



Caste discrimination and harassment in Great Britain

Hilary Metcalf and Heather Rolfe

December 2010

**National Institute of
Economic and Social
Research
2 Dean Trench Street**

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Acknowledgements | iv |
| Glossary | v |
| Summary | vi |
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Background | 1 |
| 1.2 Caste: definitions and terminology used in the report..... | 2 |
| 1.2.1 Low caste | 3 |
| 1.2.2 Terminology used in the report on ‘caste membership’ | 3 |
| 1.3 The remit and scope of the study | 4 |
| 1.4 The Equality Act 2010: scope and definitions | 4 |
| 1.5 Report structure | 5 |
| 2 Research method | 7 |
| 2.1 Overview of the method..... | 7 |
| 2.2 The literature review | 7 |
| 2.3 Discussions with interested parties and experts | 7 |
| 2.4 Qualitative interviews with people claiming to have experienced caste discrimination and/or harassment | 9 |
| 2.4.1 The interviews | 9 |
| 2.4.2 The sample..... | 9 |
| 2.5 Analysis | 10 |
| 2.6 Methodological challenges | 11 |
| 3 Caste: concepts, relevant populations and change | 14 |
| 3.1 Introduction..... | 14 |
| 3.2 The concept of caste | 14 |
| 3.3 Caste concept used in the study..... | 16 |
| 3.4 Caste indicators | 16 |
| 3.5 British population potentially affected by caste discrimination | 17 |
| 3.5.1 British population affected by caste | 17 |
| 3.5.2 The low caste population in Britain | 18 |
| 3.5.3 The size of the low caste population in Britain..... | 19 |
| 3.6 Caste: is it dying in Britain? | 20 |
| 4 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: introduction to the evidence chapters | 22 |
| 4.1 Introduction..... | 22 |
| 4.2 General evidence | 22 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 5 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: education | 24 |
| 5.1 Introduction | 24 |
| 5.2 Inter-student relations: caste-based bullying and abuse | 24 |
| 5.3 Caste discrimination in access to education | 27 |
| 5.4 Schools' understanding of casteism | 27 |
| 5.5 Comment | 28 |
| 6 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: work .. | 30 |
| 6.1 Introduction | 30 |
| 6.2 Caste-based unfair treatment, bullying and harassment | 30 |
| 6.3 Recruitment | 36 |
| 6.4 Promotion | 39 |
| 6.5 Task allocation and downgrading | 40 |
| 6.6 Dismissal | 41 |
| 6.7 Other | 46 |
| 6.8 Comment | 47 |
| 7 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: goods, services and associations | 49 |
| 7.1 Introduction | 49 |
| 7.2 Social care | 49 |
| 7.3 Health care | 51 |
| 7.4 Shops | 51 |
| 7.5 Education | 51 |
| 7.6 Associations | 52 |
| 8 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: other activities | 53 |
| 8.1 Introduction | 53 |
| 8.2 Worship and religion | 53 |
| 8.3 Politics | 54 |
| 8.4 Public behaviour | 55 |
| 8.5 Violence and criminal activity | 56 |
| 9 Evidence on caste discrimination: themes | 58 |
| 9.1 Introduction | 58 |
| 9.2 Who is affected? | 58 |
| 9.3 Caste discrimination is dying out? | 59 |
| 9.4 Religion or caste | 60 |
| 9.5 Effects | 61 |
| 10 The role of government policy | 63 |
| 10.1 Introduction | 63 |
| 10.2 Existing response to alleged caste discrimination and harassment | 63 |
| 10.3 Legislation | 64 |
| 10.4 Other approaches | 65 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Appendix 1: Organisations contacted for the sample of individuals..... | 67 |
| Appendix 2: Case studies..... | 69 |
| Case study 3..... | 69 |
| Case study 4..... | 70 |
| Case study 6..... | 72 |
| Case study 7..... | 74 |
| Case study 8..... | 75 |
| Case study 9..... | 78 |
| Case study 10..... | 79 |
| Case study 11..... | 82 |
| Case study 12..... | 83 |
| Case study 13..... | 85 |
| Case study 14..... | 86 |
| Case study 15..... | 88 |
| Case study 19..... | 91 |
| Case study 20..... | 93 |
| Case study 21..... | 94 |
| Case study 22..... | 96 |
| Case study 28..... | 101 |
| Case study 29..... | 104 |
| Case study 30..... | 106 |
| Appendix 3: Discussion Guide..... | 107 |
| Appendix 4: Freefind recruitment questionnaire | 111 |
| Bibliography | 113 |

Acknowledgements

Many people provided extensive assistance with this study. First our thanks go to all the individuals who participated in the case studies: all gave up their time, sometimes at great discomfort to themselves, to describe events which they found upsetting to report. Our thanks also go to the representatives of organisations who showed great interest in the study and who provided us with extensive literature and their time. We would also like to thank the people who participated in seminars and the individuals who contacted us.

We would also like to thank Ipsos-Mori for conducting the fieldwork with individuals and, particularly, Neha Viswanathan and Rezina Chowdhary who conducted most of the interviews.

Finally, we would like to thank all members of the steering group and the two research managers. We were particularly grateful for the support and good humour of Charles M. Ramsden, Steve Porch, Jay Begum, Evelyne Doh (Government Equalities Office) and Suzanne Lehrer (Treasury Solicitor's Department).

Glossary

| | |
|--|---|
| ACC | Association for Community Cohesion. A pro-caste legislation pressure group. |
| The Act | The Equality Act 2010 (see Chapter 1) |
| ACDA | Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance. A pro-caste legislation pressure group. |
| biraderi | A form of caste (or clan) system operating amongst Muslim South Asians |
| BSCF | British Sikh Consultative Forum |
| CasteWatchUK | A pro-caste legislation pressure group. |
| Chamar | A low caste (leather worker/shoemaker); also a term of abuse |
| Chura | A low caste (sweeper); also a term of abuse |
| Dalit | A term some people of low caste have adopted meaning 'oppressed' |
| direct discrimination | Less favourable treatment of a person compared to others because of a protected characteristic. |
| DSN | Dalit Solidarity Network UK. A pro-caste legislation organisation. |
| EHRC | Equality and Human Rights Commission |
| FABO | The Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations (UK). A pro-caste legislation organisation. |
| gurdwara | Sikh place of worship |
| HCUK | Hindu Council UK |
| HFB | Hindu Forum of Britain |
| indirect discrimination | An apparently neutral policy which particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic, including the complainant, and that policy is not objectively justified. |
| jati | A form of caste based on occupations |
| Jatt | A higher caste (also spelt Jat and Jaat) |
| NSO | Network of Sikh Organisations |
| Ravidassia | Followers of the Guru Ravidass, who was low caste, as are nearly all his followers. Ravidassias are assumed to be low caste. |
| relevant discrimination and harassment | Discrimination and harassment of the type addressed by the Act for race. This is limited for the purposes of this study to the areas of work, education and the supply of goods and services. |
| SGRS-UK | Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha UK |
| Tarkhan | A higher caste |
| untouchable | A term for low castes |
| Valmiki | Followers of Valmiki, who was of low caste, as are nearly all his followers. Valmikis are assumed to be low caste. |
| varna | A form of caste system in Hinduism. |
| VoDI | Voice of Dalit International. A pro-caste legislation organisation. |

Other than acronyms, words in the glossary are italicised in the text.

Summary

The term 'caste' is used to identify a number of different concepts, notably, *varna* (a Hindu religious caste system), *jati* (an occupational caste system) and *biraderi* (often referred to as a clan system). The examples of caste discrimination identified related to *jati*.

Caste awareness in Britain is concentrated amongst people with roots in the Indian sub-continent (who comprise five per cent of the population). It is not religion specific and is subscribed to by (and affects) members of any or no religion.

The study identified evidence suggesting caste discrimination and harassment of the type covered by the Equality Act 2010 in relation to:

- work (bullying, recruitment, promotion, task allocation);
- provision of services; and
- education (pupil on pupil bullying)¹.

The study also identified evidence suggesting caste discrimination and harassment which may fall outside the Equality Act 2010 in relation to voluntary work, demeaning behaviour and violence.

The caste discrimination and harassment identified in this study was by higher castes against the lowest castes.

There is no clear evidence on whether the extent of caste discrimination and harassment is changing. There are both positive and negative influences at work.

To reduce caste discrimination and harassment the Government might take educative or legislative approaches. Either would be useful in the public sector. However, non-legislative approaches are less likely to be effective in the private sector and do not assist those where the authorities themselves are discriminating. Relying on the Indian community to take action to reduce caste discrimination and harassment is problematic.

Equality Act 2010 provisions on religious discrimination cannot cover caste discrimination and harassment as effectively as caste-specific provisions would.

¹ Pupil on pupil bullying is not directly covered by the Equality Act 2010. However, the actions of a school may be covered where it deals with bullying in a particular way because of a protected characteristic.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

There is little evidence on caste discrimination and harassment in Britain: its existence and nature are disputed, as is the need for anti-caste discrimination and harassment legislation. The development of the Equality Act 2010 (referred to in this study as the Act) brought debate on caste discrimination to the fore.

The Act was designed to simplify and streamline discrimination law in Britain. It replaced the previous discrimination legal regime and covers nine² 'protected characteristics' (sex, gender reassignment, race, 'religion or belief', age, disability, sexual orientation, 'marriage and civil partnership' and 'pregnancy and maternity')³ in areas such as work, education and goods and services. Pro-caste legislation groups lobbied for the protected characteristics to be extended to include caste, whilst a number of other groups lobbied against this. Whilst both pro- and anti-legislation groups condemned caste discrimination, they differed in their views over a) whether caste discrimination and harassment exists in Britain and its extent, b) whether 'discrimination' is confined to personal social relations (e.g. marriage partners, social circles) or is wider and c) whether legislation or other means should be used to tackle caste discrimination (if it exists).

There were also differences of opinion over the extent to which the Act, through the inclusion of race, religion and belief would cover caste discrimination anyway. Race is defined as including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. Religion is defined to include lack of religion; belief is defined as any religious or philosophical belief and also includes lack of belief. It is left to the tribunals and courts to determine in each particular case whether a particular religion or belief is covered by the legislation. Caste could be seen in light of a person's race since it is particularly associated with South Asia. It may also be an aspect of a person's religion or belief, since the caste system originated in Hinduism and certain castes have come to be associated with particular religious groups.

During the passage of the Equality Bill through Parliament, the Government considered that the available evidence did not indicate that caste discrimination was a significant problem in Britain in the areas (i.e. work, education and goods and services) covered by discrimination legislation. However, the Government acknowledged that the protected characteristics of race, religion and belief might not always allow an avenue to provide redress

² In the legislation, 'religion or belief', 'marriage and civil partnership' and 'pregnancy and maternity' each count as a single protected characteristic.

³ These are the legislative terms for the nine protected characteristics (with the 'and's and 'or' as in the legislation). However, in the rest of the report, we use standard English and list the named characteristics separately, joined with a single 'and' (e.g. 'race, religion, belief, marriage and partnership', rather than 'race, religion or belief and marriage and partnership').

for caste discrimination (if it exists), although there may be overlap in some cases.

Against this background, the Government accepted an amendment to the Equality Bill, inserting a new provision. Section 9 of the Act provides that a Minister may by order amend that section to provide for caste to be an aspect of race (and to provide for exceptions in the Act to apply, or not to apply, to caste).

At the same time, the Government decided that further research was needed in order to decide whether to exercise the power. In consequence, the Government Equalities Office commissioned the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) to assess the nature, extent and severity of caste prejudice, discrimination and harassment in Britain and the implications for Government policy.

1.2 Caste: definitions and terminology used in the report

'Caste' has various meanings. The starting point for this study was the definition of caste given in the Explanatory Notes to the Act:

The term "caste" denotes a hereditary, endogamous (marrying within the group) community associated with a traditional occupation and ranked accordingly on a perceived scale of ritual purity. It is generally (but not exclusively) associated with South Asia, particularly India, and its diaspora. It can encompass the four classes (varnas) of Hindu tradition (the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra communities); the thousands of regional Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Muslim or other religious groups known as jatis⁴; and groups amongst South Asian Muslims called biradaris⁵. Some jatis regarded as below the varna hierarchy (once termed "untouchable") are known as Dalit. (Equality Act 2010: Explanatory notes Section 9: Race paragraph 49, p15).

Varna is a Hindu religious concept. Its importance and role within the Hindu tradition has varied over time.

*Jati*⁶ can be defined as 'occupational castes', of which there are about 6,000 (Chahal, undated). In the Indian sub-continent, many people worked in the occupations linked to their *jati* (e.g. carpenter, shoemaker). *Jati* vary across the sub-continent, so, for example, the *jati* for carpenters in Gujarat is not the same as in Tamil Nadu.

Biraderi (or brotherhood) is found amongst Muslims from the Indian sub-continent.

⁴ Also zat (Ballard, 1994)

⁵ More commonly spelt biraderi (e.g. Ballard, 1994); also spelt biradri (Chahal, undated).

⁶ *Jati* should not be confused with *Jatt*: the first (pronounced with a long a) refers to occupational castes, the second (pronounced with a short a) is a specific occupational caste, agricultural workers from the Punjab.

Within the report, 'caste' is used to denote the generic meaning under the Act. Where the meaning relates to *varna*, *jati*, *biraderi* or to specific castes within these, then the more specific term is used.

The nature of caste is discussed further in Chapter 3.

1.2.1 Low caste

Although the Act and this study cover discrimination between any castes, the caste discrimination debate focuses on discrimination against the castes perceived to be the lowest, i.e. those termed 'untouchable' or '*Dalit*' in the Explanatory Notes to the Act quoted above.

A variety of names are used to identify the lowest castes. Each, in their own way, is problematic (being, variously, political, offensive, terms of abuse, related to specific caste-systems, signifying subsets of the lowest caste, relevant to the Indian, but not British, context). For example, the term 'untouchable' is seen by some as derogatory and reinforcing caste prejudice and disadvantage; and '*Dalit*' has been the chosen term amongst some but carries specific political connotations. In this report, we have therefore used the term 'low caste' or 'lowest caste' to indicate this group. This should not be taken to indicate there is a single low caste nor to refer to the *Varna* system.

Hundreds of *jati* are low caste. These include '*Chamar*' (leather worker/shoemaker) and '*Chura*' (sweeper). Both of these describe the *jati* but can also be derogatory terms and can be used as terms of abuse. The report refers to specific *jati* and, when these are introduced, describes whether these are low caste or not.

Religion can also identify caste. Nearly all *Ravidassia*, *Valmiki* and *Ambedkarite Buddhists* are low caste in origin, whilst Indian Christians are disproportionately from lower castes. *Ravidassias* and *Valmikis* may also use the term to denote their caste⁷. The term 'Hindu' and 'Sikh' are used by some to denote higher castes.

The glossary lists terms used in the report. 'Low caste' is discussed further in Chapter 3.

1.2.2 Terminology used in the report on 'caste membership'

In the study, it was necessary to identify the castes (or perceived castes) of the people involved in incidents which were perceived as discriminatory. Many interviewees either rejected a caste label or the idea of caste entirely. Nevertheless, nearly all stated the caste which would be attributed to them or which would be identified by their religion. Within the report, for clarity and brevity, people are described as being of a particular caste even if they did not consider themselves as actually belonging to a caste or if they rejected the caste system entirely. Thus, being a specific caste should be read as 'being from that caste or being likely to be seen by others as being from that caste'⁸.

⁷ Ravidassia and Valmiki are included in the list of scheduled castes in India.

⁸ Note that for direct caste discrimination to occur, it is only necessary for a person to treat someone else less favourably because of the caste attributed to them. It is not necessary for the person actually to be of the attributed caste (i.e. the attribution may be erroneous). This is

1.3 The remit and scope of the study

The study aimed to ‘*assess the nature, extent and severity of caste prejudice and discrimination and harassment in Britain and the implications for Government policy*’. Within this, the focus was on discrimination and harassment as defined in the Act (rather than that which might fall under criminal law or prejudice, which is not covered by legislation) (see Section 1.4).

The research was to be largely qualitative and it was recognised at the outset that quantification of the extent of caste discrimination and harassment would be highly limited. Therefore, objectives of the study were to:

- identify whether caste discrimination or harassment as relevant to the areas addressed by the Act for race (i.e. work, education and the supply of goods and services) exist in Britain (henceforth termed ‘relevant discrimination and harassment’); and, if so,
- the nature of such discrimination or harassment; and
- the consequences of such discrimination and harassment.

In addition, the study was to consider any indicators of the size of the population which may be affected by caste discrimination and harassment.

As caste within Britain is largely found in people whose roots come from South Asia, the study was to focus on this group.

Whilst the study concentrated on caste discrimination and harassment covered by the Act, other aspects of caste were raised in the course of the study, including in relation to the nature of caste and to perceived poor treatment of low caste members. Although the study could not address each of these fully, the information gathered is useful for understanding perceptions of caste discrimination and harassment and for the development of policy to address perceived caste discrimination. Nevertheless, the report should not be seen as providing full information on these aspects, particularly on the nature of caste in Britain.

1.4 The Equality Act 2010: scope and definitions

As the study focussed on discrimination and harassment covered by the Act, this section outlines the relevant main provisions of the Act.

The Act covers discrimination and harassment in respect of:

- work
- education

important for caste discrimination, as the victim may reject the concept of caste and their membership of a caste but, nevertheless, be considered by others to have a caste and be treated as a member of that caste. In addition, caste may be hidden, unidentified or misidentified.

- services and public functions
- associations
- premises
- transport

Discrimination and harassment are defined as follows:

- *direct discrimination*, which occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone else because of a protected characteristic. This definition is broad enough to cover cases where the less favourable treatment is because of the victim's association with someone else who has that characteristic (discrimination by association), or because the victim is wrongly thought to have that characteristic (discrimination by perception).
- *indirect discrimination*, which occurs when a rule or policy which applies in the same way for everybody has an effect which particularly disadvantages people with a protected characteristic. Where a group of people are disadvantaged in this way, a person in that group is indirectly discriminated against if he or she is put at that disadvantage, unless the person applying the rule or policy can justify it.
- *harassment* is unwanted conduct related to a particular protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. When considering whether conduct has that purpose or effect, the victim's perception is taken into account, as well as all the circumstances of the case and whether it is reasonable for the conduct to have that effect. Harassment because of association or perception is also prohibited.

In this study, references to discrimination include both direct and indirect discrimination. Such references may also occasionally include harassment, depending on the context, since for ease of reading it is not always appropriate to refer to both discrimination and harassment.

The Act also makes provision for the advancement of equality, through:

- the public sector equality duty (which, in respect of the protected characteristics, places a duty on public authorities to have due regard in their activities to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations); and
- positive action.

1.5 Report structure

The report follows the following structure. The next two chapters are introductory: Chapter 2 describes the research method and Chapter 3 provides an overview of caste in Britain: the concepts and population affected by caste. The following chapters present evidence on caste discrimination and harassment in Britain. Chapter 4, presents general evidence. Chapters 5 to 8 present evidence on specific incidents relating to alleged discrimination and

harassment in education (Chapter 5), work (Chapter 6), goods and services (Chapter 7) and other activities (Chapter 8). Chapter 9 discusses a number of themes arising from the research, including the groups affected, whether caste is dying out in Britain, the conflation of religion and caste and the effects of alleged caste discrimination and harassment. The final chapter discusses the role of government policy in addressing caste discrimination and harassment.

2 Research method

2.1 Overview of the method

The study was based on:

1. a review of the literature on caste discrimination in Britain;
2. discussions with interested parties and other experts; and
3. qualitative interviews with people claiming to have experienced caste discrimination⁹.

2.2 The literature review

The literature review focussed on evidence of caste discrimination and harassment in Britain and, particularly, evidence of discrimination of the type covered by discrimination law in the Act (e.g. work, education and the provision of goods and services). It also sought to identify the size of relevant populations. From the start, it was recognised that evidence was limited and so the literature review would be brief.

As well as a general search (using key words such as 'caste', '*jati*', '*biraderi*', 'discrimination' and 'Britain'), a search for publications and other documentary evidence by the following organisations was conducted: the Equality and Human Rights Commission (no results), the Department for Communities and Local Government (13 results, not all relevant), the Runnymede Trust (one result) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (one result).

Publications and documentary evidence was also sought from:

- groups campaigning against caste discrimination (Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA), Dalit Solidarity Network UK (DSN), CasteWatchUK, Voice of Dalit International (VoDI) and The Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations (UK) (FABO)); and
- Hindu and Sikh representative organisations (the Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB), the Hindu Council UK (HCUK), the British Sikh Consultative Forum (BSCF) and the Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO)).

2.3 Discussions with interested parties and experts

Discussions were held with organisations and experts with an interest in caste issues. These aimed:

⁹ Interviews were with the alleged victim, except in a small number of cases where the alleged victim was vulnerable or frail.

1. to explore perceptions of the nature, extent and severity of caste discrimination in Britain and to identify the basis for these perceptions;
2. to collect information on examples of perceived discrimination, including their consequences;
3. to collect evidence and views on the wider impact of caste discrimination and the reasons for these views;
4. to explore the need for and nature of potential remedies to address caste discrimination and the evidence and reasons for respondents' views; and
5. to inform the development of the qualitative research.

Discussions took place through interviews with one or a small number of people from each organisation and through discussions at seminars and events, some of which were held in response to this study. In this way discussions were held with representatives from:

| Organisations¹⁰ |
|--|
| Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) |
| Association for Community Cohesion (ACC) |
| British Sikh Consultative Forum (BSCF)/Sikh Human Rights Group |
| CasteWatchUK |
| Central Valmik Sabha (Southall) |
| Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) |
| Hindu Council UK (HCUK) |
| Hindu Forum of Britain (HFB) |
| Sikh Education Forum |
| Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha UK (SGRS-UK) |
| The Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABO). |
| Voice of Dalit International (VoDI) |
| Academics: Annapurna Waughray, University of Manchester Roger Green, University of Hertfordshire Gurnam Singh, University of Coventry Harshad Keval, Christ Church University, Canterbury |

¹⁰ A brief discussion was held with the Dalit Solidarity Network UK. The respondent suggested that other organisations would be of more assistance in relation to caste discrimination in Britain.

In addition, at seminars and events, discussions were held with people representing various *Valmiki* and *Ravidassia* temples.

2.4 Qualitative interviews with people claiming to have experienced caste discrimination and/or harassment

The study interviewed 32 people who believed they had suffered caste discrimination or harassment. The aim was to try to identify relevant incidents of caste discrimination and harassment (i.e. relevant under the Act for race, in areas such as work, education and the provision of goods and services) through gathering detailed information on alleged incidents. Proof either way was impossible, particularly because evidence was gathered from a single person only. This is discussed further in Section 2.6.

2.4.1 The interviews

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured discussion guide (see Appendix 3). Interviews were conducted in the language of the interviewees choice. Twenty-eight of the interviews were conducted face-to-face by interviewers from Ipsos-Mori. With the agreement of the interviewee, these were taped. Those conducted in English were transcribed. A note was drawn up for interviews not conducted in English. Four interviews were conducted by NIESR, one face-to-face and the others by telephone¹¹. Notes were taken in these interviews.

The interviews were conducted with the person who believed they had suffered the discrimination, unless the person was too young or frail to participate, in which cases closely involved third parties (e.g. a parent) were interviewed.

