabad	24 th February 2009 `	Murder	Rohidas Tupe	Male, 23	Mang, Hindu

A young dalit activist murdered by dominant caste people in Ahmadnagar.

In a shocking incident, the newly converted Buddhist was hacked to death. Late Baban Misal was borne into Matang Caste (ex-untouchable). Despite his perceived low social status he was a former President of Panchayat Samiti of Jamkhed; recently he had been elected as a



Director of Committee on Marketing Agricultural Products. Since 1995 he was an active member of Campaign for Human Rights. And under his leadership Dalits had started cultivating fallow Grazing land as the source of livelihood .Eventually; Late Baban missal had become unquestioned leader of marginalized groups of Ahamadnagar which attracted the ire of caste Hindus in the village who decided to eliminate him.

Baban Misal had brought to light the corruptions of Kailash Jadhav (upper caste opponent of Victim) in administering Students' Hostel. Babanrao had also started to demolish all wine shops owned by Kailash Jadhav in order to protect the people living in the area from Alcohol abuse. He had attained prosperity because of his hard work in the Society for Fishermen. He was also actively agitating for the rights of the farmers not only of his own caste but for the other caste people, too. On 5th July 08, while he was going to Jamkhed from Sonegaon with his friend Shayam Sathe; a car numbered MH-12 YA- 7929 dashed his motorbike from behind. He got thrown on the road. All the six accused namely, Kailash Jadhav, Shahaji Bolbhatt, Arun Bhagal, Marian Birangal, Taljarao Jadhav, Rajesh Ralke (all between age of 30 -40 years) caught him. A scuffle ensued between them. But since the accused possessed axes, daggers & sickles, they overpowered them and threatened his friend Shaym Sathe to leave the place. When they got assured that Shyam left the place, they completely defaced the victim by brutally crushing his face due to which he died on the spot. Then they cut his hand and legs into pieces throwing them into different directions.



Dalit beaten and burnt alive in his own car

Late Sahebrao Jondhale was living in Karanjala with his wife, two daughters & a son. Devoid of any land, he joined driving profession and ferried the passengers from Karanjala to Parbhani in his taxi. He was sustaining himself and his family from the income he earned through this vocation.

On the night of June 16, 2008 while returning home in his Tata Sumo, vehicle, he was charred to death in Karanjala village of Hingoli District in Marathwada region allegedly by a group of villagers belonging to the upper caste .The alleged upper caste Marathas stopped the vehicle, gagged and tied him up, poured kerosene and burnt him alive inside it. Charred remains of the vehicle stand by the road with a few pieces of Jondhale's bones scattered amid the ash, making a gruesome spectacle for villagers who pass by, some of whom stop and poke round in the debris.



Burnt Car



It is learnt that on the fateful day, as a part of his daily schedule he had gone to Jawal Baazar (Taluka Market Place) in his passenger car. The whole day he was busy in his work and didn't make any contact with his family. On that day, suspicious accused Ram Dandvate asked Sahebrao to drop him to his house but Sahebrao denied and went for dinner. On the morning of 17th June 2008 at around 7 am, villagers saw his torched car (Gama MH-38-412) with Sahebrao Jondhale on driving seat. Sahebrao Jondhale's body was completely burnt by that time and only a few parts of his skeleton and ashes were there to be seen.

At present CID officers are investigating the case but have failed to arrest accused.

Dalit woman killed by dominant caste Hindu when she denied physical relationship

People worldwide appreciate mainly two things of India, so called Indian culture and divine status of women. But the cruel mentality of patriarchy and dominance of caste people can be easily seen in Sushilabai's case in Latur district of Maharashtra.

Mrs. Suhshilabai Pawar belonged to Pardhi tribe community; living with her only son Santosh Pawar and daughter in law Vimalabai Pawar in Mungji village of Latur district, Maharashtra. On 31/12/2007, when she was sitting in her house with her son and daughter in law, accused Bhaskar Somvanshi (a co-villager) came inside, and asked victim's son about his wife and offered 60 rupees to take her away. Hearing this, Mr. Santosh Pawar got angry and called other community members. Victim Sushilabai slapped and threw the accused out of her house.

