

A Critical paper of Caste System in Mauritius, Political backings, discrimination and favoritism in job & promotion; Nepotists claim that *Vaish* (वैश्य) caste are more qualified ‘*Vaish pli kalifié ki toi*’. Qualified in what? my personal opinion as a *Babujee*, *Kshatriya* (क्षत्रिय , बाबूजी) and being apolitical

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ABSTRACT: ‘*Vaish pli kalifié ki toi*’ is in a Creole Mauritian language used by Mauritians of all communities. This phrase can be translated into ‘*Vaish Caste are more qualified than you*’. The paper elaborates on the nepotism, favouritism, Political backings, associated with Hindu Caste system in Mauritius. It has been a common discriminatory thinking in Mauritius that people of *Vaish* (वैश्य) caste believe they are more qualified, just because of the caste they are in and not based on their qualifications and competences. The different Hindu Caste are namely *Maraz* (Brahmin), a *Babujee* (*Kshatriya*) and *Vaish* (*Vaishya*). Being from the *Babujee*, *Kshatriya* (क्षत्रिय , बाबूजी) Caste, In the education sector, I, myself have never discriminated, nor favoured anyone based on religion and caste. It is of very discriminated and narrow thinking that some people claim they should get jobs, promotion based on the caste they are. It is also acknowledged that in Politics, the former Prime Ministers have been from *Vaish* and the political field in Mauritius is dominated by *Vaish* Caste. Nevertheless, those same politicians who were caught red handed with coffers and involved in various political scandals were from *Vaish* caste. Those neighbors who drink and smoke and beat their wives every night are also from *Vaish* caste. That bus worker who harasses passengers also is from *Vaish* caste and fastfood seller who lack hygiene also is from *Vaish* caste. That friend who in bungalow filmed me bathing and shared in *Reduit* region also was *Vaish*. So what proud of these people of being from *Vaish* Caste. Being neither from political field, apolitical nor member of any political party and with no political ambitions, I consider that giving people job, promotions based on just Caste system, namely as they claim *Vaish* caste, in education and employment sector, as being completely discriminatory and of falling into nepotism and favoritism and unacceptable. Such types of thinking and unethical practice of job and promotion should be set aside by any employer. Myself being highly qualified for my set aspirations, if anyone claim to be more qualified than me academically, then they have no place in this sector, their applications should not be considered and are over qualified and should seek work in other areas such as at university.

KEYWORDS: *nepotism, favoritism, Caste system, Vaishya, Kshatriya, Education, Politics*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Caste System in Mauritius

The 1968 constitution recognized four population categories: Hindus, Muslims, Sino-Mauritians, and the general population. Mauritius is a multicultural society whereby everyone is free to practice the faith he/she wants without any fear, shame and threat from anyone. According to socio-historical theory, the caste system began in India. The “*Varna Dharma*”, that is the division of labour in society, consisted of four ‘*Varnas*’ or major groups namely the “*Brāhman*”, the “*Kshatriya*”, the “*Vaishya*” and the “*Shūdra*”. From an organic analogy, the “*Brāhman*” was like the brain in the body, as its representatives were responsible for spiritual and intellectual matters. Political administration and defense were entrusted to the “*Kshatriya*”, who was seen as the arms of the body. As for the “*Vaishya*”, he was like the thighs and so he had to supply food to the nation and administer its economic welfare. At last, the “*Shūdra*” for his part did menial work for he was considered the feet of the body. the ‘*varna of Brāhman*’ commonly identified with the priests and learned class, is the “*Maraze*” in Mauritius. The ‘*varna of Kshatriyas*’ associated with rulers and warriors including property owners, are the “*Baboojee*” in Mauritius. Besides, the ‘*varna of Vaishyas*’ associated with businessmen, farmers and traders are the “*Vaish*” in Mauritius and are also in Majority on the island. At last, the ‘*varna of Shūdras*’, that is the servile labourers, are the “*Rajput*” (or “*Dusadh*”) and the “*Ravived*” (or “*Chamar*”) in Mauritius.