Third parties were interviewed in six cases (a daughter reporting treatment of her mother at an old people's day centre; a son reporting treatment of his mother by a carer; three cases of parents reporting treatment of their children at school; and one case of a mother reporting her son's rejection by a *Gurdwara* for language lessons). In two cases the 'third party' was present when some or all of the alleged discrimination occurred. In two other cases (relating to treatment at school), the parent had discussed the issue with the school. (Note some of these respondents also described alleged caste discrimination against themselves as well.) In addition, some respondents, described both alleged discrimination against themselves and occurring to others. Such third party information has generally been omitted from the report, although a number of reports of bullying at school of close relatives have been included in the case study descriptions in Appendix 2.

2.4.2 The sample

The sample of cases was drawn in two ways. Firstly, organisations campaigning for anti-caste discrimination legislation and religious groups,

¹¹ This was part of the screening process to identify suitable case studies. However the extent of information gathered at this stage meant that a further face-to-face interview was unnecessary.

mainly temples, with predominantly low caste congregations were contacted. They were asked to publicise the study and to ask individuals who believed they had suffered caste discrimination to volunteer to participate. As part of this, a member of the research team attended two events at which the research was publicised. A list of the organisations contacted is given in Appendix 1. This yielded 29 interviews.

We also wished to include people who were neither involved with anti-caste discrimination organisations nor with religious groups dominated by lower castes. A number of methods were considered and, on the advice of Ipsos-Mori, a 'freefind' method was used. Locations likely to have a relatively high concentration of people from low castes were identified. These included Southall, Hackney, Colindale, West Hampstead, Kilburn and selected businesses (taxi cab offices, restaurants, cleaning companies). Recruiters from Ipsos-Mori asked people a brief set of questions on their experience of discrimination (in regard to gender, race etc., as well as caste) in work, education and the supply of goods and services (see Appendix 4 for the questionnaire). Those who said 'yes' in respect of caste were asked to participate in the study and an appointment made for interview. This was seen as a high risk method, which might yield no interviews. However, it was attempted in order to try to include interviewees who were not involved with pro-caste legislation organisations. Seventy-eight people were asked about their experience of discrimination. This involved 30-33 hours of recruiters' time. This yielded three interviews.

Of the 32 individuals interviewed:

- 23 have been used as case studies (one of which was freefind)
- nine have not been used as case studies:
 - four incidents were judged to have happened too long ago, occurring 20 or more years ago;
 - two, whilst relating to caste, did not provide information on incidents within the remit of the study (one was about personal relations; the other described problems in general terms);
 - one, whilst relating to caste, did not provide convincing evidence of caste discrimination;
 - one did not appear to relate to caste, but to class and wealth;
 - one was subject to legal proceedings.

2.5 Analysis

The evidence from all strands of the research was analysed, firstly, to identify incidents of likely caste discrimination or harassment of relevance to the Act and, secondly, to identify other information which helped to contribute to the understanding of the existence and nature of caste discrimination in Britain.

In analysing the qualitative case studies and other evidence of caste discrimination, the factors which to us indicated possible caste discrimination were:

- 1) statements by the perpetrator that the action was due to caste (e.g. a person being asked to leave rented rooms '*because I had not realised you were low caste*');
- 2) derogatory or offensive reference to caste, including caste references used abusively (e.g. calling someone '*a dirty Chamar*');
- 3) change in behaviour after identification of caste; and
- 4) differential treatment of people of different castes.

In the qualitative interviews we tried to investigate whether these indicators were present and also whether there might be other reasons for the change in behaviour or for differential treatment. Based on this evidence, we comment on whether caste discrimination or harassment may have occurred and, if so, whether this might be covered by the Act. However, for many cases drawn from publications and from the pro-legislation lobby groups, too little information was given to be able to make a judgement on how likely it was that caste discrimination had occurred.

Summaries of the case studies are provided in Appendix 2.

2.6 Methodological challenges

This approach presented a number of problems, both of identification of caste discrimination and interpretation for policy purposes.

Firstly, a single case of caste discrimination or harassment proves that it exists. At the same time, legislation to address a single case is rare. Therefore, if any cases of caste discrimination or harassment were identified, the study needed to provide some indication of whether these were isolated cases or not. Within this study, this could only be done qualitatively, drawing on the evidence in the literature, from discussions with interested parties and experts and from the qualitative interviews. Quantifying the extent of caste discrimination would require a representative survey. This would be highly complex and was outside the budget and timescale of the study. Moreover, estimating the possible population open to caste discrimination is hampered by lack of data on the population by caste in Britain.

Secondly, it is impossible to identify caste discrimination with absolute certainty based on the statement of the person who feels they have suffered such discrimination: their perception may be erroneous and the information provided incomplete. At the same time, through close questioning about the circumstances, it is possible to form a judgement about the likelihood that caste discrimination occurred. This may be judged by, for example, whether caste was directly referred to by others for their actions, whether caste-offensive language was used, whether perceived behaviour changed on learning the person's caste, how other people of the same and different castes were treated and so on. On this basis, we have analysed individual examples of perceived caste discrimination and presented those which, to us, appear likely to have resulted from caste.

Difficulties are increased by the correlation between caste and other factors, notably, religion, family and friends and, possibly, culture. Where a religious

group (or section of that religion) is composed largely of one caste and those perceived to be discriminating belong to a different caste and religion, it is difficult to disentangle whether any perceived discrimination is based on caste or on religion (or both). Similarly, if family and friends are of one caste and are favoured, it is difficult to identify whether the perceived discrimination is nepotism unrelated to caste (although such nepotism might constitute indirect caste discrimination).

Thirdly, the approach was reliant on each of three factors being present for each incident: individuals recognising that they had been discriminated against or harassed because of caste and being willing to talk about this and the incident entailing factors (described in the previous section) strongly suggestive of caste discrimination. The need for all three of these is likely to lead to an under-identification of caste discrimination, if it exists, for the following reasons:

- not all discrimination is recognised by the victim; measures of gender and race discrimination, for example, rely not only on individual cases, but on the pattern of disadvantage e.g. unexplained lower earnings: each individual act of discrimination which has contributed to that pattern is unlikely to be recognised by an individual victim;
- whilst some may have erroneously perceived or reported caste discrimination, the assessment of the evidence was likely to sift these cases out; however, other cases will have been sifted out not because caste discrimination was erroneously perceived or reported, but because the evidence was inconclusive;
- a rejection of the caste system or one's membership of a caste may result in caste discrimination being overlooked or attributed to some other factor; and
- for some, coming from a low caste and suffering caste discrimination are very sensitive issues and may be seen as shameful¹²; individuals may be unwilling to discuss these issues, particularly with a stranger.

Individuals' experiences and their perceptions of these differ due to differences in their situation. In relation to caste discrimination, experiences and perceptions are likely to differ depending on the extent and circumstances in which one associates with people from the Indian sub-continent and with their treatment of caste. This may differ across the country and with the composition (by, for example, caste, religion, personal characteristics and background) of the Asians with whom one is in contact.

The evidence as to whether caste discrimination exists can only be drawn from the positive cases (i.e. where it seems likely that caste discrimination did occur). Some of the cases we investigated of perceived caste discrimination (in the qualitative interviews and the literature) did not present convincing evidence of caste discrimination. This is not to say they were not caste discrimination but that the evidence presented was inconclusive. The

¹² The degree of sensitivity and issue of shame was likened by some members of pro-legislation groups to disclosure of rape.

inconclusive cases should not be interpreted as indicating that people perceive caste discrimination when it is not there.

Some of the cases investigated fell outside the remit of the Act (e.g. violence, which falls under criminal law, and pupil-on-pupil bullying). These and the inconclusive cases shed light on issues around caste discrimination which affect whether the Act might be a useful tool for addressing caste discrimination and so this information is used in the report.

3 Caste: concepts, relevant populations and change

3.1 Introduction

Caste exists in Britain: this is not in dispute. The issue for this study is whether caste discrimination and harassment exist and, if so, whether these might be addressed by the Act. To better understand the issues, it is useful to consider further what is meant by caste and to identify the population affected by caste. We also consider the evidence for the claims that caste is changing in importance, as this may affect the need for legislation.

3.2 The concept of caste

As has been stated, the study took as a starting point for the definition of caste that given by the Explanatory Notes to the Act (see Section 1.2). However, it is useful to consider more widely what 'caste' means. The following is intended to provide some understanding of the complexity of the issue and to provide some understanding of the study's concentration on *jati* and *biraderi*, rather than *varna*. A full analysis of the foundations and nature of caste in Britain today was beyond the scope of this study.

A number of anti-legislation representatives described the term 'caste' as a colonial concept and also a 'muddled' concept, mixing a range of different ideas (notably *varna*, a Hindu concept, and *jati/biraderi*).

- Hindu anti-legislation representatives challenged the interpretation that *varna* is hierarchical and that any *varna* is considered lower or higher than any other. They also challenged the idea that it is immutable (within one life), saying that individuals can change their *varna* (within one life).
- Sikh anti-legislation representatives, variously, suggested that caste was not adhered to by Sikhs (saying that this was against the Sikh religion) and also challenged the idea of ritual purity, which they saw as a Hindu and not Sikh concept.

Varna is a Hindu concept. However, Hinduism encompasses a variety of beliefs and, according to some Hindu organisation representatives, the importance of caste as a religious concept varies (and has also changed over time). Some respondents from Sikh organisations said that *varna* has no place within the Sikh religion.

Interviews (including those with individuals) suggested that *jati* was the focus for caste discrimination (if it exists). Beckford *et al.* (2006) identify a link with *varna*:

'In practice people identify with a particular hereditary group called a jati that is associated with one of the varnas. These groups are often referred to in English as castes or sub-castes and the pattern

of jatis varies considerably according to regional origins. Biradari are extended kinship groupings found among people of Muslim background with origins in the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent.'

Whether the connection between *jati* (and *biraderi*) and *varna* is accepted or not, the language used to describe specific *jati* (by most respondents in the study) suggests a hierarchy (even if the respondent themselves rejected the concept of caste or it being hierarchical). The use of specific *jatis* (e.g. *Chamar* and *Chura*) as derogatory names, often linked with words such as 'dirty', (as reported by respondents in the qualitative interviews and by the pro-legislation representatives) also suggests a hierarchy of *jati*.

Ballard (1994) describes caste and kinship networks as being the same due to marriage within caste. She says:

'kinship reciprocities still offer the most effective means of organising mutual support.... Thus whenever migrants have helped each other gain access to jobs, housing and other scarce resources, they have invariably found that kinship ties provided the most effective base for collective mobilisation.'

Similarly, caste has been described as:

'more of a 'clan' system, where people draw support from each other as if in a club and, moreover, are secure enough to be benevolent towards similar clans, as well as other wider caste groups'. (Anil Bhanot, General Secretary, Hindu Council UK, foreword to Sharma, 2008)

Certainly the term 'clan' is often used to describe *biraderi*, which Anwar (1995) also describes as a kinship system and (referring to the UK):

'the whole way of life of Pakistanis is directly or indirectly related to this institution'.

He describes how *biraderi* networks helped the process of migration and settlement through mutual support, finding jobs and establishing businesses, as well as relating to support in the personal sphere.

Caste can be part of one's identity (DSN, 2006). Respondents stated that culture differs with caste. It provided an indicator to some of how well they might get on with a person (and so seek or not seek their company). The caste system in Britain has been described as a means of preserving culture, as *'an effort to preserve communal, regional and vernacular based groups'* (Sharma, 2008). Caste provided support systems and contacts. At the same time, caste can be seen as dividing communities (DSN, 2006).

In the literature (and the discussions with experts), there was no indication of whether, in Britain, the benefits of caste were common to all castes or not. It seems likely that they are, but, in the interviews, those that mentioned benefits were anti-legislation representatives whilst pro-legislation representatives and those who felt they had suffered caste discrimination and harassment did not mention benefits. However, this may have been due to a

difference in interests¹³. Certainly, a survey showed that many low caste members consider that they belong to a caste (DSN, 2006)¹⁴ (although this is not universal). Therefore, it is unclear whether low caste members derive the same benefits of caste membership as others.

3.3 Caste concept used in the study

The study was open about the definition of caste. However, the cases of caste discrimination identified in the literature and in the qualitative case studies related to *jati*. Given the inclusion of Hindus in the study, the lack of reference to *varna*, but reference to *jati*, suggests that perceived caste discrimination (outside *biraderi*) is based on 'occupational castes' rather than 'religious castes' i.e. it is a cultural rather than religious construct.

The study found little literature on *biraderi* in Britain and none of the qualitative case studies related to *biraderi*. Whilst this may be due to its lack of relevance in Britain, it may be due to our reliance on pro-legislation organisations for the supply of the sample of individuals for the qualitative case studies and such organisations being comprised mainly of other religions or secular. The study can therefore make no judgement about caste discrimination based on *biraderi* nor in the Muslim community.

For these reasons, the study focuses on *jati*.

3.4 Caste indicators

A number of factors may indicate a person's caste (DSN, 2006, ACDA, 2009). The main ones include:

- occupation prior to migration (if a migrant from India) or that of a recent forefather (or current relative) in India;
- village (or part of the village) in India from which one's family comes;
- last name (although this can also mislead);
- religion; and
- *gurdwara* or temple of worship (many in Britain are caste-based).

Thus, it is often possible to identify a person's caste whether they subscribe to the concept of caste or not and whether they are willing to state their caste or not. However, according to some anti-legislation representatives, identification through village and last name was only possible for those from broadly the same area (e.g. people from South India were unlikely to be able to identify the caste of North Indians in this way). Some individuals interviewed in the study had changed their last name or that of their children in order to conceal their caste.

¹³ The benefits of the caste system were not a focus of the study. Information on these was not sought in the interviews, but pro-legislation representatives were keen to identify these.

¹⁴ DSN conducted a survey of 130 low caste individuals and organisations, in which 85 percent said they belonged to a caste (DSN, 2006). The survey is unrepresentative (in a statistical sense) and so the incidence may not be representative of a wider population. However, it does suggest that many low caste individuals believe they have a caste.

Within the study, pro-legislation representatives and many individuals claiming caste discrimination interpreted questions from other South Asians about their name, religion, place of worship or background as attempts to identify their caste and so found these types of questions offensive (and indicative of caste discrimination). However, others claiming caste discrimination and harassment were happy to respond to such questions by other South Asians and saw such questions as innocent social interaction. Avoiding responding to such questions could result in hostile conversations. Some reported these occurring at work, with white British colleagues witnessing the conversations being puzzled by the hostility.

Low caste respondents reported that unwillingness to state their caste could result in the assumption that they were low caste. Whilst some refused to answer questions which might identify their caste, others would try to prevent identification through non-specific answers, for example, stating their religion as 'Sikh' or 'Hindu' rather than '*Ravidassia*' or '*Valmiki*'.

For some people, this fear of caste discrimination appeared to limit basic social interactions.

3.5 British population potentially affected by caste discrimination

The study aimed to examine the extent of caste prejudice, discrimination and harassment in Britain. An estimate of the number of people who suffer caste discrimination and harassment would require a major quantitative survey. This was beyond the scope of the study. Therefore, to provide some indication of the potential extent of the problem, data on the size of the population with the characteristics of those who claim to suffer caste discrimination was sought. This population we have termed as 'at risk' of caste discrimination.

Below, first the population in Britain who are affected by caste (i.e. they either subscribe to caste or are likely to have a caste attributed to them) is described. Then data is provided on the size of the low caste population in Britain, as the evidence points to low caste members being most 'at risk' of caste discrimination and harassment.

3.5.1 British population affected by caste

Whilst caste systems do not stem uniquely from the Indian sub-continent, in Britain the evidence on caste relates to those with a South Asian heritage and it seems likely that few others are affected by caste. Therefore, the following examines evidence on the South Asian population affected by caste.

Caste is not religion specific: it is subscribed to by Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Muslims (Sharma, 2006; Chahal, undated; Change Institute, 2009). It is also subscribed to by members of low and high castes (DSN, 2006). Rejection of caste and membership of a religion which rejects caste does not protect against being perceived as having a caste. Therefore, at the upper limit, the population potentially affected by caste (i.e. being a member of a caste or being treated by others as though they were a member of a caste) in Britain is all those with a South Asian heritage, i.e. the population in Britain of Indian,

Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent¹⁵. This comprises about five per cent of the population or almost three million people¹⁶.

Potentially, any (or none) of this group may discriminate or be discriminated against, whatever their religion and whatever their caste. However, although some individuals did refer to cases of caste discrimination they have known of against people of higher caste, the literature and interviews suggest that perceived caste discrimination and harassment is against members of low castes. The next section assembles evidence on the composition and size of this group.

3.5.2 The low caste population in Britain

There is no information on the composition of low caste members in Britain as a group. Data would be difficult to compile for many reasons, not least that some low caste people wish to hide their caste, whilst others reject the notion of caste and so would not report having a caste. Nevertheless, certain groups within Britain are known to be composed largely of people from low castes and there are estimates of the size of these groups.

Groups largely comprising low caste members within Britain include:

- Khalifas (Muslim) (Change Institute, 2009)
- *Valmiki* (Waughray, 2009)
- *Ravidassia* (Waughray, 2009; ACDA, 2009)
- Ramdasis (Waughray, 2009)
- *Ambedkarite Buddhists* (Waughray, 2009).

Other sub-groups exist, for example, a small Christian minority from the Pakistani Punjab, most of whom are of low caste descent (Ballard, 1994).

¹⁵ including those (and those whose families) first migrated elsewhere in the world.

¹⁶ The figures are based on the Office for National Statistics estimate of the population by ethnicity in England and Wales in 2007 and the Census 2001 for Scotland. For England and Wales the estimate includes Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and mixed (white and Asian). For Scotland it does not include mixed.

High concentrations of low caste communities have been identified in the following locations in Britain:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Birmingham | Luton |
| Coventry | Newcastle |
| Darlaston (Walsall) | Bradford (including Khalifa) |
| Walsall | Derby |
| Willenhall (Staffs) | Leicester (Khalifa) |
| Wolverhampton | Erith (Kent), |
| Southampton | Gravesend |
| Stroud | Glasgow |
| Slough | London |
| Bedford | East London (Khalifa) |
| Hitchin | Southall |

(DSN, 2006; The Change Institute, 2009)

The identification between certain religions and the lowest castes means that certain places of worship are associated with the lowest castes (Waughray, 2009). Low caste places of worship in the UK include Guru *Ravidass* temples, Bhagwan *Valmiki* Temples and Buddha Vihar (DSN, 2006). Some Hindu Temples, Ramgarhia Temples and Sikh *Gurdwaras* are associated with higher castes (DSN, 2006).

3.5.3 The size of the low caste population in Britain

There are no good estimates of the size of the low caste population in Britain. Estimates are impeded by issues around identification as 'low caste', the changing of names and reluctance to acknowledge low caste origin (DSN, 2006). Below, we present various estimates of lower caste groups. The accuracy of the figures is unknown and should not be assumed to be high.

The low caste population (*Ravidassia*, *Valmikis* and *Buddhists*) are estimated at 50,000 by DSN (2006)¹⁷ as follows:

- Shri Guru *Ravidass* (some are Sikhs): 35,000
- Bhagwan *Valmiki* (partially Hindus): 10,000
- *Ambedkarites* (*Buddhists/Valmikis/Christians/Ravidassias*): 5,000

with the following geographical spread:

- Southall and London: 11,000
- Birmingham and Wolverhampton: 10,000
- Coventry: 10,000
- 18 other locations: 1,000.

However, the Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisation and Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha puts the figure at 200,000 (DSN, 2006), whilst ACDA (2009) reports that there are 175,000 *Ravidassias* alone in the UK.

¹⁷ Based on data from the communities and the Dalit Sabhas. However, DSN says that not all *Dalits* are registered in the Sabhas, as well as other problems with making estimates described above.

Other low caste populations in the UK include (DSN, 2006):

- foreign students (a small number of Indians and Nepalese)
- Nepali *Dalits*: 200, of whom approximately 100 are in the British Ghurkha Army. Ghurkhas are concentrated in Farnborough, Reading, Southall, Fleet and Woking. Other low caste Nepalese are widely spread across Britain.

DSN (2006) points out that there are few low caste Hindus in the UK. However, the complexities of identity make differentiation between Hindus and Sikhs on the one hand and *Valmiki*s and *Ravidassias* on the other difficult (Nesbitt, 1991).

There are an estimated 5,000 Khalifas in England (Change Institute, 2009, referring to Baily, 2006).

Thus the estimates range from a minimum of 50,000 to 200,000 or more.

3.6 Caste: is it dying in Britain?

Anti- and pro-caste legislation organisations express opposing views about the trend in caste awareness and its influence. The former consider caste to be dying out in this country (if not already dead), the latter believe it remains and will remain strong.

Anil Bhanot, General Secretary, Hindu Council UK says '*Today, UK born Hindus are hardly aware of the old hierarchies of the caste system*' (foreword to Sharma, 2008). Sharma (2008) argues that the trend in marriage across castes shows 'upper castes' are more relaxed about caste than low caste groups claim and that 'issues related to caste discrimination' will be resolved in a generation. Pro-caste legislation organisations point to the continued existence of caste (as a selection preference) on South Asian marriage sites as an indication of its continued relevance.

The evidence on this is scant. In 1994, Ballard said that, although it was widely assumed that migratory and economic pressures would undermine the caste system for migrants to Britain and their descendants, he found '*caste disjunctions and caste loyalties are still almost as active as they ever were*'. Certainly, anti-caste legislation organisations stated that it was the older generations which were more caste conscious and so caste was dying. However, pro-caste legislation organisations stated that caste consciousness was passed from generation to generation and that there was a growth of '*Jatt pride*' amongst the young (exhibited in, for example, music lyrics) which increased caste consciousness. Organisations and some individuals in the qualitative research suggested that caste consciousness was strengthened or diluted by new migration from South Asia, with perceptions of the effect dependent on the attitudes of the migrants encountered by those reporting this¹⁸.

¹⁸ The direction of the effect, if any, would depend on the attitudes of the individual migrants, not on the relative strength of caste consciousness in Britain and South Asia.

Qualitative studies provide little enlightenment. In an unrepresentative¹⁹ survey of 130 low caste individuals and organisations, 85 percent said they belonged to a caste, but only 30 percent said their children were aware of their caste (DSN, 2006). This may indicate a diminution in the caste system, although it could be an ageing effect (i.e. as individuals age, they may become more aware of their caste). A qualitative study of Indian Muslims reported that most of its respondents (who were mainly representatives of organisations) acknowledged the prevalence of caste hierarchy and discrimination, but that it was diminishing, particularly in relation to mosque segregation (Change Institute, 2009).

¹⁹ 'Unrepresentative' is used here in a statistical sense. It is not intended to suggest that the findings are wrong, but that the incidence identified may not be representative of a wider population.

4 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: introduction to the evidence chapters

4.1 Introduction

The evidence on alleged caste discrimination and harassment is presented in the following four chapters, covering: education; work; goods, services and associations; and other activities. The first three relate to areas of activity covered by the Act. The fourth chapter relates to activities outside the Act. They are either covered by criminal law or not covered by legislation at all. However, they are relevant to understanding the operation of alleged caste prejudice in Britain and its consequences and help inform considerations about government policy.

The evidence is drawn from the qualitative case studies conducted for this study, publications and evidence collated by pro-legislation lobby groups and submitted to this study.

As already discussed, it is impossible to categorically determine whether caste discrimination and harassment within the meaning of the Act has occurred.

Some of the evidence suggests that caste discrimination occurred because the perpetrator had sought to identify a person's caste. This alone is seen as offensive or discriminatory by some of the qualitative research interviewees and by pro-legislation organisations. However, whilst identification of caste may lead to discrimination, attempts simply to identify the caste to which a person belongs have not been treated by the study as evidence of discrimination occurring.

