

CASTE & GENDER INTERSECTIONS

Struggles of the Most Marginalized

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I am most grateful to the Dalit community people from villages of different states, introducing me their condition, plights, specifically of Dalit women and ultimately resulting in a study that will hopefully bright light to the dilemma of this community. The present work is highlighted the harsh reality of suppression, struggle and violation, that Dalit women face every day of their miserable lives due to caste. The collective forces of caste, patriarchy, and feudalism have made their lives miserable. An overwhelming majority of them lives under the most miserable conditions, in which they are discriminated for their basic living things. Thus an attempt to make documented the field work/ observations, analysis of the position of Dalit women in caste - based society that persists different corners of the states of India. This work gives us an accurate picture of caste and gender intersection further come out with the dynamics of discrimination in every sphere and unleash a barbarous range of violence against Dalit women. I decided to bring up the issues of caste and gender because it is not possible that one can talk about gender justice without looking at the structure of caste. How can gender justice be achieved when millions of women remain under the trap of deep - rooted caste system?

This work is also inspired by my research study from Delhi University.

I give my deep gratitude towards National Commission for Women, where I worked for rights of women and for women of most marginalized.

I would like to thank my friends and family members their unconditional support give strength to me to complete this work.

Hemlata Kheria

INTRODUCTION

In this work, my intent is to explore the relationship between caste and gender and how caste and gender together influences on women's life. Gender has joined with caste oppression in several ways to create the specific situation of women's life. In this regard, the purpose of this study is how caste ideology affects the life of lower caste women. As well as specifically focuses on the condition of these women who have been severely oppressed throughout centuries because they are stand at the lower rung of caste hierarchy it is therefore essential to understand the influence of this caste tradition as they have caused lower caste women to suffer from different forms of oppression. Hence my purpose to addressed caste attitudes towards lower caste women and how caste maintained through gender and patriarchy. In fact this study presents important insight in to the economic and social status of lower caste women and many other significant issues like discrimination not only by economic or gender but associated with caste and untouchability, further, which results the denial of their social, economic, cultural rights that continue to be central to lives of lower caste women everywhere to day.

Also this study observed that, despite constitutional guarantees millions of lower caste women in India still suffer from sub human conditions, indulge in degrading works, and constantly excluded from mainstream of society and subjected to torture and treated very low and polluted. As well as they are continually sufferer of caste violence that is a result of gender relations whom assumes patriarchy to be superior to them (women). Hence, the caste-based society provides gap in between the position and roles that accorded to lower caste women (to describes their social status in caste society) ones give by constitution and law and another imposed by caste culture. In this regard, my study deals with very important issues of violating human dignity known as 'Manual Scavenging', which is widely prevalent in the country as being ignored, accepted and encouraged. I want to discuss here is that, the Dalit (the term Dalit has rooted in Sanskrit where the root 'Dal' means to split, cracks, and open. Dalit has come to mean things or persons who are cut, split, broken, scattered or destroyed, in 1970, the Dalit Panther Movement of Maharashtra gave currency to the term 'Dalit' for their rights and self- respect. Later the term came to be used to include all the oppressed and exploited sections of society, Zelliott 1992, Louis 2003)

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women considered impure and low not only because they are positioned last and degrade in caste hierarchy but also they are indulging in most polluting tasks and the perceptions of their life and dignity is associated or measured by their work.

In addition, I want to highlight the reality of caste (with some observation) which, is still existing in our society affected the day to day lives of Dalit women with the struggle, exploitation, discrimination and exclusion in all sphere of life. They also face violence when they try to access rights and entitlements provided by the government.

Also, this study is a step to observe the deprivation and an exploration of the various forms of discrimination (socio- economic) of the Dalit women in caste society.

Traditionally Dalits were sufferer of all kinds of discrimination, their touch, sight and shadow would pollute upper caste so they were segregated and usually lived outside the main village in separate settlements. They were involved in most of the agricultural operations and worked for the caste patrons, women still worked in manual scavenging and washing dirty clothes in upper caste households. Also they are sufferer of untouchability practices, which is a concept related or associated to the degrading traditional task or caste work performed by Dalit women. Though their association with low task or low work activities considered them very polluted, as result, hence due to fear of this pollution and for the protection of purity upper caste people maintained distance from them and instructed to commonly segregated or separated from the life of the lower caste society. Moreover, caste society creates very much strict prohibition on marriage and other social interaction between Dalits and upper caste. Upper caste violates the rights of Dalit to marry and choose their spouse. Inter caste marriages are frequently brutally punished by acts of public lynching, murder, rape, beating, community punishment and other sanctions against the couple and their family or relatives. Therefore, crime against Dalit (women) through the lens of upper caste is quite normal.

These women affected all kinds of social and economic oppressions. Mainly employed in unorganized sectors. They are treated very harshly by upper caste men and women also their own menfolk. Their contribution in all spheres has never been recognized. In fact, it was an increase in tendency in the case of violence against Dalit women. They were not

allowed to own land and in fact, they totally depend in all spheres of the living things at the mercy of villagers for shelter and livelihood. The basic problems of these women are illiteracy and low income they are socially humiliated and economically deprived stand in below poverty line most of them are worked in field. Also, they were denied wage paid employment in agriculture and in one-third of the villages they were excluded from construction labour on the grounds that upper caste community members did not want Dalits to pollute their homes, this is all about untouchability (Shah et al., 2006). Through untouchability many inhuman brutality against Dalits is showed in society. Whereas caste based discrimination and atrocity against Dalits are increased all over the country the National Crime Record Bureau, reported crime against Dalits rose to 47,064 in 2014 from 39,408 in 2013. In 2012 there were 33,655 crimes against Dalits, about the same as in 2011 from 32,712 in 2010. In 2014-15, 15-5% of the crime rate rise in registered. In 2015, 54,355 cases of crimes against Dalits were registered. Kidnapping and abduction also went up in these years, 755 kidnapping/abductions in 2014, there were 628 in 2013, 490 in 2012, 616 in 2011, 511 in 2010. Statistics show that 2,233 Dalit women were raped in 2014, up from 2,073 in 2013, 1,576 in 2012, 1,557 in 2011, and 1,349 in 2010 (National Crime Record Bureau 2015). According to a 2010 report by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the prevention of atrocities against scheduled castes, a crime is committed against a Dalit every 18 minutes. Every day, on average, three Dalit women are raped, two Dalits murdered, and two Dalit houses are burnt. The data also shows that Dalits are prevented from entering the police station in 28 percent of Indian villages. Dalit children have been made to sit separately while eating in 37 percent government schools. And they are denied access to water sources in 48 percent of villages because untouchability remains a stark reality (Indiatoday 2016). The incidents of atrocities against Dalits are increasing despite having laws for safeguarding. The protection of civil right Act, 1955, and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, prescribe punishments from crimes against Dalits that are much more stringent than corresponding offences under the IPC. In December 2015, the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, passed by Parliament, made several critical changes. New activities were added to the list of offences. Among them were preventing SCs/STs from using common property resources, from entering any places of public worship, and from entering an education or health institution. In case of any violation, the

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new law said that the courts would presume unless proved otherwise that the accused non- SC/ST person was aware of the caste or tribal identity of the victim. After all of this, the violent attempts against Dalits were increased over the years because caste is more a social problem not law and order problem (Indiatoday 2016). The more sufferers are Dalit women who face tremendous pressure of caste violence. They are harassed, brutally killed, raped by upper caste people. Even boycotted, terrorizing, paraded naked on streets, beating or their houses were burnt etc., these cases indicated that the violence and attack on Dalit women are so violent that lower caste people always live in constant fear and insecurity. In villages, Dalit women have been punished for taking up education, dressing in clean/good clothes, taking up jobs in traditional setups, claiming higher wages, or claiming for their rights to land or many times refusing to sell it. "The upper caste cannot tolerate Dalits for no reason, any social activities of Dalits like marriages, temple festivals, funeral proceedings or assuming self respect and dignity cannot go smoothly without violence and Dalits killings" (Khanna 2010: 88). This perception is still exists in present society. Dalit women have been publicly shamed paraded naked or raped by dominant caste land- owners to punish not only Dalit women but Dalit men and the Dalit community also (Kannabiran and Kannabiran 2003). Often women are seen, as a symbol of prestige and honour of community and this is also fact for the Dalit community. Therefore violating the honour of Dalit women considered or direct signals the powerlessness of the Dalits to protect their womenfolk. In other words insult of Dalit women means all community insulted. Moreover, Dalit women's assertion would not tolerate by upper caste and always ready to suppress them and their voice at all costs. Hence these types of practices introduce a major challenge for the right to life with dignity and empowerment of Dalit women, who are not even able to speak about the atrocities or exploitation committed against them. All could be constructed as threat to the traditional hierarchical caste order. In this regard caste violence against Dalit women who are the most miserable on the scale of caste hierarchy and the scale of power and are subjected to different forms of exploitation in the hands of the upper caste man is considered normal behaviour and accepted by society. Also, violence against Dalit women related issues not taken seriously by the administration, as they are the last of the social economic and political ladder and these are the massive structural issue in the nation that show the poor/ marginalized still have no claims to

justice and security (Jaising 2014). This indicates how Dalit women struggle for dignity, equality and life with respect of threatening/ alarming of upper caste society. Further, any significant attempt is disturbing the traditional caste hierarchical balance has met with inhuman brutality (Teltumbde 2010).

It is a reality that 'caste society' always gives differentiate status to men and women. This status inequality is reinforced between men and women and the separations are very strongly present in (caste) patriarchal cultures. Patriarchy runs through all walks of life, and it has not weakened in the walk of development in contemporary India (Chakravarti 2003).

This separation also depicted in many religious texts. Such texts are frequently quoted as the spiritual basis for the legitimization of women's low status through the ages (Chakravarti 2003).

Hence, this study discusses that, for many centuries the caste system and its norms and traditions holding the lower caste (women) under tremendous subjugation to ensure continuity of hereditary caste services. Therefore, it is important to understand the caste practices, untouchability, caste discrimination and violence against lower caste women in corrected perspectives to find out their status in caste society. Though, caste is maintaining its own identity and differences, whereas the purity, honour, power of a caste is considered by the status of women in 'particular' caste society because women are seen as honour of the caste and community.

In this regard, the perspective of the study is turning in to how caste needs to be understood in a gendered structure. Because the important factors of gender relations are defined in division of labour, exclusion in all spheres (socio- economic), economic dependence of (lower caste) women, and controls of women's sexuality through violence. These gender roles do not allow (lower caste) women free choices and decisions. Therefore, here the consideration is how gender relations and patriarchy is maintained by caste norms.

I argued throughout in this study, however, caste does not perform alone, gender has joined in ways with caste oppression and subjugation to create the 'specific' situation of women particularly Dalit women's life. It has been the object of my study to understand and address the interaction of these two (caste and gender) structures, as they have

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caused Dalit women to suffer from a form of oppression that is frequently different from both upper caste women and Dalit men. Although this study observed the issues faced by Dalit women in caste society. Dalit women suffer from not only discrimination based on their gender but also caste identity and consequent economic deprivation.

The chapters of this book are as follows

Chapter One is focused on features of the caste system, different views of scholars on caste system and position of caste system in Indian society. It also presents the caste society, gives differential status/separation, these separations are very strongly present in caste norms and cultures. These so called caste norms introduced by the practice of untouchability, this practice along with patriarchy maintained the life of Dalit women without weakening and lessening in contemporary India.

Chapter Two is on gendering caste, it sketches the caste related customs and practices of untouchability in villages and towns in which Dalit women live with constant fear. Dalit women are subjected to triple discrimination and violence at the level of caste, class and gender. She faced multiple atrocities and is considered as the most miserable person on the scale of power and is subjected to different forms of exploitation in the hands of the upper caste society people. This chapter also deals with the male chauvinist power relations in caste society. As well as the position provided by caste tradition of Dalit women in all sphere of life, socio- economic, cultural, and religious.

Chapter Three sketches the caste and gender violence against Dalit women also the ideology of caste responsible for various forms of violence. I highlight these violence with the help of different cases, which are turn in to verbal abuse, sexual assault and physical harassment and trying to describe how the violence are used an instrument to oppressed lower caste women. Also presented how gender violence plays important role in preserving the power structure of caste hierarchy.

Chapter Four discusses the continuing caste based practice of manual scavenging, in which, Dalit women are subjected to all kinds of discrimination. They were segregated and usually lived outside the main village in separate settlements. They were at mercy of villagers for shelter and livelihood. This study indicates that the upper dominant castes in rural India are fighting harsh to maintain the traditional caste hierarchy

and their power. When Dalit women raise their voice against their harassment, it is branded as threats against the traditional caste hierarchy and upper castes and is dealt with violence.

Chapter Five argues that the Dalit women still unequal, powerless, and violated despite constitutional provisions, with the specific reference or observation of socio- economic condition. This study clearly indicating the rule of caste system kept alive and society still have failed to addresses the axes of discrimination faced by Dalit women through caste and gender intersections.

Conclusion highlights the ways in which caste and gender hierarchies needs to be looked together.

CASTE

The caste system is one of the most rigid and defining social institution where people in society are socially differentiated. In this system a person's social status is bound with their caste in which they were belong to or born to. One caste is strictly separated from other caste. "Members of different castes are expected to behave differently and to have different values and ideals"(Beteile 1965:45). Every caste has its own norms and customs for their social behavior of a particular style of life with strict rules and barriers due to fear of the mixing of a upper caste with an lower caste, though, this is associated with the thought of purity and pollution. Many academicians, scholars described the different views on origin of castes, one differ from other, but the truth is that, historically the lower caste people considered as the most polluted persons in society and for this many strict rules regulations (socio-economic, religious, cultural) imposed on them. These people constantly lived in all injustice for long years. This prejudice still existed in society. Caste system created the rigid barriers of mobility and other restrictions with in the society. On caste G.S Ghurye stated the major characteristics of caste are segmental division, hierarchical division restrictions on feeding/social intercourse, ritual status of a caste, lack of instructed choice of occupation and restriction on marriage (Ghurye 1969). According to him caste hierarchy is based on the concepts of rituals purity and pollution and socio- economic factors play a secondary role (Ghurye 1969). Also he stresses endogamy as the essential feature of caste, even the 'essence of caste' system (Ghurye 1969). On this system, Bougle has explained castes as hereditary specialized and hierarchically arranged groups (Bougle 1971). Whereas, M.N. Srinivas defines caste in the following words: "caste is a hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group having traditional associations with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy by caste. Relations between caste are governed among other things by concepts of pollution purity and generally maximum commensality occurs within the caste" (Srinivas 1978: 3). These, "three principles of inequality (division) based on birth, gradation of professions and their inequality, and the restrictions on marriage outside the caste are the bases and main characteristics of castes. All the ramifications of this great institution can be traced to one of these three ideas. They have one thing in common between them, and

that is the principle of inequality. This is the foundation on which the whole edifice is erected” (Pannikar (1933) 2004: 10-11).

Strict separation and strict hierarchy these are the fundamental aspects of the caste system. Every caste is rigidly separated from every other caste (Shah et al., 2006: 20). It is believed that caste system became fixed and divides the society or population in to four groups, which is known as Varnas. This is also called divine origin theory of caste system. As Srinivas states, Varna refers to one of the four main categories in to which Hindu society is traditionally divided (Srinivas 1962: 63- 69). The four fold division or Varna system considered as divine origin. This hierarchical system sanctioned by the religious scriptures called ‘Shastras’. One of them are the laws of Manu, ‘Manusmriti’, date roughly the third century A.D, preach the sanctity of the Varnas, also legitimized and introduced inequalities as central ideals of social relations of every caste (Aloysius et al., 2006). From top to bottom there is a definite scheme of ‘Varna system’ that is, social order amongst caste, the Brahmins (Priestly caste) at the top of the Varna scale, then the Kshatriyas (Warrior caste), followed by the Vaisyas (Traders and Merchant caste), after that the Shudras (Servants caste). In this scale or order the last are those who are not included in the ranked castes or they are out of Varna system, holding the dominance of other three Varnas also they refer to the impurity because they perform occupations that are considered unclean and polluting like cleaning, scavenging, work on dead animals etc. basically they are out caste people, in fact they are said that they are in this place of hierarchy only because due to their past sin or karma (Jatav 1997). Besides the four Varnas, there are many sub-castes or jatis in India. They are differentiated by region and are based on inherited occupation, religious convictions and social proscriptions (Chaube 1997). As Srinivas stated that caste system is more complicated with several castes and sub- castes and other divisions. The caste is used for Varnas and also for jatis (Srinivas 1962).

Though the origins of this caste hierarchy have often been argued. Herbert Risley stated that caste system existed due to clash of cultures and contact of races (Risley 1908: 56). According to him the two different races differentiated by colour and features and segregated the society as two individual races. The Aryan and non - Aryan race, the Aryan (the white skin) came to India as conquered, and defeated the non-Aryan (the dark skin) and enslaving them. Thus the racial superiority

were held responsible for the origin of caste system, the Aryan formed three Varnas of the caste system and the fourth Varna given by Shudras, also the (dark skinned) Anaryas are separated from other caste members socially and physically and categorized them polluted and outcastes (Risley 1908).

Dr. B. R Ambedkar totally rejected the racial theory and argued that in Vedas there are no evidences of any invasion by Aryans in India or defeated the non- Aryans (the Dasas and Dasuys) who supposed to be natives of India (Ambedkar 1946). He argued that the so-called Shudras were not the separate Varna but part of Kshatriya Varna and they are the originally king later they become slaves. There was continuous battle between the Shudras king and the Brahmins; these Brahmins have many tyrannies and indignities. As a result of the hatred towards the Shudras generated by their tyrannies and oppression, the Brahmins refused to perform ceremony of 'sacred thread' or Upanayana Sanskar of the Shudras. Loss of this sacred ritual, the position of Shudras who were Kshatriyas became socially degraded. Their rank fell below the Vaishyas then came to form the fourth Varna that's called the Shudra Varna (Ambedkar 1946:230)

Ambedkar challenges this ideological foundation of Varna system or graded system of caste hierarchy, which is totally based on graded inequality. According to him this Varna system or hierarchical division based on not only religious principle of purity and pollution but also on system of marked inequalities. He strongly expressed that caste system is also a gradation of rights, privileges and opportunities (Ambedkar 1936). Further, he argued that caste was the essential part of Hindu social order. The social hierarchical system and inequality is the fundamental principle of this system. He stated due to the division of society in to Varnas in the social structure system the Hindu social order has failed to uphold the liberty, equality and fraternity which essential to society or to a free social order. For this he strongly denies the racial theory of caste, and argued that the caste system is a social division of people of same race. He explains that what racial difference is there between the Brahmin of Punjab and the Chamar of Punjab. The Brahmin of Punjab is racially of the same stock as the Chamar of the Punjab and the Brahmin of Madras is of the same race as the Pariah of Madras. He elaborated our understanding on the caste system and challenges the caste hierarchy, which based on graded inequality. According to him the idea of ritual

purity and pollution is associated with caste only because priesthood and purity are old associated and it is priestly caste that enjoys the highest rank in the caste hierarchy. Further he stated that this ritual hierarchy in itself is a source of power which originated in the Hindu scriptural and religious social tradition system, while the Brahmins enjoyed maximum privileges in the field of religion and ritual sphere the caste particularly below the line of pollution suffered the utmost disabilities and accept the worst (Ambedkar 1936).