Frustrated and infuriated, accused Bhaskar then came at night to victim's house with other accused, Sahadev Somvanshi and Sudhakar Somvanshi. They started abusing the victims' family by calling them by their caste name and ransacked the house. Bhasakar Somvanshi and his friends dragged Mrs. Vimalabai out of the house, beat her with sticks on chest, destroyed the belongings, and started beating other family members. When Sushilabai intervened, she was killed on the spot. The accused threatened the family members not to inform police otherwise they would meet the same fate as that of their mother. But victim's son fearlessly reported the crime to the local police station. The police due to hue and cry by dalit organisations arrested the accused. However, they did not file the charge sheet within the stipulated period of 30 days, due to which all the accused were bailed out. A compensation of Rs. 1, 00,000 was paid to the victim's family as per SC/ST (POA) Rules 1995.

CASTE HINDUS RAPED AND BRUTALLY MURDER DALIT WOMEN



Dalit village head's (sarpanch) house burnt by caste Hindu in Khadki-ghat village, Beed

Mr. Gandhi often glorified the concept of Indian village. However the concept of Indian village is itself very oppressive and discriminatory in nature with respect to marginalized communities in India. Marginalized communities which are residing in villages are facing more heinous atrocities as compared to that of urban areas. This is evident in case of Khadki village of Beed district where caste Hindu people burnt the house of a dalit sarpanch.



Khadki village is situated in Beed district of Maharashtra. Socio-economic status of the village is good and most of the villagers are engaged in farming. There are people from Maratha and dalit community. The population of dalits is less than Maratha community. There are only five houses of dalits in the village. Mr. Popat Waghmare, a dalit, lives with his four brothers and their families in the village. The members of their families work in the farm as daily wage labourers for their survival. They don't have their own land or farm, so they work in the farm of Maratha people.

In the history of Khadki village, there was not a single sarpanch coming from dalit community. So when Mr. Popat Pandurang Waghmare belonging to Mang caste (ex-untouchable), was elected the sarpanch of this village, the Maratha caste people started disagreeing and non-cooperating with the dalit sarpanch from the village.

The incidence took place on Republican Day, 26th January 2009 in Khadki village. After flag hoisting in the gram panchayat, the members began discussing corruption in gram panchayat.

During discussions, the accused Babasaheb Taware and Bandu Babasaheb Taware started fighting with the sarpanch. When Waghmare family came to know about this incident, they arrived there to resolve the conflict. They saw that the five accused from Maratha community were fighting with the Popat Waghmare and arguing on the issues of the gram panchayat. Meanwhile, two accused, Babasaheb Taware and Bandu Babasaheb Bhosale went out and burnt four houses of Waghmare family. When the people from Waghmare family came to know about this, they ran towards their houses and tried to control the fire. But unfortunately the hoses were burnt badly. At that time miss. Rajni Waghmare was present in the house and she recognized the



accused burning the houses.

After the incident, Mr. Popat Waghmare informed the police about incident but police didn't register the complaint. After some time, police registered the complaint and gave police protection to Mr. Waghmare's family

The Waghmare family is still under threat and suffering several kinds of discrimination. The people are not allowing them to work in their farms and now they are facing the problem of unemployment due to which their survival is difficult in the village. The people of Maratha community are still threatening them that they would kill them. The condition of the Waghmare family is worst in the village. The five accused are still not arrested by police and are roaming free in the village.

Dalit sisters abused and assaulted ruthlessly by dominant caste

The brave and smart dalit sisters, Diksha and Panchashila are residents of Shindi village, Beed district, Maharashtra. Diksha's family belongs to newly Converted Buddhist fold which comes under Schedule Caste. Diksha is studying B.A. –I year and Panchashila is pursuing her H.S.S.C.



On 19th Jan 2009, after attending college, Panchshila returned home at about 12.30 P.M. with Diksha. Both were heading for their farms to help mother, father and brother. On the way to their fields, accused Jagganath Jadhav and Bharat Jadhav saw them and commented “Salam Tumacha Sabhetela” (Salute to your silence ladies!) . Along with that they uttered abusive words, but the girls did not react and went to the fields.

