

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL BOYCOTTS IN GUJARAT

A Working Paper

by
Dr. Rajesh Lakum



Human Development and Research Centre (HDRC)

Ahmedabad

2022





Forward

The Human Development and Research Centre (HDRC) has been a pioneer amongst the right-based research organisation in India, especially Gujarat, to focus on the development concerns of marginal sections and socially excluded communities. Over the last forty years, we have carried out several studies understanding different aspects of human development and strengthening the struggle for social justice. We have stood against human rights violations and supported marginalised social groups such as Dalits, tribals, other Backward Classes (OBCs), religious minorities, women and children in Indian society. HDRC exists to promote and strengthen the community-based organisations (CBOs). We want to help create movements on behalf of the marginalised, discriminated, excluded communities, to achieve social justice and dignity within the human rights framework and democratic mechanisms of the Indian Constitution.

The working paper, “Understanding Social Boycotts in Gujarat” critically examines the validity of social exclusion as an exercise, in the context of social discrimination and boycott against Dalits. It is a barrier against the accession of water, denial of daily necessities, supply and services. Generally, the social boycott is utilised against Dalits by the dominant upper caste group to re-ensure their hegemony. A social boycott is a form of socio-cultural and economic punishment that is imposed on individuals or groups. Thus, the study attempts to understand the phenomena of social boycotts and their consequences. This study is conducted with the multi-disciplinary approach, through analysis. This analysis is based on psychological, emotional, economic, and physiological impacts due to social boycotts on the marginalised communities in India.

We hope that this Working Paper helps in generating awareness across board, amongst academics, students, activists, civil society organisations (CSO), and policy-making bodies.

Alice Morris

Director



Acknowledgement

This working paper would have been incomplete without the help and support of many people to whom we want to express our gratitude. We are thankful to the Director of Human Development and Research Centre, Alice Morris, who created a space for research at the institute. Without this, it would have been impossible to initiate such a vast study. We are also thankful to the HDRC Secretary, Fr. Isaac Rumao SJ, and former Secretary Dr. Jimmy Dabhi SJ.

This Working Paper was compiled under the guidance of Arif Mirza and Mukesh Lakum. We wish to acknowledge the contribution made by all the field respondents. HDRC wishes to express our gratitude to them for sharing their experiences with us, enabling us to get a glimpse of what they have been through as socially boycotted people. We are thankful to Ami Dodiya, Bogha Rathod, Kaushik Parmar, and Bhimji Bagda for the field support they extended. This work would not have been possible without extensive assistance from the research team, Arif Mirza, Rashmika Dabhi, and Mukti Barot. We are also thankful to Vasudev Charupa, Preeti Vaghela, and Hitendra Rathod.

Dr. Rajesh Lakum
Research Associate