Ambedkar explains that caste is a notion; it is a state of mind. If someone wants to break the caste system, who has to attack the sacredness and divinity of the caste. He believed that the real way to annihilate the caste system is to destroy the belief in the sanctity of the Shastras (Ambedkar 1978). According to him, the caste system based on dogma of predestination system and the roots of this system with in the Hindu religion (Ambedkar 1948). On this account, according to Dumont (1970) religion is the foundation on which the caste system rests.

On the other side Mencher stating that, "it is not this religious concept of duty, but rather the economic superiority and political power of the high castes that keep the low castes low. The caste system can be therefore interpreted above all as a system of economic exploitation" (Mencher 1974:478). On this, according to Delie`ge (1999) caste has worked to keep untouchables from improving their living conditions.

Though, caste system characterized by "a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system" (Beteile 1965: 46). Every caste strictly bound together with own caste laws, which govern the behavior and relations of caste members like two castes will not interconnect unless the distance (purity /pollution) between them is not so high. This distance or inequality among castes is considered by divine origin or part, which expressed or considered in terms of purity and pollution. Although, the caste system characterized by its strict hierarchical membership with well defines social interactions and customs. Like "with in a village relative rank is most graphically expressed at a wedding or death feast, when all residents of the village are invited at the home of a high- ranking caste member, food is prepared by a member of a caste from whom all can accept food, usually by a Brahmin. Generally, feasts and ceremonies

given by lower caste are not attended by higher ranking castes” (Tripathi 2012: 54- 55). As we saw ritually separations are associated to a very high degree in caste society, Andre Beteile (with a study) described that, “non Brahmins are not generally invited to participate in feasts, they may be invited under certain circumstances. Even in such cases there is no question of their eating along with the Brahmins, separate arrangements have to be made for them and they are served after the Brahmins, also Brahmins, on their part, do not dine at non- Brahmin weddings. Generally they do not even attend, if they go, they are given betel leaves, areca nuts and fruits- things which are not regarded as having any element of pollution attached to them, generally two different castes will not inter-dine unless the structural distance between them is small ” (Beteile 1965: 57). Though this perceptions are weaken (small level) in modern day society specifically in cities but their remains are still alive especially in rural areas. Due to notion of purity pollution many restrictions are imposed on castes (members), hence every caste has its own way or style of life and no one allowed daring to break these rules. M. N Srinivas pointed out the caste system is very complex system with other divisions (Srinivas 1962). In caste system there are strong rules on inter castes marriages. Families control caste norms, if ever these caste norms are trying to change then they are treated with strict violence. In this regard Beteile states, marriage occurs within the jati and people who dared to break these rules were out castes (Beteile 1965). The banned of marriages except in one’s own caste also sever punishments meted out those marriages who are out side caste, though this is the prime essence of caste system. These rules and regulations still continue and strictly exist in present society. Upper caste controls women from interacting with other caste or out caste male specifically lower caste, only because the protection of caste purity from impurity, if such things are happened it coming out with great tension.

Usually, higher caste people strict about their customs whereas they imposed many socio- economic, religious, cultural restrictions on lower caste. The lower castes carried the burden of oppression and exclusion established by social hierarchy. In this regard Kamble stated that, “this classified Sudras includes various caste groups, which have suffered social and economic inequity since the ages. They had to stay outside the village. The concept of pollution was attached to them and they were treated as untouchable castes” (Kamble 1982: 30). Historically lower

caste people had been isolated throughout centuries. Purity, pollution are the central idea of this system in which the three castes considered traditionally pure and the untouchables were considered polluted and this is justified by the continuity of this practice due to desire of upper caste's who maintain purity- pollution beliefs.

In this regard, Louis Dumont's (1970) argues that the principles of hierarchy and holism were central for explaining the caste system. The principle of hierarchy in India he proposed was based upon the religious opposition between pure and impure pollution. Hence this principle of the opposition of the pure and impure---- underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure, underlies separation because the pure and impure must be kept separate, and underlies the division of labour because pure and impure occupations must likewise be kept separate (Dumont 1970:43). Further, the task of removal of pollution was assigned to the lower castes that became permanently imbued with it. This separation between castes as well as their hierarchical ordering could be derived from the opposition between pure and impure (Dumont 1970: 65- 66). For Dumont however, "this opposition of Brahmins and untouchables is also complementary the completion of 'whole' by two equally necessary but unequally ranked parts" (Dumont 1970:78). He elaborated this, "the impurity of the untouchable is conceptually inseparable from the purity of the Brahmin. Since the execution of impure tasks by some is necessary to maintenance of purity for others.... society is totally made up of two unequal but complementary parts" (Dumont 1970: 92-93). Accordingly, the opposition of purity and pollution constructs on which the caste hierarchy has based and that also merges in upper most and lower most or superior and inferior. The so-called inferior or untouchables are therefore, those categories who indulged in impure or very low and inhuman tasks, hence their work is cleaned up the society and removed the waste, for this the involvement and association with impure and unclean tasks or manual occupations they considered with permanent state of impurity and because their connection with impurity they has been assign to a lower position. Though they never achieve ritual purity. And the superior or upper caste groups are more anxious about to protect their purity from the members of lower caste and maintaining the distance from them. Here the impurity describes as contagious, and entire group or family can be contaminated as impurity gets transmitted through those who touch or

are touched by them and their defilement is only corrected after performing various purification rites. Hence these two opposed parts continuously affected the entire circle of social life (Dumont 1970). Even in present society the rules of caste hierarchy purity/pollution are still alive, the stigma of a man's caste permanently sticks to him forever, he identifies with his caste, this inequality based on birth is still a fact governing or handling everyday relationships. The principle of inequality was pushed to the most extreme and denied them not only all social rights but kept them excluded from many civil and legal rights.

This is a fact that caste was found among all Hindus, and without any internal variation or differences. Caste became a metaphor of tradition and rigidity. Since it had survived for ages, without any change, the basic principles of its working could presumably be de-codified from the ancient Hindu texts (Jodhka, Shah 2010: 3).

Additionally "the caste system's fundamental characteristics of fixed civil, cultural and economic rights for each caste, with restrictions on change, implies 'forced exclusion' of one caste from the rights of the other caste, or from undertaking the occupations of other castes" (Thorat 2008: 3). Though the caste system is based on hierarchies and power structures of purity and pollution in which the upper most caste were traditionally considered the purest while the untouchables or lower caste and also women were considered the polluted. These lower castes or out castes are isolated and excluded through out the centuries with the practice of untouchability. In fact the patterns of hierarchical division is very clear that the upper caste were kept separate and maintain purity and avoid impurity. Whereas, the most low and unclean status that defines lower or out caste populations are those their sight and shadow brought pollution. So they are kept separate from other upper castes members socially and physically. Their population mostly resided in segregated hamlets outside the village. Often suffer of various discrimination and exclusion and expected to perform all kind of impure, unclean, low status work. However, the strict and rigid caste rules subjugate lower caste in every sphere of life, socio- economic, education and religion and also change of occupation. "Due to divisions and the hierarchical nature of the caste system, the entitlements to various rights further narrow down as one goes down the hierarchical ladder within the caste system. Castes at the top of the order enjoy more rights at the expense of those located at the bottom. Therefore, the untouchables located at the bottom of the caste

hierarchy have much fewer economics rights” (Thorat 2008: 3). The caste system is also characterized by the provision of strong social ostracisms and this system strongly support from social and religious ideologies. “Social ostracism is normally characterized and enforced by many penalties against the violation of customary rules, norms and traditions of caste system. The forms of social ostracism vary from social and economic exclusion to various types of physical punishments meted out to the former untouchables, particularly those who initiate change and asserting mobility of sorts as against the traditional rules of caste behaviour” (Thorat, Negi 2007: 1).

Whereas, the interrelated differences purity versus pollution deeply rooted in the psyche of the caste system from the basis of untouchability practises against lower caste (Sinha 2010). According to Pannikar, “untouchability is not an institution, it is a corollary of the institution of caste” (Pannikar (1933) 2004: 15). Many of the untouchable castes were considered to be hereditary slave, other was confined into unclean occupations. Upper caste kept them in under the rigid restriction of social exclusion. The restriction called untouchability appear in many cases denial of public wells, roads, and of the right to worship in temples, etc., which is all in base of idea of pollution who pollute the upper caste. In contemporary India, upper caste community, in spite of such inhuman treatment, continues to maintain its domination over the lower caste people.

Untouchability is a mind set of dominant castes, shaped and legitimized by religious and cultural factors, that regulates their social interaction with Dalits in public (Shah et al., 2006). “In both ways, Dalits are denied their rights to touch and be touched (physical and social exclusion), their right to live with dignity (psychological and spiritual alienation), their rights to basic means of livelihood (economic deprivation), their rights to life and security of life (loss of identity), oral politics and to freely exercise their democratic franchise (political marginalization), and their rights to practice their own religion and culture. Physical and social exclusion includes such common phenomena in rural areas as segregation of Dalit’s habitats from those of the dominant castes where as economic deprivation is related to the denial of Dalit’s right of access of land, water, job wage opportunities” (Aloysius et al., 2006: 22). The practice of untouchability is a core issue of caste system, which has to be understood in the context of Dalit and Dalit community oppression, still continue as

an important part of the caste society, with experience of discrimination in all sphere of life in modern Indian society. Even present day the practice of untouchability, still prevalent in many parts of India. “The socially degraded and economically disadvantaged section of the society have been subjected to social injustice and different forms of exploitation, though because of old traditions, and beliefs, permitting the ‘purity- pollution’ notion of the caste system to persist in people’s mind” (Srivastava 1997: 146). Moreover the upper caste society always ‘become’ and try to ‘become’ the ‘destiny’ of Dalit community members through their caste sanctions. The larger civil society does not consider it necessary to intervene when Dalits are murdered in broad day light, publicly beaten, paraded naked and raped. These incidents are directed towards reminding Dalits about their status in the caste based social structure, and ensuring that they remain there. These atrocities are committed to ensure that Dalits live a life of humiliation and exclusion from the mainstream society, so that they continue to provide the caste based services ‘so essential for society’ and remain at the bottom rung without access to higher education and entrepreneurship.

Thus, the caste system has its clear and definite principles, and it is not only considered but clearly described by religious scriptures/shastras and the ancient writers but it is as understood and practiced at the present time, the three conceptions hierarchical division or inequality based on birth, division of profession and their inequality, and the most, restriction on marriage or endogamy are the bases and important characteristics of caste and the foundation of the whole system, and only one thing between of them are ‘principles of inequality’.

GENDERING CASTE

The grading system between castes is also seen in men and women in different castes. Therefore, it is important to understand the way caste and gender together to influences on the women who are at the lowest level of the caste structure and experiences of struggle for their survival, this dominant power structures are caste and patriarchy as they have caused Dalit women to suffer severely oppressed throughout history, they are sufferer from unique or specific form of oppression. Therefore, to understand how caste affects the lives, identity, work of Dalit women and many social restrictions imposed on them, also their dignity and rights are dominated and violated because they are at the lowest rung of the hierarchical ladder. Hence, it means that the caste system cannot be understood without understanding the gender relations between this structured with in this system, therefore, then they highlight on gender discrimination and atrocities against Dalit women. Though, Dalit women are controlled by caste members through major aspects like control of women's sexuality through violence, controlling their labour or wages, excluded them from economy or land, restriction on their mobility, also caste is propagated through violence against them.

Further, it is important to understand the position of women in caste, first is look on the sacred religious text that downgrades woman to lower rank to man. Such texts are frequently quoted as the spiritual basis for the legitimization of women low status through the ages. They are the sacred authority, which teaches that woman's status has to be low and unequal to that of the man. The sacred texts have prescribed quite elaborately the traditions of stridharma for women simply means serving and obeying their husbands and other members of the family (Chakravarti 2003). All the anxiety display by the early texts is to monitor the woman's sexuality for maintaining her purity and subordinate them into (caste) patriarchal structure (Chakravarti 1993). Therefore, caste culture also affected 'those' who are not direct sufferer by caste norms and patriarchal 'violence'. In this regard here is trying to understand the basic rules for women's behavior as expressed in the 'Laws of Manu', insist that by a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house, and a woman must constantly worship her husband as a god, even if he is without virtue or is a womanizer, or even a Brahman, Kshatriya, or Vaishya man can sexually

exploit any Shudra woman (Aloysius et al., 2006). Even the killing of a Shudra woman is explicitly as a minor offence for the Brahmins: equal to the killing of an animal (Manusmriti). In the Manusmriti not only shows contempt for women but goes on to degrade them as slaves, devoid of intellect, denies them the right of education and rights about the property, and forbids them from performing sacrifices (Aggarwal 1999). This is clear that Manusmriti and other religious scriptures/shastras or texts closed the all doors for women in society through which woman could be uplifted.

Another important factor or arena of gendering caste is occurs in controlling sexuality through controlling inter caste marriages with in (upper caste and lower caste) also controlling the sexuality through violence and controlling the arena of sexuality which can be seen in the rituals with female purity in the caste societies. In fact, rituals reveals a lot about the gender construction in a particular society (Yalman 1968). Srinivas (1976) pointed out “men had control over women’s sexuality. In the monogamous family, popular among most groups in India, a man’s sense of private property in his wife’s genital organs was as profound as in his ancestral land. And, just as, traditionally a wife lacked any right to land she lacked an exclusive right to her husband’s sexual prowess. Polygyny and concubines were both evidence of her lack of such rights. Men and women were separate and unequal” (Srinivas 1976: 155). Therefore, men obtain a significant part of their social position from holding the sexual control over women. “The idea of female subordination reinforces the control of women’s power in the gender hierarchy. This therefore necessitated the adherence to the practice of endogamy. Uphold endogamy as a principle to protect caste purity and therefore caste identity, endogamy is understood also as the basic element in the marriage system of the subcontinent” (Chakravarti 2003: 27). This system is still prevalent in modern day society in a very strict manner, inter caste marriages (specifically higher and lower caste) are not allowed in caste society and the rules that govern to ensure the separation between high and low, in fact, honour and izzat of a family and a individual, also community is related to the concept of ‘women modesty’ in this regard women ‘control’ by families from interacting with other caste or out castes persons, if ever these norms affected or go beyond and disregard of caste laws/rules then they are inflicted with strict ‘castiest’ violence. Accordingly, with in caste culture notion, it is that

there is great danger from the mixing together in castes, means pure (upper castes) are be kept separated to avoid and afraid of impurity (lower castes). This pure and impure are connected to men and women both means higher caste men or women are kept separated to lower caste women and men this separation is more rigid with lower caste men case. At this point (here explanation how lower caste blood dangerous to caste purity) Nur Yalman links the “sexual purity of women with the purity of caste, suggesting that female sexuality presents a threat because of a danger of her introducing impure or low caste blood in lineage it is through women (and not men) that the purity of the caste community is ensured and preserved. (The) danger of low quality blood entering their caste...the danger here are the low caste men” (Yalman 1968: 43-44).

This analysis is elaborated by Veena Das, she stating that “women are literally seen as point of entrance, as “Gateways” to the caste system. If men of ritually low status were to get sexual access to women of higher status, then not only the purity of the women but that of the entire group would be endangered. Since the main threat to the purity of the group came from female sexuality, it becomes vital to guard it” (Das 1976: 135). According to her, women are guarded by the higher castes because sexual contact with lower caste men would not only pollute the purity of the caste, but also the lower castes access to it (Das 1976).

Because the purity of women is crucial to maintaining not just the blood purity of lineages but also the position of the family with the social hierarchy (Yalman 1968). Women are seen to have a special place in families as a ‘repository of family honour’ of their own family as a daughter and of their husband’s family as a wife and mother. It is very common refrain that the *izzat* (prestige) of a family is in the hand of its daughter, (means a female liable for her purity entire life) repeated to girls by their parents and to married women by their in-laws. The implication is that if their conduct is dishonourable or they are impure, women can ruin a family forever (Chakravarti 2003: 151). Although honour and purity concepts always links with the behavior of individual women and the community norms (Das1979a).

My point here is that the control over women body and sexuality in order to preserve caste purity and identity are more important in upper caste domain but this perceptions totally changed when it comes to lower caste women, hence the rule of controlling of the sexuality of women from

low caste is changed by assaulting, insulting, sexual harassment, rape, and humiliated by physical torture more easily by upper caste males. As Rajan states “the relations of power that regulate the caste – bound exchange of women are violated precisely because lower caste women are not seen to be like “our” women” (Rajan 1999: 244). Here the controlling of lower caste women sexuality is considered the superiority of upper caste. It is the caste traditions that allow upper caste male power established over the lower caste women or all community. “For achieving the significant symbol of the low status of women in caste society is that the women of lower castes are accessible to men of higher status, while there is very severe punishments for men of lower castes who dare to approach women of higher groups” (Das 1981: 143-44).

Here the perceptions of women’s (upper or lower caste) sexuality are associated with the way they position themselves in relation to the public and private sphere, “upper caste women are referred to as ideal, ritualistic, pure in domestic domain they have to abide and inculcate cultural practices, which sustain the distinctions and ritual status in caste hierarchy” (Dube 1996: 5-9). On the other side lower caste women are not considered as ‘pure’ and ‘idealistic’ as upper caste women in private and public domain because they are participating in polluting tasks like washing dirty clothes, removing the pollution of upper castes, midwifery, manual scavenging, sweeping etc. these are the polluted occupational activities in which lower caste women indulge (Dube 1996). Moreover their community’s habitats in rural areas, and even urban areas like slums, and the dwellings of sanitation workers, are physically separated from those of upper caste women.

To understand how caste affects the lives, work and identity of women, it is important to begin with social restrictions on the life styles of women, which have particular consequences for women, as a general rule, at least in rural India, the upper castes do not allow their women to work outside the home or their widows to remarry while this is not true for ‘lower’ caste (Rege 1995). In this regard here, according to Srinivas, women’s mobility is determined by patriarchy and is not based on her choice as an autonomous person (Srinivas 1978).

