



CALL FOR CHAPTERS

‘Outcastes Among the Outcaste: Valmiki Community in India’

EDITED BOOK VOLUME

This edited book aims to provide better insights on the socio-economic reality of the Valmiki community in present India. It would not only particularly bring out the intricacies of the status of the community, less researched in Dalit studies in present times but could be a unique contribution to the sociology and anthropology of Dalits discourse in India in general.

India is a caste-based society and therefore it not only categories communities based on culture and social customs but goes further and discriminates and marginalizes certain communities based on varna-caste discriminatory mind-set and practices even today. The legacy of past continues even after 75 years of independence of India with a very progressive Constitution. The discriminative varna-caste system is so well established in the mindset of Indians that even education and exposure to other countries, societies and cultures have not erased the inhuman ideology and practice. Buddha, Phule, Periyar, Ambedkar have tried to do away with the system and ideology in various ways and yet the varna-caste discrimination and hatred raises its head in various forms and ways and contexts. The *Avarna* or the outcastes or the Dalits and women among them are the most discriminated and excluded. The Valmiki among these communities are the worst exploited and excluded among the outcastes facing the brunt of the discrimination from other Indians who claim themselves Indians abiding by the Constitution.

The varna-caste as a social system even today determines the nature and characteristic of socio-economic and political institutions in India, relations among them and dictates the role and responsibilities of the role holders in these institutions. Those who challenge the system are looked with suspicion to say the least. The varna-caste as an ideology, system and practice has penetrated not only the social life of Indians but also the economic and political lives of Indians. Put it bluntly belief and behaviour of an Indian often enough is influenced by the varna-caste they belong to. India is on the path of modernization, new India as some like to call. Is it really so? India is fast accepting modernization but does it want modernization to be accompanied by modernity, a new critical thinking, of being and of an inclusive citizenship?

Education and enhancement have gone up in many communities of Schedule castes but the Valmiki have lagged behind in socio-economic development and political participation. Untouchability is practiced with them the most by other castes but even by other Dalit groups. Some

Valmiki have emancipated them through education and by self-efforts largely. However, manual scavengers are considered the lowest of the poor in the Dalit hierarchy. Even today, the Valmiki are isolated, compelled not to use public spaces, public utilities, and services; discriminated and deprived of equal access to social and economic opportunities. Social exclusion must be seen from the articulation of political, social, economic and spatial dimensions. Valmiki communities across India and some parts of south Asia are largely engaged in cleaning and sanitation related occupation are into the cleaning of filth, human and animal excreta, disposing dead and rotten bodies of animals, cleaning private and public latrines, cleaning gutters manually, etc. They are marginalized socially, economically and politically. In matters of health and education, considered to be pillars of development by Amartya Sen, these communities are far behind. According to the social hierarchy among both higher and lower castes, they occupy the lowest of the low position, as they are night soil remover. In almost all human-made and natural disasters the handling and disposing of human and animal decomposed bodies, rotten grain, food are done by the members of these communities, largely without any proper protection gears, namely bare handed.

In this background, Centre for Culture and Development (CCD), Vadodara has planned to bring out an edited book exclusively on Valmiki community in India in order to highlight and address various issues, challenges and an understanding of their 'lived' lives. Considering that the community lacks academic attention in the 'Dalit Studies' as such, the book will focus on the Valmiki through the spectrum of change and continuity over the years in terms of their socio-economic status in India.

Recommended Themes/Topics

The Centre invites papers on the following themes focused on Valmiki community per-say and not Dalit in General.

1. Valmiki Community in India: Discrimination, Marginalization and the Pathos of Caste Hierarchy

- i. The Caste Identity and Hierarchy with the Caste Structure
- ii. Valmiki community and nature of exploitation: Theoretical underpinning
- iii. The Occupational Stigma and Challenges of Valmiki Community
- iv. Manual Scavenging and Social exclusion
- v. Dalit hierarchy, Status of Valmiki and Gender
- vi. Separated Habitations and freedom of movement: Valmikis Stigmatized Identity

2. Change and Continuity in Status of Valmiki Community in India

- i. Social changes among Valmiki
- ii. Community Identity: Stigmatization and Evolution.
- iii. Economic changes among Valmiki,
- iv. Urbanization, migration and Valmiki,
- v. Education as an instrument of change – how and how much?

3. Legal and Human Rights of Valmiki Community

- i. Indian Democracy and the Valmiki's Struggle for Equality and dignity
- ii. Sustainable development goals and Valmiki – Issues and Challenges
- iii. Political mobilization and Valmiki Emancipation (Movement, Assertion and Participation)
- iv. Indian citizenship and status of Valmiki

4. Governments Affirmative Efforts and Valmiki

- i. Legal and Developmental Interventions: Outcomes and Gaps
- ii. Government schemes- entitlements or tokenism?
- iii. Government schemes and relevance in context of Valmiki

5. Modernization, Modernity and Valmiki

- i. Valmiki in 'New India'.
- ii. Changing nature and forms of social discrimination
- iii. Modern India Vs Modernity – Practice of exclusion and Inclusion
- iv. Upward mobility of Valmiki: At what cost?
- v. 'Privileged/Elite' Valmiki – Role and Responsibility,

6. Civil Society and Valmiki Community

- i. Experiences, Observations and Lessons Learnt
- ii. Action Research and Success Stories

7. '*I am Valmiki : My Life –My Story*'- Personal Narratives

Submission and Dates

People working with or have research interest specifically on the Valmiki community are invited to submit an article (5000 words) on or before **April 30, 2023**. Inquiries and submissions can be sent electronically (Word document) to the email: **centreforculture@gmail.com**

Editors

1. Dr Jimmy C Dabhi, Director, Centre for Culture and Development, Vadodara
2. Kanchan Bharati, Assistant Professor, Centre for Culture and Development, Vadodara
3. Jyoti, Faculty, Centre for Culture and Development, Vadodara

Publisher

This book is scheduled to be published by a national reputed publisher and is anticipated to be released by the end of 2023.