In the evening at around 5.45 pm when Panchshila, Diksha and her elder sister, Suvarna's daughter named Priya (age 4) were returning from the fields, accused Jagganath Jadhav, Bharat Jadhav, Kailash Deshmukh and Barik Deshmukh were following the sisters with blowing whistle and ringing songs in the mobile. After some time Jagganath Jadhav pushed Panchshila. She asked him as to why he was doing so. But Jagganath slapped both the sisters. He also abused them on caste lines “Dhedgyano Lay Mazlat kay ani amahala vicharayachi tumachi maharachi himmat hai ka?” (“You untouchables have no right to ask whatever we do) The four accused then started hurling abuses of caste and mother.

But this was not the end. They started beating them by hands, legs, sticks and iron rods; they smashed girls on chick, hand, chest, and waist and pulled their hairs. Jagganath called his friends namely 1.Tukaram Rajaram Jadhav 2. Datta Ashruba Deshmukh 3. Anil Jadhav 4. Devidas Jadhav 5. Shashikant Jadhav 6. Shyam Jadhav 7. Manubai Jadhav 8. Limbabai Deshmukh. They all again started abusing “lai mazalet dhed” (“These Mahars arrogant”) and threatened to kill them. They brought them beating to the village. Diksha could not withstand the torture. She fell down. She could not talk or walk. However, Panchshila ran fast and told the incidence to her brother and other family members.

After this cruel incident Diksha’s family members took Diksha and Panchshila to police station at 10 pm of 19th Jan 2009. To their surprise, irresponsible Police Inspector Mr. Pawar declined to register the FIR. At that night Diksha’s health condition turned from bad to worst. She was so critical that her brother had to take her to Kej Rural hospital .But Dr. Pritam Raut, a medical officer there too did not care much. Dr Pritam Raut sent back Diksha and her brother to home.

Government authority is supposed to protect the victim but in this case of dalit sisters, prejudiced Police and Doctor of government hospital denied to help.



Murder of a Dalit youth

Rohidas Tupe, a brilliant and smart young boy belonging to Mang community (ex-Untouchable) did a fatal mistake; he fell in love with a girl belonging to a dominant caste.

Vaishali Vitthal Jadhav was Rohidas's class mate in his school. She belonged to Maratha community, an upper caste. Rohidas was witty and clever that made him cynosure of every eye in his school. Vaishali got attracted to his personality and naturally fall in love with him.

Due to biases, when her father came to know about the affair, he admonished Rohidas and pressurised his father to take him away from the school. But their love for each other did not diminish in spite of the separation in school. Rohidas kept meeting Vaishali after school time in fields. So, when Vaishali's father came to know about the meeting, he became angry. But she did not deter.

After completing school education, in Patri village, Rohidas went to Aurangabad for further studies. But they could not stop loving each other even after strong objection from her father. He attempted to poison Rohidas on several counts. Once Rohidas was even admitted in the hospital and recovered after a long time.

Moreover, Mr Jadhav registered a false case against Rohidas under IPC section 354(outraging the modesty of women). Police arrested Rohidas but he got bail. In last two years, Rohidas was working in a pharmaceutical company due to which his living standard got improved. Despite warning, Vaishali could not deter from continuing her love with Rohidas.



Lastly Mr Jadhav realized that he could not separate them and finally decided to exterminate him. The main reason for such anger was the ire of upper caste barons over the issue. They naturally extended their help in the revenge game.

On the fateful day of 23rd Feb 2009, Mahashivratri Hindu festival was in vogue. Rohidas arrived in the village he visited the Mahadeo temple .Soon upper caste villagers gathered and caught him. They started beating him. They took him to statue of King Shivaji where his cloths were removed. Rohidas was tied to an electricity poll and was beaten by mob. Villagers threw chilli powder and salt on his wounds. When Rohidas asked water to drink, the accused, Bhausahab Tejrao Jadhav urinated in his mouth. Kerosene was thrown over his body. Whole episode was shamelessly witnessed by the village mob of 150 villagers, just similar to Khairlanji. Most of them took part in the crime, beating him till death. Rohidas died soon.