On the other side, caste rules are easily mended in the event of economic necessity as in the case of Haryana, north India, where poor women are allowed to move about in a village for work provided they cover their

face, the veiling in this case, being symbolic of patriarchal controls. Thus, if work outside home becomes a dire need, women receive consent to move out, but with in strictly controlled conditions (Chowdhry 1994). When we turn to lower caste women this theory totally changed, these women is to deny opportunities, choices and freedoms at multiple levels, weaken and shattered not only their dignity and self respect, but also their right to development. As Rege elaborates, “in upper castes families especially in rural area women are denied the right to work outside the family. Whereas in case of lower caste women the fact that their labour outside the family is crucial for the survival of the family, leads to the lack of stringent controls on their labour, mobility and sexuality and this renders them impure or lacking in virtue” (Rege 1998: 39). Thus caste not only determines social division of labour but also sexual division of labour. Physical mobility is also restricted through caste norms (Das 1981). Hence, Dalit women face violation, exclusion and strict control by dominant caste in caste based patriarchal system, experienced several forms of discrimination as being Dalit women and low caste arising in social hierarchical order.

In fact, caste always degrading Dalit women, their position in caste society are worst, their freedom, mobility, security, right to work, violence, revenge attacks, and their livelihood are under control by caste norms and cultures. They are degraded in every sphere, though their (communities) resident’s are segregated and physically separated from those of upper castes. Moreover, they are constantly discriminated, harassed, violated and even denied of basic rights of their self-respect and equality.

Economic dominance is closely associated with issues of access to lower caste women’s sexuality because this is castiest thought that lower caste women are made available for the consumption of upper castes (Rege 1995). For example, Dalit women came into greater contact with land - lords (dominant caste men under whom Dalit women work as labourer), due to poverty they are needy for work, hence the weak position of the women of bargaining for labour and livelihood made landlords to maintaining a dominating influence on her (Aloysius et al., 2006). As Anupama Rao explaining the economic dominance and harassment also reflected in statement such as ‘give her some measures of grain and she will be quite’ or ‘propose her work in field and get night with her’ (Rao 2009). Further, the caste based customs and practices have led to Dalit

women to occupying a subordinate position in society and engaging in degrading inhuman work, therefore the perceptions of their sexuality associated with their work or determined by the type of work they handle, often they are engaged in most menial low work, though, handling inhuman task, their position in society is likewise interpreted. Many times the upper caste members like land lords use sexual, filthy abusive language and other different forms of violence on Dalit women for humiliating them and their communities to taught them a lesson and crushing their movements. Although, particular in caste society woman's body are seen as representing honour for family as well as for community and this also true for Dalit woman, therefore, crushing the honour or teaching a lesson to all community or family, woman are the main targets, they are insulted, sexually violated and abused by upper caste members (Kannabiran and Kannabiran 2003, Rao 2003). In this point Guru states, 'the Indian state..... could not offer more dignified alternatives vacations for Dalits. They (Dalits) found themselves limited to sanitary work, scavenging, midwifery, washing dirty clothes (mensuration), tanning and lately rag picking, occupations that are considered defiling and socially inferior by civil society with a 'Hindu mind set' (Guru 2000: 125). Their engagement in activities of degrading manual labour further deems them inferior, low and impure in society. This impurity cuts down the interaction or gapping between 'upper caste' and 'lower caste women' (Ilaiah 2003). Also, "this caste impure status, when combined with free movement in public spaces to engage in this labour, leads to perception of the women being low in moral character and easily available and accessible for sexual crimes" (Aloysius et al., 2006: 324).

Moreover, upper caste women also humiliating Dalit women (along with their male counterparts), they are affecting their life with influencing and pressurizing the economic, social, cultural and political positioning over them with the patriarchal thinking. For example, "the primary duty of an upper caste woman is to protect the life of her man and ensure his longevity her own social existence is identified by hinges on his life. The Dalit women can claim no such privilege since she can and has been expropriated by the upper caste men as a matter of this right. Another example is when Dalit women step on the streets in protests, they are seen as transgressing their limits, when upper caste women take to the street in protests, their sense of wrong and their appropriation of public space is immediately legitimate" (Kannabiran and Kannabiran 2003: 256).

Whereas Dalit women also experience of patriarchy of their own men folk specifically the Dalit women's husbands and male relatives are subjected to patriarchal influenced on the women. These controls are seen in the practice of maintaining caste identity and purity in the Dalit community, in fact role of patriarchy and the superiority and authority of Dalit male person accepting in the family but the position of taking and maintaining patriarchal authority in society with perceiving higher stakes are dominant caste men and women, compared to Dalit men, in terms of perpetuating discrimination and atrocities against Dalit women. (Narula 1999). Further, in caste society Dalit women carried the burden of oppression and violence, though this violence against them always legitimized and reflected in caste society.

For this Anupama Rao clearly expressed on the relationship between caste and gender, she states that, "Caste ideologies draw on biological metaphors of stigma and defilement to enable differentiated conceptions of personhood, and to render the body a culturally legible surface. Taboos regarding touch ritual sanctioning of practices such as spatial segregation and taboos about physical contact operate along the axes of purity and pollution that manage bodies and physical space, such ideologies are embedded in material forms of dispossession that are also always forms of symbolic dispossession, and they are mediated by the regulation of sexuality and gender identity through the rules of kinship and caste purity" (Rao 2003:5-6). Further she talks about the patriarchal society and its impact on women, according to her in patriarchal society every women are marginalized but the marginalization of Dalit women are not equal as upper caste women. Dalit women faced more exploitation, violation and exclusion in compared to other women (upper caste). Also, due to their low status in caste society, Dalit women considered as impure by virtue of the purity- pollution polarity, hence in (caste) society they are then considered as not requiring any protection of their purity or chastity as such. As she states all these points are central area of caste, class and gender discourse through which the sexual violence is legitimized against Dalit women (Rao 2003). She also notes that "Dalit women's bodies are seen collectively as mute and capable of bearing penetration and other modes of marking 'upper caste' hegemony without the intervention of a discourse of desire and sexuality, because of the over – determination of this violence as caste privilege" (Rao 2003: 293). Caste culture and its related customs or practices imposed on Dalit

women to occupying a subordinate position in the society or in the family. This is another or indirect form of oppression that is seen in caste and gender culture sometimes in invisible position still continue in oppressive structure in caste society. Caste and gender intersection is a mindset and product of social and hierarchical construction, it is also shaped within the given cultural functions of a society (Chakravarti 1993). The important analysis in this study is that caste always maintains and strengthens 'caste' privileges. Whenever any attempt disturbing the caste balance or the traditional hierarchy and interest of upper caste is done, this comes out with severe inhuman brutal punishments. Further, Dalit's (women) empowerment always seen to disturbing the interests of dominant castes, or if such empowerment breaks the traditional hierarchies, Dalits would have to face inhuman atrocities. Dalits upward mobility threatens the upper caste, which in turn of violence and counter violence. As Prakash Louis elaborates, "the heart of the matter is that Dalits and poor peasants no longer accept the existing oppressive feudal social system..... (and) fight for their izzat (dignity), azadi [freedom], proper wages and redistribution of land but the powerful upper caste landed gentry cannot tolerate this defiance by the Dalits and the poor peasant's" (Louis 2000: 22). In this regard Gopal Guru (2000) states that Dalits 'pursuit of modernity' saw them as accessing the 'language of rights to equality, freedom, dignity and self respect' and to reject the language of obligation, which in Dalits perception had confined them to 'negative rights' such as right over flesh (raw hide, flesh of dead cattle) and food (leftover food of the upper castes) (Guru 2000). Consequently the brutal sexual atrocities and exploitation largely came out when Dalits assertion their rights or take action against upper caste. This perception is very clear here that Dalit women have no rights or permission to asserting their rights or trying to breaks the hierarchical order of caste system. Whenever these traditional rules are trying to break they face 'individual or community' punishment and atrocities. These kinds of atrocities are increased all over the country.

The situation of Dalit women needs special attention. Dalit women are one of the largest socially segregated groups. They are considered the Dalits among Dalits sufferer and discriminated against three times over given that they are:

1. Gender [patriarchy].
2. Caste [untouchable].
3. Poorest and most marginalized.

Women from this community suffer from exclusion and discrimination in all spheres. Dalit women constituted 16.60 percent of India's female population in 2011. Dalit women's problems encompass not only gender and economic deprivation but also discrimination associated with religion, caste, and untouchability, which in turn results in the denial of their social, economic, cultural, and political rights. They become vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation due to their gender and caste.

Caste based discrimination and atrocity against Dalit community is increased all over India that leads to brutal killings of Dalits everyday. Dalits are harassed, killed, socially boycotted by the upper castes. Physical violence against Dalit women like sexual harassments, terrorizing the Dalit women by parading naked on streets and striping, raped, threats and killing are especially vulnerable to violence by upper caste persons their bodies are taken as targets of revenge for demanding or claiming the rights by the women's families and communities. Some primary studies provide information on caste violence against Dalit women, like primary level study across 500 villages (Shah et al., 2006) on the forms and nature of violence indicated that across the states studied, harassment of Dalit women takes the following forms, non Dalits frequently use abusive and derogatory language when addressing Dalit women, in their work place or in the market. Another study by (Irudayam, Mangubhai, and Lee 2011) of the narratives of 500 Dalit women across from states on the forms of violence found that the most frequent forms of violence that are perpetrated against the majority of Dalit women are verbal abuse (62.4) percent, physical assault (54.8) percent, sexual harassment and assault (46.8) percent, domestic violence (43.0) percent, and rape (23.2) percent. This is the clear indication and evidence that how Dalit women are vulnerable of caste violence. They face a number of restrictions on their rights to freedom of thought, mobility, conscience and religion.

Whenever Dalits take action against dominant caste or talk back they face heinous atrocity, sexual exploitation largely, though, they are powerless to protect their community members and women, this is the easiest way for upper caste to punish Dalit community, hence Dalit women are humiliated and raped to humiliate their community. They are the means of taking revenge or considered like objects, which can be dishonoured by rape.

Moreover, caste and gender are the perspectives, the view in which the dignity and rights of lower caste women are violated and dominated because historically they are at the lowest level of the social structure. Accordingly, being low status they face severest exploitation and violation of rights.

Most of the time Dalit women are raped by upper caste leaders, land lords and police to stop the movements to demand payment of minimum wages, to settle share cropping disputes or to reclaim lost lands (Human Rights Watch 1999). Whereas, they are economically, socially and educationally excluded from the main society, also lack of awareness, poverty, hunger/ starvation makes them oppressed, helpless, and voiceless. They are sufferer of untouchability practices, and because of this deprived of their basic survival needs and more vulnerable to violence like sexual abuses and rape. Although in society sexual violence against Dalit women or rape is stigmatized as punishment of whole Dalit community. As Rege state that in rural India rebelliousness of caste restrictions by the Dalits has most often resulted in destroying property, arson and gang rape of the women of lower castes (Rege 1995). Here, Veena Das writes, “rape against these women as an offence of honour and as stigmatic or shameful for the women is a powerful construct since the stigma is transmitted from the women to the woman’s family, community or even nation, depending on the political context” (Veena Das quoted in Baxi 2000: 1196). In addition Baxi argues, “in this discourse the honour of man is traced through the purity and chastity of women”(Baxi 2000: 1192). When considering discrimination and violence against Dalit women, the problem of impunity she faced is the key problem, while seeking legal and judicial redress for violence. And while attempting to access and enjoy their fundamental rights and freedoms (Thorat 2008). Caste and gender biases are clearly seen in police official’s discrimination specifically against Dalit women who attempted to file police cases but it turned away, many cases related to them are lying

without investigation in police stations across the country. Often most of the time Dalit women are threatened and forced to compromise the cases (Rajan 1993). “The functionaries of the state such as politicians and policeman, who are positioned as guarantors of right to its citizens, invariably emerged instead as a major perpetrator of injustice” (Rajan 1993:6). Dominant caste community and state officials enjoyed impunity, they are insensitive against justice of lower caste women, and also they are unsupported, continuous failure of the criminal justice administrative system.

This is clearly illustrated in a recent national study of violence against Dalit women based on 500 cases.

1. In 40.4 percent of the cases, the women did not even attempt to obtain justice.
2. In 26.6 percent of the cases, the victims were prevented to file cases.
3. In 1.6 percent of the cases, the women were able to obtain informal justice.
4. In 17.5 percent of incidents, the violence reached the notice of the police, but cases were left unaddressed.
5. Only in 13.9 percent of cases was appropriate police or judicial action taken.
6. A mere 3.6 percent of cases have ever reached the courts while only 3 of the cases (less than one percent) have ended in conviction (Manorama 2006).

As in most of the cases attacks on lower caste women many times the accused escaped punishment. Sometimes in most cases attacks were not investigated and prosecuted properly, the problems of lower caste has also been neglected. “In some critical cases like rape the government’s failure to prosecute the cases of rape and the manner in which differential rates of prosecution are compounded by corruption and caste and gender bias even at the trial level” (Human Rights Watch 1999: 166-167). In addition, “gang rape is a crime, and the stripping and parading of women are collective, public and publicly witnessed acts of violence in which higher caste women have at times been actively complicit. The husband and relatives of the women are often to watch helplessly, yet their testimonies are discredited on the ground “consent”. The testimony

of assaulted Dalit women is also discredited they are represented as unreliable witness, liars, innately and sexually promiscuous” (Sangari 2005: 162).

Despite the laws, which is indicated a standard and sanctions against gender violence all of that equally apply to Dalit woman. But the most important part of any ‘law’ is however, in its implementation. But most of the rules are hardly ever implemented as Pratiksha Baxi argues that “in practice these rules which award interim relief to a survivor of sexual violence, have become a symbol of social conflict, where in Dalit and tribal women are seen as liars who wish to appropriate state resources to alleviate their poverty. Most victims are not awarded the interim relief or do not have control over the use of the compensation awarded to them. Instead, the word compensation is taken to mean monetary compensation for the violence of rape. This moralistic regarding of relief, structured as an extra ordinary measures in laws, does not differentiate between compensation as a form of humiliation versus compensation as a form of relief that creates the conditions that allow a woman to testify against violence” (Baxi 2009: 15). This is the true reality of caste society in which lower caste women who is a survivor of rape or sexual assault will face many problems in bringing her case to the attention of the police, and in turn the courts, she will face rejection and exclusion from her community and family and finally she will have difficulty gaining access to the justice system.

Historically caste society is oppressive culture in which Dalit women continually discriminated and exploited and even they are unable to speak about their exploitation, oppression and barbarity against them. These type of violence affected not only Dalit women but also the whole community punished or ashamed through the act. These concepts are inter-linked between gender and caste hierarchies in which Dalit women are excluded in all sphere of life and denying even their basic rights. “Although Dalit women are easy targets for any perpetrator because upper caste consider them to be sexually available and because they are largely unprotected by state machinery” (Human Rights Watch 1999: 32).

In several instances, “the rape of Dalit women may not be considered as rape at all because of the customary access or (caste tradition) that the upper caste men have had to Dalit women’s sexuality. In almost all regional languages of India, the word for rape is equivalent to the phrase

‘stealing the honour of’ and since lower caste women by the virtue of their double oppression have no ‘honour’ to speak of the right to redressal is often denied” (Rege 1995: 30). Further Dalit women’s resistance against rape or violence is perceived as a challenge to caste and patriarchal structures. But the point is the ideological caste construction of purity and pollution is forgotten when upper caste men raped lower caste women. Here Bela Malik elaborates that “Dalit women aware the caste pollution by either presence or touch, that operated so strongly in the case of conflict over public resources seemed not to matter at all in the extraction of labour. When it comes to taking water from a hand pump, notions of ritual purity are invoked, when it comes to the extraction of labour in the field, it does not matter at all that the seed is planted the crop tended and the grain harvested by the same untouchable. The same applies in the case of rape as social revenge, punishment, and coercion. By curious quirk, the untouchable becomes socially touchable in more ways than one” (Malik 1999: 323-24). In another words, so-called ideology of ‘caste identity’ ‘touch and be touched’ and ‘pollution/ purity’ is exactly not works when rape occurs.

Caste based discrimination and atrocity against Dalit women and their community is alarming increased all over India. Upper caste committed these acts by terrorizing the Dalit women and their community in almost many parts of India. Most of the Dalit women are landless and are engaged as wage labourers in agricultural fields, construction sites or in mines. They work in brick kilns for long hour as casual labourers to lay roads with hot tar in the burning sun and crushing big stones in to small pieces with hammer, without any protective gear and some work in the small shops. A few ones have migrated to neighbouring cities and engage themselves in some kind of manual work or domestic work. Some of them are also engaged in other degrading work, which was provided by caste society. Dalit women are living in abject poverty and sub human conditions. In most of the cases, they do not have proper house to live in the facilities of light, pure drinking water, sewage and toilet etc.

Many Dalit women who are employed in agricultural farms owned by higher caste feudal landlords tilling, sowing, irrigation, cutting and harvesting seasons or many of them are engaged in stones mines and are on their mercy for their livelihood as well as live in constant fear. They are always paid for fewer wages than prescribed by the rules and have to work for longer hours. During the course of their work in the fields or

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work area they are often sexually exploited and easy targets of insult by their dominant caste landlords.

Many Dalit women are forced to work in so called “polluting” and degrading occupations influenced by “untouchability” which is still prevalent in many parts of country. These socially degraded and economically disadvantaged section of society is forced to work in inhuman practice, like ‘manual scavenging’ that is totally caste and hereditary based, most extreme form of the denial of human dignity and social oppression. Though Dalit women face caste and gender discrimination and violence, their problems always associated with caste, untouchability and gender, which in turn resulted in the denial of their socio- economic, cultural rights.

VIOLENCE AGAINST DALIT WOMEN

WITHIN THE DYNAMICS OF CASTE AND GENDER INTERSECTIONS

This chapter highlights how Dalit women are violated and discriminated due to the gender bias that deep rooted in the Indian caste society. As well as the chapter focuses on violence against Dalit women within the form of caste and gender intersections by presenting different cases. The lives of Dalit women and their social, economic, educational and political status is directly linked to violence and subjugation because they are at the bottom rung sanctioned by the caste system. Moreover, “Caste based discrimination continues and widespread it condemns women to a life of exclusion, marginalization and disadvantage in every sphere of life. Denied education and economic opportunities and perform dangerous work” (Manjoo 2014: 5). Caste society does not give them space and development sources, which are also closed. They are “Socially degraded and economically disadvantaged section of the society have been subjected to social injustice and different forms of exploitation because of old traditions, customs and beliefs, permitting the ‘purity- pollution’ notion of the caste system to persists in people’s mind”(Srivatva 1997: 416). They are neglected by society, hence are very prone to a different types of violence and sufferer of injustice and oppression. There have been many cases where Dalit women are abused, tortured, murdered or rape just because they belong to lower caste.