II. DISCUSSION

Nepotism can be defined as appointing someone to a position mainly due to their relatedness (i.e., family ties, or bloodline)¹². Yasir et al³ states that nepotism mainly relies on organizational political activity rather than the merit-based reference. Boadi⁴ and Arasli et al.⁵ explained that nepotistic practices persist and continues recurrently in the daily operations of the business environment in developing nations as there are no visible implementation of any policies against such practices. The term “Nepotism” comes from the Italian word “nepotismo,” which is based on Latin root “Nepos,” meaning nephew or grandson⁶. Nepotism is an owner’s or manager’s preference for hiring or appointing family members (nepots) instead of unrelated job applicants⁷. It results in interference from family, their involvement for years and generations^{8,9}. Le-Breton & Miller¹⁰ hammers that the practice of nepotism that encourages, make it easier for relatives, the next in line to access leaderships post rather than the deserving candidate. Some studies show that nepotism can harm the establishment itself^{11,12,13} even in terms of performance¹⁴. This even has an impact on mental health of postulants. Schunck et al¹⁵ and Sellers and Shelton¹⁶ argued that PD is associated with an increase in depression, anxiety and psychological distress as well as a decrease in well-being and the more frequent the PD, the greater the risk of mental health problems. Nepotism is when Managers and those responsible for recruitment decisions with whom they are socially connected regardless of their ability or qualifications¹⁶. Most studies have shown that nepotism leads to decreased employee satisfaction and commitment¹⁷. Human resource management plays an important role to create competitive advantage but only when there is a highly competent workforce to utilize¹⁸. Kwon¹⁹ believes that favoritism, nepotism, and cronyism are stimulants for the development of the conflicts of interest. It has even been shown that discrimination has an impact of mental health. The International Labour Organization had stated that anti-discrimination laws do not function effectively and therefore employment discrimination, including recruitment discrimination, continues to exist around the world²⁰. Perceived discrimination (PD) is when people experience the discrimination. PD can be at the institutional level, or the personal level and can manifest itself as both direct and indirect forms. This even has an impact on health of postulants. Schunck et al²¹ and Sellers and Shelton²² argued that PD is associated with an increase in depression, anxiety and psychological distress as well as a decrease in well-being and the more frequent the PD, the greater the risk of mental health problems.

III. FINDINGS

Vaish Caste , Politics and Education

The first Prime Minister of Mauritius was from the *Vaish* Caste and since then almost all Prime Minister have been from the same caste. For reasons still unjustified, the political field of Mauritius is dominated by *Vaish* Caste. Being myself apolitical, I neither judge by caste nor religion while voting. When it comes to political nominations, the *Vaish* Caste system also has an influence on this recruitment exercise. The *Vaish* community also imposes their nepotist attitude and favouritism towards their own people of same caste and there are situations whereby the political nominee is less academically qualified, even in terms of competencies. The caste system has also tried to infiltrate the Education sector. It has been a common thinking from politicians to make people believe that the *Vaish* caste are more qualified ‘*Vaish pli kalifé ki toi*’. The question is qualified in what? If the Nepotist think that just because they are from a specific caste they will get important post like Deputy Rector, Rector, Senior Educators, or even Administrators, then it is favouritism, Casteism, and nepotism. I myself as a Babujee (Kshatriya) and educator, I have never discriminated anyone based on their caste, religion and background. Being myself highly qualified, I feel very surprised that people close to politics think that just because of being *Vaish* Caste, they would be automatically qualified for higher post, jobs and promotions. Any honest and law abiding recruitment authority would not base their recruitment just the criteria of Caste and hoe friendly the candidate for the post is with politicians. If some *Vaish* believe they are more qualified than me because of their political backings then they have no place into the sector I am. If they think they are more qualified than me, then they are in the wrong sector and are OVER Qualified for the posts of deputy rector, and rector that I aspire. Their applications should not be considered and they should go to the universities, tertiary sector.

IV. CONCLUSION

Character not Caste

As a law abiding citizen and abiding to all discriminatory practices, I seriously condemned any practice of Casteism, favouritism, and these mentality of *Vaish* caste are more qualified ‘*Vaish pli kalifé ki toi*’ just because of their caste and political backings. In politics it might be a common practice that *Vaish* Caste is the dominant force but I am both apolitical, not into politics and neither member of any political party. In education sector, as a professional, I do not believe that Casteism, favoritism, nepotism, and even corruption has any place. So those professionals who think that *Vaish* caste are more qualified ‘*Vaish pli kalifé ki toi*’ just because of their political backings, and because of their political friends then they are mistaken. Those eminent politicians who were caught red handed with coffers and all sort of corruption and bribe scandals also were from *Vaish* caste. Those lawyers caught with drug, marijuana and ecstasy, also were of *Vaish* caste. Those neighbors who drink,

smoke and beat their wives also are *Vaish* caste. That woman who betrays her husband with other men also is *Vaish* caste. That Hindu friend together with his Muslim friend who filmed me bathing , shared with everyone in Reduit area also was *Vaish*. So, what really these people of so proud to be of *Vaish* caste. You cannot determine the worth, competencies of anyone just by their Caste and political affiliations. The Character of that person is important. You cannot discriminate, do favoritism, choose, select , do nepotism in job, and education sector. The caste you are does not, should not be an advantage but rather if you search political backings, then it is detrimental.

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