CENTRE FOR POLITICAL STUDIES, SSS, JNU

MPHIL OPTIONAL COURSE

DALIT MOVEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA (PO637)

Credits 4
Course Teacher: Professor Narender Kumar
Scheme of Evaluation: 1 Seminar paper and 1 Term Paper.

Objectives:

This Course underlines the significance of the emergence of dalit consciousness and its implications for contemporary democratic politics. It seeks to understand the politics of the oppressed sections of society as expressed through a search for identity and through movements which seek improvement in their socioeconomic status, a share in political power and ultimately destruction of the unequal caste order.

The nature of these movements, their objectives and construction of dalit identity is sought to be understood through existing frameworks in the first part. Part two analyses the debates on reform and representation of the dalits and the factors underlying various anti-caste movements in the colonial period which have significance for the post-independence period. The final part takes up a few movements, and examines their emergence, ideology strategies of mobilisation. The similarities/differences among these movements and their implications for politics in various regions will be highlighted.

I. Framework for the Study of Dalit Movements

a) Social Movements – Liberal and Marxist frameworks.
b) “New” Social Movements in the West and in India.
c) Approaches to the study of dalit movements, overview of literature.

II. Depressed Castes and anticasaste movements in the colonial period

a) The socioeconomic conditions of the depressed castes.
b) The Depressed classes and the colonial government.
c) Gandhi and Ambedkar on social reform and representation for the depressed castes.
d) Anticaste movements in the colonial period.

III. Dalit Movements in Post Independent India

Emergence, ideology and strategies of mobilization of major dalit movements:
a) The Republican party of India – UP and Maharashtra
b) The Dalit Panthers
c) The Bahujan Samaj party
d) The Dalit movement in Tamil Nadu
e) The Dalit Sangharsh Samiti in Karnataka

IV. Issues and Problems Concerning Dalits
a) Reservations
b) Caste-based Atrocities

Selected Readings:
Aruralan “The Relevance of Periyar” Radical Review no 2, May, 1990,
Badri Narayan, The Making of Dalit Public in North India, OUP, 2011
B.R. AMBEDKAR COLLECTED WORKS, GOVT OF MAHARASHTRA.
Chinnaiah Jangam, Dalits and Making of the Modern India, OUP, 2017
Gail Omvedt Dalits and the Democratic Revolution Dr Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement
H.Kotani (ed) Caste System Untouchability and the Depressed Manohar, New Delhi, 1997.(See essays on TN)
J.R. Kamble Rise and Awakening of Depressed Classes in India, National publishers, 1979
Journal of Political Economy XII, nos 3&4, special issue on Schedule Castes in India JulyDecember: 405-422.
Kancha Illiah “Productive Labour, Consciousness and History: A DalitBahujan Alternative” Subaltern Studies, Vol IX, OUP.
Narendra Jadhav, Untouchables: My Family’s Triumphant Escape from India’s Caste System, University of California Press, 2007

Narender Kumar, Dalit and Shudra Politics and Anti-Brahmin Movement Economic and Political Weekly, November 4-10, 2000


Rajni Kothari (ed.) Caste in Indian Politics, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1970.

Robert Deliege The World of the Untouchable Paraiyars of TN OUP, 1997


S.K. Gupta The SCs in Modern Indian Politics: Their Emergence as a Political Power Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1985.


Sharmila Rege, Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women’s Testimonies, Zuban, Delhi, 2007

Seminar 1998 (special issue on Dalit) no 471, November.


Sudha Pai 2002 Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution: the BSP in Uttar Pradesh, Sage, New Delhi