Dalit women in many parts of the country are humiliated, insulted, raped/ gang raped, assaulted and burnt alive or molested. There are certain kind of violence, which are traditionally reserved for Dalit women, extreme filthy verbal abuse, naked paraded, being forced to drink urine, eat faeces, pulling out teeth, nail, and tongue and violence including murder after branding witchcraft, are only experienced by Dalit women. Dalit women are threatened by rape as part of collective violence by the higher castes (Manorama 2006). These kinds of activities enforced by untouchability by upper castes members are freely permitted and still continue today.

Accordingly, Dalit women are more sufferers to the evils of untouchability. “They are still expected to perform their subjugated social status for the benefit of upper castes. This includes wearing torn and

dirty clothes, maintaining a servile demeanour, and remaining in segregated spaces. When Dalit exercise their civil rights by stepping outside this exercise role, they are humiliated, ostracized and even physically assaulted” (Shah et al., 2006:137). It also suggests that whenever Dalit women or as community demanding or efforts for their rights, always provoked with brutal violence. Hence violence is depicted as the weapons of the upper caste whom they establish their power over the society in the realm of caste and gender structure (Ray 2000). The violence comes out in a different way upper caste mostly used economic and social boycotts as a common tool that influences the overall access of Dalits to economic and social rights. These boycotts generally used to teach a lesson or as a form of revenge by the upper caste against Dalits (women) asserting their rights. Hence very particularly violence came with humiliation, insult, torture, molestation, assault, sexual assault and abuse. But at the same time “poverty compels Dalit women to work for upper caste often in spaces where they are at risk of sexual and other abuses” (Shah et al., 2006: 139). While working as labour they face abusive words, filthy, unpleasant, immoral sexual comments and dealt with casteist language, which are linked to her and their bodies. The abusive language is very opening and frequent in society to violate Dalit women. Dominant caste men violated, dominated and oppressed lower caste women only because they are at the lowest level of caste structure and being low status they face continuous sexual harassment through feudal castiest thought in which it is believed that Dalit women (or their sexuality) can be easily “bartered, appropriated and constant references to the women’s ‘availability’ end up rendering her a passive object that can be easily acted upon” (Geetha 2012:1).Accordingly, sexual abuse or violence works as an object by taking caste revenge and controlling the Dalits particularly Dalit women. Moreover, targeting Dalit women by abusive language with contempt is the easiest way to deprive and scare them. Whenever Dalit women demand their wages to landlords and other employers in return they respond with very unpleasant words. Like, “If it’s wages you want spend the night with me. Instead of twenty rupees, I’ll give you a hundred. Plus some grain for the next few days. You just stay with me one night”. In another incident the words indicating, “a police officials told a complainant, I helped you in your land dispute. So you must take care of me. Let us spend a day together” (Aloysius ed. 2011:132). These filthy language affecting deeply on Dalit women psyche their feelings are hurt, ashamed sometimes they could not

bear this humiliation. Consequently, the domination of caste and gender based violence is a matter of upper castes rights that came out whenever Dalit women asserting their rights. Although upper caste believe that they have right over lower caste women's bodies as being used for sexual satisfaction through violence, this also showed in the language which is abusive in words with caste oppression targeting Dalit women. In this regard Leela Dube elaborates our understanding with examples, "in Uttar Pradesh, for instance, it is said that just as a she-goat may be milked at any time at ones own will so can a chamar woman be enjoyed anytime at one's discretion". In continuation, another proverb also showed how caste power reinforces on Dalit women, in 'Vidharb, Kunbi landowners on the lookout for Mahar women working in their fields say with contempt, "give her a few measures of grains and she will be quiet" (Dube 1996: 20). Accordingly, she also states that 'the control of resources and ritual status together integrally informed by and constitutive of relations of power reinforce each other and underlie the sexual exploitation of lower caste women by upper caste men' (Dube1996: 20). Due to their low positioning and regarding as inauspicious Dalit women are targeting by upper caste male authority with impunity even after committing violence. Most of the time upper caste addressing Dalit women with their caste name linked her and her community with their occupations, whereas, not only she addressed but faced occupation related abusive words too. For example In various areas of Uttar Pradesh manual scavenger women known (in upper caste domain) with caste name like, if someone asked about them, they said '*arrey vo hallalkhor or vo mestrani ka ghar*' (oh that *hallalkhor*, or the house of *mestrani*) means a woman who belongs to manual scavenger community or house of that manual scavenger women. Also, their *basti's* (houses) are known in upper caste as "*Bhangyana*", "*Mestranad*", means the residential area of manual scavengers. Accordingly, in rural areas upper caste named Dalits residents area with their caste name, like '*Chamaro ki basti*' or '*Chamar Toli*', or '*Musabari Toli*', '*Chott jaat Tola*' or *Moballa* etc. However, the caste names of Dalit's residential areas are often changed village to village. Often they were trying to understand that Dalit and their areas are segregated and lower to them. Also this separation reflected in day today language specifically for Dalit women like, in rural area whenever Dalit women dressing well, taking up education or wearing good clothes, this action are unbearable of upper caste people, as Kumar elaborates the matter that Dalit women's mobility always provoked or in another words

is threatening the caste order which seen in their abusive filthy language like “*Bitiya Chamar Ki, Nam Rajraniya*”, (daughter of chamar, has a royal name like that of the chief queen), the language is full of wrath and like abuse, which indicating the upper caste community not tolerating and felt that Dalits are trying to adopt their culture. Another phrase is “*Chappal Per Chamarin Chale, Sandal Per Dhobiyani, Hai Mor Rama Badal Gail Duniya*” it means (the chamar woman is wearing chappals, the washerwoman is wearing sandals, oh my Lord Rama, the world has changed) (Kumar 2009: 72). It showed even the slightly upgrade social and economic position of a lower caste women is appeared challenges to dominant caste, also these changes depicted against the power of caste traditions or caste hegemony. For this, Dalit women always targeting by casteist abuse and harsh atrocities.

Even Dalit women are beaten up and harassed if they refused to any work (traditional occupation) of upper caste like a case in Gujarat a group of upper caste men allegedly beaten up a pregnant Dalit women and her family in Banaskantha district of Gujarat, for not picking up cow carcasses in their village of Kajra (Scroll. in 2016). This case introduced that the discontinuation of hereditary services result mass humiliation, whereas, “members of dominant castes bring economic and other pressures on dependent castes to ensure continued master-servant or patron-client relationship” (Karanth 1996:92). Whenever the ‘caste services’ are not performing or denying they face anger. In rural India, Dalits are still continuing to be trapped into the most humiliating and socially degrading occupations. The height of oppression is that Dalit accept their caste roles without any resistance if they are resisting it leads brutal killing or harassment against them. Otherwise, Dalit take action, resists or talk back to dominant caste they face rampant sexual exploitation even somewhere Dalit are powerless and unable to protect their women and this is the opportunistic way for upper caste to punish Dalit community. Thus, “The caste, class, gender status and authority is inextricably involved in acts of sexual violence can also be understood in the context of dominant caste men stating their right to sexually abuse Dalit women, with Dalit husband’s witnessing or being helpless to stop this violence against their wives” (Aloysius ed. 2006: 28). With reference to an incident in village of Chilakurti, Nalgonda district, Andhra Pradesh, on August 14, 1991, a 35 years old Muthamma, a Golla by caste women, an agricultural labourers was brutally beaten up by Reddi men (dominant

caste) and paraded naked through the streets, the women unable to bear the sight went indoors and shut their doors. The men of her caste covered their eyes. The aggressors derided the men ‘open your eyes’. Are there no men amongst you’ (Kannabiran and Kannabiran 2003: 254). Here Kannabiran argues that, “this insult is double edged. On the other hand, the lower caste men can only cover his eyes because the structure of relations in caste society castrates him through the expropriation of his women” (Kannabiran and Kannabiran 2003: 254). The caste-based cases exactly represents the controls of upper caste and patriarchy over women’s bodies. Particularly Dalit women body became the place of revenge for upper castes that often stripped off her dignity for taking revenge or deliberately disrespect her only for their (upper) caste pride. As a case represents here, a woman (victim) belongs to lower caste in village of Patna district, was stripped and paraded in the streets by dominant caste men to take revenge just only for their caste pride. She narrated that when she was brushing teeth in the courtyard all of sudden they came and held her. Even they were shouting and said ‘*dhobi jaat ka hoke itna he*’ (despite a dhobi or lower caste, you have so much dare) then they held her arm, legs and dragged her out in the street, tore off her clothes and paraded her with humiliation (The Hindu 2013). In fact caste violence against Dalit women influenced not only her but the whole community also. With reference another case in Shahjhanapur’s Hareva village in Uttar Pradesh, fifteen Other Backward caste villagers stripped five women of the Dalit community, paraded them naked, caned them and then put them on show on the highway at four hour because one of their daughter had allegedly eloped with a Dalit’s son (Mail online 2015). In this case parading Dalit women naked through the streets once again highlights that the Dalit women and their bodies are been marked as sites for caste pride and revenges. The men (fifteen other backward caste) ensure that it was their right to punish the Dalit women by using their bodies as targets and objects of public humiliation and dishonour whom related not only the women but their family or the whole community also. It also represents that caste-based violence is the way where power relations are redefined in terms of gender. Often in caste tensions lower caste women are victimized, many women who stood against the upper caste are punished by paraded naked or by being raped. Accordingly, rape or stripping and parading of women and other forms of generated humiliations representing by upper caste male privilege (Rao 2009). Caste based restrictions seen within various atrocities on Dalit women. In

hierarchical caste based society, the rape symbolizes as an instrument to oppressed lower caste women, they are more targeted for anger of the upper caste groups. With reference I want to present a very heinous crime case against Dalit girl, she faced not only barbarous violence but also serious setback of negligence at every step. In July 2013, reported that a Dalit girl in Kharinashi village under Mahakalpada police station in Kendrapada district, Orissa, were set ablaze by three youths (upper caste) after she refused their advances. After that she was rescued and brought hospital in Cuttuck where she was underwent treatment for eleven days, while being shifted to Delhi she died at Bhubneshwar airport. I handled this case.

Dominant caste people ensure their powerful position in society, perhaps they doing violent act over Dalit women, often challenge them and their community to seek justice for the act imposed on them because they are over confident of the support of community and state machinery. This is clearly shown in many cases where women are denied or not accept their complaint by state agents. For this Bela Malik stating that “the innumerable cases of rape of Dalit women, only a fraction of the victims lodge reports, an even small fraction is field by the police, while actual conviction is negligible. The problem lies not so much in the law itself as with the context in which it exists”(Malik 1999: 324). In several instances rape of lower caste women not considered rape, even never get reported and never get justice in fact they are depicted as a liar or unreliable or addicted and habitual of sexual entities, as regard, here discusses some cases which exposed caste rigidity and patriarchal control, like, in an incident at Birati in West Bengal 1990 (gang rape of three refugee women) the police argued that since the women crying rape were prostitutes the matter could be overlooked (Sarkar 1991). With reference in the article of Tanika Sarkar noted a statement ‘seems to echo a popular notion that rape ceases to be so in the case of certain categories of women. What else explains her reference to the moral and social standing of these women – that they resided in unauthorized hutments and that they were engaged in foul professions, were mistresses of and had honeymoons with men they were not married to’ (Sarkar 1991: 215-218). This patriarchal statement on women established a question over their morality and creditability also they are not seen as victim. Likewise Dalit women suffer rape as a part of the ongoing caste confrontation (Rege 1995). Another incident in the late 1970s in Maharashtra, a young

marginalized, girl called Mathura, was raped by two policemen in police custody. The court acquitted the rapists who were policemen. In this case it was argued that Mathura's character was questionable, also an question raised about the virtue of this girl. The judges who reversed the verdict of the Bombay High held that the alleged rape was actually a willing act, and that Mathura had sex with the two policemen who were strangers to her. According to judgment, Mathura was of habituated to sexual intercourse, her consent was voluntary. Under the circumstances only the sexual intercourse can be proved and not rape, doubtful moral character she was not virgin and had a boyfriend in spite of her family's objections. Further police argue that Mathura had raised no alarm there were no physical injuries on her body indicating no struggle hence it showed she could not have fought them, therefore not indicating rape. Hence accusation of rape was a defamatory falsehood. This case were taken up by the women's movement in India and the Supreme Court reopening the case and finally into amending the law against rape, to recognized custodial rape and to put the onus of proof on the rapist and not the women (Rege 1995, Gangoli 1996, Kannabiran ed. 2007). The concepts of these types of cases always linked to caste and gender hierarchies in which a question of creditability or authentication is present on which Dalit women denying justice. Another case which also showed the caste-patriarchy at every level, Bhanwari Devi, an *Kumbar* (potter) by caste (other backward caste), woman who worked as a *Sathin* a grass root social worker in the Women's Development Programme of Government of Rajasthan. From the village of Bhatari, who agitated against the practice of child marriage in her district, was gang raped by dominant caste men (Mathur 1992). The case particularly interplays between caste and gender relations. She faced a hostile police machinery who refused to record her statement and register the case, and male doctor who refused to conduct a medical examination, the medical examination conducted after 52 hours. The doctors who delayed the medical examination ultimately they reported that, there were injuries on Bhanwari's hands and legs caused by a blunt instrument, also reported that she was clearly not virgin, but married and has four children, further suggest that a woman who is not virgin cannot be raped (Mathur 1992, Abraham 2002). The attitude of state agents not favourable towards Bhanwari Devi, the entire family was also punished by their own community, Bhanwari and her husband were expelled economically or socially by jati panchayat, the whole community felt they are ashamed by this act or due to Bhanwari, who lost her own

honour, that of the family and the community too (Mathur 1992). In fact the trial at session court began only in October 1994, and on 15 November 1995, the session and district court released all the accused against the charge of gang rape. The court delivered the judgment which was very casteist in tone that, upper caste men including a Brahmin would not rape a woman of lower caste because they were respectable and middle-aged and above all, whereas, rape is usually committed by teenagers, in Indian culture it is not possible that an uncle and his nephew could jointly commit rape (Gangoli 1996, Mathur 2004). However, the court dismissed the allegation of gang rape, the judge asked “what perversity propels Bhanwari to imagine being raped by Gujjars, when they would not even consider her worthy of such defilement?”. (Rajan 1999: 244) According to Rajgopal and Dutta, the judge commented that: “the court is of the opinion that Indian culture has not fallen to such low depths, that someone who is brought up in it, an innocent, a rustic man, will turn in to a man of evil conduct who disregards caste and age differences and becomes animal enough to assault woman” (Rajgopal and Dutta 1996:28). In this regard, the notes of Kum Kum Sangari stated, “the judiciary seemed to be unaware of the fact that lower caste women have for centuries been sexually exploited by upper caste men” (Sangari 2005:162). Even the judgment, which was passed, disregards the evidence of Bhanwari Devi and her husband Mohan who had witnessed the rape (Gangoli 1996). “Kirti Singh an advocate in Delhi High court summed up the defense counsel’s strategy it raised the issue of Bhanwari’s creditability as a witness. Her own evidence was there, her husband was there but she was completely discredited as a witness by the judge” (Mathur 2004: 212). In Bhanwari Devi’s case the biased judgment given by the court as she was a lower caste women. Accordingly the case highlights how caste tied and played an important role in structuring gender relations and patriarchy. In continuity, here another brutal, violent incident against lower caste the Khairlanji case. In October 2006, a mob of sixty people of upper caste society, stormed at the Bhaiyalal Bhotmange’s house in Khairlanji village at Bhandara district. The four family members (Surekha the wife of Bhotmange, Priyanka the daughter, two son Roshan and Sudhir) were dragged out from house stripped naked, beaten and taken to the village square. Both women were raped, boys are brutally beaten up after which all family members were died, at this time the Bhaiyalal Bhotmange was out side the home. The act was done by as revenge for previous activism

(Teltumbde 2008). Whereas, in Khairlanji, Bhotmange has owned family land/ cultivation, good house although he was Dalit, the upper caste farmer used Bhotmange's land as a way, the family resisted with Siddharth Gajbhaiye (relative). That added to strong feeling of revenge of the villagers towards Siddharth Gajbhaiye and Bhotmange's family as well. Villagers beaten up Gajbhaiye and he escaped by Surekha and her daughter Priyanka into hands of upper caste. Then he made a police complaint against villagers and Surekha was a witness, the villagers were arrested and kept in police custody. Due to police complaint by family made villager's angry. Also in the village, people doubt that Surekha has extramarital affair and she was a characterless woman having relationship with her relative and therefore she was taught a lesson. Further, the daughter Priyanka was good in education, she score good percentage also provoked and jealous the upper caste. Hence, upper caste takes revenge (Teltumbde 2008). This case is also suffer of the gaps and delay in the police investigation, also the delay in carrying out medical tests on time on alleged victims of rape, even doctors failed to file proper autopsy reports, and the prosecution's failure to present the case effectively, the rape were not proved in the court due to lacuna in post-mortem (Teltumbde 2010). However, in July 2010, both the trial court 2008 and Nagpur division of the Bombay high court 2010 gave its judgment in the case, acknowledge the violence and murders, (the judge did not find any caste angle to the case) they refused and agreed with the judgment of the sessions court on the non- applicability of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act (Prevention of Atrocities Act), ruling out both the caste angle and rape, and converted the death sentences of the six convicts to 25 years of imprisonment (Khairlanji Judgment 2010). Accordingly, these cases are typical example of the influence of caste bias in whole system also barriers of caste and community to obtain justice, like "a Dalit women is likely to be confronted with any of the following impediments to the successful prosecution of her case, unsympathetic doctors and police officers, difficulty in finding witnesses who are willing to risk their own safety by testifying, police officers and prosecutors who are bribed or pressured by the attackers, as well as having her case misfiled under more lenient sections, the combined effect of these hurdles is much that, even if her case is properly investigated a Dalit woman will likely find that her attackers have been granted impunity" (Sinha 2010: 118-120). However the caste, class, gender biases are increasingly rampant through which helpless lower caste women didn't

get justice. Whereas, cases appearing in the form that if the case of Dalit women the police suspected the complainant who trying to misuse the Atrocities Act in false charge and defame the dominant caste male. In fact, the lower caste women were raped by dominant caste people, but all 'state machinery' allegations on them that they are in the category of those victims who were telling lie or they are habitual. Whereas, brutal violence are used for asserting the caste hierarchy, which is clearly highlighted in the cases, also showed the casteism in state, police and judiciary. Though, cases proved that the prejudice against Dalit women, which has brought, justification to the atrocity by law and courts (Ray 2000). Moreover, the purpose to present these cases because cases highlights the caste norms which allow dominant caste men's rights over Dalit women bodies as shown "in brahminical patriarchal ideology, Dalit women are assumed to be sexually available to all men, to be of immoral character, and have an unrestrained sexuality. It is therefore believed that it makes no difference to the women whether or not they are sexually violated" (Aloysius ed. 2011:316). Though this is the reality of caste in which dominant caste male always stating their rights to violate and sexual abuses the women of lower castes. Also the cases are significant due to the biased judgment and the women are identifies as questionable character and not as constitutional safeguard holder. In all cases Dalit women suffer the stigma of being 'immoral' and their 'testimonies' are 'discredited', they are victimized because they are stood against the dominant caste. Hence, Dalit women are harassed, subjugated, raped, molested and murdered as representing them as immoral and unlawful or low morality means open to violence so it is important to protect the caste norms structures they are punished in fact they are punished brutally by upper castes. Also cases represents that the Dalit women are alone to face their problems and their cases are highlighted, complaints are lodged and investigations are initiated after severe pressure or protest from the community, Dalit activists, women's groups and civil society organizations. Hence, these violence is casteist in nature against Dalit women and define caste is gendered. Whereas, sexual violence against these women are more high and widespread due to their low position in caste scale and their economic dependency they become target of caste violence. Often "Dalit women are kept away from centers of power. Yet, irrespective of all these structural constraints they continue to struggle to liberate themselves" (Louis 2003: 160). Hence efforts of liberation or challenges caste tradition and gender norms or demand their rights and

trying to achieve socio-economic mobility for their rights to life with dignity by Dalits is assuming as threatening of caste hierarchy, they face anger and inhuman atrocities. In fact this type of violence or act mostly meant or threat with warning to the Dalit women and the others (whole community), who interfere in the tradition of upper caste customs and practices. The whole institution/system and machinery also gave importance of the warning means Dalit rights to live or life with respect or dignity could be easily crushed if they try to disturb the caste traditions.