In this and the next four chapters, summaries of incidents which illustrate caste discrimination and harassment are presented. Fuller summaries of the qualitative case studies are provided in Appendix 2.

In the following chapters, we frequently refer to caste discrimination and harassment as *covered by the Act* and that actions *would be unlawful under the Act*. This is shorthand for indicating actions which would be covered by the Act and would be unlawful *if the caste power within the Act were exercised*. Obviously, currently, caste discrimination and harassment is not covered by the Act and is not unlawful.

4.2 General evidence

Before turning to specific evidence, it is worth reporting that there are very different views on the extent of caste discrimination in Britain.

Representatives of organisations opposed to caste legislation in Britain (the HFB and the HCUK) considered that there was either no or very little caste discrimination in this country. Representatives of organisations campaigning

for caste legislation (e.g. ACDA and CasteWatchUK) considered that there was extensive caste discrimination, including in relation to areas relevant to the Act. Individuals who participated in the qualitative interviews held a range of views on the extent of caste discrimination and on whether they had encountered it on a single or many occasions, although much of this appeared to relate to conduct outside the remit of the Act.

People's experiences vary. Different experiences were reported in different areas of the country (for example, some localities were described as having caste-based temples, whereas others were described as having temples without any caste divide). Experiences may vary depending on the extent to which one mixes with, and in what circumstances, other South Asians, their caste and background. Perceptions may differ based on one's own caste, identification with that caste and beliefs about caste. Thus differences in perceptions should not be considered strange, just as women and men tend to have different views about the extent of sex discrimination and whites and ethnic minorities about the extent of race discrimination.

5 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: education

5.1 Introduction

The cases of alleged caste discrimination and bullying in education relate to inter-student relations and to access to education.

The Act covers discrimination and harassment by educational institutions. It does not cover discrimination and harassment solely between students or pupils (inter-student relationships). However, an educational institution may be in contravention of the Act if it deals with discrimination and harassment between pupils in a discriminatory way, for example by not treating bullying based on one protected characteristic as firmly as it deals with similar behaviour based on other characteristics, where the reason for the difference in treatment is a pupil's protected characteristic²⁰. Therefore, in examining alleged caste discrimination and bullying amongst students, we were particularly interested in the action taken by the educational institution.

Evidence from the case studies conducted for this study is labelled with the case study number and is boxed. All other evidence is referenced.

5.2 Inter-student relations: caste-based bullying and abuse²¹

Caste-based bullying and abuse at school and college were reported by pro-legislation organisations, in publications (Chahal, undated; DSN, 2006) and in the qualitative interviews. It was perceived as a major problem by these sources.

Four of the qualitative case studies reporting perceived caste-based bullying and abuse at school are discussed below.

A 16 year old said that her friends had assumed that she was of higher caste and, when they found out that she was not, bullying started and she lost many friends. The bullying started when she was 12 and continued for a couple of years. She ended up socialising little. Eventually, she told her parents. They offered to speak to the pupils' parents. X asked them not to do this, fearing that it would make the situation worse. She did not speak to teachers about it because she felt they could not do anything about it. (Case study 4)

²⁰ The Education and Inspection Act 2006 places a separate duty on schools to encourage respect for others and, in particular, to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.

²¹ Case studies: Case study 4, Case study 9, Case study 13, Case study 19, Case study 21, and Case study 29.

This case, as reported, appears to be caste discrimination. However, for it to be covered by the Act, the school would have had to have been aware of the bullying and to have treated it in a discriminatory way (see Section 5.1). Lack of belief that the school could do anything meant that the bullying was not reported. This raises the question of whether, if caste discrimination were covered by the legislation, the school would have taken action so that pupils and their parents felt it was worthwhile reporting alleged caste-based bullying.

A similar case was reported by a woman now in her early 20s:

After a year at secondary school, X's new, *Jatt* Sikh friends discovered that X was not *Jatt*. This meant that she was not one of them. They then discovered she was a Christian. She was bullied for a few years, both inside and outside school, leading to threats of serious violence (for which the police were called). Eventually her parents found out and spoke to the school. This led to further intimidation.

She spent a lot of time with her year head, not in the classroom. She was not attending lessons. She felt that the school handled it badly and that either the perpetrators were the ones who should have been taken out of the class, not her, or the issue should have been addressed in some other way. (Case study 29)

This case may have been bullying because of caste or religion or both. According to the alleged victim's description of the way the school handled the situation, this was inadequate. It raises the question of whether, had the bullying been racial (i.e. covered by legislation), it would have been better handled. The case also illustrates how the bullying can escalate into serious threatened violence.

Another case, described by his father, involved a fourteen year old boy who was *Valmiki*:

X described how his son had been taunted at school using caste terms, largely by one boy, a *Jatt Sikh*. My son '*had so much flak about being Valmiki – and they had another name for it – and he'd say "I'm not that"*'. His son hit back on the two major occasions described (in 2002 and 2004). The first led to police involvement, the second led to him being suspended from school when he taking his GCSE exams.

A few days after the second incident, concrete was thrown through X's car window while it was parked outside his house. X says he saw the boy's father's car driving off at speed. X describes various hostile (but not violent) later encounters with the boy's parents.

After the first incident, X spoke to his son's teacher. The teacher told the perpetrator's father that the boy must not say these things and he would be suspended if he did it again. X thought the teacher handled it as best she could but felt she did not understand the severity of the remarks and how damaging they could be. He also commented that, if they had been racist remarks, the other boy would have been suspended immediately. Similarly, X felt that the police did not understand what had happened and just saw it as a feud between two Asian people.

X's son did worse in his exams than expected and has found it difficult to cope. (Case study 13)

The above case illustrates how caste taunts can result in violence and the extension of the problem to involve the wider family. It again illustrates how the authority's understanding of the issue was perceived to be inadequate and that casteism is perceived as not being treated as seriously as racism. As with Case study 4 (above), the pupil-on-pupil interaction itself would not be covered by the Act, although, if caste were covered by legislation, the school may be liable if it dealt with the issue in a discriminatory way (see Section 5.1). The smashing of the car window would also be outside the Act, although covered by criminal law.

A mother described caste questioning and then taunts of her daughter (aged eleven or younger):

A boy in her class in the school had asked her about her caste and she had responded that caste did not exist amongst Sikhs and the boy had told her to 'go home and ask her father about it', as, for him, caste did exist. Following on from that, this boy had made derogatory, upsetting remarks towards her.

X contacted the school about the boy's remarks. The school met with both children to mediate and resolve the incident. Whilst X was relatively satisfied with the school's approach, she was alarmed that her daughter's generation were also subject to caste discrimination and contrasted the subtle reaction of the school with the approach they may have taken were it a racist incident between a black and a white person for example. (Case study 21)

Again, this raises the question, by the victim's mother, of casteism being treated less seriously than racism by the school.

5.3 Caste discrimination in access to education²²

One of the qualitative case studies reported alleged caste discrimination in access to courses.

A father, a Sikh (a *Ravidassia* Sikh), applied for a place for his son at a Sikh school. The application was rejected. They believe the refusal was because of his caste. The parents did not ask for an explanation. (Case study 30)

Unfortunately, the case study provided too little information for adequate assessment of whether caste discrimination was likely to have occurred. Whilst the rejection could have been because of caste, as the parents believed, there may be other explanations. The parents did not seek an explanation and not enough information could be provided to the study to form a reliable opinion.

5.4 Schools' understanding of casteism

The issue of schools contributing to casteism through their lack of understanding of caste has been raised by Chahal (undated) and, in this study, by CasteWatchUK representatives. They have criticised the teaching of caste in schools as reinforcing the caste system and disadvantaging lower castes.

²² Case studies: Case study 28 and Case study 30.

Examples of incidents allegedly demonstrating lack of understanding of caste which contributed to disadvantage were reported in two of the qualitative case studies. Both cases related to teachers asking pupils about their caste.

X's teacher expressed surprise that she was wearing a wrist-band but did not have a Sikh surname. X explained that one of her parents was Hindu, the other Sikh. The teacher, who was Punjabi, then asked what caste she was. X felt embarrassed and ashamed at having to state her caste in front of the class, and pupils were giggling at her response.

X believes that the teacher did not realise that she had hurt her feelings. This teacher did not treat X differently from other pupils following this incident. (Case study 4)

The other case was described by the child's uncle:

X's niece was asked her caste by a teacher. X wanted to speak to the school, but his sister thought it would cause problems with the teacher and so they left it. X said the issue was not that the teacher knew the child's caste, but that he should not be asking about it at all.

At the same time, X did not believe anything would have happened even if they had spoken to the school about it.

'But if we went there to the head and said, there was a remark made about my skin, my colour or my religion maybe then, yes, the alarm bells would be ringing. But this problem, it does exist, it does, it does affect our children's ... education'.

About six months later, X's sister saw the teacher (for other reasons). The teacher said to X's sister:

I can't believe that you're Chamar because you're not dark skinned. (Case study 19)

Neither of these cases provide evidence of discrimination because of caste by the school (nor were they claimed as such by the respondents). However, they suggest not only a lack of understanding by the teachers of the sensitivity of caste to some pupils, but also a lack of policy in the schools to ensure that the issue of caste is well-handled.

5.5 Comment

The evidence suggests caste-based pupil-on-pupil harassment and bullying exists in schools, but whether other forms of harassment and discrimination occurs is unclear. The use of caste-based insulting language means that

some of these cases were *de facto* related to caste, one case shows the difficulty sometimes of distinguishing between caste- and religious-based bullying.

Whilst pupil-on-pupil bullying itself is not covered by equality legislation, the equality legislation requires schools to treat bullying (related to protected characteristics) in a non-discriminatory way. Without evidence from the schools themselves, it is unclear whether, in the examples, the schools treated caste-based bullying in the same way as bullying related to protected characteristics. Certainly, some of the qualitative case study respondents did not believe it was treated as seriously as racist bullying and the evidence presented lends to support to the idea that caste-based bullying may be treated differently from racist bullying. The need for parents to explain issues of caste and the examples of teachers asking children about their caste and commenting on a mother's caste support respondents' claims of a lack of understanding of caste issues. It is difficult to see how schools' policies and practices could not discriminate in their treatment between race and caste if one of these (caste) is little understood.

Irrespective of possible discriminatory treatment by schools, the believed lack of understanding of caste by schools means that caste-based bullying is inadequately dealt with, as parents and pupils are deterred from reporting such bullying. Where police had been involved, they were also seen as lacking understanding and so not treating the cases either as seriously as required, or blaming the victim.

The combination of evidence on caste-based bullying and the seriousness of its effects, together with lack of confidence in schools' understanding of casteism, the consequent lack of reporting of bullying incidents and the belief that racist bullying is treated more seriously, point to the need for action on caste-based bullying in schools.

6 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: work

6.1 Introduction²³

The Act covers discrimination and harassment in work. Alleged caste discrimination and harassment in the area of work were identified in respect of bullying and harassment, social exclusion, recruitment, promotion, task allocation and dismissal.

As in the previous chapter, all evidence from the case studies conducted for this study is labelled with the case study number and is boxed. All other evidence is referenced.

6.2 Caste-based unfair treatment, bullying and harassment

Nearly all the cases of alleged discrimination in work also entailed alleged bullying or harassment. In this section, only the cases which involved bullying and harassment and did not also involve recruitment, promotion, task allocation and dismissal are presented.

Bullying, exclusion from work social events and networks (ACDA, 2009) and humiliating behaviour (*'women of so called upper Castes not taking water from the same tap from where the so called lower caste person drinks'*) (letter from CasteWatchUK to Dr Sharma on his HCUK report, published in Chahal, undated, p 52) were reported in the literature.

Bullying, harassment and unfair treatment was reportedly perpetrated on the victim by superiors (e.g. managers and supervisors), by colleagues and by subordinates (e.g. people they managed or supervised) or by a combination of these. Most of the examples reported in this section relate to bullying and harassment by colleagues. This is because the bullying and harassment by superiors identified also affected promotion, task allocation and dismissal and so is described in subsequent sections.

One respondent in the qualitative study described alleged bullying and unfair treatment by supervisors and managers:

²³ Case studies: Case study 3, Case study 8, Case study 10, Case study 12, Case study 14, Case study 16, Case study 18, Case study 19, Case study 21, Case study 25 and Case study 27. In addition, Case study 6, which relates to working as a volunteer has been included. Volunteering is not covered by the Act but, at the time of writing, this was subject to legal challenge.

X, who is of low caste, reported bullying by supervisors and managers and unfair treatment to be common at his workplace.

'If a Sikh wants a holiday, he gets it. If I ask, I'm refuse[d]. He gave a recent example where he was refused because, he was told, too many people were off, but, he said, the numbers were 'well' within the limits required.

He described that he felt the way the Punjabi *Jatt* line managers looked at him and other lower caste employees was about seeing them as at the bottom, that they *'have a laugh'* amongst themselves when they see lower caste employees struggling.

'Sikhs are higher class (sic) than Hindus. The way they look at us. I can't explain it. We're treated unfairly. They don't talk to us much. If we ask a question, they won't give us a full answer.' (Case study 10)

He said that the Sikh line managers got on well with other Sikhs. They did sometimes treat people of their own caste badly, but not all the time. However, the perceived bullying was not confined to lower castes. A Muslim friend of his was bullied by the shift managers, who made demands on him beyond his job. White British and black employees also had problems with these line managers. (Case study 10)

This case illustrates how difficult it sometimes is to ascertain whether harassment and bullying, when widespread, is linked to caste or not. In this case it is reported that employees of no caste and those of the same caste as the managers and supervisors sometimes had problems, but the problem for those of low caste was more common, suggesting a caste element.

DSN (2006) describes bullying and unfair treatment by a supervisor:

- L is low caste from India. He arrived in the UK in 2005 to work with a healthcare team in a NHS Trust. For three months his relationship with his supervisor (a woman of Indian origin but brought up in the UK) was good. After three months in the post, the day before he was to go to India to marry, his supervisor discovered his caste. Her behaviour changed immediately and having offered him a little time off before he was to leave for India, she then refused it. After he returned, she caused him ongoing difficulties about his failure to own a car, alleged lack of work and incompetence. She had supervisory meetings sometimes every other day for up to three hours, which caused him considerable distress. Eventually, he was suspended temporarily. He became ill under the pressure. He ascribes this whole situation specifically to the fact that he is of a lower caste and to his marrying, whilst his supervisor was single. (DSN, 2006 Case Study)

In this case, the change in treatment coincides with discovery of his caste. At the same time, he suggests that his treatment may have also been due to him

marrying and his supervisor being single. Without further information, it is difficult to judge the role of caste in this incident.

In one case, harassment and bullying were alleged to come from both colleagues and managers:

X believed he was being discriminated against by a new manager. He felt that his colleagues then started to treat him badly because they needed to keep in with the manager.

At work, they made 'jokes', some of which he did not understand because they were in languages he does not speak:

I think the jokes [are] about me because you walk in "Ha ha ha ha ha". What do you want me to think? If I walk, if you were all in the room and you walked past me and everyone starts laughing after something's said and you don't understand everything but you understand few words, what are you going to think? And what am I going to do? Tell them off or go and say "Forget it, let them laugh at me, read my newspaper". When I get a job I go to work. I don't see them after work. I'm only there for my office time; I'll only see them when I'm in the staff room. When I'm working I don't see them. What do you want me to do?

He stopped chatting with colleagues, because he started to feel it led to trouble.

The manager also made 'jokes'. Those reported were clearly caste related:

"Go wash some floors. What are you driving cars for? You're a professional clothes washer, go and wash clothes". Staff have said it and I've said "You're katchi. Go and build some brick walls then"... Sometimes it's humour. I could have taken that very personally ... [which I did] at first but the jokes weren't like that at first. It was so... They wouldn't come out straight. They were a bit more, you know, the Manager's not giving you jobs. You're not popular, where are you from in India". (Case study 25)

The language used in some of the above clearly relates to caste and, because of the victim's response, seem clearly to constitute caste-based harassment and bullying. However, other elements relate to not understanding what is being said and so may or may not be related to caste (and may not even be bullying at all). The above case also entailed alleged discrimination in task allocation and is discussed further in Section 6.5.

Sometimes the harassment was from subordinates (and, in this case, managers):

X was promoted to team leader (although he had applied for a managerial post). His team were *Jatt* Sikhs. They would not accept his authority. After two months he applied to revert to his previous job because he did not think it worth the stress.

X also said that the way that *Jatt* managers spoke to *Valmikis* was so bad that white British staff noticed. (Case study 8)

Most of the cases identified related to alleged harassment and bullying by colleagues.

X worked in the catering section of a hospital for over 20 years. Her colleagues were mainly Indians. Most were *Jatt* Sikhs. They came up to her and asked her directly what her caste was. *"They ask you on your face. They ask directly what your caste is."*

The higher caste women then started avoiding X and a low caste friend. During lunch breaks the two would sit on a separate table as the other women did not want to sit with them. They were excluded from casual conversations. The higher caste women would openly ridicule the '*Chamars* and the dirty work they do'. X challenged them a few times, but that did not stop their behaviour. This behaviour did not really affect her employment and work.

She did not take it up with her manager (who was white British) because she felt it would exacerbate the problem. She was worried that her colleagues would give her an even tougher time if she complained. She was scared that she might lose her job and would be branded the trouble maker because the higher caste women were stronger in numbers and were more educated (and spoke better English). (Case study 3)

X, a Sikh, worked as a team manager in a bank. She had been asked by Asian colleagues quite early on what her caste was. She resented being asked this question as it suggested the inquisitor saw caste as relevant and therefore likely to be judgemental, discriminating and hold negative beliefs towards her 'lower' caste.

The prejudice she experienced at work was upsetting yet subtle. She had someone 'joke' with her by calling her a *Chamar*. The other person saw it as 'banter' and viewed her reaction as uptight and defensive. She also heard people being rude about another colleague by calling them by negative terms behind their back, 'shoemaker' etc. On another occasion when a group of colleagues were discussing caste, one colleague said to her that 'some people don't like to talk about it' in her company. X felt this was a pointed negative comment towards her attitude.

Overall, being around her caste-focused colleagues made her feel undermined as a manager and led her to doubt her promotion prospects against higher caste staff, although no one above her level had made her feel discriminated against (even though there was a Sikh man in a senior, managerial position).

X did not speak to her employers about this, nor had any other employee to her knowledge. She described it as a '*whole can of worms*' that she didn't want to try to explain to her employers. She felt she had the minority view and it was hard to justify and explain her position against dominant thinking and much obfuscation. As there was no legislation supporting her position, she felt it was a struggle for her to have to justify herself in the face of others. To do so alone would result in alienation and potentially damaged prospects.

X said this made it a very uncomfortable environment for her and she said it may have made an indirect contribution to her decision to leave the company. (Case study 21)

At work, as a mechanical engineer, employees had to clean their own spillages. A Sikh *Jatt* refused to clean his own spillage. He said to the foreman '*It's not my job, I'm high caste. It's the job he should be doing*', indicating X, who would be regarded as being low caste.

X raised this with the company and the union, but they did not understand why it was so offensive.

(The foreman had insisted, under threat of discipline that the person cleaned up their own spillage.) (Case study 11)

One other case study related to alleged caste harassment in a voluntary post:

X said at the radio station, where she worked as a volunteer, people were always talking about the *Jatt* caste, and how they could do everything. She felt that those who were not *Jatt* were treated differently: *Jatts* were given preference. They used particular language (in Punjabi) which made her feel discriminated against. They used words they knew would hurt. (This appears to have been *Chamar*). They only used this language to people who were *Ravidassia* (three of them). They did not insult *Jatts*. (Case study 6)

As explained in the footnote in the introduction to this chapter, volunteering is not covered by the Act, but this case is included as there is no reason to believe it would be peculiar to voluntary as opposed to paid work, particularly when, in the case of caste, neither is covered by legislation.

Other cases identified were:

- The General Secretary of Buddha Dhama, a religious association in Southall, faced opposition from higher castes when he was promoted at his workplace. *'The non-Dalits in my community objected to my promotion and did not support me in my work. They did not like me in the position as a supervisor.'* His job was in dispute as he was not accepted by his colleagues and this caused concern to his white British boss, as the work was suffering. *'In the end I proved my leadership qualities and proved to be a successful supervisor. However, it took significantly longer because of the caste-based opposition. The non-Dalits presume that 'Chamars' are good for nothing.'* (DSN, 2006)
- *'My brother used to get sworn at because [of] his caste when he was at work – with comments [like] 'You are not even equal to our shoes.'* This was only three years ago. He stopped working and said I did not even used to get these comments in India.' Southampton Focus Group, 8 August 2009 (ACDA, 2009)
- *'I was working in a factory. I was in a queue and one boy said to me, 'Stand in the back of the queue.'* I said, 'Why?' He said, 'You know why.' I said, 'I don't know.' The other queue belonged to low Caste – he should be on the back side. On that day I swallowed – I didn't say nothing. On the second day I knowingly stood at the front, he said, 'You standing still there?' I said, 'Yes.'" Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009 (ACDA, 2009)

These cases bring out concerns about taking action about caste-based harassment and bullying: where the issue has to go to non-Asian staff, there is fear that they will not understand or believe the person and there is reluctance to have to explain the issue. However, cases have been reported where action has been taken.

X is a professional working in an international company with an ethnically mixed workforce. He is *Valmiki*. Two years ago he started working with a new project manager, newly transferred from India. She was in her late 20s from Rajasthan and high caste. In a coffee break they were chatting. *'Being Asian you chat about 'sport and work and everything else and your background. I am proud of where my family come from and my culture and my God.'* So he talked about this. She made a derogatory remark (*'the thief'*) about the *Valmiki* guru. They argued about his religion, during which she said *'You're the untouchable community'*. The white British people listening did not understand what was going on. X was offended by what she said. She was talking loudly and then explained to others that X was untouchable. (The new project manager spoke to her mother in India, who confirmed what X had said about his religion and told her good things about it.)

The incident made X feel small in front of his colleagues. He told his boss he did not want to work with her. His boss, he felt, understood somewhat and X has not worked with this project manager again. (Case study 27)

(Note that, whilst the argument was about religion, calling him untouchable and saying this to his colleagues relates to caste.)

- Amicus became involved a case at an engineering factory in Medway. An 'upper caste' lady was transferred to another department where the trainer was of lower caste origin. On discovering this she made written complaints to the management of being bullied, intimidated, threatened and harassed. The company found the claims were completely untrue and, in December 2006, issued a final written warning against her for raising grievances that were untrue and causing undue stress and anxiety to the person whom she made complaint against. (Chahal, undated, referring to Balram Sampla speaking at a TUC fringe meeting 11 September 2007).
- At a factory, an white British man had been using the words '*Chura*' and '*Chamar*' and was asked to stop by other workers. He continued and was disciplined. (The man's wife was a *Jatt*, a higher caste.) (ACDA, 2009).

6.3 Recruitment

Cases of caste discrimination in recruitment were not found in the literature, although Chahal (undated) suggested that, if the pattern of employment were analysed, this would indicate discrimination:

'if analysed by industry, particularly where employees are taken on by personal recommendation,...it will usually be revealed that they are from one caste'

Two cases of alleged caste discrimination in recruitment were reported in the case studies. These relate to the same employer.

