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India Discrimination Report 2022

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Introduction

While the extent of discrimination has declined over the past decade, women continue to be heavily discriminated against in labour markets. Women either do not apply owing to societal expectations or are not hired due to the travel requirements and late hours that the job requires. Discrimination against Muslims has been declining, either because they work through agencies which do not reveal their identities or in areas where physical contact is low, which results in lower discrimination. However, they continue to receive low levels of formal training. Discrimination against SC/STs has gone down marginally, with education improvements partly due to reservations. The report conducts a deeper analysis of such trends.

Key Highlights

Urban Areas:

- In 2019-20 37.5% of C/ST were in regular, salaried (R/SE) employment compared to 41.3% of non-SC/ST people. Multiple studies show the existence of caste-based discrimination, but 98% of such discrimination in employment stems from unequal access to education and training.
- Self-employment among Muslims in India is usually a forced option due to a lack of alternative forms of employment. 15% of Muslims are in regular jobs compared to 23.3% of non-Muslims. 68% of this difference is directly due to discrimination.
- PFLS data also shows that men have significant advantages over women—60% of men are in regular, salaried jobs, while the number is 19% for women. All women, regardless of their socio-economic position, are discriminated against.

Rural Areas:

- In rural areas, 35.2% of SC/ST are in R/SE compared to 41.5% of non-SC/ST. Caste-based discrimination is more prevalent in rural areas but has decreased from 80% to 59%.
- The gap in RE is lower among Muslims and non-Muslims. While 6.9% of non-Muslims are in RE, it is 5.8% for Muslims. While discrimination has reduced, the extent of improvement in educational levels of Muslims has been low
- Gender gaps in rural and urban areas are similar, with men having higher levels of education. When the years of education of household head goes up, women from such households are less likely to seek and get jobs due to socio-cultural reasons.
- Even with increased education, women do not enter the labour market primarily due to “family reasons”, but SC/ST women start working early.

Wage/Earning Discrimination in Urban Areas

- The pattern for and causes of discrimination in wages and earnings is similar to employment.
- Men earn an average of 19,799 as compared to 15,578 for women, primarily due to gender discrimination.
- Non-SC/ST workers earn more than SC/ST workers primarily due to educational differences. The average earning of an SC/ST worker is 10,533 compared to 15,878 for non-SC/ST.
- Religious discrimination in earnings is also high, with the average earnings of non-Muslims at 20,346 compared to 13,672 for Muslims, primarily due to endowment (educational) differences.
- Even under self-employment, men earn nearly 2.5 times that of women due to social, cultural and mobility constraints.

- In casual work, 79% of the wage differences among SC/ST workers is attributed to discrimination despite low differences in endowment. In 2019-20, the casual wages of Muslims in urban areas were *slightly* higher than non-Muslims due to the specialized jobs that Muslims usually undertake. Men in casual work again earn significantly higher than women.

Wage/Earning discrimination in rural areas

- In R/SE, there is an average gap of 1977 between SC/ST and non-SC/ST groups due to discrimination. Muslims in rural areas earn 644 lesser than non-Muslims due to endowments similar to urban areas. Gender-based wage differentiation in rural areas in R/SE is much higher than in men, with 91% of the difference due to discrimination.
- The difference in earnings in self-employment also follows similar patterns. Few self-employed SC/ST have high education levels because they opt for urban, regular employment instead. The distinction in wages among self-employed Muslims and non-Muslims worsened during the first three months of the pandemic. For men and women, only 7% of the gap in earnings among self-employed is due to endowments, while the rest is due to discrimination.
- On all three counts, discrimination in casual work also follows a similar pattern, with low levels of religious discrimination for Muslims owing to the specialized nature of their work in rural areas. Male casual workers on average, earn 3000 more than women.

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