The violence also raised the serious issues about the caste and gender discrimination and weak power of Dalit women. Another caste violence, which is very regressive practice, still frequent is witch - branding and witch hunting common in several states of India. Even today, witch hunting is being practised in the states and has become burning issue, marginalized women (tribal and lower caste) trapped into this heinous crime. Whereas, due to low position Dalit women always targeting for upper caste violence and are more victimized. "One of the reasons why Dalits are forced to suffer extreme humiliation and violence is the traditional caste beliefs that regard Dalits as inauspicious. Not only their touch but even their shadow is treated as polluting" (Shah et al., 2006:132). Hence, for low status often Dalit women are trapped in this practice, many Dalit women have been victimized due to branding as witch or practitioner of witchcraft. Kanchan Mathur elaborates "lower caste women branded as witches, these women may be blamed for certain mishaps in the community, they punished for the mishaps, for example by being made to eat faeces and drink urine, by having their teeth pulled out, by having chilly pepper put in their eyes, and being beaten severely enough to result in death, sometimes such women are childless or widowed and hence easily charged with casting an evil eye or causing ill health or death of children. Usually, the faces of such women are painted black they are paraded naked with garland of shoes and slippers around their necks and beaten mercilessly" (Mathur 2009:289). There is growing number of Dalit women are being assaulted, tortured or even murdered after being labelled as witches. Branding witches, who made observed by an *Ojha* or witchdoctor whose work to find witch or claiming the existence of a witch somewhere in the locality. *Ojha's* one word provokes the all villagers or residents to 'hunt the witch'. Also, the witch is identified by other different observations made by relatives,

village people etc. The causes of witch is very common in affected states, according to them (Ojha) they possess evil eye, they eat all living things like human and cattle and destroy crops. Like someone dies in family, or in near society, also follows an epidemic in village this branded as somewhere is witch who responsible for all of this mishaps (Live mint 2014). With reference I want to present the case of witch hunt (victim) survivor Chhutene Mahato of village Birbans, district Saryekela Kharwasa, state Jharkhand. She shared us her horrific plight, that 'on September 2, 1995 my neighbor's daughter became ill, people have doubted that I have done this through witch practices. There was panchayat in the village in this I was branded a witch. The villagers called me witch, beat me up, made me drink urine, they set my house on fire, looted my home and seized my property. I was thrown out of my home with my children. When I went to the police station the police refused to lodge an FIR. Fortunately the then one officer heard me out and took action against the culprits. I took many years to get normal, once I managed to get over the trauma I decided to help victims like her.'

Thus, this barbarous practice of witch hunting which includes most extreme violence also deep rooted beliefs have led to the assault, torture and murder of alleged witches. The incidents of women facing humiliation, brutalization or attacked after being branded witches are common in these remote, underdeveloped villages with a particular marginalized population. Therefore, the practices of witch hunt persists in society because acceptance of society or social sanctions/permission given to them also the law protector/ police do not take them or treated them as serious crimes like murder. Though, the non- registration of crimes against marginalized is general problem, also 'strong' influence over the police and caste, gender, religion, class biases are widespread, It is most difficult for these helpless women to file complaints against the powerful villagers or an individuals.

The so-called witch usually a weak, in all sphere, helpless, lower caste women and being low status they are easy targets for this violence. As Rashida Manjoo noted about "the brutal acts of violence against women referred as witch hunting, the stigma that is attached to women who are labelled a 'witch' and the rejection they experience within their communities, leads to various violations and is an obstacle to gaining access to justice. Such labelling affects family members across generations. There is reportedly little or no official investigation into such

violation” (Manjoo 2014: 7). Moreover, there are many cases reported as the women who branded as a witch were made numerous forms of assault, torture, severe beatings, strip and paraded naked through the villages, their hair is cut off, forced to eat excrement and even put to death. Many women suffer smashed teeth, shaved heads or chopped off breasts (Karat 2001, live mint 2014). The practice of witch hunting is also connected to the patriarchal attitudes whenever patriarchy challenges seem to be cause for accusing as witches. Though superstitious beliefs, religious practices with combination of caste and patriarchal norms suffering Dalit woman as accused of witch, many cases which in turn their murders. Whereas, the original root causes of this violence are to take revenge like women refuse sexual advances, family disputes, land rights of women, disputes over property. Several incidents showed women who inherit land have been branded as witches and were even killed by male relatives for grabbing the land (Kelkar 1992). Also, even due to scarcity of land, childless widows are often accused of being a witch or they are pursuing as bad character or having illegal affairs so thrown out of the village for securing control over the land (Munshi 2001). Basically, widow women, childless, single women who have land or who are economically well off or kinds of revenge are reason of witch hunting in which Dalit women are trapped in fact due to their low positioning in social structure Dalit women are branded as witches and they are victimized, ostracized, lynching and brutal deaths. For example the recent cases, a 40 years old widow Dalit woman was allegedly branded a witch at Kadera village near Kekri in Ajmer, Rajasthan. She was badly tortured, stripped, lashed and made to eat faeces and burn on August 2, 2017. The accused claimed that they asked one Ojha to beat (her) the victim, as she was a witch (Indian Express 2017). Another case from Bihar where in March 2017, a 70 years old Dalit women from Kanp village under Mohanpur police station, district Purnea, Bihar, was beaten and burnt alive by her neighbours who suspected or blamed her of practising witchcraft (Hindustan Times 2017). According to the National crime record bureau 2,097 murders were committed between 2000 and 2012 where witch hunting was the motive. Jharkhand is top on recording witch-hunt cases. The Jharkhand central bureau of Investigation (CBI) office puts the total number of such murders from 2001 to October 2013 at 414 and cases registered for witchcraft at 2,854 (Live mint 2014). As per police records 98 deaths and 1,857 incidents of witch- hunt occurred in Jharkhand 2014- 2016, and from 2015- 2017 more than 250 women

were subjected to witch hunting in Bihar (Indian Express 2017). There are other states still report cases of witch –hunt like, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana (Indian Express 2015). There are increasing number of incidents of witch hunting in which communities are killing women but there is no National Law or Legislation against witch hunting. There is strange silence on violence against women in the form of witch hunting. Every year the data increased in number of reported cases of women killed in witch- hunts in various states, released by National Crime Record Bureau and every year we only comparing the reports without response. Witch killing were nothing more than murders of innocents. Here, the purpose is trying to highlight the growing violence against Dalit women in which she lives with fear like the practice of branding Dalit women as witches, which is an approved form of caste culture violence, and clearly sanctioned by publicly and basically accepted forms of torture and assaults. Even murders with flourished by social, economic and sexual motives or intentions. Though, increasing trends of sexual assaults on dalit women in which they are torturing continue and common in several states and in remote rural areas. The caste and gender violence and practices of untouchability are more prevalent in caste society in which, Dalit women are most violated and discriminated. Violence against them is often characterized by attacks on the honour of women and also associated their communities too. Many cases point out that the violence and attack on them are so harsh and violent that they constantly live in fear and insecurity. The caste violence showed in “the exercise of dominant caste male over women’s identity and dignity, body and sexuality, resources and labour, subjectivity and as personhood” (Aloysius ed. 2011: 48). Though, the social, economic, political and educational status is directly linked to caste violence and discrimination. The ideology of caste responsible for various forms of violence on Dalit women this violence turn into verbal abuse, physical assault and sexual assault. Sometimes punishment coming out in terms of teaching the Dalit women and her community a lesson of submissiveness or respect to caste norms. As regard frequent practice of caste discrimination and violence are subjugate Dalit women and does not give them the rights of living and the whole government machinery is failed to ensure their security, or livelihood as a person and also failed to provide a space to enjoy their constitutional rights

MANUAL SCAVENGING

DEEP ROOTED CASTE CULTURE, SUBORDINATION OF DALIT WOMEN

This chapter presents the observation of the grievances of Dalit women who are at the bottom rung of the caste society and engaged in degrading profession called 'manual scavenging', the practice which purely imposed by caste culture, still continue in many parts of the country in many forms.

Manual scavenging is a practice by which Dalit community people engaged in for removing the human excreta from public and private latrines. This practice forcefully continues in most states. This occupation is totally influenced by caste culture and interlinked by untouchability and mostly women are engaged in this work. According to Supreme Court of India 'manual scavenging' refer to 'the inhuman practice of manually removing night soil which involves removal of human excrements from dry toilets with bare hands, brooms or metal scrappers, carrying excrements and baskets to dumping sites for disposal', a practice that still prevalent in many parts of the country (Supreme Court of India 2014). In addition National Human Rights Commission explains that the excreta is piled in to baskets which scavengers carry on their heads to locations sometimes several kilometers from the latrines (National Human Rights Commission 2011). According to Bezwada Wilson manual scavenging is blight on humanity in India. Consigned by structural inequality to the Dalits, India's untouchables, manual scavenging is the work of removing by hand human excrement from dry latrines and carrying on the head the baskets of excrement to designated disposal sites (The News Minutes 2016). It is important to understand the reason behind persistence and continuity of this inhuman practice, which is still, exists even today and continues in most of the states. Bindeshwar Pathak states "India is the country in the world where a particular section of the society is traditionally responsible for keeping the habitation clean by removing the waste products of the society including the human excreta" (Pathak 1992: 128). Lakhs of people (mostly women) are still forced to work as manual scavengers. Those women who are engaged in manual scavenging live their lives as social out castes and also stigma of untouchability. Hence present study is a step in this direction and it is an exploration of the

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various forms of deprivation of these community women in caste society. As well as how these community women affected by caste and gender intersection and how caste is maintained and strengthens caste privileges, also talks about prevalence of manual scavenging practice that is imposed by caste still exists in contemporary India, due to this work the most sufferer are Dalit women. And their rights and justice are in darkness. Though justice could not be achieved when women remain under the degrading work, which is deep-rooted in caste culture. Also, this work represents the voice and plights through the words narrated by women who still engaged in manual scavenging work.

It is important to understand major impacts of this work on Dalit women, noted that the segmental division of feudal caste, worked and forced as an caste instrument through which the process for the subordination of Dalit women are constructed and they become worst victims of this process called untouchability and branded as the most polluted in the society. Whereas caste culture forcefully pushed them in such degrading tasks like manual scavenging. Thus caste based biased system responsible for this practice from many years ago. Also increased control on women (through labour or sexuality) are an essential part of a rise in caste hierarchy. This study highlighted the caste attitudes towards women. Because the caste always arrogated itself the right to decide the fate of the Dalit community through its caste sanctions and fighting harsh to maintain the traditional caste hierarchy and control the rest of the people.

Plight of manual scavenger women: Humiliated and excluded by caste culture

Manual scavenging continues as an occupation in India where most of the manual scavengers are Dalit women. The women are subjected to do this humiliating and degrading work, which further results in discrimination and social exclusion. Women belonging to this communities experience many forms of discrimination, as they are affected the intersection of caste, class and patriarchy.

The status of women in this manual scavenging work is worst. They become vulnerable for being women, a Dalit, and for being a manual scavenger. Surveys have revealed that 95-98% of manual scavengers in the country are women. They bear the dual burden like domestic works and taking care of their families as well as working as manual scavengers.

They are excluded, subjugated, oppressed, marginalized and victimized in both social and household spheres of life. The girl child more sufferer faces discrimination at all levels and is usually compelled to take up the occupation once married (Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan -2011).

In 2014, Human Rights Watch interviewed people indulged in manual scavenging in states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and revealed that women who are manual scavenger clean dry toilets in rural areas often are not paid cash wages, but instead as a customary practice they receive leftover food, some grains during harvest, old clothes during festival times, and access to land for grazing livestock and collecting firewood all at the decision and choices of the owner of the households they are worked or served. Many areas where untouchability practices are intact, food is dropped into their hands or thrown in front of them (Human Rights Watch 2014). Manual scavenging as an occupation is entrenched in caste discrimination. We find that this is practised as a form of untouchability in many places.

I participated many public hearings and interacted with manual scavenger women and shocked to see their living condition and position in 'caste' society. Found that this degrading task or work is completely enforced by caste system. These women are working in different villages of Uttar Pradesh, public hearing organized in Lucknow, Ghazipur, Mohammadabad, Deoria, Fatehpur, Jaunpur. Most of the women who still engaged or some who left this inhuman work attended the hearing. They share their problems which they face continuously in society their condition are very horrific and deplorable. All are working in the upper caste household both Hindu and Muslims. Some are working in 4 to 10/15 houses, some are new in work and some have experience of 30 to 35 years. They clean and collect latrine from the houses every day and dump it to dumping ground. For this work they get one roti from every house (more house more roti) sometimes leftover sabzi. According to them, this food is essential for them because they are very poor. Their male counterparts mostly working in the field as agricultural labourer but this work is seasonal. Some are engaged in sweeping, cleaning septic tank, drains etc. according to them they earn very small money and don't have enough money for sufficient food so their dependence on this work are crucial for the daily food. That is work of manual scavenging. All accepted that this work is inhuman and very degrade but they don't have any other options to work or earn money or to collect food for the

family. In this work they get some food, occasionally grains and some old clothes. Very few women doing this work at their parent house but most of women accepted that they start this work after the marriage (they got this work inherently) at their in-laws home giving by their mother in-laws to them, without asking their will or not, even their male members hired by panchayat to manually cleaning drains, septic tanks etc. they are bound or force to do this job. Many women accepted that they doing this work for more than 25 to 30 years. They have no other choice and don't dare to go against their in-laws. According to these women "*sasural vale jo kabenge vo karna padega*" (whatever the in-laws said we are doing willingly). "*parivar ko chalne ke liye kaam karna padta he, kbana to mil jata he*" (our work is so essential for the family at least we get food). "*hum jante hai ye ganda kaam he lekin is kaam ke alava dusra kaam nai hai*", "*kam nai karenge to khaenge kya*" (we know this work is dirty but we don't have any other option of work, if we don't work what we are eating). I told them why not they join another work for their livelihood they said that "*hum jis jati ke he uske liye gaon me kisi or kaam ki jagah nai he jaha jate he jati ke anusar kaam dete he, ye unchi jaat vale kehte he ki tumhari jaati hi is kaam ke liye bani he, tumhara kaam he gandagi ko uthana*"(we are from those castes which are not getting any other work in the village, where we going we get work or we are select for work according to our caste, upper caste people said we are lower in caste and made for doing this dirty jobs). Many women talk about during their work they face untouchability practices. They reacted and said, upper caste still consider us as untouchables and we are made only doing degrade work, they force us clean drains, sweep roads, clean their houses but with maintaining distance. When I asked these women "*jis ghar ki gandagi uthati ho kabi tumhe apne ghar me bula kar bithate hai*" (the houses you collect shits is they call you entre in their home). "*kya aap unki rasoi me ja kar kaam kar sakti ho*" (is you allow to work in their kitchen), their words are showing their plight they said that "*hum itna ganda kaam karte hai ki jis raste se hum jate he us raste me bhi koi humare samne nai ana chahta. Hum unke ghar dwar chadne ka soch bhi nai sakte to saath bethna babut dur ki baat he ghar ke najdik bhi nai ja sakte, ghar ke picbhvade se gandagi uthate he vanhi se chale jate he*" (we doing such degrading and dirty work they even not like to see us or they avoid using those paths and streets where we cross, we are not allowed in front of their houses and don't even dare to enter in the houses, so it is not even thinkable that we sat with them or even not dare to close anyone house, we collect excreta from backyard of the houses and went to the dumping ground). These

lines are showing their deplorable conditions or exclusion they face everyday. Even they don't dare to leave this work because of threats, they said “*yadi hum ye kam karne ke liye mana karte he to vo hume dhamkate he kam nai karogi to gaon se nikal di jaogi, hum tumhe yanba rehne nai denge, kis raste se jaogi, kya kam karogi, kese khaogi*” (when we said to left this work they threaten us and treated very badly, how dare you not coming for work, what are you doing other than this, you don't have any other options, they warned if you stop doing which way you go, you thrown out from this village, what you earn or feeding their children) the most harrowing words are these women said that “*humare mana karne per vo kehte he tum ye kam nai chhor sakti, tum nai karogi to kaun karega, ye to parampara he, tumhari jati to ye kam karne ke liye he*” (when we stop the work they said you are not allowed to stop doing this work this is tradition, and you and your caste are made or bound to do this traditionally work for us). I asked these women about their children work what they want, women told us ‘we want our children to be well educated so that they could earn their living by doing some decent job. But nothing of that happened, our children too have entered this work to earn their bread. We are so helpless can't do anything’. These are some horrific words that women reveal in the hearing, in their village they face problems more than these words. It was very sad to know about these women they are not aware of new law against manual scavenging. They even don't know about the work they doing are illegal. Some young boys and girls also participating in hearing they are sufferer of this practice, their parents still engaged in this work, when asked them about the work, they totally rejected this work, because they are knowing that what kinds of exploitation in this work, girls sharing the ‘situation’ when they deny to marry for those homes where in laws demanding the continuity of this work after marriage. Many girls who know the condition and situation of this work they are rejected to marriages. They want to educate own selves and their community people and rehabilitation of their community people. Some women left the work and start training of cutting tailoring, jari jardozi work, and other handicraft work. For their earning they join alternate work but the dominant caste culture and untouchability practices are so strong that they can't do this without the support of upper caste or officials. The strong untouchability mindset would not allow them doing these works. When a manual scavenger open a tea shop, is there any upper caste people come to drink tea or buy something from their shops, or they start a tailoring shop whose women of dominant caste come to stitched

the clothes from them. Answer is absolutely not because of caste culture they are also threatened by dominant caste people that how can one break the caste rules and survive. Then how one can think about the rehabilitation of these 'caste workers' without strong government steps. As Wilson argued that we define rehabilitation as a process of breaking the link between caste, birth and unclean occupations, and restoring human personhood, dignity and equality (The News Minute 2016). Whereas the new generation totally rejected this work no one want to continue this inhuman work they resist against it but in very little level some young boys are working in sweeping and cleaning roads and septic tanks because of no other job option and their education is not getting them a job and obviously their caste is stick to them wherever they go the caste rules are always staying with them, thus they don't get good work also in cities. Youngsters try to study further. But in the village where caste rules and their boundaries are so strong these people can't go against them. These hearings clearly indicate that manual scavenging still alive and ruined the Dalit people because manual scavenging is a clear form of caste constructed where caste rules are so strong and they forcefully imposed on Dalits to doing this dirty job.