X had applied for a job in the company (in which he later worked) and helped a *Jatt* to complete the application form because he could not write English. The *Jatt* got the job and X did not. X considered he was much better than the other appointee, with better qualifications (he has a post-graduate management qualification.) However, those making the appointment were *Jatt* Sikhs and X is a *Chamar* and *Ravidassia*. (Case study 8)

The respondent (and his colleague in the next example) also described nepotism and what appeared to be caste-based discrimination (e.g. in promotion) and bullying once he worked for the company. Under British law, nepotism is not in itself unlawful, so long as it does not particularly disadvantage people with a protected characteristic (i.e. result in indirect discrimination against this group). In this case, if caste discrimination were unlawful, nepotism would seem likely to result in potentially unlawful indirect discrimination, unless the recruitment policy could be justified. Considering all these factors, this case may have involved caste discrimination.

X is Hindu and low caste. He worked for an temp agency. He was placed at Company Z. Senior management at the company were white, but the majority of relevant line managers/supervisors for X were Punjabi *Jatts*. When a permanent job came up, he applied for it, was interviewed (by a Punjabi *Jatt* and a white British man who was friendly with the *Jatt* supervisors) and was rejected. This happened seven or eight times and it was only when the Managing Director (a white British man) became involved that he was appointed.

He believed these rejections were caste discrimination and also nepotism because:

- a) the people appointed were family and friends (mostly *Jatt*) of the Punjabi *Jatt* managers and supervisors;
- b) the reasons he was given for being rejected were, variously, that he was not experienced and that his answers were not in great depth. He was experienced (and, for some of the later applications, highly experienced, having been working for some time in relevant parts of the company). The people appointed were not experienced. Both he, and the MD (when he interviewed X), considered his responses to be in depth: *'the MD said I answered them brilliantly'*; on the other hand, at previous interviews X had felt pressured by the way that questions were asked and that the MD was much better at interviewing; whether the way questions were asked was due to caste-based discrimination is unknown; (interviewer training was planned for the line managers);
- c) when the MD, along with the white British interviewer, interviewed him, the MD asked why he had been rejected before and, when he gave the reasons, the MD said he could not understand it; the MD looked at the white British supervisor, who said nothing and looked away; *'he [the MD] looked at the line manager in disgust'*;
- d) the interviewers initially refused to provide feedback on reasons for rejection and it was only when he forced the issue that they did;
- e) if he had been no good at the job, they would not have kept him on via the temp agency for a few years;
- f) a shift manager's son had been appointed and was rapidly promoted to team leader;
- g) a record had not been kept of X's work, which would have indicated experience and affects progression; records were kept on others. (Case study 10)

The support of the MD points towards him being unfairly treated. The appointment of a manager's son, with less experience, suggests possible nepotism. As does his colleague, X describes supervisors bullying employees (but not only low caste employees). He also describes Sikhs as higher caste than Hindus, suggesting a possible religious element. Together these factors suggest that this case may entail religious or caste-based discrimination or both.

6.4 Promotion

Cases of caste discrimination in promotion were rare: only one was found in the literature and one in the qualitative case studies.

One of the case study respondents described a number of incidents relating to promotion which he believed were caste discrimination:

X worked as a manager for many years in a public company, before taking early retirement and taking up his current job as a warehouse operative. The company has four to six *Jatt* team-leaders and line managers.

X applied for promotion to manager and was offered a team leader post only, despite his previous managerial experience.

The son of one of the *Jatt* team leaders was employed at the company via an agency as soon as he left school after GCSEs²⁴. Within a few weeks he was given a permanent job and, before he was 19, was made team-leader. This was very rapid.

The only Asians who were managers in the company were *Jatt* Sikhs. (Case study 8)

This person's and his colleagues' experience in the company has already been described in relation to recruitment, where issues of nepotism, bullying and religious discrimination were discussed. This seems to provide further evidence of possible caste (or religious) discrimination in this organisation.

ACDA (2009) gave an example of Asian employees trying to stop a promotion (due to caste). The appointment was made by white British employees.

- After applying for a supervisory position, the applicant said:

'The Personnel manager rang me. She said to me, 'I was very surprised to hear that people came into my office and said "he is going to be our supervisor when his forefathers were working in our fields". So we feel, do you still want to go ahead with it?' I said, 'Of course.'

²⁴ Recruitment at this level is via an agency. Some temps were then made permanent. However, this generally took longer than a few weeks.

supposed to get the job, he left the job. For ten years I was a supervisor there.' Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009 (ACDA, 2009)

This example illustrates possible caste-based harassment by the subordinate.

6.5 Task allocation and downgrading

Cases where caste appeared to have affected the tasks people did in their job or movement to lower level jobs were found in the literature and the case studies.

In one case, a higher caste manager was alleged to allocate better paid work to higher caste employees:

X is a taxi driver. His first manager was of higher caste than X, but did not care about caste. He allocated taxi jobs in order. Everything was fine at work.

Then a new manager came from India. He was a Lohana (higher caste) and knew X was a Dhobi (a low caste) because the drivers talk to each other (and discuss caste directly as well as indirectly). According to X, the manager was cold from the start. He threw his weight around, but X was not sure if this was because of caste or the way that Indians new from India into management positions behaved.

X stopped getting any of the good jobs (e.g. airport runs) or work during his preferred hours. Instead his Lohana colleagues got them. Others (whites, other Asians and others) were also treated badly. The Asians who did not like it left.

X did not dare complain for fear of losing his job. Instead, he got angry and took it out on his family. (Case study 25)

In the above case, the taxi driver was at pains to say that this might not be caste discrimination, in part because white colleagues also suffered. However, it appeared as though Lohanas were favoured and, if so, this could constitute caste discrimination.

Another case reported by ACDA (2009) entailed an white British manager allocating menial jobs to lower caste employees but not to higher caste employees:

- *'Two months ago we had some guests and they said some ladies were working in a factory – Jatt ladies and Chamar ladies. The Jatt ladies told the managers that the Chamar ladies used to do the menial jobs in India – cleaning etc. They asked managers not to give them work next to us but give them jobs like they used to have in India. The managers put a few people on cleaning jobs; the other ladies realised that this is very wrong and they had a meeting with management. We said that we have a mind too and*

can also think for ourselves – what is going on here? Then they changed things. This was a factory in Birmingham.’ Luton Focus Group, 16 August 2009 (ACDA, 2009)

Task allocation was also reported to be managed so as to avoid low and high castes working closely together:

- *‘My [relative] [specific relationship type removed to protect identity] manages the bus company operating in Southampton. He has had lots of issues with his Indian staff over this and had to completely reorganise the shifts system so a “lower caste” driver would not drive with a “higher caste” inspector. He also had similar trouble when testing drivers in that higher castes would not like being analysed by lower castes. There are many examples. I was speaking to someone in the food manufacturing industry who has had similar problems.’ Online survey (ACDA, 2009)*

ACDA also reported a case where a person alleged she had been downgraded because of her caste, resulting in her resigning:

- *X (‘No-one can even imagine she belongs to the untouchable class’) had been employed for two years when her boss ‘started investigating behind the scenes...He never rested until he found out she was from the Chamar community.... he moved her from the secretary post to another building just to look after as a security guard. She said, “He throw me in the rubbish bin”.’ After six months she left the job.’ Reported by the secretary’s father. ACDA (2009)*

6.6 Dismissal

Cases of dismissal because of possible caste discrimination, near dismissal and concealment of caste out of fear of dismissal were found in the case studies and the literature.

X had worked in professional and managerial roles in a major company for many years. He had worked with his manager for many years and they were friends. Three years ago X's manager recruited two Asians into their department. X trained them. Everything was fine. They then found out his caste. (Other Indians told them.)

They started to complain to X's manager that X was not training them properly. His manager was surprised. This continued over a period. They refused to take orders from X. As they got friendly with others, they poisoned the atmosphere. X started to be bullied by them. They would tell X that what he said was wrong and then they would say something totally different to his boss. His manager could not understand what was happening and that they would lie to him. X explained about caste, but his manager was not interested. X started to be bullied by his manager.

X's life was made a misery and his wife suggested he leave. But he could not see why he should be the one to leave. Instead he made a written complaint about bullying by his manager. X was given a final written warning for a spurious 'offence'. This was described as a cover for moving him out of the department (as opposed to a real attempt to dismiss him). This is supported by the status and responsibilities of the new job, which, for the alleged offence, would have been totally inappropriate. The department fell apart and his manager was forced to take early retirement. The case is seen by the company as bullying by a manager, but X believes the real cause was caste discrimination by the two recruits.

He believed this was caste discrimination because:

- a) there had been no complaints before they knew his caste; and
- b) he believed he did his job well and had received very good feedback on his performance.

The experience was very traumatic. He nearly lost his job; his manager did. Both had loved their jobs. It has taken about two years to regain his self-confidence. '*It nearly destroyed my life.*' (Case study 14)

The above case is somewhat problematic as evidence of caste discrimination, relying as it does on the report of the victim alone. It is impossible to judge whether the recruits' behaviour was because of caste discrimination or other factors.

A second case, where the employee has claimed unfair dismissal, encounters similar problems:

- A *Valmiki* reported caste discrimination from his bosses (*Jatt* Sikhs) when he started going out with and then married a colleague, also a

Jatt Sikh. The bosses knew he was a *Valmiki* and neither he nor his future wife had problems until their relationship was known. He reported that from that point there was pressure on both him and his future wife to stop the relationship. They suffered worse treatment, including higher work loads. Eventually he was dismissed and is taking an unfair dismissal case against his former employers. (Kennedy, 2010)

Although the alleged victim saw this as caste discrimination, the respondent reported a number of comments and actions by his bosses in respect of Muslims which might suggest that, if discrimination had taken place in his case, it might equally well have been because of religion (between Sikhs and *Valmikis*) rather than caste.

DSN (2006) reported caste-based bullying by subordinates, which resulted in dismissal:

- Indrajit, a Kenyan Asian, was a manager at a church social service centre for older people. When some Asians amongst the staff realised that Indrajit was low caste, they complained about him and brought disciplinary action against him, saying he was inefficient. They also organised a protest at the centre, upon which the management closed down the centre. After a month they restarted it without employing Indrajit. (DSN, 2006)

Chahal (undated) presents a case of alleged caste discrimination resulting in dismissal. Few details are given, making it impossible to determine whether this was a case of caste discrimination. However, the fact that an out of court settlement was made lends some credence, even though this solution was criticised by the dismissed person as stemming from a lack of understanding of caste discrimination:

- in 2006, at a Distribution Depot in Swanley, Kent, USDAW became involved when a person of low caste accused three *Jatt* Sikhs of conspiracy to have him dismissed, due to their caste prejudice. An out of court settlement was reached for unfair dismissal (Chahal, undated).

Cases of dismissal from voluntary work were also found, though these would not be covered by the Act. All related to radio stations.

X worked at a radio station. A new manager had joined a month previously and asked her about her caste. When she said it was *Valmiki*, his behaviour towards her changed and he made the workplace uncomfortable for her. He would fiddle with voice controls when she was hosting the radio show and ignore her.

Within four weeks, he changed her schedule. Her slot was taken by two other women. She felt there was no good reason for this, because she had been hosting the show for four months and was popular with her listeners. She was given no reason for the change in schedule. She was upset by this.

He sent her a text message the following day saying that others had complained that she had behaved in a threatening way. When she asked for evidence, he did not offer any. He sacked her and only offered the explanation that she was a 'criminal'. She feels that it was a caste-related issue, as he had behaved normally with her before she stated that she was *Valmiki*. He was from Khatri caste and she felt that he thought he was superior.

She did not know to whom to complain. The owner of the radio station was contacted, but the owner said that the manager had complained about her conduct and refused to take her complaint. (Case study 16)

Another volunteer claims dismissal due to using a *Ravidassia* greeting on air:

X had a voluntary post, as a presenter at a Punjabi community radio station. Most people at the station were *Jatt*. She is *Ravidassia*.

When she had applied to the radio station, she was not asked where she was from. She was asked this and about her caste after two or three months. She said she was from the Sikh community (as *Ravidassias* are). She felt their behaviour changed as a result.

She used to give a *Ravidassia* greeting on air. The managing director told her not to use this greeting, as it was from a lower caste. The owner, a *Jatt*, said she could not use a *Ravidassia* greeting because the station is for high castes and some people who donated to the station were complaining that lower castes were working there. He said donations to the radio would decline. X asked for evidence of this, but none was given. She refused to stop and was dismissed. Another *Ravidassia* was also sacked.

X was surprised and shocked by her treatment at the radio station. When she was dismissed, she cried and felt ashamed to tell her husband. She stayed at home and did not bother to look for another job. She felt depressed and just lay on the bed. (Case study 6)

Another *Ravidassia* reported radio station sackings for using a *Ravidassia* greeting (Case study 12):

X worked as a presenter for a community radio station. He opened his show with a *Ravidassia* greeting and told his assistant presenters to do the same. While X was on a visit to India, the other presenters were dismissed for using this greeting.

The decision to sack was made by the managing director who is a *Jatt*. Subsequently, the managing director apologised. However, later that evening, X was arrested following a complaint to the police that he had threatened the managing director and other station staff. X explained to the police that the basis of the dispute was caste, but they went ahead with the prosecution, although charges were later dropped by the radio station. The radio station then dismissed all presenters from low caste backgrounds. (Case study 12)

Both these cases might equally be described as religious discrimination (by Sikhs against *Ravidassias*), if *Ravidassias* are viewed as belonging to a separate religion (which would, ultimately, be a matter for tribunals and courts to determine). This example also illustrates how alleged cases of caste discrimination can escalate into criminal cases and the perceived lack of understanding of caste by the police.

Fear of dismissal if one's low caste was identified was also reported:

X had worked for six years (until 2006) in a small company. She was never asked her caste and her name did not identify it. They believed she was a *Jatt* and treated her as one. *Jatt* colleagues used insulting words about lower castes. She did not say anything, as she was worried about losing her job. She was afraid they might find out her caste, as she had seen how they treated other lower caste. She hid her identity to keep her job. When she left, she said she was *Ravidassia* and did not want to work with them anymore. (Case study 6)

- Cllr Lakha trained as a Sikh priest but could not disclose his identity of being a *Ravidassia* as he would have lost his post. He told us, '*Here, too, I am identified as a Ravidassi and a Chamar.*' (DSN, 2006)

6.7 Other

Other types of incidents in the area of work were ascribed to caste discrimination. Some of these are clearly not covered by the Act but are included as they provide further information on the types of discrimination which some people perceive as occurring.

The first concerns an owner of a business and perceived discrimination from his employees:

In 1999, X, a *Ravidassia*, bought a private hire company, employing around 50 drivers. He heard many comments from drivers about caste, referring to low caste Indians in derogatory terms.

In 2001, he was involved in a discussion about caste in the office which led to him objecting to the views of his employees and telling them he was from a low caste. Following this, five employees from the *Jatt* caste left the company, saying they did not want to work for an untouchable. (Case study 12)

This situation would not be covered by the Act, nor by any other British legislation, but it illustrates that those leaving felt it acceptable to give a casteist reason for doing so.

The other two cases relate to customers' behaviour:

X encountered a business customer whom he had met elsewhere. Previously, the man, a *Jatt* Sikh in his 50s, had questioned him about his background (and found that they came from the same village). X is a *Chamar*.

The man asked a white manager about X's religion. She said he was a Buddhist. The man was surprised, saying he acted like a *Jatt*. The manager did not understand any of this, until X explained. The manager then said to X '*Is it true you are from a lower caste because your people make shoes?*'. She did not realise this could upset or offend X.

And I said, well, you can believe what you want. And she was like, oh, have I said something wrong? I said, no, nothing at all. But really I was thinking, I just didn't really want to go through the rigmarole of explaining and this and, you know, I just couldn't be bothered with it, but that is still happening in the workplace.

X continued to see this customer (who tried to curry favour with X, as he was in a powerful position). X tried to explain why the man's behaviour was offensive:

Yeah, the tone and the expression on the face. It's, when, in all the cases when the people say it, they all, they take a step back. They take step back as if you're filthy or you're dirt. That's how they make you feel. (Case study 19)

X, a *Ravidassia*, runs a licensed grocery and finds that customers frequently ask questions to find out his caste and that their behaviour changes when they find out he is from the *Chamar* caste. (Case study 12)

In the first of these, as well as the perceived attitude of the customer being problematic, the white manager behaved in an unacceptable way, providing confidential information, probably, at least in part, due to lack of understanding about caste. The case also illustrates the reluctance to explain caste to those who know little about it.

6.8 Comment

The above cases illustrate the possible range of ways in which caste discrimination may occur in the workplace and its impact on individuals. As with all discrimination, in many cases it is impossible to prove. The above accounts could be challenged on the grounds that the 'victim's' perceptions

were erroneous or that the facts were distorted. We cannot discount the latter, but it seems unlikely to be so in every case.

Perceptions, obviously, may be erroneous. In particular, caste is a highly sensitive issue to some of those reporting caste discrimination. However, low caste terms are used as terms of abuse and this alone means that some of the reports of bullying and harassment provide evidence of caste harassment, even if higher castes were unaware of the offensiveness of these terms.

The cases relating to recruitment, promotion, task allocation, downgrading and dismissal could be explained as due to the individuals being less suitable or performing poorly or, at worst, just disliked by the manager. This possibility cannot be entirely dismissed. However, the only real test would come through employment tribunal cases, an option not available when caste discrimination is not in itself unlawful. And, even then, it cannot be assumed that tribunal cases always get to the 'truth'. Consideration of the details provided suggest that some of the cases are likely to be due to caste discrimination and to indirect caste discrimination resulting from nepotism.

A number of issues are raised about such discrimination.

Firstly, the overlap between religion and caste. Some of the cases might have been either caste or religious discrimination. This does not mean that caste discrimination laws would be redundant. *Ravidassias* and *Valmiki*s may be protected under religion or belief discrimination laws. However, low caste individuals of other religions or none will not always be covered, nor would the harassment using offensive caste language. Thus, without legislation specifically prohibiting caste discrimination, such discrimination would only be partially reduced by law.

Secondly, the overlap between caste and family/friendship groups means that action against caste discrimination would also amount to action against nepotism.

Thirdly, the cases brought up a number of issues around non-Asians' understanding of caste discrimination and of redress. A number of respondents did not do anything because they did not expect their white managers to understand and some did not wish to have to explain. Unless knowledge is increased amongst non-Asian managers (and, perhaps, employee representatives), this will continue, as will caste discrimination. At the same time, some did not challenge the perceived discrimination and harassment because they would need to complain to the perpetrators or to people of a higher caste. DSN (2006) reported this:

'Most of the businesses are small – if you complain, the person who will listen to your complaint is from the 'higher' caste... so no action is taken.' (DSN, 2006)

However, in a small number of the cases referred to either the person claiming discrimination received compensation from their employer or those alleged to have discriminated were disciplined.

Finally, the degree of sensitivity to raising issues of caste should not be underestimated and any action by employers needs to take this into account.

7 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: goods, services and associations

7.1 Introduction²⁵

The Act covers discrimination in the supply of goods and services. Incidents of caste discrimination were reported in the provision of social services and of health care, and in treatment in shops.

As in the previous two chapters, all evidence from the case studies conducted for this study is labelled with the case study number and is boxed. All other evidence is referenced.

7.2 Social care

One person reported an incident with his mother, who received help at home from care workers:

X's mother has personal care assistance at home provided by Social Services. X and his wife were with his mother when a new carer came. The carer asked them what religion they were. They said they were not religious. The carer seemed confused because one of his mother's names was Sikh and the other was Hindu. It was obvious they were Punjabis. She kept questioning them and it was clear to him that she wanted to know their caste. X knew the family of the carer and knew she was a Brahmin.

The carer identified their caste when she saw a picture of Guru Ravidass in his mother's bedroom. The carer would not bathe X's mother, who was supposed to receive help with bathing every day. *'She made excuses. She'd say it was not safe, she might slip.'* This went on for a week. Other carers had no problem. (The other carers were Sikh and would also recognise Guru Ravidass.)

They complained to Social Services, but did not mention caste. He said this was because it is difficult to explain to people who do not know about caste and also because it is difficult to admit one is a *Dalit*. They said they could not understand why this carer had a problem when others did not. Social Services just thought they were not getting on. The carer did not reappear, but Social Services did not do anything about her behaviour. (Case study 7)

²⁵ Case studies: Case study 7, Case study 11, Case study 20, Case study 22 and Case study 28.

The events described (detailed questioning on religion, refusal to bathe X's mother once caste was identified and a seemingly spurious reason for not bathing her) strongly suggest caste discrimination. It is interesting that the respondent did not mention caste and reported this reluctance, in part, to be to admitting he was a *Dalit*.

Two other cases related to reported casteism in the interpersonal relations between users of day centres for older people.

X is a Buddhist and her father was a shoemaker. X's mother used to go to an old people's day centre. The users were predominantly Punjabi, Sikh *Jatt* women. X had noticed over the years that if a Sikh or a *Jatt* went to the centre they were made welcome, but that low caste people were not and were taunted.

Last year a row developed between one of the users, a Sikh, and X over X's position as a Trustee. Eventually the woman swore at X and said '*You Chamars coming here and trying to take over our centres. In India you're almost like beggars, but when you come here you think you know it all and you want to take over our centres*'. No-one else said anything.

X's mother then had problems with this woman, who started picking on her. X spoke to a member of the management board, but their response was '*what can we do?*'. A couple of months ago X's mother said to the woman that if she did not stop mentioning *Chamars* and *Valmiki* she would be very upset with her, but the woman effectively said '*you cannot do anything*'. Her mother stopped going to the centre.

X's mother was upset by all this because none of those who had known her a long time supported her. Luckily, she could go to another day centre, but if there had been no other she would have been stuck at home. (Case study 22)

Access to a day centre is an area covered by the Act as a provision of a service. Owing to the language used, this case appears to show caste harassment²⁶. The management board's knowledge of the harassment and failure to take action could mean that the day centre itself could perhaps be held liable in some way.

The other case did not appear to have been reported to the people who ran the centre, but illustrates how it can result in loss to older people:

- 'Some people said to me, 'Why don't you go to old people's home to pass your time?' I said I have tried there. When I go there, all the old heads just start talking about the caste system – 'what caste you are?' And I don't like this idea and that's why I don't go to these homes. This

²⁶ It is unclear whether the motive was caste or dislike of X's mother. However, under the Act, the motive is not relevant.

happened six months ago in Hayes. The people who organise this old people's home, they don't mind [their caste]. But the Sikhs or Hindus, they just want to know what caste you are. If I am their caste they will talk happily; if not they will talk in a very funny way. I went twice and did not go anymore.' Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009 (ACDA, 2009)

7.3 Health care

ACDA (2009) reports cases where people felt that they have been asked about their caste (directly or indirectly) by doctors, nurses and other health and social care workers. Seeking to identify caste alone need not indicate discrimination. However, two cases provided further details of alleged discrimination:

- a physiotherapist's employee refused to treat a patient. She had said the patient was low caste and she (the employee) was high caste and so she was unable to touch the patient. (ACDA, 2009)

The other incident was in the qualitative case studies was:

X went to hospital for some tests. The doctor was from South India. Whilst examining X, they talked. The doctor described that after examining him, he would do some tests and got the equipment ready. The doctor asked his caste. X said he did not believe in caste, but said he was a Buddhist. The doctor then called in a nurse and got her to do the tests. X believes the doctor was going to do the tests, but got the nurse to do them once he knew his caste. (Case study 11)

With the evidence reported, it is difficult to know whether the medical incident was caste discrimination or whether the doctor had not intended to do the tests himself.

