
Migrant Workers' Perceptions towards Caste in a Global City

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Abstract (in French and/or English)

The location of caste in urban industrial settings has historically evoked complex set of responses. Caste and untouchability has been considered as rural phenomenon. Interestingly, modernisation and Marxist theorists converged in their expectations on caste becoming irrelevant due to the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation. The liberalisation of Indian economy since 1990s have provided grounds for similar expectations. Others have, however, contended that caste has been 'repeatedly reformulated in numerous ways' or has been 're-worked' in the changing social, economic and political context. Yet, there remains a major gap in the literature that explores the people's perceptions of caste in urban settings. This paper fills this gap by exploring rural labour migrants' perceptions about caste in Mumbai. The focus on rural migrant worker is important because it is this section of the workforce that is supposed to have experienced the declining influence of caste in the urban settings. This paper uses the survey data of 1033 single male migrant labourers that was conducted between March and May 2015.

Keywords: migration, labour, caste, rural urban nexus, city, perceptions, Mumbai, India

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