In continuity, the National Commission For Women for the very first time (I) take initiatives for the women who still engaged in manual-scavenging, organized a convention on "Listening to the Voices of Most Marginalized, Engaged in Manual Scavenging" in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Many women came to participated from different parts of the state. The women came from Ghazipur, Mohammadabad, Varanasi, Urai, Kanpur, Deoria, Mau, Gorakhpur, Chandauli, Allahabad, Bhadoni, Fatehpur, Chitrakuta, Lucknow and Kushinagar. These women shared their experiences of this undignified work. All stressed the need for honourable rehabilitation. Women described that "we, don't have anything, we did not get any housing. We get old cloths, food and very little money. We are ready to leave this work if other work is available." They stated that 'we continue to do this job for a very fewer wage of rupees 15 to 30, per houses per month and a few roti's from a households'. It was also noticed that most of the women from manual scavenging communities tend to be addicted to heavy tobacco (gutka), beetlenuts and paan. Women states that "*is kaam me itni badbu or gandagi he ki usse bhulane ke liye hum paan chabate he*" (this work is so dirty and smelly, it's very hard for us to manage that's why we always chew beetlenuts or

tobacco). In Uttar Pradesh the doms, bansfors, rawat, balmiki, helas, halalkhors, they all are lowest in caste hierarchy or excluded in all sphere of life due to untouchability. Also they are the communities who are engaged in manual scavenging and remain absolutely landless and assetless. The women of these communities are most sufferers. It was found that due to their lower position in caste hierarchy, people from these communities are consistent with traditional housing arrangements; continue to reside in separate enclaves in villages, and even in some urban areas. Most of them even don't have enough food to eat or homestead land. Almost all of them face untouchability in their day today life. In Varanasi, Doms (and their women) are the most marginalized communities living on railway lines and on the pavements. They face eviction threats, living for years, absolutely out of bound for any government schemes. They have lots of pressure in the villages for doing manual scavenging work. Other threats are emerging from rural villages where the people have social status yet weak economy, which force them to continue with this practice. Also most of these rural towns have manual scavengers and the practices is absolutely feminized as males go for work like cleaning septic tanks in the urban areas and women do the traditional cleaning manually. Many times the village head man sarpanches with dominant castes people are involved in threatening to Dalits if they do not do the work.

Literacy rate among Doms, Bansfores, Rawats, Helas, Halalkhors, Balmikis (specifically women) is absolutely minimal and needs attention. They are not aware of government programs and schemes. They are even unaware of the Act (2013 Act for manual scavengers), which is passed for their benefits. It seems they live in another world, the world in which their lives are very vulnerable and miserable.

Manual scavenging is one of the most inhuman and degrading form of work performed by Dalit women. Whenever these women refused to perform such tasks leads to physical abuse and social boycott. Infact, they have very few options of their livelihood so women engaged as manual scavengers also face pressure from the community and family to continue this practices. Male member of manual scavenger community work as day labourers in fields and their income is unreliable because the work is seasonal. Some are working in construction sites, brick making, drain cleaning etc. whatever work but they didn't get sufficient money. Most of the families have no other source of income so they bound to

rely on manual scavenging to meet their basic needs. In this work a small amount of food they get per house, not sufficient but according to them at least they have something. This community's people belong to most deprive and poor condition in caste society hence daily food security is a challenge for them. Many women explained that they wanted to leave this work but no other permanent option of survival for their family, which is more important to them. Our families need food they do not allow us to leave this work. Hence when we get another jobs we leave this work but not now it takes time because of our needs and family pressure too.

Women narrated their plight that “when we say no to clean the toilets they threaten us that otherwise which ‘way’ will you go (*kis raste se jaogi*), you don't have any other way or place to go”, Women informed us that when they refuse to work of manual scavenging, upper castes groups have threatened and blocked their access to land. They don't have own land so dire need to use the upper caste land for grazing the animals, for firewood, even for defecation in the field, hence they have no choice but to turn to cleaning the toilets (NCW 2015). It was strongly noticed that whenever Dalits refused to perform these stigmatized tasks for the upper castes or to give in to the economic exploitation of their labour, this breaks the hierarchical dependencies in which Dalits are engaged in exploitative economy of labour, thus leaving the upper castes with no labour and break the tradition of ‘untouchable’ jobs, leading to accusations (Narula 1999, Rao 2003). In addition, whenever Dalits asserted their rights they have met with inhuman atrocities. Dalit women are more vulnerable to threats, exploitation and sexual harassment as this is the way of demoralizing them in their struggle for an improved existence. These are the caste instruments to oppress them. These types of attempts were made to revive untouchability related practices, for example, caste based activities and discrimination continues to be major force in the villages. Hence, whenever Dalits are raised the voiced against their harassments it is branded as threats against the traditional caste hierarchy and upper caste.

These women are very scared to miss even a day of work, immediately the so-called upper caste people came to their home for looking them or threatening them. They don't dare to miss work because of practical requirements at the houses of upper castes. Though it prevents these women for finding alternate occupations such as agricultural labour. In case they find out another option of work and stop coming for manual

scavenging work they and their family face tremendous pressure (warning, threatening, abusing, sometimes violence) from the community. Thus this hierarchical stigmatized task is bound with the caste, and it was clearly indicate that caste perpetuate through gender, these women sufferer of caste culture because the perceptions of Dalit women as polluted persons by reason of their birth causes them to be separated from the rest of caste society and excluded from social, religious and economic life. Continually experience of caste based exploitation, deprivation and consequential lack of alternative employment opportunities and extreme poverty, force Dalit women into taking up degrading jobs, such as manual scavenging. Observations indicate that despite manual scavenging being illegal, its practice is actually increasing. This type of work is demeaning, unsanitary and hazardous, and has a social stigma attached to it where other castes won't associate with them who perform the work.

Untouchability: Almost all these manual scavenging communities face untouchability in public as well as private, rural and urban places. The hierarchical caste society is responsible for undignified situation of Dalit women. The caste tradition pushed these lower caste community women (for doing) in such menial, filthy low level tasks only because they are born in that low caste and due to this work they known as also treated as most polluted and low persons even they and their residential areas known with their 'work' name. Women are not allowed in front of the upper caste households and they don't dare to enter their house, they came only backside complete the tasks and go back. Even when these women going to dump the excreta the way (roads) they used no one from the upper caste people going on that way or face these women due to untouchability and because of their work which is very dirty and belong to very low. Untouchability and discrimination against manual scavengers makes it difficult to find alternative employment. The manual scavengers have little choice in what they do for a living.

Tea vendors don't give them tea. Women from manual scavenging community are prevented from purchasing goods, excluded from cultural events and festivities (religious), and also denied access to temples and places of worship. Children too are engaged in manual scavenging. In cities, they go with their parents for cleaning septic tanks as well as cleaning of toilets and collecting the excreta in rural towns. These children face discrimination at schools as they are not allowed to sit with

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other students and teachers generally send them back. They are also subjected to discrimination by the members of the upper caste and community. They dispose off human waste not because they want to, but because they are born into their particular caste. Manual scavengers are routinely exposed to both human and animal waste without the protection of anything (Ramaswamy 2005).

A large number of Dalit women are engaged in scavenging because of their association with these occupations. They said that 'people hesitate to employ us as domestic help or cook. But they happily provide us the job of cleaning their latrines', because we are lower in caste. This was the reaction of many women who felt very helpless, hopeless, can't do anything about it. It was noticed that many girl children work with their mothers in their adolescent age. Though women engaged in the work of manual scavenging when they get married (NCW 2015).

A 2013 survey of 480 women from manual scavenging communities in nine districts in the Indian states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, undertaken by Jan Sahas social development society with the support of UN Women, found that 70% of respondents across all three states became involved in manual scavenging after marriage while 30% entered the practice before marriage. By state 60% of respondents in Bihar, 77% of respondents in Uttar Pradesh, and 76% of respondents in Madhya Pradesh started manual scavenging after marriage (Jan Sahas 2014).

Scavenging caste: Using a broom, a tin plate and a drum (basket) they clear and carry human excreta from public/ private latrines, on their heads to dumping grounds. The manual scavengers have different caste names in different parts of the country like bhangi, balmiki, chuhra, mehtar, mazhabi, lal begi, hela, hallalkhor, doms, bansfors, rawats, han, hadi, paki, thoti, mira, balashahi etc. (Ramaswamy 2005, Srivastva 1997). Their names may be different in different states but their fate is the same. They all belong to the lowest rank in social hierarchy, they are untouchables or last in the caste hierarchy. These untouchables or today's Dalits have the most degrading work or occupations like manual scavenging, cleaning, sweeping etc. these people and their caste are demoralized for long time that they have no hope for anything good for them hence they prepared their mind that this work is for them.

Speaking on a session Wilson said we have internalized caste system. When I ask them (manual scavengers) why they continue doing it, they say it is my work, work that has been reserved not for the dominant castes, but for my (Dalit) people. Parliamentarians themselves ask questions like who will clean the toilets if they don't. Also, there's no public pressure to end manual scavenging in the country he rued (The News Minute 2016).

The persistence of manual scavenging is linked to the caste system with about 1.3 million Dalits, mostly women, make a living as manual scavengers across India. The prime reason why manual scavenging continues according to the government is the existence of primitive unsanitary latrines meaning those without water, where the excreta must be physically removed. There are more than 2.6 million dry latrines in India, according to census 2011. In addition, there are 1,314,652 toilets where excreta are flushed in to open drains and 794,390 dry latrines where human excreta are cleaned manually (First Post 2016).

Types of Scavenging: The international labour organization (ILO) describes three forms of manual scavenging in India:

1. Removal of human excrement from public streets and dry latrines.
2. Cleaning septic tank.
3. Cleaning gutters and sewers.

Manual scavenging involves the removal of raw human excreta usually no personal protective equipment by the worker doing the job. The excreta are piled into baskets, which the workers carry on their heads to locations sometimes several kilometers away from the latrines. Male person cleans the gutter and sewer or septic tank in a very harsh condition. They also clean railway tracks. Railways also is the biggest violator where many train carriages have toilets dropping the excreta from trains on the tracks and who employ scavengers to clean the track manually. Indian train toilets have traditionally emptied excreta on to the train tracks, which is unhygienic as well as corrosive to the tracks. Every so often, the railways budget contains a suggestion for installing bio- toilets in train coaches, but the progress continues to remain slow (The News Minute 2016). The inhuman practice of cleaning and carrying human excreta by Dalit community women on head, hip or shoulder exists even today. These

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women are forced to work in unthinkable conditions, humiliated and discriminated by upper caste community members.

Manual Scavenger and their Health: Women who engaged in this work affected by many health problems, these women states 'we don't get anything from the government, no mask, no gloves, nothing to prevent diseases when the excrement comes in contact with our hands and legs' (Human RightsWatch 2014, NCW 2015). Direct handling of excreta by the manual scavengers lead to grave health issues such as vomiting, headache, skin and respiratory diseases, trachoma, diarrhoea, and sometimes prone to psychological effects too, because unhealthy methods of scavenging have serious impact on their physical and mental aspects of the scavengers (Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan 2011). Jan Sahas social development society, states that the situation becomes more appalling while one of the scavengers is seen with an over-head basket, filled with excreta. At all times, and especially during the rainy season, the contents of the basket drip onto a scavenger's hair, clothes and body (Jan Sahas 2014). Still in society they are Dalit sanitation workers who occupy the bottom of the complex class and caste hierarchy, worst victims of untouchability they are considered untidy and impure and are placed at the lowest levels of caste society.

Condition of Manual Scavenger:

Manual-scavenging practices continues almost all over India. Lakhs of people are still forced to work as manual scavengers. People engaged in manual scavenging live their lives as social outcastes and also stigma of untouchability. The unhealthy methods of scavenging have serious impact on their physical and mental aspects of the scavenger. Most of them have no other skills and no other option of work for their livelihood. Thus they are bound to do this work. According to socio-economic caste census 2011, about 180,657 households are engaged in this degrading work for a livelihood. The state of Maharashtra, with 63,713, tops the list with the largest number of households working as manual scavengers, by the states of Madhya Pradesh- 23,093, Uttar Pradesh- 17,619, Tripura- 17,332, Karnataka- 15,375, Daman & Diu- 6,277, and Bihar- 5,296, where the majority of them are women (Census of India 2011). The caste census has starkly revealed deprivations of many kinds. But the data about manual scavenging goes beyond that, and shows gross degradation of humanity. There is still a dispute over the

exact number of people who are involved with the work of manual scavenging. The estimates provided by the government are significantly lower than those given by the civil society groups.

The practice of manual scavenging, officially banned since decades in India, continues with impunity in several states. Various efforts have been made by the government and the society as a whole to end manual scavenging. However, there is still a lot of work to be done.

Laws for Manual Scavenging:

Employment of Manual Scavengers and construction of dry latrines {Prohibition} ACT, 1993-

The Act inter alia, provides that no person shall:

1. Engage in or employ for permit to be engaged in or employed for any other person for manually carry human excreta; or
2. Construct or maintain a dry latrine.

The employment of manual scavengers and construction of dry latrines [prohibition] Act, 1993, provides for the prohibition of employment of manual scavengers as well as construction of dry latrines and for the regulation of construction and maintenance of water sealed latrines and matter connected therewith.

Construction of dry toilets, as well as hiring scavenger, was made a punishable offence with a term of imprisonment up to 1 year and a fine of rupees 2000. The fine was also subjected to an increase of rupees 100 per day if the violation continued (Act no. 46 of 1993) Despite the stringent penalties imposed under the Act, there was not much success in ending manual scavenging. It has been widely accepted that even after two decades since the law was passed, the states did not commit themselves fully to the cause, which resulted in the improper implementation of the 1993 Act. The main criticism based on this Act was it was purely made from the sanitation perspective, but the actual objective of this Act should be to restore human dignity and was liable to talk about rehabilitation and rejuvenation of manual scavenger.

The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavenger and their Rehabilitation ACT, 2013:

The Act came in to force on 6 December 2013 across India except Jammu Kashmir. A new law was enacted to improve the mechanisms,

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toughen accountability and to widen the definition of scavenging, there was also an overall shift in the focus to not only end scavenging but also to ensure the protection of the communities who are engaged in the work of manual scavenging. The law prohibits the employment of manual scavengers, the manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks without protective equipment and the construction of unsanitary latrines. The law also provides rehabilitation of manual scavengers and alternative employment to them within the bound manner. From now onwards, the construction and maintenance of the insanitary latrines has become an offence, therefore no one can be employed or engaged as the manual scavengers.

Main features of the ACT:

1. The Act prohibits the employment of manual scavengers, the manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks without protective equipment, and the construction of unsanitary latrines.
2. The definition of 'manual scavenger' has been widened to include a person engaged or employed, inter alia, for manual cleaning of human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit, railways tracks etc.
3. Express provisions for identification of manual scavengers and unsanitary latrines.
4. Prohibition of hazardous manual cleaning of septic tanks and sewers, so as to ensure that health and safety of such workers is not compromised.
5. More stringent penal provision for contravention of the new Act.
6. Vigilance and monitoring committees to be set up at the sub – division, states and central levels.

Rehabilitation Provisions:

1. Manual scavengers who are identified in urban areas receive a photo identity card giving information about dependent family members.
2. An initial, one – time cash assistance shall be provided.
3. Manual scavengers are to be allotted a residential plot and financial assistance for construction, or a ready – built house and scholarship for

children as per the relevant scheme of the central or state government or the local authorities as the case may be.

4. They shall be trained in a livelihood skill, subject to eligibility, and provided a monthly stipend of Rupees 3000, during the training.

5. Shall be provided with subsidy and concessional loan if they want to take up an alternative profession, subject to eligibility.

6. Legal and programmatic assistance will also be provided as notified by the central or state government.

7. Manual scavengers in rural areas will be rehabilitated by as per the previous provision relating to urban manual scavengers.

Penal Provisions:

1. For employing manual scavengers or failing to demolish unsanitary latrines; imprisonment of one year or a fine of rupees 50,000, or both, for the first violation. For subsequent violations by the same person, the punishment shall stand at imprisonment for two years, or a fine of rupees 1 lakh, or both.

2. For hazardous cleaning of septic tanks and sewer; imprisonment of two years and \or a fine of rupees 2 lakh for the first violation. For subsequent violations by the same person, the punishment shall stand enhanced to imprisonment for five years, or fine of rupees 5lakh, or both.

The 2013 Act a time bound plan was envisaged for this but implementation has lagged far behind plans and intentions, as can be seen from the fact there has hardly been any prosecutions even when violations of the law have taken place with the knowledge of and at the behest of authorities. In addition on the law of manual scavenging Bezwada Wilson, National Convenor, Safai Karamchari Andolan argued that there has been law against manual scavenging in place since 1993. There are over 650 districts in this country, each headed by a district authority. However, in the last many years of presenting law no case has been filed by any such authority against a violator of the law (The News Minute 2016). In March 2014, the Supreme Court of India declared that there were 9.6 million dry latrines being manually emptied but the exact number of manual scavengers is disputed – official figures but it at less than 700,000 but campaigners say it is closer to 1.2 million. The Supreme

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Court has also reprimanded state governments many times for their negligence and failure. The Supreme Court has also noted that the progress has been very little, and the survey has identified and acknowledged only a minute section of people who are engaged in the work of manual scavenging (Safai Karamchari Andolan 2014).