7.4 Shops

Customers who were low caste were reportedly treated differently and humiliatingly in shops (ACDA, 2009) However, no details of such treatment was found in the literature review nor supplied by organisations. Nor were any such cases reported in the case studies. Therefore we are unable to present evidence of caste discrimination or harassment in this area.

7.5 Education

One of the case studies alleged caste discrimination in access to a class run by a *Gurdwara*. Within the Act, this issue would fall under discrimination in the provision of goods and services, rather than under education and so is described in this Chapter.

A teenage boy wanted to learn Punjabi. His mother suggested that he went to the classes run by a local *Gurdwara*. His (low) caste was known to the *Gurdwara* and he was told to go elsewhere. The mother reported that, as well as being refused attendance, the son was treated rudely and provided with no explanation. They believe the refusal was because of his caste. (Case study 28)

Unfortunately, the case study provided too little information for adequate assessment of whether caste discrimination was likely to have occurred. Whilst the rejection could have been because of caste, as his mother believed, there may be other explanations and not enough information could be provided to the study to form a reliable opinion.

7.6 Associations

One case of alleged caste discrimination within an association was identified in the qualitative interviews:

X is a British born *Valmiki*. He works for a large company with a mixed race workforce.

Seven years ago, X stood for Chair of his workplace Social Club, against a Sikh. He had been on the committee for several years. His friends, who were mostly young *Jatt* Sikhs, told him that older *Jatt* Sikhs were saying not to vote for him because he was low caste. (This included people who were friends of other family members.) He heard them calling him '*Chamar*' and saying '*We don't want the Chura*', although a *Jatt* Sikh defended him. He reported this to his employers, who put up posters against racism saying that racism was a disciplinary offence. The younger *Jatts* and others supported him and he was elected. The same thing happened when he stood again three years ago.

He said that everyone continues to talk to each other but the older Sikhs were not as friendly as before.

X found the experience very stressful and it made him feel bad: they were all Asians, they used to be friendly and had eaten together. He now stays out of older *Jatt* Sikhs' way. His friends (*Jatt* Sikhs) gave him a lot of help. '*If you don't have friends, it must be really bad, [you'd] feel you were doing something wrong.*' (Case study 20)

8 Evidence on caste discrimination and prejudice: other activities

8.1 Introduction²⁷

The broad areas within which alleged caste discrimination and harassment took place described in the previous chapters (i.e. work, education and goods and services) are covered by the Act. These areas were the focus of the research and were the areas in which the qualitative case studies sought information. However, a number of other areas, although outside the remit of the Act, have a bearing on considerations of extending the Act to treat caste as a part of race. These include worship and religion, politics and the public promotion of caste, as well as violence, public harassment and other criminal activity. These issues were raised in the literature, by pro- and anti-caste legislation organisations and by individuals interviewed.

A further area, that of personal social relations, including marriage, was also of great concern: the pro-caste legislation organisations seeing this as an important area of discrimination, the anti-caste legislation organisations concerned that legislation might be extended into this area. However, personal social relations are outside the remit of this study, except to the extent that they are covered by harassment and bullying elsewhere, and so are not discussed.

As in the previous chapters, all evidence from the case studies conducted for this study is labelled with the case study number and is boxed. All other evidence is referenced.

8.2 Worship and religion

It was reported (pro-legislation organisations; Chahal, undated; and DSN, 2006) that many temples and *Gurdwaras* are caste-based, having been set up in the early sixties due to lower caste members being made unwelcome in the existing places of worship. This varies across the country, with some localities not having caste-based temples and *Gurdwaras* (anti-legislation organisations and others). Caste segregation was reported as not the norm in most parts of India (DSN, 2006). However, this does not mean that individuals are actually excluded from temples and *Gurdwaras*. The Hindu anti-caste legislation organisations interviewed denied that Hindu temples were exclusive to any caste and asserted that all were open to all.

The development of caste-separate *Gurdwaras* was described by a representative of a Sikh organisation as resulting from *Jatts* being the largest group amongst Sikhs in Britain. Because people would tend to vote for their

²⁷ Case studies: Case study 6, Case study 12, Case study 15 and Case study 20.

own caste for positions in the *Gurdwara*, *Jatts* dominated. This led to other castes setting up their own *Gurdwaras*.

Problems raised include:

- people being excluded on the basis of caste from performing puja (a form of worship) in Hindu temples in the UK (DSN, 2006)²⁸;
- people being excluded because of caste from becoming a Hindu priest (DSN, 2006);
- humiliating treatment, for example:

'The new Sikh Singh Sabha temple in Southall - we went to Matha tekh [to bow down in front of the Guru Granth Sahba] and we then came down and sat in the hall. I touched one of the glasses and it was immediately put in for washing because the ramaal [a headscarf] I had on my head said Guru Ravidass.' Southall Focus Group, 6 September 2009 (ACDA, 2009)

The case of a *Ravidassia* who had trained as a Sikh priest feeling he had to keep his identity secret for fear of dismissal has already been mentioned (DSN, 2006) (Section 6.6).

Caste-based mosques have also been reported, established for the same reasons as the separate temples and *Gurdwaras* (Change Institute, 2009). However, amongst Muslims, caste separation for worship was believed to be breaking down (although it was not clear whether this was based on the views of lower caste Muslims or not) (Change Institute, 2009).

The only other specific example identified of caste-based discrimination in worship was the refusal of a woman to take Kara Prasad (a flour-based sweet received with cupped hands) from a Granthi (a Sikh temple worker) on the grounds that he was untouchable (Chahal, undated). The report states that a scene ensued, with the Granthi feeling humiliated, and he made an official complaint to the Executive Committee of the *Gurdwara*. The Committee called a meeting for the woman to explain her behaviour. The woman again insulted and humiliated the Granthi in front of the Committee. The Committee did not take any action.

8.3 Politics

A number of reports of examples and allegations in connection with politics were identified:

- reports in the Birmingham Post, 8 May 2008 and quotes from Tariq Khan (Deputy Leader, Liberal Democrat Group, Birmingham) suggest that '*intimidatory tactics*' arising from the *biraderi* system were used to

²⁸ DSN (2006) reports the results of a survey of low caste individuals and organisations. This suggested high levels of caste discrimination. The percentages are not presented in our report because there is no way of ascertaining the representatives of the survey sample. However, the survey does identify the nature of caste discrimination perceived by some people and so this is reported.

'force people, particularly women, to vote against their will, in the way dictated by their wider families'. 'It is widely suggested that extended family and kinship networks, frequently with their origins in settlement patterns in Pakistan and in Bangladesh, are mobilised to secure the support of up to several hundred electors, effectively a Block Vote.' *Certain people criticise me for my caste. The people were saying 'Tariq is from the clan or this part of Pakistan'* (Chahal, undated).²⁹

- The former Mayor of Coventry, Ram Lakha, a Labour Councillor who is of low caste, reported discrimination from 'upper castes' when he stood for election in a largely Indian ward. *'During campaigning I was often told that I would not get people's vote as I was a Chamar. So I filed my nomination in a non-Asian constituency and was able to win. The Indian community in Coventry always felicitates every new Mayor, however, till today they have not done this for me.'* (DSN, 2006)
- *'Jatts vote for their own, regardless of politics.'* Lord Nazier Ahmed (Chahal, undated, p45).

8.4 Public behaviour

Certain public behaviour was seen as offensive and harassing or stirring up caste discrimination. They all illustrate prejudice. Some may constitute harassment, although not as covered by the Act.

A number of the qualitative interviewees mentioned problems that they had in pubs. They reported other customers speaking loudly to laud their own caste (the cases reported were *Jatt*) or making derogatory remarks about low castes (using the words *Chamar* and *Chura*). The immediate problems with this reported by low caste respondents were, firstly, discomfort, offence and fear and, secondly, the development of arguments and violence, with either the respondent or others participating.

X was in a group in a pub. One of the group, a *Jatt* Sikh, started saying *'bad things about untouchables'*. The *Jatt* said that he knew X was a Christian and so probably an untouchable. This shocked X. (Case study 15)

X said the only other discrimination or harassment he had experienced was in pubs, with *Jatt* Sikhs taunting lower caste Indians or talking loudly about *Jatts* and *Chamars*. When this happens, his friends who are also *Jatt* Sikhs and he leave, to avoid trouble. (Case study 20)

²⁹ This may stem from Wilks-Heeg (2008).

The literature and the qualitative case studies identified alleged humiliating behaviour in the treatment of shopkeepers:

- a customer refused to take change from a shopkeeper's hand in case their touch was polluting; the customer insisted that the change was placed on the counter to avoid contact. (Wolverhampton) (Chahal, undated)

Chahal (undated) also referred to a similar incident in Coventry.

The qualitative research did not identify any recent case of such treatment (although it did of shopkeepers being similarly treated or boycotted, but many years ago). Whilst such incidents are humiliating for the victims, they are not covered by the Act.

The other form of public behaviour reported as problematic to people of low caste were displays of 'Jatt pride', for example, through song lyrics celebrating *Jatts* and through other displays, such as the use of stickers, logos and number plates. Chahal (undated) comments on banners being painted on car windscreens extolling caste virtues.

'Casteism is ... being promoted by the Indian media via Bhangra music. Songs often refer to the superiority of Jatts.' Shiv Gharu, talking on BBC Breakfast (Chahal, undated)

One qualitative case study interviewee believed this growth was due to young people having lost a sense of identity and seeking to establish a new one.

These displays of caste pride are seen as a problem by those who believed they suffer caste discrimination because, by increasing caste consciousness, they bolster caste discrimination. Moreover, evidence from the qualitative interviews suggested that they increased alienation and reduced self-esteem for those suffering low self-esteem due to their caste. *Jatt* pride may be viewed as beneficial, promoting self-esteem, whilst the perceived damaging effects may be seen as resentment. It may be viewed as having parallels with the US black pride movement. However, an important difference is that the black pride movement did not have groups which might be lowered by their actions, whereas *Jatt* pride does.

8.5 Violence and criminal activity

Some of the incidents reported in the previous chapter, notably school bullying, and the incidents in pubs reported in this chapter resulted in violence. The qualitative interviews and the literature report violence and other criminal activity resulting from alleged caste discrimination and harassment. Whilst these alleged manifestations and consequences of caste prejudice fall outside the Act, they provide important contextual information about the nature, perceptions and consequences of alleged caste prejudice, discrimination and harassment in Britain.

One of the women who had suffered perceived caste bullying at school reported that her locality was dominated by teenage gangs. For Asians, these were caste and religion-based and excluded low caste people. This made low caste teenagers more vulnerable. ACDA (2009) also said:

- ‘You get gangs in places like Southall and you get stabbings and it’s related directly to caste.’

One person in the qualitative interviews reported a burglary allegedly due to caste:

X set up her own radio station. It was criticised for promoting the *Ravidassia* community. She received telephone threats from, by their accent, Indians born in the UK. The radio station was burgled. Because of the threats and because nothing other than the radio station equipment was stolen, she believes this was to stop it broadcasting, i.e. that it was caste inspired. (Case study 6)

Obviously, if the purpose of this burglary was as alleged, it is unclear whether it was caste or religion inspired.

The issue of the police taking action was raised by a number of respondents. For example, one said:

X believed that, while the majority of fights within the Asian community involve caste, when people go to the police they don’t understand it, and don’t know that ‘*Chamar*’ is perceived as an insult and is inflammatory. (Case study 12)

Other reports of violence were related to inter-caste marriages and relationships, resulting in the low caste man being beaten up (Chahal, undated; Meeting on Caste and the Equality Bill – Committee Room 4a, HOL, 4th February 2010). At the extreme, pro-caste legislation organisations claim that the majority of so-called honour killings related to hatred caused by the caste system (discussions with pro-caste legislation organisations; Meeting on Caste and the Equality Bill – Committee Room 4a, House of Lords, 4th February 2010 Minutes).

9 Evidence on caste discrimination: themes

9.1 Introduction

The previous four chapters have focused on specific incidents of alleged caste discrimination. These incidents, together with the literature, the discussions with organisations and the interviews, provide rich information about the nature of caste discrimination in this country which is discussed below.

9.2 Who is affected?

Caste discrimination may take place between any castes, both 'upwards' and 'downwards'.

There have been claims that, compared with higher castes, people from low castes differentiate less on the basis of caste, with the implication that those from low castes are less likely to discriminate (DSN, 2006). However, Sharma (2008) refers to attacks and abuses against Brahmin Priests both in India and in the West. Moreover, one of the mechanisms of caste discrimination is nepotism and this may equally be exerted by low castes against higher castes.

Nevertheless, nearly all the evidence found was of alleged discrimination against lower castes and, where specified, against *Chamars*, *Churas*, shoemakers and *Dhobis*. Those reportedly discriminating were *Jatts*, *Lohanas* and *Tarkhans*. In the case studies, the alleged incidents of caste discrimination were predominantly against people of religions which were either low caste-based or associated with low castes (*Ravidassias*, *Valmikis*, *Ambedkarite Buddhists* and Christians).

In the interviews, respondents were asked about who did and did not discriminate against them. Many said that they believed they were discriminated against by *Jatt* Sikhs. Some of these said that they had little difficulty in their relations with Hindus (Case study 10; Case study 12), although one respondent believed this was because Hindus were more subtle in the ways they discriminated (Case study 22). She related this not to religion but to education, with Hindus being better educated than Sikhs. Others saw education and job status as making no difference (Case study 19). Some saw the problem as mainly being with Punjabis³⁰ and mentioned that Gujaratis were less likely to discriminate, although others thought Gujaratis were no better (Case study 22). Whilst some respondents clearly linked these comments to their experience, others did not and it was difficult to identify the extent to which these views were based on actual behaviour. In the case study examples, the alleged incidents of caste discrimination were

³⁰ Nearly all, or all, Sikhs have roots in the Punjab, although not all those with roots in the Punjabi are Sikhs.

predominantly perpetrated by Sikhs, although some alleged cases had Hindu perpetrators and involved Punjabis, although some involved Gujaratis.

These patterns should not be used to suggest that, in Britain, the problem of caste discrimination, if it exists, stems from *Jatt* Sikhs or is largely confined to Punjabis. The study did find convincing incidents of caste discrimination perpetrated by people other than *Jatt* Sikhs, including people from outside the Punjab. As a qualitative study, the research was not designed to identify the pattern of discrimination and respondents' experience should not be assumed to be representative. Indeed, the sampling approach could be expected to lead to this pattern: the study sought evidence and assistance with identifying case studies of caste discrimination from organisations prominent in pro-caste legislation lobbying. Religion and Indian heritage (both family location and caste) play a role in the networks within these organisations. Therefore, it is not surprising that most qualitative interviewees had similar backgrounds, which, in this case, was roots in the Punjab. Caste discrimination is more likely to take place between people from the same area of India, because caste systems vary across India and so it is less easy to identify the caste of people from other areas:

X, whose family comes from the Punjab and who is a *Ravidassia*, said he experienced harassment from Sikhs. He believes almost all Sikhs will discriminate, both British-born and immigrants. However, he said he does not associate with many Gujaratis. He would expect that discrimination and harassment by Gujaratis would be of low caste Gujaratis and that discrimination and harassment between Punjabis and Gujaratis would be rare, because they would not understand each other's caste system. Case study 17

With a sample of predominantly Punjabis alleging caste discrimination and harassment, it is not surprising that the alleged perpetrators were predominantly Punjabis. Similarly, with the dominance of *Jatts* and of Sikhs amongst Punjabis in Britain, it is also not surprising that *Jatts* and Sikhs were most often reported as alleged perpetrators.

A much larger study would be required to address this question, investigating caste in a number of areas of the country so as to ensure coverage of different groups of Indian origin and religion. The findings of the study should not be used to suggest that caste discrimination is any more perpetrated by one caste (other than, perhaps, higher), religion or regional background than another.

9.3 Caste discrimination is dying out?

The issue of whether caste discrimination is dying out was raised at the start of the study. Anti-caste legislation organisations believe it is and therefore that legislation in this area is unnecessary.

The anti-caste legislation organisations suggested that caste consciousness was generational and that it was largely confined to older generations and so

was dying out. This view was supported by some of those who believed they had suffered caste discrimination, but was challenged by others. The experience of individuals in the qualitative interviews and provided by other evidence suggested a complex picture.

The alleged caste discrimination cases were perpetrated by people of all ages. More widely, those who believed they had suffered caste discrimination reported, variously, that, from their experience of who discriminated against them and their friends and relations:

- it was confined to older generations;
- it was passed down the generations, with children learning discrimination from their parents and grandparents;
- the problem was largely confined to migrants (and that British-born Asians were less discriminatory);
- it was 'topped up' by migration from India, with recent migrants continuing to bring caste discrimination to this country;
- individuals became less discriminatory the longer they had been in this country.

A reported growth in inter-caste marriage was presented as evidence of a decline in caste discrimination, particularly amongst younger generations. This was argued not only by anti-caste legislation organisations but also by individuals who believed they had suffered caste discrimination. At the same time, others pointed to the persistence of caste as a selection criterion in marriage (including its presence on marriage websites).

Extensive research would be required to identify whether the consequence of these pressures and trends is a diminution in caste consciousness and discrimination, and the speed of decline.

9.4 Religion or caste

We identified that some alleged caste discrimination may equally possibly be religious discrimination. This arises from some religions (notably *Ravidassia*, *Valmiki* and *Ambedkarite Buddhists*) being comprised almost solely of members of low castes and many Indian Christians being low caste. This raises the issue of whether existing discrimination law covering religion and belief adequately protects against caste discrimination and harassment.

Theoretically, *Ravidassia*, *Valmiki* and *Ambedkarite Buddhists* ought to be able to be able to gain redress for caste discrimination through using religion or belief discrimination law, as there would be an exact correlation between their caste and their religion e.g. no *Ravidassias* would be promoted if no low caste people were promoted. However, this does not apply to members of religions not almost wholly confined to low castes (e.g. Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims) or to atheists. For these, if discrimination were based on caste, other members of their religion and atheists would not be discriminated against. Thus in the previous example, people of the same (or no) religion would be promoted. Thus, theoretically, religious discrimination legislation only partially covers caste discrimination.

In practice, though, reliance on religious discrimination legislation is likely to reduce the chances of success in cases which could, theoretically, fall under religious discrimination legislation. Many of the cases described involved the use of offensive caste language, but not religious language. This is clearly evidence of caste harassment and supportive of claims of caste discrimination. However, it is not necessarily evidence of religious discrimination and harassment.

For these reasons, based on the evidence found in this study, we would suggest that, if caste discrimination were seen as an issue which needed to be tackled and discrimination legislation was an appropriate means to achieve this, then reliance on religious discrimination legislation is inadequate.

9.5 Effects

Drawing from the case studies and the literature, the personal consequences of alleged caste discrimination and harassment include:

- depression
- loss of self-esteem
 - 'It makes us feel like a piece of dirt. They treat us like a piece of dirt, like from a different planet.'* (Case study 15)
- loss of confidence
- loss of employment
- reduced career prospects
- lower earnings
- anger
- detrimental effects on education
- social isolation
- reduced provision of personal care services
- reduced access to social provision (old people's day centres)

However, the consequences are wider than just personal. Certainly, public violence was reported as stemming from caste discrimination and harassment.

Another issue was community cohesion. The effect of caste, caste discrimination and caste legislation on the community depends in part on what is perceived as the community: all Asians? all Hindus? all Sikhs? all Punjabis? all Gujaratis? subsets by caste? subsets by religious belief? Whether the community is comprised of all castes currently may depend on the locality and would be seen differently by different groups.

Caste is seen as providing identity and support networks and so reinforcing community. At the same time, caste discrimination has been described as *'dividing people, destroying the development of the individual and society and breeding mistrust'*. It:

- encouraged the formation of sub-groups and creates friction;
- restricted interaction between members of society. (DSN, 2006)

The anti-caste legislation organisations believe that caste discrimination legislation would be bad for community cohesion and also bad for white/Asian relations, providing ammunition for attacking Hindus. This was not an issue the pro-caste legislation organisations expressed a view on.

However, the evidence from the case studies suggested that alleged caste discrimination reduces community cohesion (if the community is considered wider than a single caste):

X, a 16 year old *Ravidassia*, said that she avoids certain people, mainly Sikhs with uncut hair, and is wary of social contact with older Hindus and Sikhs. (Case study 4)

Another respondent (Case study 30) pointed to the existence of caste-based *Gurdwaras* (in her area, Southall), as evidence of the poor effect of caste on community cohesion:

'People have been encouraged to enclose themselves in caste (and religious) boundaries. We're becoming more and more fragmented. I'd expected a fall off in identity as Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, but instead the Asian community is so fragmented now.'
(Case study 14)

10 The role of government policy

10.1 Introduction

It has been argued that there is little caste discrimination and harassment in this country and that it is rapidly dying out and therefore no action is required. The study was unable to identify any evidence on the extent of caste discrimination, nor any reliable estimates of the size of the low caste population, the population most likely to be subject to caste discrimination. The size of the population of South Asian descent provides an indication of the maximum size of the population affected by caste in Britain: around 3 million people or five per cent of the population. The estimates (of unknown reliability) of the low caste population range from a minimum of 50,000 to 200,000 or more. The percentage that experiences caste discrimination and the frequency of discrimination is unknown. Only a major programme of research could establish this. Similarly, we could find no evidence on whether there has been any change in the extent of any caste discrimination. A range of factors, operating in different directions, may affect this and so even the direction of change is unclear. Again, only a major programme of research could establish whether caste discrimination is dying out.

The study has found evidence that caste discrimination and harassment is likely to occur in Britain. Evidence has been found in respect of work and the provision of services. Whilst not ruling out the possibility of caste discrimination in education, no incidents enabling us to conclude that caste discrimination is likely to occur in education were found. However, evidence was found of caste-related pupil-on-pupil bullying and that this was likely to be addressed differently (and less adequately) by schools than bullying related to protected strands.

In the light of this evidence, this chapter discusses the options for tackling caste discrimination and harassment in Britain.

10.2 Existing response to alleged caste discrimination and harassment

Four responses to alleged discrimination and harassment were identified in the case studies:

- taking the case to the authorities (the school, the employer, the service provider, the police);
- speaking to the perpetrators (or their parents);
- doing nothing;
- taking the law into one's own hands.

People's experience of taking cases to the authorities varied. In some cases the ultimate result was satisfactory (i.e. the discrimination or harassment stopped). However, in most cases, problems were perceived with this

approach due to 'the authorities' being non-Asians and therefore ignorant about caste. This meant that individuals had to explain in detail the issues and still did not always feel that the authorities understood. It was believed that this led to the authorities not recognising the inflammatory nature of the language used, not recognising the harm and hurt caused and not taking the right (or any) action due to their lack of understanding of caste. Because of reluctance to discuss caste, some people went to the authorities but did not mention caste. This could mean that the underlying problem was not dealt with and might recur.

Speaking to the perpetrators (or their parents) was an approach which did not seem to yield change and might escalate the problem.

Others did nothing. This was for a range of reasons, including: that the authorities were of the same caste as the perpetrators (or were the perpetrators); reluctance to have to explain caste to non-Asians; a belief that the authorities would not understand and so one would be seen as a troublemaker; embarrassment and shame at having to reveal one's own caste; a lack of belief that there would be any effective action taken; and a belief that going to the authorities would exacerbate the problem and lead to retribution.

'Not many people will come forward at the moment to report their experience of caste discrimination. They feel threatened and scared and they have no faith in what is happening.' Case study 14

This meant that some took the law into their own hands, which tended to lead to violence.

10.3 Legislation

One approach to preventing discrimination and harassment is legislation, both discrimination legislation and criminal legislation. The first would allow individuals to seek redress against some of the types of activities described in Chapters 5 to 7. The second could be used in relation to caste offensive language and violence.