However, the dehumanizing practice of manual scavenging, arising from the continued existence of insanitary latrines and most important highly forced and imposed by caste system, form of hereditary slavery, still exists in many parts of the country. The Dalit caste people had to involve in this work, thus they are those who are engaged in this degrading work are at the lowest rung of the caste society. Manual scavenging involves discrimination and untouchability, which forced them to perform this low work for dominant caste people. Due to this practice Dalit women faced vulnerabilities, discrimination in all sphere of life, their lives become miserable, though they don't have any other option of changing their occupation because of their birth in particular castes. And it is caste beliefs, that lower status group were born to clean the pollution of higher castes. Although being born in a lower caste then they don't have rights or change their social status. In fact this practice is actually caste based and only lower caste indulged in this work, also most of them have no other skills and so cannot do any other work for their livelihood. Training them in other occupations has mostly remained a plan on paper. Hence they remained marginalized in society today despite the constitutional provisions, which direct the state to promote their educational and economic interest. Though due to scavenging practice they had serious impact on their physical and mental aspects. Their communities are still employed to carry out the country's basic sanitary services, and they don't have necessary literacy skills to take advantage of government reservation in education and employment. This is directly related to their poorer social and economic status as women, and they are continuous engaged in to the most hazardous and degrading work for survival.

Even after constitutional attempts it is shameful to know that people mostly women who are manual scavengers are still engaged in this inhuman degrading work which is totally imposed through caste system and because they are bottom rung of caste society and at the mercy of villagers for their daily food, shelter, and other livelihood things. These women had no rights and had only duties and obligations. This

discrimination also means that women scavengers have extremely limited work opportunities other than manual scavenging work and because of that they physically live in segregated communities in the village, town or cities. Due to the low literacy level among the community [women] members, are not well informed about the social welfare schemes. Hence accessing information and claiming benefits also becomes difficult for these communities who are not involved in decision-making process and local governance.

Scavenging remains a complicated caste based system and social economic problem that prominently have to be appeared in agenda and dire need of radical change of mindset. The people who engaged in this work need very special attention for their liberation and upliftment and required fundamental change.

DALIT WOMEN

UNEQUAL, POWERLESS, & VIOLATED: AN OBSERVATION

Indian Constitution guarantees equality for all but the deep-rooted caste system in the society has never allowed the Dalit women to be treated as equal as upper castes. The attitude of higher caste people towards the lower caste (untouchables) even today has not changed. The practices of untouchability by and large continue to still exist. Atrocities against them are on increase. Due to untouchability practices the lower caste people considered to be impure and polluting suffered from physical and social segregation and exclusion in every sphere of life. Further this segregation and exclusion led to suppression and discrimination of their freedom, restriction on their mobility that are turned in to denial of equality in accessing in various spheres of life like socio-economic and culture (Thorat 2013). Society has failed to address the multiple levels of discrimination faced by Dalit women that are actually deep rooted in caste. This is the reality of our society hence I want to present this dual mind set who runs through with hierarchical practice in society. Also this chapter present the understanding of the problems and challenges faced by them. Further, study gives fieldwork observations on Dalit women, who live in remote villages in different states and sufferer of caste and gender discrimination. The aim of this analysis is to highlight the harsh reality of the caste and gender discrimination, violence and struggle that Dalit women face every day of their miserable lives. As well as the analysis of the socio – economic status, which is lower in the society on the basis of inequalities of caste and gender. The problems face by these women due to severe exploitation by the upper caste members. Some hierarchical practices still being followed, that stands as a proof that lots needs to be done to eliminate caste discrimination. The problems of Dalit women are unique in many ways; they suffer from the burden of gender bias, caste discrimination, and economic deprivation. Hence the violation of Dalit women's rights is characteristics of the intersection of caste and gender.

Dalit women constituted 16.60 percent of India's female population in 2011. They are discriminated by caste, religion and untouchability, which in turn results in the denial of their social, economic, cultural and political

rights. They become vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation due to their gender and caste. Also, they are deprived of their basic survival needs. Illiteracy, lack of awareness and poverty makes them helpless, voiceless and completely oppressed, vulnerable to different forms of sexual abuses. Especially rural Dalit women become the worst victims of atrocities.

According to caste census 2011, Dalits make up 16.2% of the total population most of them living under the poverty lines. The Dalit women are sufferer more they are living in abject poverty and sub-human conditions. In most of the cases, they do not have proper houses to live in, they don't have any facilities of pure drinking water, sewage and toilet etc. most of them have to live in small hutments without proper sanitation and hygiene. As caste census (2011) shows that less than 10% of Dalit households can afford safe drinking water, in fact only 41.2% of Dalit households enjoy tap water from a treated source, and 2.9% draw water from rivers, canals, ponds, lakes or other sources. Collecting of water is the main duty of a woman in (rural area) domestic domain she fetch water from far- far place sometimes they cover very long distance, and they are become most victim of caste oppression during fetching water. They face harassment during fetching water and sometimes not allowed to touch wells/ taps, the upper caste women pour water to the vessels of Dalit women. The vast majority of Dalit women depend on the goodwill of the dominant castes for access to water from public wells, electricity and toilets, which is indicative of their deplorable social condition. Dalit society has consistently poor sanitation facilities. For example in 2011, census shows 66.2% of Dalit households continued to lack toilet facilities and resorted to open defecation, and only 33.8% of Dalit households had toilets within their houses. It is worse in rural areas. So the total access to toilets is 57.5% for Dalits compared to the national average of 87.2% - 30% difference. When we look on the state wise percentage of the availability of latrine facilities among the Dalits in India as per the 2011 census. It highlights the states where the availability of toilets is less than 50%. The following states are Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhatisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, where more than 80% of Dalits do not have any toilet facility. On visits of villages, in some places the structure of toilet shown, but the actual situation is showing that only half made walls of the toilet stand unused. Thus, it is no surprise that a large number of rural Dalit population

defecate in open areas. During field visits many women informed about open defecation with pain how it is difficult to survive in this condition, many times upper caste don't allow them for defecate in their farms due to untouchability and they haven't own land so they go far places for defecation even in night also. It shows that most of the Dalit villages don't have toilet facilities. Which in turn results the sufferer for all this lacking are women and girls. Women and young girls go to forest, interior in village jungle, or in farm for defecation. During defecation, many girls and women abducted or stabbed and sometimes are raped. When dire need of nature's call these women often go far places (in night also) because of shame, far from their houses for defecation and become easy targets. At most of the places day today many cases reported that during open defecation women are victimized, sexually harassed, raped and molested by upper caste men. When analysing the situation, open defecation is one of the main reasons for crime against Dalit women. Many cases of exploitation faced by these women during defecation registered and reported in daily news. Open defecation is the serious problem specifically for women. These types of case noticed in daily routine.

Across the country, the Dalit colonies are separated from the main village or out side the village or last in the village from the upper castes areas. I noticed in many states that the Dalits had to live separated from the main village, and in its most polluted surroundings. They have lack of essential facilities or limited access to facilities in their localities. The unavailability of basic facilities can be seen in most Dalit hamlets. The path or road for entering to Dalit basti was also separated. Mostly Dalit women live in small huts made of clay, stones, bamboo, thatched huts, few lives in pukka houses provided by government. Their residents mostly found near cremation grounds, or outside the villages near to jungles or outside the street. Most of the development initiatives of village's, basic facilities, government provisions, etc. are provided in the middle of the village means all primary facilities found in the main village area the centre of upper caste residents. Though their livelihood was bound with those from the dominant caste village. They are provided several services to the main village (upper caste house holds) including menial labour, washing, cleaning and sanitation. In fact, they are totally prohibited from any social engagement. Strictly or depend on the availability of space for Dalits they had to live on the periphery of the village or in separate habitation. This

caste based residential segregation leads to the exclusion of all the facilities, like big wells, water taps (or water access), Anganwadi, health facilities like small medical center or dispensary, hospitals, police station, clear well, ponds, etc., in few Dalit basti often seen, water pipe line is there but without water, electricity wire is there but without current, and vast majority of Dalit women depend on the goodwill of upper caste community members for access to many things. This is because so called lower caste people don't have as much access of things as those living in the centre of the village. This segregation and separation defines more rigidity, which resulted in even greater action of impurity and pollution on them and their habitation. Most of the districts are extremely backward only small shops and small trading are found, agriculture and related work are main occupation of people, Dalit women also engaged in it, but this is also seasonal, most of the villages are situated far away from the city center and thus less affected by the city culture and values. Dalit women are unorganized workers at most of the places and hence whenever they assert for wages and reject any work they have faced such assaults. One of the major reasons for the vulnerability of Dalit women is their low economic status. Most of Dalit women earn a living through daily wage employment. They came into greater contact with the landlords and other persons who provide them work. There are frequent cases where landlords use abusive language, sexual harassment and other forms of violence and humiliation against Dalit women (Human Rights Watch 1999). Wage discrimination against Dalit women is also rampant problem; they are received less than the market wage rate for their labour (Shah et al., 2006). In addition, another issue is the lack of access to health facilities that is emerged as serious issue, example most of women engaged in caste based work like (manual scavenging) that many Dalit women are made to perform routinely exposes them to serious and sometimes fatal health hazards. Accordingly, the Dalit community in general and Dalit women, in particular, are frequently refused admission to hospitals and denied access to health care and treatment due to untouchability (Shah et al., 2006). In most of the villages women admitted that they don't have efficient basic health facilities available in their hamlets or in their Bastis. They also discriminated by nurse, midwives and Anganwadi workers. Further, the right to an education free from discrimination is not secured for Dalit children or specifically Dalit girl. Dalit children face consistent hurdles in their access to education. The literacy rate of Dalit women is 41.9% in 2001 and 56.5% in 2011.

But still behind the general women whose literacy rate is 64.6%. In many states the literacy rate amongst Dalit women are very low, these states are Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh (Caste Census 2011). A study conducted by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan and supported by UNICEF shows that discrimination of various kinds plays a big role in the high dropout of Dalit children from schools. The study conducted in 41 primary schools, 36 middle schools, and 17 secondary schools in (Nalanda) Bihar, (Hardoi) Uttar Pradesh, (Jodhpur) Rajasthan and (Beed) in Maharashtra examined various facets of discrimination. Children said, “Teachers don’t give proper attention to us. We have sit on the ground. It’s very difficult.... The quality of food (mid day meal) is also very poor. We also get very little food in lunch as we are served the last, our stomach does not fill” a Dalit girl student in Bihar. Dalit children in Uttar Pradesh were also assigned menial caste based tasks like cleaning the yard, filling up water baskets and cleaning the toilets. Even Dalit girl children were seldom allowed to use toilets but have to clean them (Times of India 2009). The economic, social, educational, cultural status of Dalit women is directly linked to violence and subjugation, which does not give them to space to fully enjoy constitutional rights. It is absolutely true that most of the cases of violence on Dalit women happen as part of the caste atrocity. Hence I want to present some observation on Dalit women who are living and worked in very harsh position for their lives in caste society, which are closed for them. Discrimination on the basis of caste and untouchability and many inhuman caste practices are imposed on them. Also through purity and pollution principle women are kept bonded. They don’t have right to access of drinking water and sanitation. Because they are surviving in separate settlements, they don’t have basic things for lives. Dalit women and children are malnourished. Liberation is made almost impossible due to grinding poverty. Many of them end up as agricultural labourer or scavenger or in unorganized sector of employment. Being landless and denied access to resources, their life becomes miserable. Despite laws to protect them caste abuse, untouchability and social evil still rampant in the society, their situation is still worse and need special attention. In this regard, presenting some observation/ analysis on caste and gender in which Dalit women are the most violated, powerless and still unequal in society.

Accordingly, I want to discuss the position of Musahar Dalit women, who are living in Dalit basti of Musahar. 'Musahari' basti or villages situated in states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where I personally interacted with these community women, they facing serious problems of untouchability and caste discrimination, hunger, starvation, malnutrition, and abject poverty. Musahar is a Dalit community, they are Dalits among the Dalits, categorized as the Maha Dalit communities in Indian caste society and inhabited largely in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. They are isolated socially, economically, politically. They are sufferers of caste violence and untouchability, these community women works very hard for their livelihood. They face untouchability practices in their day-to-day life. They are strictly segregated to other caste in all spheres. Their living area is separate they are not allowed to utilize the bathing – ghats (ponds), tea stalls, public temples, wells, ponds etc. They lived in very small houses made of bamboo, leaves, straws, clay most of them cannot afford to use electricity in their houses. They live in small basti's called 'musahari basti' or 'Tola', the surroundings of these bastis are very dirty and stinking most of these bastis are un-cleaned and polluted, garbage and other dirty things are found, pigs are roaming around, mostly the inhabitants are intoxicated, they don't have proper basic living things like water for drinking and for other things due to this most of the women and children do not take bath, because of shortage of water. They don't have proper electricity and other basic things (like sanitation) of life for daily lives. Most of the women are busy in their daily work routine in the fields or farms or construction sites, they work long hours, they don't have time for own like cleanliness and hygiene practices or comb hair, cleaned clothes, due to pressure of hard work. Even some women are stinking of wine. It was noticed that consumption of alcohol, smoking, and chewing tobacco is very common in male parts. These women can't afford one time proper meal in a day. They cook different type of saag or wild grass, chicken feathers, rat, snail, frog, carrion, because it's free of cost. Food security is a big issue because they are very poor. They eat what are found in villages because its dire need of them. Even today one can find Musahar who eat rat, snail and carrion as a result of poverty. Their basti is totally cut off with main village area, even today upper caste people avoid entering in their 'tolas' or bastis. They are the socially marginalized, educationally deprived, physically exploited caste. Due to ignorance and illiteracy most of women believe in superstitions in which they are become victims. Many women trapped in practices like

witchcraft, also targeting by particular violence called witch branding or witch hunting. These women faced social disability, which regarded by customary caste practices. They are living a life in extreme poverty. Women of these communities live a life most miserable and below the level of human dignity. They contribute to the family income by working as daily wage labours, or most menial works. Most of them are treated as bonded labours in fact they are bound by dominant caste with tremendous (social) caste force or pressure to ensure caste services and doing the customary responsibility as to work on the farms of landowners without asking for any compensation or any rights. In fact they are abused, assaulted in working areas. Women are not aware about their rights, and even if they are, they are not prepared to assert them. Though under social pressure they don't efforts to improve their miserable or wretched conditions and never resisted against the injustice meted out to them in their day-to-day lives. The landlords give them small amount or kind as wages. They also face severe verbal abuses and sexual harassment (Banerjee 2015) The literacy rate of the musahar is extremely low, 3-6% in general and 2% for girls in most states. Their parents do not realize the value of school education as they send their child to tend cattle (Prasad 2007). The girl children who do go to school usually give up after primary or secondary level. In the villages, I had met with these children very few girl children going to school only boys are going to school but their number also very low. All the children roaming around here and there, they are very dirty, not wear proper clothes even some children both boys and girls are half naked, all are untidy, unclean and malnourished. They busy in their animals like hen, pig, when I asked them for schooling they are least interested. Lots of reasons behind these children are not going to school. The schools are quite far and most of the time the parents have no money and hence are unable to send them. Due to their position in caste hierarchy children face discrimination and untouchability practices. In school they are physically and mentally harassed on the grounds of their caste status and are addressed as dirty, rat eater, pig wanderers, rag pickers. More vulnerable are Musahar girl children as they are immensely demoralized as other children would never sit beside them, communicate, play, study or dine with them. As a result these girls often drop out of the school. Another reason of dropping out from the school is that the girl child helps their parents in the field or farm or in their domestic chores. When I enter in there houses the young girls making food, and some busy in other domestic

work. These women are ignorant of the benefits available to them. Likewise, family welfare schemes, sanitation, electricity and saving facilities or other government facilities are not used due to lack of knowledge. They are treated very badly for so long in the hands of others that they have lost all self-esteem. Musahar woman has been one of the chronic impoverish, subjugate and marginalized. When I met with these women they are untidy and unclean wear very old and improper cloths, they don't have time for themselves, morning to evening they are very busy, some are busy in field or construction site or brick making and other menial works or some are in collecting some jungle (jungle) food item for their meals. Interior of houses are very dirty and unhygienic in condition. Their houses are almost wretched in position made of clay and stones, animals also roaming there. They face caste discrimination, which was widely prevalent along with practice of untouchability existing in numerous forms. They are exploited manipulated in relation to the condition and equality of work employment. Also harassed by other caste people in many ways. They are most marginalized in caste society. They are still trapped in poverty and ignorance and deprived of basic human rights of livelihood and even the right to live a life of dignity. They were exterminated from the mainstream society as their presence was unbearable for the upper caste people.