One of the criticisms of discrimination law in these cases is the difficulty there would be in proving caste discrimination and harassment. This may be the case. However, this has not prevented legislation being developed to cover discrimination on other grounds. Moreover, this is a narrow perception of the usefulness of discrimination legislation. Because of discrimination legislation, employers, educators and providers of goods and services develop non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies. These not only provide structures for redress but also lead to much greater understanding of the issues and reduce the acceptability of such discrimination and harassment. In the case of caste discrimination, this educational effect is particularly necessary because the vast majority of the population is almost entirely ignorant of caste issues.

The extent to which each organisation developed caste discrimination and harassment policies would depend on perceived need and would not be universal. This is no different than for the currently protected characteristics and would result in some targeting towards highest need.

Thus discrimination legislation through the Act with the exercise of the caste power ought to reduce the extent of caste discrimination and harassment which occurs (by, in many organisations, introducing policies against it), make it easier to address caste discrimination within the organisation when it does occur (because of policies and greater knowledge) and provide an independent means of redress when these approaches are unsatisfactory (i.e. access to tribunals and courts).

As one respondent said:

'Caste law would send out signals (like with drink driving and race). It is not about getting lots of prosecutions, it is about people modifying their behaviour and making it unacceptable.' (Case study 14)

As was discussed in Section 9.4, discrimination legislation may already cover some, but not all, caste-based discrimination and harassment. Extending the definition of race to include caste would provide further, explicit protection. As has been discussed a number of times in the report, caste and religion are closely linked and it would be for tribunals and courts to distinguish on the facts of each case whether any discrimination or harassment occurred because of caste or because of religion or belief. There may also be some overlap with race as currently defined in the Act.

Criminal legislation might be expected to do the same, sending out messages that caste discrimination and harassment are unacceptable and deterring potential perpetrators. One of the concerns was the lack of action by police and it was believed by those who felt that they had suffered discrimination that, without such legislation, police would not take caste-related crime seriously. However, it was beyond the study to assess, firstly, whether caste-related crime was dismissed by the police and, if so, whether legislation would alter this.

10.4 Other approaches

An alternative approach would be educative but non-legislative. This might encompass educating non-Asians, particularly those in positions of authority, about caste, so they are better able to deal with any caste discrimination and harassment and so those alleging discrimination and harassment feel greater confidence in approaching the authorities. Target groups might include the police and educators, particularly in areas with a high Asian population. It would also be relatively easy to ensure that other public sector organisations (e.g. social services and the health service) took this on board. However, there is also a need for private sector employers to be more aware of the issue and this would be difficult without legislation.

From the evidence collected, the educational approach is only relevant where people are unaware of caste, i.e. in organisations where senior people are not Asian. This approach does not assist those where either the authorities themselves are discriminating (e.g. the employer) or feel helpless to achieve change (e.g. in the case of the older people's day centre).

Another approach to dealing with caste discrimination (suggested by a Sikh organisation) was that it could be addressed within the Asian community. It was suggested that people suffering caste discrimination from Sikhs should complain to the perpetrators' *Gurdwara* and, as caste discrimination is unacceptable in the Sikh religion, the *Gurdwara* would ensure that it stopped. There are a number of problems with this approach. It relies on the perpetrator being a member of an organisation which will behave in this way and that their membership is known to the victim. This may often be the case. It also requires the victim to have confidence that the organisation will treat them fairly, take the issue seriously and not itself discriminate. Given the views expressed about caste-based *Gurdwaras*, it seems likely that some would not have this confidence.

A respondent in the qualitative interviews also felt that *Gurdwaras* could play a role in reducing caste discrimination:

X feels that Sikh temples should send out a message opposing caste discrimination and should encourage greater mixing, including through inter-caste marriage. (Otho3)

However, others (including Sikhs) were more sceptical of the extent to which Sikh educational attempts would be successful because they said that this was what the Sikh religion already stated, but nonetheless, in their view, some Sikhs continued to discriminate.

Appendix 1: Organisations contacted for the sample of individuals

| |
|--|
| Ambedkar International Institute |
| Ambedkar International Mission |
| Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance (ACDA) |
| Anti Land Grab and Forced Displacement of People |
| Anti Slavery International |
| Asian Christian Association |
| Asian Christian Association (Coventry) and Federation of Pakistani Christians |
| Asian Rationalist Society, Britain |
| Association for Community Cohesion (ACC) |
| Baba Saheb Ambedkar Buddhist Association Birmingham |
| Begumpura Foundation |
| Bhagwan Valmik Sabha, Bedford |
| Bhagwan Valmik Sabha, Birmingham. U.K. |
| Bhagwan Valmik Temple, Wolverhampton |
| Bhagwan Valmiki Sabha Birmingham |
| Bhagwan Valmiki Sabha Wolverhampton |
| Bhagwan Valmiki Sabha, Oxford |
| British Asian Christian Council |
| Buddha Dhamma Assoc Southall |
| Catholic Association for Racial Justice/Coalition Against Caste Discrimination (CARJ/CACD) |
| Casteaway Arts (Birmingham) |
| CasteWatchUK |
| Central Valmik Sabha (Southall) |
| Central Valmik Sabha International(UK) |
| Dalit Solidarity Network UK (DSN) |
| Dr. A. Memorial Committee of GB Wolverhampton |
| Dr. Ambedkar Buddhist Organisation, Birmingham |
| Dr. Ambedkar Buddhist Society Aston |
| Dr. Ambedkar Educational Society Birmingham |
| Dr. Ambedkar Mission Society Bedford |
| Indian Christian Concern |
| Indian Workers Association (GB) |
| International Ambedkar Institute Kettering |
| Jagat Guru Valmik Ji Maharaj Temple |
| Maharshi Valmiki Sabha Birmingham |
| Maharshi Valmiki Sabha Coventry |
| National Secular Society |
| Ravidassia Community Centre, Hitchin |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Bedford, |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Birmingham |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Bradford |

| |
|--|
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Coventry |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Darlaston, |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Derby |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Erith Kent |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Glasgow |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Gravesend |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Leicester |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Luton |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Northampton |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Southall |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Southampton |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Strood |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Walsall |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Willenhall |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Wolverhampton |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, East Ham |
| Shri Guru Ravidass Temple Foleshill Road, Coventry |
| Shri Guru Valmik Sabha International |
| Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha UK (SGRS-UK) |
| Sri. Guru Valmik Sabha Southall |
| The Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABO UK). |
| Voice of Dalit International (VoDI) |

Appendix 2: Case studies

Case study 3

Background

X is in her early 60s, a retired mother of three grown up children. She came to the UK from the Punjab after her marriage about 40 years back. She is a *Chamar*.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X worked in the catering section of a hospital for over 20 years. Her colleagues were mainly Indians. Most were *Jatt* Sikhs. She experienced discrimination from them after they found out her caste. They came up to her and asked her directly what her caste was. *'They ask you on your face. They ask directly what your caste is.'*

The word spread quickly. The higher caste women started avoiding the two. During lunch breaks X and her friend, also low caste, would sit on a separate table as the other women did not want to sit with them. They were excluded from casual conversations. They would openly ridicule the '*Chamars* and the dirty work they do'. X challenged them a few times, but that did not stop their behaviour. This discrimination did not really affect her employment and work.

She did not take it up with her manager (who was white British) because she felt it would exacerbate the problem. She was worried that her colleagues would give her an even tougher time if she complained. She was scared that she might lose her job and would be branded the troublemaker because the higher caste women were stronger in numbers and were more educated (and spoke better English).

Case study 4

Background

X is 16 years old. She lives with her parents and siblings in Southall. She was born in India and moved to the UK when she was very young. She describes herself as Hindu Punjabi and her religion as *Ravidassia*. She describes her caste as *Chamar*. She describes bullying at school which took place from started when she was about 12 to the present (i.e. around 2006 to 2010).

Account of caste discrimination experiences

The first time X knew anything about caste was at secondary school. Her friends had assumed she was of a higher caste and found out she was not. This led to bullying and rumour spreading: *'I lost so many friends and confidence, I couldn't focus on my work and it was just really bad for me'*.

X is not sure how her fellow pupils found out about her caste, suggesting it was either through visiting her home and seeing that they have different customs or through people in the local Asian community. She believes that the bullying was driven to some extent by the parents of pupils who said not to invite X to their home. There were others of the same caste in her school but they generally kept quiet about it. Some had a practice of 'hiding' their caste by not using their own surname but registering at the school as Singh or Kaur. In contrast, pupils of higher caste liked to *'brag about it'*. It was considered 'cool' to be of higher caste and these pupils were more popular than others. Some pupils used their higher caste to get more friends, and to make jokes about caste was also considered amusing. She felt she could not object to pupils talking about their high caste, since it is part of who they are, but she was resentful that they were insulting about her own background.

The consequences of bullying were that X felt left out and was on her own. She socialised little with other pupils and just got on with her work. She tried hard to ignore the bullying and teasing and spoke to her parents. At first they wouldn't explain but then offered to speak to the pupils' parents. X asked them not to do this, fearing that it would make the situation worse. She did not speak to teachers about it because she felt they couldn't do anything about it. As the bullying continued, X's father gradually started to explain the attitudes behind it and took her to the *Ravidassia* temple where she learned more about it, spent time at the temple and built up a feeling of pride about her background. Now she is proud of who she is, rather than feeling ashamed. Her views about caste are that *'it is stupid that it exists'* and that people should not be treated differently because of caste.

X also related an incident involving a teacher who expressed surprise that she was wearing a wrist-band but does not have a Sikh surname. X explained that one parent is Hindu, the other Sikh and the teacher, who was Punjabi, then asked what caste she was. X felt embarrassed and ashamed at having to state her caste in front of the class, and pupils were giggling at her response.

X believes that the teacher did not realise that she had hurt her feelings. This teacher did not treat X differently from other pupils following this incident.

X has developed a friendship group outside of school. They are Sikh and Hindu and do make jokes about caste at her expense. However, they remain her friends. A grandparent of one of these friends asked her daughter not to invite X to the house, but the friend objected, leading to a family row and the situation has now been resolved, so that X can visit.

Outside school, X says she hasn't experienced caste discrimination as such, but is aware of a lot of interest in caste among older members of the Hindu and Sikh community. When she attends social events she is asked her caste by older women, which she believes is from interest in her as a potential marriage prospect. Her mother has rebuked them about it but X feels this will become more common as she gets older and more clearly into marriageable age.

Comment

X described a culture within her secondary school of high awareness of caste, which has damaging consequences for pupils of lower caste. She also described an incident where a teacher asked her openly what caste she was from, in which she felt humiliated. Although the bullying happened recently, X had not considered complaining to the school, which raises questions about the bullying policy and pastoral care of the school concerned. X believes that interest in caste is largely perpetuated by older members of the Hindu and Sikh community, yet the bullying she experienced was by young people.

Case study 6

Background

X is a broadcaster and a *Ravidassia*. She was born in India.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X reported three episodes of alleged caste prejudice and discrimination. Firstly, in work, secondly, in a voluntary post as a broadcaster and, thirdly, a burglary.

1) X had worked for six years (until 2006) in a small company. She was never asked her caste and her name did not identify it. They believed she was a *Jatt* and treated her the same. *Jatts* would use insulting words about lower castes. She did not say anything, as she was worried about losing her job. She was afraid they might find out her caste, as she had seen how they treated other lower caste. She hid her identity to keep her job. When she left, she said she was *Ravidassia* and did not want to work with them anymore.

2) Until very recently, X had a voluntary post, as a presenter at a Punjabi community radio station. Most people at the station were *Jatt*. They were not related nor friends. Three or four others doing the same job as her were paid employees. They were all *Jatt*.

At the radio station, people were always talking about the *Jatt* caste, and how they could do everything. She felt that those who were not *Jatt* were treated differently: *Jatts* were given preference. They used particular language (in Punjabi) which made her feel discriminated against. They used words they knew would hurt. (This appears to be *Chamar*.) They only used this language to people who were *Ravidassia* (three of them). They did not insult *Jatts*.

When she had applied to the radio station, she was not asked where she was from. She was asked this after two or three months and directly asked about her caste. She said she was Sikh community (as *Ravidassias* are). She felt their behaviour changed as a result.

She used to give a *Ravidassia* greeting on air. The managing director told her not to use this greeting, as it was from a lower caste. The owner, a *Jatt*, said she could not use a *Ravidassia* greeting because the station is for high castes and some people who donated to the station were complaining that lower castes were working there. He said donations to the radio would decline. X asked for evidence of this, but none was given. She refused to stop and was dismissed. Another *Ravidassia* was also sacked.

X was surprised and shocked by her treatment at the radio station. She had been told stories about caste discrimination in India, but had never encountered it. When she was dismissed, she cried and felt ashamed to tell her husband. She stayed at home and did not bother to look for another job. She felt depressed and just lay on the bed. Her family got her back up. They said she should prove herself at another place. She thought she should tell others, which she did at the temple.

3) After leaving, she set up her own radio station, which was to treat all as equals. She received criticism that it was promoting the *Ravidassia* community. She then received telephone threats from, by their accent, Indians born in the UK. The radio station was burgled in May 2010. Because of the threats and because nothing other than the radio station equipment was stolen, she believes this was to stop broadcasting, i.e. was caste inspired.

Case study 7

Background

X was born in the Punjab, India. He came to Britain when he was young and had almost all his schooling in Britain. He is about 50, in a professional job. He described his caste as Dalit. The incident happened about 18 months ago.

The case relates to X's mother, who receives home care visits from Social Services. The incident happened about 18 months ago.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X and his wife were with his mother when a new carer came. The carer asked them what religion they were. They said they were not religious. The carer seemed confused because one of his mother's names was Sikh and the other was Hindu. It was obvious they were Punjabis. She kept questioning them and it was clear to him that she wanted to know their caste. X knew the family of the carer and knew she was a Brahmin.

The carer identified their caste when she saw a picture of Guru Ravidass in his mother's bedroom. The carer would not bathe X's mother, who was supposed to receive help with bathing every day. *'She made excuses. She'd say it was not safe, she might slip.'* This went on for a week. Other carers had no problem. (The other carers were Sikh and would also recognise Guru Ravidass.)

They complained to Social Services. They did not mention caste to Social Services. He said this was because it is difficult to explain to people who do not know about caste and people find it difficult to admit they are Dalit. They said they could not understand why this carer had a problem when others did not. Social Services just thought they were not getting on. The carer did not reappear, but Social Services did not do anything about her behaviour.

He believed this was caste discrimination because:

- a) he believed the carer's questions were to identify caste (*'I don't expect any carer to be quizzing me on who I am and where I'm from. And then quizzing on caste. It is very offensive'*);
- b) the nature of the care refused (bathing) was significant;
- c) the carer identified his mother's caste as 'untouchable' and the carer was a Brahmin;
- d) the reasons given not to bathe his mother seemed spurious, given that all other carers bathed her.

Comment

It seems unlikely the carer could refuse to bathe all clients and retain her job. It therefore seems likely this was a case of caste discrimination.

Case study 8

Background

X came to Britain from the Punjab more than 30 years ago. He completed his education in Britain. He is a *Ravidassia* and a *Chamar*. X described encountering caste discrimination in 1) hiring a wedding venue and 2) at work. The wedding venue incident took place in 2004 and the employment incidence since he joined his present company in 2003, with the last reported incident in 2009.

Account of caste discrimination experiences: goods and services

In 2004, X tried to hire a venue outside his locality to celebrate a wedding. He contacted a Council, went to see the venue and discussed the details with Council employee, who was Asian, a Hindu. He was asked questions about the ceremony, which at the time, he did not think was strange. As it was a *Ravidassia* ceremony, this would have revealed his caste. He said he wanted to book it and offered to pay immediately. He was told to wait till he got the confirmation letter. He heard nothing and two weeks before the wedding was having difficulty contacting the Council employee. When he finally did, he was told the hall was booked. He said he had not paid. She denied he had offered to pay at the time and that she had said to wait for the letter. He complained to the Council, but was told that there was no evidence to support either's claim.

He believed this was caste discrimination because:

- a) she was Hindu and he was a *Chamar*;
- b) she had asked what he now believes were unnecessary questions about the ceremony: for another wedding, in a local council venue, he had been asked no questions about the ceremony by the (white British) employee; these identified his caste, which his name does not;
- c) in his words, '*what other reason could there [be]?*'

Prior to this incident he had not encountered caste discrimination in Britain and said it had never crossed his mind (irrespective of there being caste-based temples).

Account of caste discrimination experiences: work

X worked as a manager for many years in a public company, before taking early retirement and taking up his current job as a warehouse operative. The company has four to six *Jatt* team-leaders and line managers. He described three incidents which he believed were caste discrimination.

1) X was promoted to team leader (although he had applied for a managerial post). His team were *Jatt* Sikhs. They would not accept his authority. After two months he applied to revert to his previous job because he did not think it worth the stress.

2) The son of one of the *Jatt* team leaders was employed at the company via an agency as soon as he left school after GCSEs in the summer of 2009³¹. Within a few weeks he was given a permanent job and, before he was 19, was made team-leader. This was very rapid. X then called out as the young team leader was passing '*Here's our next manager now*'. The young man shouted back at him. X complained to the young man's father (as he should receive more respect, as a person who could be the young man's grandfather). The father told X he should stop harassing the young man. X was disciplined for questioning a manager's authority.

He believed this was caste discrimination because:

- a) the manager was a *Jatt* and he was a *Chamar*; and
- b) normally, if anyone is abusive they are sacked.

3) On another occasion X had applied for a job in the company and helped a *Jatt* to complete the application form, because he could not write English. The *Jatt* got the job and he did not. He knows he is much better than them, with better qualifications (he has a post-graduate management qualification.)

However, there were other things going on at work which support his belief this was caste discrimination:

- the *Jatt* managers would not appoint or help non-*Jatt* Asians;
- there were no lower caste Asians in management jobs;
- there were also allegations of corruption, with managers 'selling' jobs and overtime. White British employees and *Jatts* did not have to pay. (These allegations were part of an on-going investigation.) Since the investigation, none of the *Jatts* will shake hands with him. He considers this is because they know he is a *Chamar*, but he had already said everyone knows everyone's caste;
- the way the *Jatt* managers spoke to *Valmikis* was so bad that white British staff had noticed.

At the same time, he described how the *Jatt* managers would cultivate the more senior white British managers (inviting them to their homes, taking them to the pub) and therefore they were listened to and could '*spread malice*'. He also said that the *Jatt* managers did have two or three *Valmiki* employees they kept very close. The *Valmikis* were flattered, but they were being used as a shield so they could not be accused of prejudice.

The discrimination makes him uncomfortable and angry. *It makes you look dumb.*

³¹ Recruitment at this level is via an agency. Some temps were then made permanent. However, this generally took longer than a few weeks.

Comment

From the evidence presented, the wedding venue booking does not present strong evidence of caste discrimination, as it is impossible to rule out either a misunderstanding or incompetence.

From the evidence presented on his disciplining, there was too little to point to caste and not other causes of his treatment.

His statements about the aggregate treatment of *Jatts* and non-*Jatt* Asians (recruitment, promotion, being charged) point towards discrimination. If this is the case, it may be direct discrimination or possibly indirect discrimination due to favouring of family and friends.

Case study 9***Background***

X is in his early 60s. He has lived in Britain for 45 years.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

The incident X reported centred on his son and his school games teacher. He explained that this incident took place when his son was five and he had graduated and left home by now.

The games master, a *Jatt* Sikh, used to pick on his son and singled him out for different treatment. It was noticeable to his school friends who included Sikh and non-Sikh boys. The children thought it was because his son '*believed in Ravidass*' and they did not. The unfair treatment had been happening for some time but on one particular occasion he was so upset that he told his father. The respondent made an appointment with the head teacher to discuss this. The head teacher did not believe that one of his staff members could be discriminating in this way and did not think that caste discrimination could happen. However, the head did believe the children.

The games teacher was summoned and angry words were spoken by the parent. 'You think you're better because you're a *Jatt*.' When the teacher denied the allegations of treating a student unfairly because of his status, the respondent then gave him an ultimatum and said he 'would sort him out outside the school'. The games teacher apologised and said it would not happen again.

Comment

The main problem with this example is that it occurred many years ago and so may not indicate present day experiences.

Case study 10

Background

X is in his late 20s to early 30s, British-born. His family comes from the Punjab and he is from an untouchable caste. He describes his caste as Hindu. The incidents occurred between 2008 and 2010.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X worked for an temp agency. He was placed at Company Z. Senior management at the company were white, but the majority of relevant line managers/supervisors for X were Punjabi and *Jatt*. When a permanent job came up, he applied for it, was interviewed (by a Punjabi *Jatt* and a white British man who was friendly with the *Jatt* supervisors) and was rejected. This happened seven or eight times and it was only when the Managing Director (a white British man) became involved that he was appointed (two months prior to interview for the study).

He felt his rejection was caste discrimination because:

- h) the people appointed were family and friends (mostly *Jatts*) of the Punjabi *Jatt* managers and supervisors;
- i) the reasons he was given for being rejected were, variously, that he was not experienced and that his answers were not in great depth. He was experienced (and, for some of the later applications, highly experienced, having been working for some time in relevant parts of the company). The people appointed were not experienced. Both he, and, when interviewed by the MD, the MD, considered his responses to be in depth: *'the MD said I answered them brilliantly'*; on the other hand, he said that at previous interviews he had felt pressured by the way that questions were asked and that the MD was much better; whether the way questions were asked was due to caste discrimination is unknown; (interviewer training was planned for the line managers);
- j) when the MD, along with the white British interviewer, interviewed him, the MD asked why he had been rejected before and, when he gave the reasons, the MD said he could not understand it; the MD looked at the white British supervisor, who said nothing and looked away; *'he looked at the line manager in disgust'*;
- k) the interviewers initially refused to provide feedback on reasons for rejection and it was only when he forced the issue that they did;
- l) if he had been no good at the job, they would not have kept him on via the temp agency for a few years ;
- m) a shift manager's son had been appointed and was rapidly promoted to team leader;
- n) a record had not been kept of his work, which would have indicated experience and affects progression; records are kept on others.

From X's report, bullying was common and most people found it a bad place to work. This applied to people who were not low caste, as well as those who were. A Muslim friend of his was bullied by the shift managers, who made demands on him outside his job. He considered several others had no chance of promotion, for some due to caste, but not for all. A *Valmiki* friend had been degraded by a shift manager at a party. However, he said that the Sikh line managers get on well with other Sikhs. He did say that they did sometimes treat people of their own caste badly, but not all the time. He also said that white and black British employees also had problems with these line managers.

X also described unfair treatment. *'If a Sikh wants a holiday, he gets it. If I ask, I'm refused.'* He then gave a recent example where he was refused because too many people were off, but the numbers were *'well'* within the limits required.

He also described that he felt the way the Punjabi *Jatt* line managers looked at him and other lower caste employees was about seeing them as at the bottom, that they *'have a laugh'* amongst themselves when they see lower caste employees struggling.

'Sikhs are higher class (sic) than Hindus. The way they look at us. I can't explain it. We're treated unfairly. They don't talk to us much. If we ask a question, they won't give us a full answer.'

He does have a least one Sikh friend *'Hindu, Sikh, caste: doesn't bother him'*.

He did not have problems in previous jobs, where the majority were white British.

He considered the behaviour towards him as stemming from both caste discrimination and preference for family. He saw it also as religious discrimination. This draws out the conflation between caste and religion for some religions.