Most of Dalit population lives under the poverty line, the poverty in their households compel them to work as domestic worker, agricultural labourers, and manual labourers at construction sites. Some of them are also engaged in animal farming, piggery, poultry, fishing, small handicraft etc. About 90% of women working in unorganized sector are mainly from lower castes (Jogdanand 2005). Many Dalit families in the villages are landless and engaged in agricultural fields as labourers they work very hard for long hours in the field but when we look at the economic situation of Dalit women reveals that their work force structure is such that they rarely own any land, or they earn very fewer wages. Though a large majority of them are agricultural labourers but it was also noticeable that many Dalit communities have not worked on land for agricultural activities because the lack of agricultural field for cultivation. Also this work is mostly seasonal. Very hard to find other work so many Dalit women working in unorganized fields. Some are migrated to other states to find out the work. Due to extreme poverty and poor economic condition they are bound in compulsion to work as bonded labour with

their whole family including children. Hence abject poverty in these communities, which in turn revealed their vulnerability to remain in exploitative forms of labours like mining/quarrying. It also reflects the inaccessibility of any skilled employment for them, in the absence of any educational opportunities. The highly excluded categories among them often become bonded labours, migrant workers, or casual and contract labour. A survey in 2001 shows that 97% of workers in stone mines are indebted and majority of them is in bondage. These debts are passed on from one generation to the next, and can even cause a worker to be sold to another contractor. Women are the most exploited, low wages, without health care benefits such as maternity leave, they often return to work a day after childbirth for fear of lost wages (Basu 2010). Dalit women worked in quarrying are generally uneducated, unskilled labourers and also very poor. They work under subhuman conditions without any safety equipment. Hence, no work safety measures are vulnerable to serious health hazards, which also affect their reproductive health, and are exposed to sexual exploitation. They face constant harassment from the mining companies. While the large - scale mining has no space for women, the small –scale sector absorbs them only as contract or bonded labour under highly exploitative conditions. Wages always less than those for men, they do not get a paid holidays even one day in a week or during pregnancy or childbirth. No work equipment is provided, there are no toilets or work facilities. The women are frequently exploited, physical and sexual, of the mine – owners, contractors and other men (MAC 2003). India’s major quarries are spread over the states of Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, where I interacted with Dalit women working in mines or in stonework. Almost everywhere they are worked by internal migrant labour people forced by poverty, drought, famine, or failed crops to take up the hardest possible employment opportunities. In Rajasthan alone, there are 2.5 million mine workers employed in over 30,000 small and large mines. 98 percent of this work force is tribal or Dalit ‘belonging to the untouchable caste’, which places them among the most marginalized of India’s poor (Basu 2010). These women join the labour force in quarries and mines to increase their low family income, to be able to repay debts. In the quarries women have separate tasks from men handpicking, cleaning, loading and crushing the stones. Some time collecting coal, scours the dumps for waste coal that can be sold as household fuel to earn a few rupees. Most of women engaged in this work with there whole family. They are work in harsh conditions for

long- long hours. Depend on their masters or (malik, sahib) who provide them work, often treated very badly, abused and violated, some times harassed. The condition of women are very worst they are not safe at all, despite they are work all the day for very few money. They are paid far less then men, with this very low income and unable to get out of the situation of poverty (Gunasekaran EPW) These workers toil under extreme conditions, with hardly any protective gear, in mining work women indulge in chisel stones in smaller pieces for tiles, cutting and polishing the stones. Another work is cutting and breaking stones in to small pieces with hammer, whole of the day. They have no work safety/rights, they work like 'slaves' (generation to generation) and get sick, sufferings of many type of diseases. A recent report on stone quarrying in Rajasthan states that official figures for workers suffering from silicosis stand at 5,307 till April 2016 and 248 people have died between 2013 and 2016 (Ghosh 2016). Moreover they get very small amount of money. The poverty and hardship in which the Dalit women lives is well illustrated with their daily diet, there is no money for eating daily two times enough/ nourished food. Most of them are malnourished, they are living in small huts, small stone house, or in tents and as result they are vulnerable for other forms of exploitation and abuses. This kind of exploitation is especially common in many state's construction sector, particularly in the unregulated areas of brick making and stone quarrying. This type of industry are the main source of these lower caste community people for their livelihood, for generations these workers trapped in poverty and in debt bondage to the owners of the quarries. Majority of Dalit women are engaged in these types of work they often seen on roadside or in construction site as a stone- cutter for their livelihood. In continuity, the other work in which Dalit women and their family indulge, are leather work, many women in villages of Agra, Uttar Pradesh are working in leather work, making shoes and slippers/sandals, married, unmarried, small girl are indulge in this work, making and supplying the goods for the manufacturing factories. Most of the work they done at home, weaving, stitching, pasting, decorating, and coloring the leather pairs of shoes and sandals, whole of the day. The wages decide on the pairs of shoes they are working on, almost very meager in fact working hour is so long. As leather -work has traditionally been considered impure and a caste based occupation. Wages are lower, which decided by factory owner and Dalit (women) workers depend on them because they are the work provider. Their condition revealed that

they engaged in this work because no other alternatives, although this work is consider totally for the Dalits who are at the bottom of the social hierarchy, are less resistant to exploitation by employers (Srivastva 2017). Since the leather shoe factory is the only option for their subsistence, they are highly vulnerable to being abused. Agra shoes industries are one of the largest leather clusters in the country. In Agra, there are 3.5 million labours working in the shoe-manufacturing units, while in unorganized small- scale units, the number is above 8 million (Times of India 2016). Moreover the labours engaged in these factories most of the number is Dalit. Another work in which Dalit women are engaged is fishing work, they are main labours and tenants of coastal lands like Orissa. They lived in impoverished villages and most of women engaged in preparation of salt water dry fish. The coastal villages are mainly fishing villages often remote and inaccessible, women of these communities are very poor and, most of them uneducated, trapped in indebted, facing untouchability and caste discrimination and exclusion on large level. Basic facilities such as drinking water, housing, sanitation and health services are often missing. They suffer from malnutrition and dietary imbalances. In addition, there is a large concentration of Dalit women as weavers, making carpet in villages of Rajasthan. These women are very poor, illiterate, they don't have knowledge of marketing, and their situation is very pathetic they are under the clutches of contractors for their earnings they are working for long hours, while making carpet they sitting long time on looms. Some are engaged in bidi making, with greater contact of tobacco, which dangerous for health.

These women work like bonded labour; bondage is usually passed on from one generation to next and Dalit women are deprived of other options. Hence, the overwhelming majority of them are bonded labour victims in different sectors. Their livelihood totally depends upon upper caste people who give them work and decide their wages not only wages but their life also. They are very poor uneducated women, mostly lives in rural areas. Many Dalit women are engaged in basket making and rope making in different villages of Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh. Their living condition is very miserable. They weave baskets and barely earn a few rupees per day. Some times they didn't sell their products for long times. And they don't find any other work for livelihood. Most of them don't have their own houses they sleep or live on roadsides, their everyday life is full of discrimination and insecurities.

They live separated from the main village, mostly in kuchha houses, or many live in small tents outside the village. They go to city's outskirts forest areas to collect their needs and are harassed by forest guards who then they have to bribe. They are constantly harassed by upper caste people and police. Often Dalit women due to poverty are engaged in construction site, or work on road side for carrying bricks, cement mixture and water pots on their heads or they climbing ladders and staircases providing the materials to skilled masons. Here, the study is trying to discuss the socio-economic condition of these women through the works or kind of unorganized works in which most of Dalit women indulge, the serious challenges faced by these women due to socio-economic deprivation and lack of access to essential goods and work, also the problems and condition of Dalit woman in which she is living and workings which is very miserable and pathetic, imposed by caste culture. Lower positioning in caste society cause Dalit women face tremendous pressure of untouchability and poverty in their whole life. They are sufferer of the curse of caste practices. They are not expected to enter in upper caste homes or restricted in all and some parts of upper caste premises. The wells, water taps and ponds are preferably described as the property of upper caste people. Dalit women are not allowed to fetch water from the common water bodies and often-denied access or have restricted to access of water sources. In many areas, Dalits cannot use these water sources in any circumstances. Even in public taps or wells they cannot draw water only when upper caste have finished drawing water, or upper caste women pour water to the pots of Dalit women with maintaining distance. Even they are not allowing using the same bathing ghats (ponds). Upper caste people attached this with the 'tradition' of caste hierarchy, which is believed Dalits are not allowed to fetch water from upper caste wells or taps and no one allowed breaking this rules. Upper caste, constantly remind them that they are untouchables, they cannot touch the well from which dominant caste community members draw water. Although, when we look back to see in 1927 dr. B.R Ambedkar start Mahad Satyagraha, which was led Dalits to fetch water from a public water tank to break caste barriers and give out the message that no one is untouchable. But in reality the fact is that this work is still remains unfinished. Also their presence restricted in many public places like temples or same religious places, transport systems or even in public health services.

Due to caste and untouchability, most of Dalit girls dropout the schools, their situation are very bad they are not allowed to sit with other upper caste children or same row. Even restricted in serving or touch the meals or when meals are distributed they are separated to those of upper castes children. They are often made to clean class rooms/hostels rooms/toilets/garden etc. Most of the schools are situated in the dominant caste localities and Dalit children have to travel on an average half an hour or more to reached school, infact, many times Dalit children have to travel almost 3-4 kilometre daily for reaching the school. I visited many schools or school cum residents to know the situation of the Dalit girl children. In Odisha, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh. The situation/condition of these schools are very pathetic. In Odisha, I visited Sewashram Sc/St residential school, Nayagarh, the condition of the building was very poor, doors and windows were not in good condition for security purpose, and rooms are not spacious, also in miserable condition. Watchmen, guard, cleaner not found, student's don't have proper bedding, one small bed for two girls, Dalit and tribal student's clean own hostels rooms, washrooms, and toilets. Even no medical facility was available. Boys hostel rooms used for morning classes due to shortage of space. It was noticed that because they don't have other option these girls in different states coming from very abject poverty, poor infrastructure and dearth of proper accommodation have forced them in the interior districts of the states to reside in makeshift hostels, compromising on their safety. Most of the building was not in good condition, for security purpose also. There is no sweeper to sweep the school- yards or clean the toilets. Consequently, the absence of poorer infrastructure and the unsafe conditions have contributed to the rise in the dropout rates among the girls. Many incidents reported from the government run school cum residential hostel for marginalized. Here I want to give examples, the incident of sexual assault on minor inmates of the government run residential school for marginalized community girls in Jhaliyamari village of Kanker district, Chhattisgarh, in 2013, the girl students sexually assaulted by cook, care taker and warden cum security person of the school hostel since long time. Even 'some small girls understood that this is the part of education, which was very terrible'. The incident is very heinous and abominable. The school hostel was in a small wretched hut, very small space, no proper bedding, one bed (or cot) for four or three girls, condition was very pathetic, no basic amenities are available like no washroom, bathroom, no safe drinking

water supply etc. students going to near pond for their daily routine, and without any security, several irregularities were noticed. The full report submitted in National Commission for Women, I was also part of this inquiry committee. Another incident occurred in Odisha, in 2015, Sewa Ashram School run by Odisha government's Sc/St caste development department, incidents reported from residential school where girl students of marginalized community getting pregnant. Several cases were reported from various residential schools across the state. Scheduled tribe and Scheduled caste Minister admitted in the assembly that at least 16 students of various Sewashram schools had been the victims of rape in the past five years (Telegraph 2015). These cases indicate the poor infrastructure as well as poor mindset of the whole set up whom always taken granted marginalized community people. Dalit girl face gender violence that is rooted in caste, and whole state machinery also bound by caste practice, which imposed in a form of atrocities on Dalit community.

Denial of the right to work and free choice of employment, that is very close to the caste system. Dalit women are forced to work in polluting and degrading occupations such as manual scavenging and are subject to exploitative labour arrangements such as bonded labour, migratory labour.

This indicates the clearly economic compulsions to stop many Dalit women from escaping customary caste occupations. Though this is directly related to their low or poorer social and economic status as women, and they are incapable of being avoided the most humiliating, degrade and hazardous caste work for survival.

Engaging in unclean occupations that derive from the culturally polluting character of human waste, cleaning of sewage tanks, sweeping the roads, working with dead skin of dead cattle. In return, they get a handful of grain, small amount of money and old clothes occasionally, or monthly very few money. If they do not do this kind of work, the upper castes people will threaten them and force them to leave the village. I found that Dalit women in every state mostly indulged into categories of work that are culturally regarded as most intensely polluting, unclean and socially degrading.

Dalit women face a serious problem of hunger, malnutrition and abject poverty due to lower position in caste society. It was observed that due to poverty they did not provide good and enough food therefore most of

Dalit women suffering from severe malnutrition and anaemia. When they didn't get enough food they try to get some other things due to hunger, they are eating mango kernels, dry tamarind seeds, wild plants, leafs, or some wild roots, generally some of these are toxic elements but hunger needs food. The hunger death of Dalits and Adivasis in villages of Odisha due to eating the mango kernel was shocking for the country (The Hindu 2010). Even to day many women and their families are still eating these types of things due to lack of food grain. I met with women in villages who are very poor they don't have one time of enough food to eat properly still they used to eat mango kernel and tamarind seeds powder, and other jungle (forest) things because of poverty they don't have other options. Even Musahar community, still eating rats, snail and other forest greens. Poor labourer women and their families still eating undernourished food due to poverty.

Dalit women are also sufferer of natural calamities like cyclone, drought, or heavy rainfall, because of this situation, their life totally shattered; being women they face serious problems.

It was also found that Dalit women trapped in things like sorcery, spirit worship, magic, these are types of beliefs, which are unhealthy customs and traditions, these all about superstitious things or practices which affect them seriously, mostly women are affected mentally physically and further make them vulnerable to exploitation not only physical but economical too.

Dalit women exploited not only caste culture but they face male chauvinism. Mostly males are addicted to liquor consumption and bad habits of gambling, as Dalit men consume liquor, it disturb the atmosphere of the family, as well as through gambling that affects their economic condition and thus they are in need or forced to borrow money from the moneylenders and trapped in bondage. They are wasting most of their money into it and leaving the whole family to starve. They often abusing and beating their womenfolk and children.

In this chapter, an attempt is to develop to understand the challenges and the problems of Dalit women also present an analysis of the complex intersections of the struggles they face. This is accomplished through the observation and fieldwork studies of different villages on discourse of caste and gender intersection in caste society and findings of different forms of gender and caste based discrimination faced by Dalit women.

Hence the analysis of caste and gender intersections and discrimination is based on lives of Dalit women in Indian remote villages and presents a review of the economic and social status of Dalit women. Whereas Dalit women faces serious challenges due to lack of access to essential goods and services or the intersection of caste and gender, Dalit women are subjected to direct and structural violence. Because of this structural violence and lack of access to resources perpetuate their poverty and undermine their dignity. Most of rural Dalit women have very limited access to and control over land results leads to food insecurity. Further, due to their low socio- economic status, Dalit women are often the victims of sexual exploitation experience gender and caste violence. This violence denies Dalit women opportunities, choices and freedoms but destroying not only Dalit's women dignity and self respect but also their right to development. Moreover, their low position and status or vulnerabilities always raised the dominant caste pressure on them. It is easy for the historically dominating caste and culture to violate rights of Dalit women who are at the bottom of the hierarchical order. Moreover, Dalit women are victims of the worst crimes and atrocities. They are humiliated, exploited, murdered, raped, molested in every part of India. The growing violence against Dalit women follows a clear pattern. These incidents are reminding Dalits about their status in the caste based social structure, and ensuring that they remain there with a life full of indignity, humiliation and exclusion from the mainstream society, providing caste based services which are essential needs of the upper caste. The violent incidents against Dalit women increased rather than decreased over the years, in spite of constitutional protection and legal safeguards. Hence the situation of Dalit women needs special attention wherein caste and gender needs to be looked together.

CONCLUSION

In this study I will examine how the caste shapes the lives of lower caste (Dalit) women. The work looked at the intersection between caste and gender by focusing on how caste sustain and maintain through gender with analysis and observation and how caste reconstruct itself in a gendered structure.

My purpose here is to indicate how caste treats the women. A common unifying theme runs through all chapters dealing with the ways and circumstances in which caste and patriarchy work together. My chapters clearly indicates the situation of social order which based on caste hierarchy that is four fold caste system, there is another rung of peoples called untouchables. Among the untouchables, the status of women is further eroded and closely linked to the concept of purity or pollution. This is the rigid, continuation of caste system that is promotes and imposed the purity/ pollution values to maintain the caste system. In this caste and patriarchal society, Dalit women suffered unimaginable oppression, not only through caste, but gender too, from which there was no escape. This highlights the violence against Dalit women with in the dynamics of caste and gender. Hence, it shows Dalit women are thrice discriminated, treated as untouchables and as out caste, due to their caste, face gender discrimination being women and finally economic impoverishment due to unequal wage disparity, with low or underpaid labour. Further, the lowest caste including women are considered impure because of the work they do and the materials they handle, and hence their living areas are located outside the main village. Even caste and patriarchy influences deliberately to keep them away from their rights and useful information. They are not allowed to access to water, or worship at village temples, even their food are considered impure or they are forcing to keep away from the main streets of the village or town, lest they pollute upper caste pedestrians. Dalit women constitute the majority of the bonded labour. Most of agricultural and in construction, mining, labour done by them and many Dalit women are forced into very degrading work like manual scavenging, the removal of human excrement and dead animals, leather works, street sweepers, midwifery, washing dirty clothes, and other menial tasks.

Therefore, this study is trying to highlight, in Indian caste society specifically in rural area, lower caste women have traditionally been

Conclusion

compelled to do very low, inhuman, degrading work specifically for upper caste households, and for other areas, many times in exchange for very low money or for some grains and old clothes or using upper caste land for livelihood like grazing, defecation, collecting firewood etc., in compensation. Hence, the manual scavenging is considered to be the most degrading of these works, assigned to the lowest castes (women). For centuries been and still today lower caste women perform the dirty tasks and regarded as permanent polluted and excluded in every sphere of life. They are humiliated, violated, sexually abused by upper caste members.

In this regard, my work elaborated the situation of Dalit women in India who considered as impure because their low position in the social hierarchy. Further this turn into experiences of many forms of discrimination. This study deals with one of the most important issues of violating human dignity that is manual scavenging, still in continuity, historically based caste hereditary form despite legislation against them. The most sufferers of this work are Dalit women engaged in degrading inhuman work. They become vulnerable for being women, for being a Dalit, and for being a manual scavenger.

In addition, I explain some particular examples of Dalit women who are engaged in unorganized/menial works, whom experienced, which is originated by caste and gender that is exploitation, violation, economic deprivation, and social exclusion. They are targeted of caste violence and discrimination this results the exclusion of every sphere of life that differentiates Dalit women's problem from the others. Hence, for Dalit women caste and untouchability, which turned socio, cultural, economic exclusion and deprivation reminded them that they are still untouchable and lower in rank, most polluted and unseeable who are not appropriate or fit for caste (social) hierarchy. Despite the fact that caste practices/untouchability was abolished but there remains still very much part of the society. Caste and gender discrimination and untouchability affects every part and dimension of Dalits daily lives – economic, social, cultural, religious and political. Although rigid caste rules excluded Dalit women from education and occupational changes.

Role of Dalit women in economic sphere are not measured or accepted because they are wage labour and mostly exploited, tortured, humiliated and discriminated in work places. They don't have access of water,

sanitation, and proper health services. These women are in depth of poverty they are deprived of basic living things. Even present day most of Dalit women can't afford one time enough food in a day. In fact, they face caste atrocity and violence due to being low in pollution purity notion. Though the cases of atrocities are increasing which indicates Dalit women's have lack of right's, freedom even their own bodies and sexuality.

Whenever, these women resist this inequality, discrimination or violence they face inhuman brutality and expected that they will maintain silence and submission. Dalit women's resistance is perceived as a challenge to caste and patriarchal structure. The collective forces of caste tradition, patriarchy, untouchability and feudalism have made Dalit women lives very pathetic and miserable. Also majority of them lives under the unstable condition. Thus, caste needs to be understood in gender structure because caste and gender intersections and discrimination against women is a means of maintaining and strengthening caste privilege.

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She is a sociologist, activists working for women's rights and violence particularly for most marginalized communities who suffer from different forms of discrimination and located in the most remote and geographically disadvantaged areas. She is a former member of National Commission for Women. She conducted field visits to various remote villages across key Indian states mostly populated by vulnerable and marginalized groups and made efforts towards these weaker and disadvantaged sections who deprived for their socio-economic, political cultural, religious and civil rights into the mainstream of society, working for their rights and raised awareness on legal and institutional provisions to fight for their rights and violence. The aim is challenging the exploitative structures and ending violence against women and enabling a society with gender equality. She raised voice against caste discrimination, untouchability, caste and gender issues, caste violence for this she organized multiple activities for the rights of these community women.