Until this happened he had not thought of himself as lower caste.

Comment

The report points to X being unfairly treated. He points to a culture of bullying and nepotism, which makes it difficult to judge whether his treatment was caste-based or not, particularly as it was not only low caste people who were badly treated. However, this does not mean that caste discrimination was not the reason that some were badly treated (with other reasons for other people).

Two further difficulties are raised by this case: the conflation of caste and nepotism and of caste and religion. The first means that we cannot deduce from the appointment of family members an intention to discriminate because of caste (i.e. there may be no caste hostility). Under British law, nepotism is not in itself unlawful, so long as it does not particularly disadvantage people with a protected characteristic. In this case, if caste discrimination were unlawful, it could result in unlawful discrimination. The second means that, in this case, the behaviour could be unlawful (under religious discrimination). This would depend on the relative incidence of lower caste Sikhs and Hindus and so whether it resulted in greater disadvantage amongst one religious

group. Where it is more likely to be considered religious discrimination is where the lower caste person is a member of a caste-linked religious group (e.g. *Valmikis*, *Ravidassias* and Ambedkarite Buddhists), but only if these groups are regarded as a religion in their own right (and not part of the Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist religions more generally). That would be a matter for tribunals and the courts to determine.

Case study 11***Background***

X is in his 30s. He is a Buddhist.

Account of caste discrimination experiences: work

At work, as a mechanical engineer, employees had to clean their own spillages. A Sikh *Jatt* refused to clean his own spillage. He said to the foreman '*It's not my job, I'm high caste. It's the job he should be doing*', indicating X.

X raised this with the company and the union, but they did not understand why it was so offensive.

(The foreman had insisted, under threat of discipline that the person cleaned up their own spillage.)

Account of caste discrimination experiences: services

X went to hospital for some tests. The doctor was from South India. Whilst examining X, they talked. The doctor described that, after examining him, he would do some tests and got the equipment ready. The doctor asked his caste. X said he did not believe in caste, but said he was a Buddhist. The doctor then called in a nurse and got her to do the tests. X believes the doctor was going to do the tests, but got the nurse to do them once he knew his caste.

Comment

It is difficult to know whether the medical incident was caste discrimination or whether the doctor had not intended to do the tests himself.

Case study 12

Background

X came to the UK in 1994 aged 16. He is married. His wife is from the *Jatt* caste, while his caste is untouchable. He identifies himself using the terms untouchable or *Chamar*. He has various businesses and says he is asked about his caste on a regular basis and believes that caste discrimination is very widespread. He is a *Ravidassia*.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X has a number of accounts of caste discrimination, all of which occurred in the UK. (In India he was completely integrated with people of other castes and did not experience discrimination.)

1) His first job was in a clothing factory where he worked for a very short while before being asked his caste. Soon after he was told that there was no more work, although he found out that they had recruited a replacement worker and was told that the employer did not want a *Chamar* in the factory. X lacked the confidence to do anything about this and also did not know what he could do.

2) In 1996 his driving instructor found out he was *Chamar* and stopped the lessons, keeping his driving test money. Again, X didn't know what to do, other than complain to the driving school manager who did nothing about it.

3) He runs a licensed grocery and finds that customers frequently ask questions to find out his caste and that their behaviour changes when they find out he is from the *Chamar* caste.

4) In 1999 he bought a private hire company and employed between 45 and 50 drivers. He heard many comments from drivers about caste, referring to low caste Indians in derogatory terms. In 2001 he was involved in a discussion about caste in the office which led to him objecting to the views of his employees and telling them he was from a low caste. Following this, five employees from the *Jatt* caste left the company, saying they did not want to work for an untouchable.

5) Another experience of caste discrimination relates to X's involvement with an Asian radio station. He worked as a presenter for a community radio station in which he had shares. He opened his show with a greeting from his community and told his assistant presenters to do the same. While he was on a visit to India, the other presenters were dismissed for using community greetings. The decision to do so was made by the managing director who is a *Jatt*. Following the sackings, a meeting took place in a community temple in which the managing director of the station apologised. However, later that same evening, X was arrested following a complaint to the police that he had threatened the managing director and other station staff. X explained to the police that the basis of the dispute was caste, but they went ahead with the prosecution, although charges were later dropped by the radio station. The radio station then dismissed all presenters from low caste backgrounds and X is still trying to get a refund for his shares in the station.

6) Another incident involved a radio station which gave directions to a mela (a gathering) at a *Ravidassia* temple. The announcer referred to the temple as the '*Ravidass Bhawan*' and not the '*Shri Guru Ravidass Bhawan*'. When X challenged them on this, the announcer said they did not recognise Ravidass as a guru, but later backed down.

Case study 13

Background

X came to Britain from East Africa in the early 60s. He was wholly educated in Britain. His father was from the Punjab (Sikh) and went to East Africa. His mother was Hindu from Mombasa. At the same time he says his family is from Rajasthan. He is a *Valmiki*. The incidents he described occurred in 2002 and 2004.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X described how his son had been taunted at school using caste terms, largely by one boy, a *Jatt* Sikh. My son '*had so much flak about being Valmiki – and they had another name for it – and he'd say "I'm not that"*'. His son hit back on the two major occasions described (2002 and 2004) and, the first time, ended up in the police station and, the second time, being suspended from school. Other children (and parents) gave his son a bad time and some families stopped talking to him. (It was not clear from what X said whether this was due to his son being seen to have attacked another boy or because the boy spread around his caste.) The latter was particularly serious as he was in the middle of GCSE exams. A few days after this incident, a chunk of concrete was thrown through the X's car while it was parked outside his house. X says he saw the boy's father's car driving off at speed. X describes various encounters with the boys parents.

X felt that the police did not understand what had happened and just saw it as a feud between two Asian people. (It was not clear whether he tried to explain.) The first time, X spoke to his son's teacher. The teacher told the boy's father that the boy must not say these things and he would be suspended if he did it again. X felt that the teacher handled it as best she could but felt she did not understand the severity of the remarks and how damaging they could be. He also commented that, if they had been racist remarks, the boy would have been suspended immediately.

X's son got Cs and Ds whereas he had been expected to get As and Bs. His son found the taunts and what he was being called very difficult to cope with, as well as his failure at GCSEs. He has put on a lot of weight and taken NVQs, but he is now 'taking time out' and his passion to achieve has gone.

Case study 14

Background

X is in his late 50s to early 60s. He was brought up in a major city in India, where he came across caste little. He moved to Britain when he was about 30. He is a Hindu and a *Valmiki*. The alleged discrimination he describes started in about 2005.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X had worked in professional and managerial roles in a major company for many years. He had worked with his manager for many years and they were friends. Three years ago X's manager recruited two Asians into their department. X trained them. Everything was fine. They then found out his caste. (Other Indians told them.)

'Those with a caste psychology will never take orders, be subservient to someone from a low caste.'

They started to complain to X's manager that X was not training them properly. His manager was surprised. This continued over a period. They refused to take orders from X. As they got friendly with others, they poisoned the atmosphere. X started to be bullied by them. They would tell X that what he said was wrong and then they would say something totally different to his boss. His manager could not understand what was happening. He could not understand that they would lie to him. He had recruited them and could not get rid of them. X explained about caste, but his manager was not interested. X started to be bullied by his manager.

X's life was made a misery and his wife suggested he leave. But he could not see why he should be the one to leave. Instead he made a written complaint about bullying by his manager. X was given a final written warning for a spurious 'offence'. This was described as a cover for moving him. This is supported by the status and responsibilities of the new job which, for the alleged offence, would have been totally inappropriate. The department fell apart and his manager was forced to take early retirement. The case is seen by the company as bullying by a manager, but the real cause was caste discrimination by the two recruits.

He believed this was caste discrimination because:

- c) there had been no complaints before they knew his caste; and
- d) he believed he did his job well and had received very good feedback on performance.

The experience was very traumatic. He nearly lost his job; his manager did. Both had loved their jobs. It has taken about two years to regain his self-confidence. *'It nearly destroyed my life.'*

Comment

This is a type of case where, from the report of the victim alone, it is impossible to judge whether the two recruits' behaviour was because of caste discrimination or other factors.

Case study 15

Background

X is in his early 40s. He came to the UK 21 years ago from the Punjab. He is a Christian and would be regarded as low caste. He described a number of incidents of alleged harassment and prejudice.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X has a shop. All the employees are Christians. People often think he is Hindu or '*just different*'. Customers often ask what his surname is and ask questions about his background, which he sees as trying to identify his caste. This makes him '*feel really horrible*'. He gave the example of a 65 year old man, to whom he did tell his Christian surname and then his previous surname. The man said various things, including *Chura*, and after a brief discussion X asked him to leave. This does not affect his business because his clientele is mainly English and there is nowhere else for people to go.

X related how he was in a group in a pub and one of the group, a Sikh *Jatt*, started saying '*bad things*' about untouchables. The Sikh *Jatt* knew X was a Christian and so probably an untouchable. This shocked X.

X also described how a friend had been beaten because of caste '*you are Churas...*' The police said they could do nothing because there was no caste law.

Seven years ago, a close friend and X got drunk together and went to the friend's house. The friend's wife said '*you don't bring this Chura into this house*'. The friend had nothing to do with X for seven years. Recently, the friend started coming back to X's shop. X thinks his friend realises he was wrong.

X made a number of comments about caste prejudice and harassment:

'It [caste discrimination] does not affect me, it hurts me. Why do they hate us like that?'

'It makes us feel like a piece of dirt. They treat us like a piece of dirt, like from a different planet.'

Comment

This interview tells us about social relations, prejudice and how people feel, rather than provides evidence of incidents which may be covered by the Act.

Case study 16

Background

X was a presenter on a local radio station and hosted a phone-in show. She is a *Valmiki*. The incident occurred in 2010.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

Until shortly before the interview, X was working at a radio station. A new manager had joined a month previously and asked her about her caste. When she said it was *Valmiki*, his behaviour towards her changed and he made the workplace uncomfortable for her. He would fiddle with voice controls when she was hosting the radio show and ignore her. A week ago, he called her to his office after she had finished her programme and said her schedule would have to change. She found that her slot had been taken by two other women. She feels that this happened without any reason, because she had been hosting the show for four months and was popular with her listeners. When she left, she was quite upset as she was given no reason for the change in schedule.

He then sent her a text message the following day stating that others had complained that she had behaved in a threatening way. When she asked for evidence, he did not offer any. He sacked her and only offered the explanation that she was a 'criminal'. She feels that it was a caste related issue, as he behaved normally with her before she stated that she was *Valmiki*. She states that he was from Khatri caste and felt that he was superior. She did not know to whom to complain, as her programme has been taken away.

The radio station has a few other presenters but is run from a small set-up. It does not have full time staff and others in the workplace were not aware of this incident. The owner of the radio station was contacted, but the owner stated that the manager had complained about her conduct and refused to respond further to her complaint.

Case study 18

Background

X is *Valmiki*. X had stated his caste openly to his colleagues. Instead of his official name, he refers to himself as X *Valmiki*. The incident described occurred in October 2009.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X was talking to a colleague of twelve years, a close friend, who was a *Jatt*. X found his behaviour strange and asked him why he was talking to him in such a manner, despite being good friends. His colleague said that a *Chura* and a *Jatt* could never be friends. X asked him to stop referring to his caste. The colleague verbally abused him and threatened to hurt him physically. The foreman of the factory was present and told X and his colleague to go out of the building and fight. X felt that the foreman should have asked his colleague to stop insulting him. When X took the matter to the factory supervisors, the foreman reported that both parties (X and the colleague) were at fault.

X went on a sit-in demonstration in the office premises. The supervisors asked X to stop demonstrating. He decided that until senior people, including union representatives, would address the issues, he would not stop. X got in touch with the *Valmiki* centre representative who got in touch with CasteWatchUK. As the matter escalated, seniors in the workplace decided to address this issue. The MD of the workplace asked X to come in for a chat. Although the MD is Indian, X does not think he discriminates because of caste. X gave him details of the altercation with the colleague.

The MD called the colleague and stated that X would decide whether or not the colleague would be fired. X felt pressurised by his colleagues to not have the offending colleague fired (as he had 12 years' service and young children) and he feels he has not had justice. He blames the partial attitude of the foreman for the escalation of the issue. X feels that the colleague was emboldened by the fact that the foreman had given tacit support to him. Although the colleague apologised, X feels that the atmosphere in the workplace has become tense because of the issue. While matters subsided for a while, the colleague has insulted X since, although not as directly. X feels that the colleague, despite being of a low caste himself, considers himself superior, as he has converted to Sikhism. He was deeply offended and emotionally hurt by the behaviour of the colleague and wants to take the issue further.

Case study 19

Background

X was born in Britain. His family is from the Punjab. He is a Buddhist and a *Chamar*. The more recent incidents described occurred in approximately 2008 and in 2010.

Account of caste discrimination experiences: education

1) As a child, he had a *Jatt* Sikh friend. The friend's mother questioned him closely about his family background. When he was 13 or 14, in response to some questions, X's father told X's friend about Buddhism. The next school day, the friend wanted nothing to do with X and said his mother told him he '*can't associate with you people*'. X's parents found out he'd been asked about his family background ('*do you own farms? does your dad wear a turban?*') and said it was obviously caste-related. X had been unaware of caste until then and X's father had to tell him about it. X thinks his friend had assumed he was a *Jatt*.

'He said that you're a different race and their parents don't mix with them. So from that and what my dad explained to me what the caste system was and, I was, I mean at that age I was confused. I was thinking, hang on, well, I don't know any farmers here. You know, I was young. So I just let it be.'

2) At college, doing A Levels, X's friends were mainly Asian, one was a *Tarkhan*, the rest were *Jatt* Sikhs. All had roots in the Punjab. The friends were '*always on about Jatt*'. They assumed X was *Jatt*. After a few months X '*got fed up with it* ;and said '*I'm not Jatt*'. He said he was a Buddhist. The friends were confused, but talked to their parents and he lost his friends.

X says that the effect on him was that he decided to not go to university, as he thought he would experience the same there. (He had a place at Nottingham University to study law.) He thought he would be safer at work and he got a job. He did feel less threatened at work.

3) Two years ago, when X's daughter was four, she was asked her caste at school by another pupil. The next day, the pupil asked her about her family background. X was worried by this:

I thought, well, I don't want her to get to a stage where you didn't feel, at that time I didn't feel I could go to uni because I was, I felt at threat because there were so many ...

X intended to speak to the pupil's grandfather, but did not.

There's a problem which is stopping children from certain castes progressing through schools because teachers are asking pupils.

His cousin's daughter, aged 13 or 14, was asked by a Sikh teacher what caste she was (with other pupil's around). He added that his cousin's daughter had lost friends because of what she is.

Similarly, his sister's daughter was asked. X wanted to speak to the school, but his sister thought it would cause problems with the teacher and so they left it. About six months later, X's sister saw the teacher (for other reasons). The teacher said to X's sister,

I can't believe that you're Chamar because you're not dark skinned.

X said the issue was not that the teacher knew the child's caste, but that he should not be asking about it at all.

X did not believe anything would have happened even if it had been taken up.

But if we went there to the head and said, there was a remark made about my skin, my colour or my religion maybe then, yes, the alarm bells would be ringing. But this problem, it does exist, it does, it does affect our children's run up to education

Account of caste discrimination experiences: work

4) Recently at work, X came across a business customer whom he had met elsewhere. Previously, the man, a *Jatt* Sikh in his 50s, had questioned him about his background (and found they came from the same village). The man now asked a white manager about X's religion. She said he was a Buddhist. The man was surprised, saying he acted like a *Jatt*. The manager did not understand any of this, until X explained. The manager then said to X, '*Is it true you are from a lower caste because your people make shoes?*'. She did not realise this could upset or offend X.

And I said, well, you can believe what you want. You can believe what you want. And she was like, oh, have I said something wrong? I said, no, nothing at all. But really I was thinking, I just didn't really want to go through the rigmarole of explaining and this and, you know, I just couldn't be bothered with it, but that is still happening in the workplace.

X continued to see this customer (who tried to curry favour with X, as he was in a powerful position). X tried to explain why the man's behaviour was offensive:

Yeah, the tone and the expression on the face. It's, when, in all the cases when the people say it, they all, they take a step back. They take step back as if you're filth or you're dirt. That's how they make you feel.

Case study 20

Background

X is a British-born *Valmiki*. He works for a large company with a mixed workforce. X's alleged caste discrimination relates to elections to the chair of his workplace Social Club, seven and three years ago.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

Seven years ago, X stood for Chair of his workplace Social Club, against a Sikh. He had been on the committee for several years. His friends, who were mostly young *Jatt* Sikhs, told him that older *Jatt* Sikhs were saying not to vote for him because he was low caste. (This included people who were friends of other family members.) He heard them calling him '*Chamar*' and saying '*We don't want the Chura*', although a *Jatt* Sikh defended him. He reported this to his employers, who put up posters against racism saying that racism was a disciplinary offence. The younger *Jatts* and others supported him and he was elected. The same thing happened when he stood again three years ago.

Everyone continues to talk to each other, but the older Sikhs are not as friendly as before.

He found the experience very stressful and it made him feel bad: they were all Asians, they used to be friendly and had eaten together. He now stays out of older *Jatt* Sikhs' way. His friends (*Jatt* Sikhs) gave him a lot of help. '*If you don't have friends, it must be really bad, [you'd] feel you were doing something wrong.*'

The only other discrimination he had experienced was in pubs, with *Jatt* Sikhs taunting lower caste Indians or talking loudly about *Jatts* and *Chamars*. When this happens, his friends who are also *Jatt* Sikhs and he leave, to avoid trouble.

Case study 21

Background

X is in her late 30s and has two daughters aged six and 11. She is Sikh and was born in the UK. She described alleged discrimination relating to her daughter, which occurred in the last six years and relating to her job, which she held between 1997 and 2008.

Account of caste discrimination experiences: education

X's daughter had experienced caste discrimination at her school. A boy in her class in the school had asked her about her caste and she had responded that caste did not exist amongst Sikhs and the boy had told her to 'go home and ask her father about it', as, for him, caste did exist. Following on from that, this boy had made derogatory, upsetting remarks towards her.

X contacted the school about the boy's remarks. The school met with both children to mediate and resolve the incident. Whilst X was relatively satisfied with the school's approach, she was alarmed that her daughter's generation were also subject to caste discrimination and contrasted the subtle reaction of the school with the approach they may have taken were it a racist incident between a black and a white person, for example.

Account of caste discrimination experiences: work

X worked until recently as a team manager in a bank. She had been asked by Asian colleagues quite early on what her caste was. She felt that caste was irrelevant (especially for Sikhs), an attempt to categorise people, and assign a negative label. She resented being asked this question as it clearly marked out someone who saw caste as relevant and therefore likely to be judgemental, discriminating and hold negative beliefs towards her 'lower' caste. She found it quite challenging to be around people who held these beliefs and thought that caste prejudice is commonplace in society and also at her workplace.

The prejudice she experienced at work was upsetting yet subtle. She had someone 'joke' with her by calling her *Chamar*. The other person saw it as 'banter' and viewed her reaction as uptight and defensive. She had also heard people being rude about another colleague by calling them by negative caste terms behind their back, 'shoemaker' etc. On another occasion when a group of colleagues were discussing caste, one colleague mentioned that 'some people don't like to talk about it' in her company, that she felt was a pointed negative comment towards her attitude. Whilst there was a Sikh man in a more senior, managerial position in the company, no one above her level had made her feel discriminated against.

Overall, being around her caste-focused colleagues made her feel undermined as a manager and doubt her promotion prospects against others of a higher caste.

X did not let her employers know about how she felt about her colleagues and their attitudes towards caste; nor had any other employee to her knowledge. She described it as a 'whole can of worms' that she didn't want to try to explain to human resources or to her employers. She felt she had the minority view and it was hard to justify and explain her position against dominant thinking and much obfuscation. She mentioned that it was so commonplace she had even heard a BBC interviewee state that *Jatts* are 'better looking, better dancers, and better spoken'. As there was no legislation supporting her position, it was a struggle for her to have to justify herself in the face of others. To do so alone would result in alienation and potentially damaged prospects.

X said this made it a very uncomfortable environment for her and she said it may have made an indirect contribution to her decision to leave the company.

Case study 22

Background

X came to the UK 52 years ago when she was ten years old. She is a Buddhist. She has no caste, but in India her father was a shoemaker. The incident X describes happened in the last year.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X's mother used to go to a day centre. The clientele were predominantly Punjabi, Sikh *Jatt* ladies. X had noticed over the years that if a Sikh or a *Jatt* went to the centre they were made welcome, but that low caste people were not and were taunted.

Last year X was asked to be trustee of the day centre. She explained that she could only go to the centre infrequently, but this was accepted and she agreed. After an absence of three weeks, she went to the centre and, in front of everyone, nearly all of whom were Sikh, a Sikh woman aged 75 or more said they did not want her there. This was because she did not come frequently enough. The discussion deteriorated into an argument, with the woman saying *'Every time your mother comes round she says, "my children are educated and have good jobs"'*. Eventually she swore at X and said *'You Chamars coming here and trying to take over our centres. In India you're almost like beggars, but when you come here you think you know it all and you want to take over our centres'*. No-one else said anything. X got her to move to another room and X told her not to say these things. The woman claimed that X had shouted and sworn at her.

Her mother then had a lot of problems with this Sikh woman. The woman started picking on her mother. X spoke to a member of the management board, but their response was *'what can we do?'*. A couple of months ago her mother said to the woman that if she did not stop mentioning *Chamars* and *Valmiki*, she would be very upset with her, but the woman effectively said *'you cannot do anything'*. Her mother stopped going to the centre.

People knew her caste because she had lived in the area a long time and initially there were few Indians.

X's mother was upset by all this because, of all the people who had known her a long time, none supported her. Luckily her mother could go to another day centre but, if there had been no other, she would have been stuck at home. X did not let the discrimination affect her, but others would. It would make them feel low.

X does not feel discriminated against because of her caste. However, she described how caste abuse is used verbally and the words still hurt.

Comment

Access to a day centre is an area covered by the Act as a provision of a service. Owing to the language used, this case appears to show caste harassment³².

³² It is unclear whether the motive was caste or dislike of X's mother. However, under the Act, the motive is not relevant.

Case study 25

Background

X is in his early 30s. He came to the UK ten years ago from Gujarat. His caste is Dhobi (low caste). The alleged caste discrimination started in the last six months.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X works in a small mini-cab company as a driver. Most of the other employees are Asian. Colleagues are from various castes, including Lohanas (high caste), other Kshatriyas (high caste) and builders (caste status unclear).

At work things were fine, until a new manager came from India about six months ago. The manager was cold from the start. The manager threw his weight around, but X was not sure if this was because of caste or the way that Indians coming over from India into management positions behave (their position and money goes their heads; '*they get big heads*'). The manager, a Lohana, was a different caste from X. The manager knew X's caste straight away because they all talk to each other (and discuss it directly as well as indirectly). The previous manager had been a higher caste than X, but had been in Britain for 20 years and did not care about caste, just if you did your job. He allocated work in order.

X stopped getting any of the good jobs (e.g. airport runs) and work during his preferred hours; instead the Lohana colleagues got them. Others were treated badly (two white men and some other Asians and others, including an Arabic-speaking Muslim). The Asians who did not like it left.

X did not question his treatment because he feared losing his job. Instead he spoke about it a lot at home. He was angry a lot, in bad moods and his family suffered. His friends (white British and Asian) tried to give him advice and tell him his rights, but he felt he did not know his rights.

He also stopped chatting with colleagues, because he started to feel it led to trouble.

[They] have to change because if they stick with me and become my friends then they are not the Manager's friends so the Manager will give them bad jobs isn't it so you have to be nice to your Manager.

At work, they make jokes, some of which he does not understand because they are in Hindi and other languages he does not speak:

I think the jokes about me because you walk in "Ha ha ha ha ha". What do you want me to think? If I walk, if you were all in the room and you walked past me and everyone starts laughing after something's said and you don't understand everything but you understand few words, what are you going to think? And what am I going to do? Tell them off or go and say "Forget it, let them laugh at me, read my newspaper". When I get a job I go to work. I don't see them in my, after work. I'm only there for my office time; I'll

only see them when I'm in the staff room. When I'm working I don't see them. What do you want me to do?

The manager also made 'jokes':

"Go wash some floors. What are you driving cars for? You're a professional clothes washer, go and wash clothes". Staff have said it and I've said "You're katchi. Go and build some brick walls then"... Sometimes it's humour. It's up to an individual. You can take it personally. I could have taken that very personally ...[which I did] at first but the jokes weren't like that at first. It was so... They wouldn't come out straight. They were a bit more, you know, the Manager's not giving you jobs. You're not popular, where are you from in India" "Oh I'm from a small village or I'm from Mumbai or I'm from... so, you know. For me to imagine what Mumbai looks like compared to my village, they can't even imagine my village probably. My village maybe has 100 people living in mud houses. It's true. We don't have electricity at night when I left. Mumbai's bright lights, Bollywood. All the pretty girls.'

A few of his friends from work had left because they could not cope with the unfair treatment; they would argue. These were a different caste from X: one was a Muslim and spoke Arabic. X said:

'I don't have time in my life to have arguments with people. If I argue with everybody all I will do is fight, not have a job. I hate fighting so stay quiet. Listen to it... at first I was arguing, I was making a lot of arguments and, but you can't win. Majority, I don't know about the laws of, I can, somebody can sue for racial discrimination and take sick leave and you know you're mentally stressed because at first I was so mentally stressed. I didn't want to go to work because everyone's against you.'

He did not believe the treatment of all the staff was wholly about caste (e.g. the treatment of the Muslim): he thought that it was about the manager being self-important, but he did believe caste played a part because the Lohana got the better jobs.

Comment

It is not entirely clear whether this was unfair treatment because of caste. X seemed quite keen to downplay caste, but at the same time he did raise it as caste discrimination. The 'jokes' were caste-related.

Case study 27**Background**

X is in his mid-40s. He was born in Britain and his family come from the Punjab. He is a *Valmiki*. The alleged discrimination occurred in 2008

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X is a professional working in an international company with an ethnically mixed workforce. Two years ago he started working with a new project manager, newly transferred from India. She was in her late 20s from Rajasthan and high caste. In a coffee break, they were chatting. Being Asian, you chat about *'sport and work and everything else and your background. I am proud of where my family come from and my culture and my God'*. So he talked about this. She made a derogatory remark about the *Valmiki* guru 'the thief'. They then argued about his religion, during which she said *'You're the untouchable community'*. The white British people listening did not understand what was going on. X was offended by what she said. She was talking loudly and then explained to others that X was untouchable. The new project manager spoke to her mother in India, who confirmed what X had said about his religion and told her good things about it.

The incident made X feel small in front of his colleagues. He told his boss he did not want to work with her. His boss, he felt, understood somewhat. He was fine and they have not worked together again. Otherwise he only told his wife about this. It preyed on his mind for a week or two.

He gets on fine with Sikhs and Hindus at work (and did in his previous job). He goes to Sikh temples for weddings. He described his town as being very mixed: Sikh, Jain, *Ravidassia*, Christian and that people invite each other to their temples and festivals.

He has not encountered any other incidents, although he said his son had been called *Chura* at school. He had not experienced anything at school.

Comment

This episode starts with religion but moves into caste when the colleague refers to X as 'untouchable' and then discusses this with other colleagues.

Case study 28

Background

X was born and brought up in Delhi. She was 16 when she came to Britain. Her parents are from the Punjab, with a Sikh background (her father wears a turban) but, like her, are Radhasoami (a faith that rejects caste). They did not go to temples. Her parents had good jobs and were very westernised. Until she came to England, she did not know what caste was. She is a *Chamar*. The alleged discrimination and harassment occurred over the last four years.

Account of caste discrimination experiences: education

About two years ago, X's son wanted to learn Punjabi and she suggested that he went to classes in the *Gurdwara* (opposite their house). The *Gurdwara* knew their caste.

'He came back really angry. He was, he's 21 now so he must have been I think 19 or 20, yeah. He was really angry, he says, Mum, he says, why do people go there? He says, they don't welcome you in, they don't talk to you. And I said, well they say hello to everyone else. He says, they were really rude to me, I walked in there I said I want to learn Punjabi. They said, oh, go and find chap on the internet or go and find some school or something, they weren't very helpful at all. And obviously I was really, really angry as well with that because I thought, OK, at least they could have said, OK, well we don't do it here or whatever. But I know for a fact that they do, do it there.'

He said it could either be because they saw someone young, a teenager, but he's very tall anyway, so he thought maybe it was to do with that, right OK. But, or he said, maybe it's to do with the caste, he said, I don't know. But he says, why couldn't they, regardless of who I was, talk to me nicely? And I said, maybe it's just the way they are, it could be nothing, it could be just that's it, they only talk to people they know.'

She did nothing about it.

'There's no point getting involved in all that and also I knew my son wants to, I said he wanted to learn and then a couple of weeks later it would be just over, finished, so it wouldn't be anything.'

X's son has never been back to the *Gurdwara*.

Comment

Access to a course is covered by the Act. However, the evidence that the treatment was because of caste is not strong.

Account of caste discrimination experiences: other

Four years ago, X moved from London to a city with a closely linked Asian community (unlike her experience in London). She felt the Asians were very

set in the past (treated women as second class), but were also very friendly and welcoming. She felt they assumed that she was high caste (because they had good jobs, money and were very Westernised). These were Sikhs and Hindus, mainly Punjabis.

1) She started to question their assumption of her caste and they then started to back off. At the same time, she described having a lot to do with the Asian community, but that she was often questioned about things which would identify her caste (where she worshiped, where her family was from) or others asked about her caste. She said that in this town, people often state they are *Jatt*.

Although she would not necessarily answer questions and would ask why they wanted to know, she also could be fairly upfront against caste discrimination. A British born *Jatt* Sikh in his forties had asked her about the *Gurdwara* she went to and the one she had gone to in London. After saying she went to lots of different ones:

And he said, oh, don't go to that one, only the lower class people go there. [He then said, there's] a tiny one here, he says, the Chamars go to that. And I said, is there one? I said, I want to go.

But he also said that he had had *Langarí* in a low caste temple and it was tasty and his mother said that means there is a lot of love there.

So he says, I suppose it doesn't really make a difference but, he says, just go to this one because I go to that one and only decent people come to this one.

2) Her son's photo appeared in the paper and gave a *Chamar* surname (not her husband's, which was Sikh). When some people mentioned this, (*'not implying it was obvious, it was straight out like you're lower caste, you know'*), her husband said to both quite rudely but also laughingly *'yeah, we're Chamar, what are you going to do?'*

Other kids ask her kids about their caste:

My kids are like, they're not ashamed of it they'll come straight out and say, OK, we're Chamars.

People ask directly or they ask about the *Gurdwara* or where the family comes from.

3) After her father, who was visiting, had spent a lot of time at the *Gurdwara* opposite, the Sikhs said they wanted to buy her house. She and her father believe it was to stop *Chamars* from spending so much time in their Sikh *Jatt Gurdwara*.

5) Then children started playing football outside her house, hitting her windows, knocking on the door and running away; dancing Bhangra in the street; they were ten and 11 year olds. She thought they were being left at the *Gurdwara* while their parents worked. They felt very harassed (in part because she worked shifts and so could not sleep). She spoke to the *Gurdwara* (not saying anything about caste), but nothing happened. She complained to her MP (she said it was because of caste) and then to the police (she did not mention caste). She felt bullied and she believed this was

happening because they wanted her to move away. The police did speak to them and it has stopped.

I do feel that the behaviour has changed. It might be to do with because I complained or it might be to do with because I was saying that, don't let your kids do that because of the health and safety. But it could also be to do with the fact that by now they know that we are Chamars and that's it. And then why should a Chamar be in a higher position and why should a Chamar be working, having a good job? So things like that.

Case study 29

Background

X is 23. She was born in Britain and is a convert from Sikhism to Christianity. She experienced long-term bullying at school, which she believes was because of her caste. The alleged caste-based bullying occurred between 1998 and 2002.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

When she was 11, her family moved towns and she started secondary school. She had little knowledge of caste and it had not been an issue in her previous home. Both her previous and new homes were in areas with a high Asian population. She described the her new town as having many gangs (including Sikh and Muslim) and that if you did not fit in, they 'looked down on you'.

Everything was fine for a year. She had Sikh (and Muslim and white British) friends. She was asked her caste by her Sikh friends and they could not believe she did not know. (Much later she learnt that these questions were prompted by their parents.) This meant that she was not one of them: '*she's not Jatt, she's not one of us*'. Then in a lesson on religion, everyone was asked their religion. They thought it strange she was Christian and seemed to see it as an insult to their religion that she had converted. It started with caste, then moved on to religion. These were intertwined.

'There was a lot of Asian community within the school and obviously, being an Asian myself that converted from Sikhism to Christianity was something that they couldn't digest, so they picked on my caste as well as my religion a lot, but they were from a higher caste and they'd look down at us and say, "Well, you've given up Sikhism and you've got into Christianity."'

The bullying was primarily by a Sikh *Jatt* gang of girls. They called her names (including 'white girl' because she was a Christian) and made comments. Her friends (Sikh, Muslim and white British) walked away from her and supported the majority. She had people threatening her outside her home and older siblings got involved (and then picked on her sisters).

They made her 'life hell' for four years. She spent a lot of time with her year head, not in the classroom. She was not attending lessons. She felt the school handled it badly and that the perpetrators were the ones who should have been taken out of the class, not her – or got them to address the issue.

She kept it to herself, but eventually her parents found out and they asked the school to do something and said that if they did not, they would handle it their own way. This led to further intimidation. When she was 13 or 14, a member of a gang, in his 30s, came to her house when she was alone. He was threatening her and had a cricket bat. She called the police. Neither of her neighbours (one white British, the other Muslim) wanted to get involved and so the police dropped it.

The bullying eventually stopped after she started to ignore it. *'I decided to just shut myself off and not, not extend it by arguing back or talking to them, and just keep my distance.'* Later, a couple apologised for their behaviour. She reported that one of her mother's friends had a similar experience and became very depressed.

Comment

It is difficult to tell whether this was caste or religious-based harassment, although caste was certainly used to bully X. Had race been used in the same way, it seems likely that the issue would have been better handled.

Case study 30***Background***

X is 31 years old and was born and brought up in West London (Southall). His parents are from the Punjab and emigrated to the UK in the 1960s. He is a *Chamar*. X calls himself a Sikh and says that, if he had to be more specific, he would describe himself as a *Ravidassia* Sikh.

Account of caste discrimination experiences

X described his application for his son to attend a Punjabi Sikh school in Southall. X's wife was keen for his son to go to the school so that he could learn about Punjabi culture and history. The school was a Guru Nanak Khalsa school. When they completed the application form, X noticed that it asked which temple was attended by the family. X wondered why the school should need to know but recorded their temple as *Ravidassia*. The child was refused a place. No explanation was given and X and his wife did not ask for one. They concluded it was because they attended a *Ravidassia* temple. X did not know whether the school was linked to any particular temple. He also found out later that the majority of children there are from higher castes, *Jatt* or *Tarkhans*, which confirmed his view that discrimination had taken place.

Comment

X's son may have been refused a place at the Sikh school because of caste discrimination. However, further information would be needed to establish this.

Appendix 3: Discussion Guide

The questions were adapted from the following guide depending on the nature of the alleged discrimination.

| Section | Discussion Points |
|---|--|
| <p><u>1. Introduction</u></p> <p>5 minutes</p> <p>Introduce them to the Ipsos MORI and explain why they have been asked to participate in a depth interview.</p> | <p><u>1. INTRODUCTION</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank for taking part. • Introduce self, Ipsos MORI • Research is about understanding issues of caste discrimination • Speaking to a wide range of people. • All opinions are valid, no right or wrong answers, just want to hear about your experiences and what you think. • Assure confidentiality. MRS Code of Conduct. All responses will be anonymised. • If respondent not comfortable with any topic, can move on to next part. <p><i>(Note: While respondent maybe uncomfortable during certain parts of the conversation, please try and get as much detail as possible, and come back to the sections which need more clarification.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask permission to audio record the discussion; explain this is for the purpose of analysis later on. <p>To start off, please tell me a bit about yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name? What do you do? • Where do you live currently? How long have you lived here? |
| <p><u>2. Understanding experience of discrimination</u></p> <p>35 minutes</p> | <p><u>2. UNDERSTANDING EXPERIENCE OF DISCRIMINATION</u></p> <p>As you know, we got your contact details through an organisation working on caste discrimination related issues/ or NIESR. I now want to discuss your experience.</p> <p>When did this happen?</p> <p>Where was this? Place of work? Education?</p> <p><i>Note: Please confirm that this incident occurred in the UK.</i></p> <p>Can you describe this place to me?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the company/organisation do? • How many people worked (change as relevant) there? • What about management? • Was it Indian (other South Asian) owned? <p>Can you tell me what exactly happened?</p> <p><i>Note: Please probe for the following details as appropriate. Please note that these questions are vital, and that you may need to bring the participant back to these questions to ensure they are answered in as much detail as possible.</i></p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why they think it is caste discrimination?</i> • <i>What was the caste of the people discriminating against them?</i> • <i>How other employees (or applicants/ as the case maybe) were treated – both of their own caste, and of other castes.</i> • <i>If there could be other reasons why they were treated in that way.</i> <p><i>(NOTE – Let participant tell his or her story, interrupt only if details are unclear)</i></p> <p>What would you say your caste is?</p> <p>Who would you say was the person who discriminated against you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think their caste was? • What else can you tell me about them? (PROBE – Caste? Age? British born? Immigrants? What region in the country of origin?) • Were there other people involved? • What else can you tell me about them? (PROBE – Caste? Age? British born? Immigrants? What region in the country of origin?) <p>How did it all start?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often has this happened? • If relevant – How long did it go on for? • How did it manifest? (PROBE – Verbal? More subtle? How?) • What was your job?/ What job were you applying for? • How long had you worked their before there were problems? <p>How do you think they know what caste you were?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When do you think they found out? • Did their behaviour change immediately after that or after a while? How long? How? <p>What made you think it was because of caste? (PROBE – Obvious references? Other clues?)</p> <p>How other employees (or applicants) were treated – both those of the same caste as you and those of other castes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there other people of your caste in the same position? Were they treated in the same way as you? • Were they other people of a different caste (or no caste) in the same position? Were they treated in a different way than you? why? • What caste were they? (or whether English/ Other Ethnicity); were these people relatives, friends, go to the same temple etc. as the person doing this to you • Can you think of other reasons this might have happened? PROBE: Because they favour/treat family better? Because they favour/treat friends better (what caste are these?) Racism? Sexism? • how well qualified and experienced were those who were better treated compared with you? How would you compare them to yourself? |
|--|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you feel about this? <p>Were some people treated better or differently than you were?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who? Why do you think this was? (PROBE – Caste? Family connections?) • How were they treated differently? (PROBE – Promotions, Opportunities, Recruitment?) |
| <p><u>3. Taking Action</u> 10 minutes</p> | <p><u>3. TAKING ACTION</u></p> <p>At place of discrimination, did you talk to anyone about what happened? (Why not?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who? What did they say? Probe: Who else? What about the manager, colleagues, the union.... • What did they say? • Did they think it was caste discrimination? • Was any action taken? What? Why/ Why not? <p>Did you talk to someone outside the workplace about it? Why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who? Why did you choose to talk to them? Probe: Who else? Why? • What did they say? • Did they think it was caste discrimination? • Was any action taken? What? Why/ Why not? • Did anyone offer any assistance in resolving the issue? <p>IF others in the workplace also faced discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did they take any action? Why/ Why not? • What action? Did it have any impact? Why/ Why not? <p>Did this affect your experience in anyway?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (PROBE – Stop it? Make it better? Make it worse? More subtle?) • If it affected your experience – what did you decide to do about it? (PROBE – Complain to someone else? Move to a different workplace? Moved to a different facility? Avoid the situation? Campaigning?) • |
| <p><u>4. Effects</u> <u>15minutes</u></p> | <p>What was the outcome of all this?</p> <p>FOR JOBS,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost job, did not get the job/promotion, changed jobs, left (or if sorted, got job etc.) • Worse work? Workplace environment? Workload? <p>Have there been longer term effects?</p> <p>FOR JOBS,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment (how long), stuck in poor job, stopped working? Got better job <p>How did this discrimination make you feel? PROBE sensitively: Stressed? Angry? Worthless?</p> <p>Has it affected you in other ways? PROBE sensitively: Depression? Avoid similar</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>situations? Stay in own community? Avoid certain castes? Which ones? Don't go out as much? Joined campaigning group?</p> <p>Were you aware of caste discrimination before this event? When did you first start to think about it? Why?</p> <p>How do you think this discrimination has affected your thoughts on caste?</p> <p>Do you think this type of discrimination has an effect on your community? In what way?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you see as your community (same caste, same religion, Indians, local population (caste, religious, ethnic composition?)) <p>Do you think it has an effect on Indians in Britain generally? In what way?</p> |
| <u>IF TIME</u> | Had you been discriminated before this incident on the basis of your caste? Where was this? When? What happened? (PROBE further if in the UK) |
| <p><u>5. Administer Questionnaire</u></p> <p>5 mins</p> | <p>Moderator to administer questionnaire that captures demographic details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age - Sex - Religion - Caste - Ethnic group - Place of Birth (If Indian sub-continent region (and country) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o IF not born in India, where is your family originally from in the sub-continent (country and region)? (Also pick up if settled elsewhere prior to UK) - Residence in Britain (from birth or otherwise) <p>GET Permission to recontact (including by NIESR) for clarification.</p> |

Appendix 4: Freefind recruitment questionnaire

1. Have you faced discrimination on any of the following grounds?

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Age | 1 | |
| Gender | 2 | THANK AND CLOSE |
| Ethnicity | 3 | |
| Disability | 4 | |
| Caste | 5 | RECORD AND PROCEED |
| Others/ Don't know/ Can't say | 6 | THANK AND CLOSE |

2. In which country did you face this discrimination?

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--------------------|
| UK | 1 | RECORD AND PROCEED |
| Other countries | 2 | THANK AND CLOSE |

3. Did this discrimination occur in the last five years?

| | | |
|-----|---|--------------------|
| Yes | 1 | RECORD AND PROCEED |
| No | 2 | THANK AND CLOSE |

4. Where did you experience this discrimination?

| | | |
|--|----|-----------------------|
| Employment/ Work/ Job Opportunities | 1 | |
| Health (e.g. Doctors, Nurses, Hospital) | 2 | |
| Care (e.g. care home, day care centre, home helps) | 3 | |
| Services e.g. jobcentre, council, library | 4 | |
| Buying things, e.g. shops, bus, train, cinema | 5 | RECORD AND PROCEED |
| Education (school, college, university, training) | 6 | |
| Housing | 7 | |
| Community centres, social centres | 8 | |
| Worship, Access to temple | 9 | |
| Violence or Harassment | 10 | |
| Marriage | 11 | THANK AND CLOSE |
| Others (record details) | 12 | REFER TO INSTRUCTIONS |

Bibliography

- ACDA (2009) *Hidden Apartheid – Voice of the Community*. Derby: ACDA.
- Ahmad, W. and Evergeti, V. (2010) The making and representation of Muslim identity in Britain: conversations with British Muslim 'elites', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1466-4356.
- Anwar, M. (1995) 'Social networks of Pakistanis in the UK: A Re-evaluation' in Rodgers, A. and Vertovec, S. eds. *The urban context: ethnicity, social networks and situational analysis*. Oxford: Berg.
- Aspden, J. and Birch, D. (2005) *New Localism - Citizen Engagement, Neighbourhoods and Public Services: Evidence*. London: ODPM.
- Baily, J. (2006) 'Music Is In Our Blood: Gujarati Muslim Musicians in the UK', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Volume 32, No. 2, March 2006
- Ballard, R. 1994. *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain*, London: Hurst and Co.
<http://www.casas.org.uk/papers/pdfpapers/deshpardesh.pdf>
- Beckford, J., Gale, R., Owen, D., Peach, C. and Weller, P. (2006) *Review of the Evidence Base on Faith Communities*. London: ODPM.
- Blakey, H., Pearce, J. and Chesters, G. (2006) *Minorities within minorities Beneath the surface of South Asian participation*. York: The Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- C3Consulting (2000) *Strategies for the recruitment as fire fighters of women and people of an ethnic minority background for West Yorkshire Fire Service*. Report of research for the Home Office. Published as Fire Research and Development Group Report 2/2000.
- Chahal, C. (undated – 2008 or later) *The Evil of Caste. The Caste System as the Largest Systemic Violation of Human Rights in Today's World*. London: The Federation of Ambedkarite and Buddhist Organisations UK (FABO UK).
- Change Institute (2009) *The Egyptian Muslim Community in England: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*. London: DCLG.
- Change Institute (2009) *The Indian Muslim Community in England: Understanding Muslim Ethnic Communities*. London: DCLG.
- Dalit Solidarity Network (2006) *No Escape: Caste Discrimination in the UK*. London: Dalit Solidarity Network UK.
- DCLG (2006) *State of the English Cities: Thematic Reports*. London: DCLG.
- DCLG (2007) *Discrimination Law Review A Framework for Fairness: Proposals for a Single Equality Bill for Great Britain*. London: DCLG.
- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Act 2010: Explanatory notes

- Goodwin & Cramer (1997) *Social support & marital well-being*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Hindu Forum of Britain (2008) *Caste in the UK*
- HMG (2008) *The Equality Bill – Government response to the Consultation*. Cm 7454, July 2008. London: House of Commons.
- Kennedy, D. (2010) 'Forbidden love: no redress for couples divided by caste' *The Times*, Monday July 5.
- Michael, L. (2004) *Leadership in Transition? Issues of Representation and Youth in British Muslim Communities*, ESRC/ODPM Postgraduate Research Programme, Working Paper 12. London: ESRC/ODPM.
- Nesbitt, E. (1991) 'My dad's Hindu, my mum's Sikh.'
- Patel, C. (2010) 'Caste within the Single Equality Bill 2010 - Updated!' National Hindu Students Forum
http://www.nhsf.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=717&Itemid=139
- Runnymede Trust () *Connecting British Hindus. An enquiry into the identity and public engagement of Hindus in Britain*
- Scottish Government (2006) *Analysis of Ethnicity in the 2001 Census - Summary Report*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- Sharma, R. (2008) *The Caste System*. Hindu Council UK.
- Turok, I. Kearns, A., Fitch, D., Flint, J., McKenzie, C. and Abbotts, J. (2006) *State of the English Cities: Social Cohesion*. London: DCLG.
- Waghray, A. (2009) Caste Discrimination: A Twenty-First Century Challenge for UK Discrimination Law? *The Modern Law Review*
- Wilks-Heeg (2008) *Purity of Elections in the UK*. York: Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust.