



VIOLENCE AGAINST DALIT WOMEN IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The practice of untouchability had virtually dehumanized a significant section of Indian society, that they lost their persona and all the basic human rights and fundamental rights. Indian society is a male dominated society; all men dominate women. The article makes two primary arguments. The article concludes by discussing broader implications for international human rights activism by other aggrieved groups. In India, women are considered as Shakti, since mythological times. This raises a lot of question about the attitude and our thinking of our society. Women, usually looked as a weaker sex and forced to play secondary role in the society and are often neglected, discriminated and oppressed. These discrimination and oppression has adversely affected the development process. Government of India abolished untouchability but the practice is followed in some part of India.

1. Introduction

The convergence of these conditions leads to the wide-ranging and multiple layers of violence that pervade Dalit women's lives, characterized by enduring violence in both the general community and in the family, from state and non-state actors of different genders, castes and socio-economic groupings¹. SC women are the most vulnerable and face untouchability, discrimination and violence much more than their male counterparts.

Dalit /Scheduled caste (SC) women, in India's highly patriarchal and caste-based society, bear the triple burden of caste, class, and gender. Being positioned at the lowest social order of Indian society, Scheduled caste women suffer from many

forms of discrimination, including lack of education, economic disadvantages, social disempowerment, domestic violence, political invisibility, and sexual oppression. In contravention of both national laws and international human rights standards that prohibit any physical, sexual or psychological violence against women, varying forms of violent acts specifically targeting SC women are occurring on a large scale across India today. Untouchability and social exclusion being faced by the Dalit community, takes shape of an institutionalized system in some places in context to Dalit women, called 'Devadasi's'. Under Devadasi system, a scheduled caste family dedicates/marry its young daughter to the village goddess, and when the girl reaches puberty she becomes an available sexual partner for

the priest and all upper caste men in the village. Dalit women also face violence when they try to access rights and entitlements provided by the constitution and the government. In addition to facing discrimination and untouchability in accessing welfare schemes, women from Dalit community also faces sexual and other kinds of physical violence. In spite of the space (reservation) given to them at panchayat (village) level their participation is dismal in the local governance. The position of Dalit women in the society is reflected by the nature and number of atrocities committed on her. Being a Dalit woman, abuse is used to remind her of her caste and keep her oppressed. On an average, about 1000 cases of sexual exploitation of Dalit women are reported annually and in the year 2001 alone, 1316 cases of rape was reported (NCRB, 2001). Not only their performance with regard to human development indicators are much lower compared to their counterpart from rest of the women, also the instances of atrocities are far higher than non-Dalit women.

2. Objective

- a. To study about the Dalit women and their dilemma in the society.
- b. To analyses the international scenario of the Dalit women's.

3. Limitations

1. Restricted accessibility to primary source of data.
2. Lack of field study.

4. Research Methodology

This research is based on the secondary data, which includes;

- Journals
- Articles
- Books
- Reports from national health assurance mission

5. Review of Literature

1. **Soni Sori,(2011)**, a young tribal teacher from Chattisgarh was brutally raped in custody in 2011 and tortured with stones put into her private parts. However, instead of putting her rapists behind bars, Soni was arrested on charges of being a link between Maoists and the Essar group. The Chhattisgarh government submitted to the Supreme Court of India that the entire allegation was being orchestrated by certain vested interests to malign the Chhattisgarh Police. The police also denied the charges of torture.
2. **Thangjam Manorama (2004)** was picked up from her home by the Indian paramilitary unit, 17th Assam Rifles on allegations of being associated with People's Liberation Army. The next morning, her bullet-ridden corpse was found in a field. An autopsy revealed semen marks on her skirt confirming rape and murder. Five days after the killing, around 30 middle-aged women walked naked through Imphal to the Assam Rifles headquarters, shouting, "Indian Army, rape us too..."

6. Dalit's Women and their dilemma

As Dalits are often denied entry to religious places, access to sources of water, governance and education, the scenarios is catastrophic for Dalit women as they are sufferers of injustice and oppression. National Crime records Bureau data records that more than four Dalit women are being raped every day. There have been many cases where Dalit women are tortured or murdered or raped just because of they belong to a caste or a class of people called Dalit. In Bihar, a woman had received money from government as part of yojna and a policeman borrowed that money for short period. When woman went to get her money back, she was raped in front of her family and burnt alive. These types of acts in societies show the level of cruelty and arrogance in the society that just because a woman belongs to

Dalit class, she becomes victim of crimes no normal prudent person can imagine.

Since ancient times, there had been many instance recorded where women were discriminated on the basis of caste, race and gender. The ancient male dominant society is still influential in today's caste divided culture in many parts of India. Although many steps have been take to prevent discrimination against women. Earlier, through history, women have been victim of many offences such as prostitution, murder, rape, human trafficking etc. And till date, many of such offences are repeatedly committed in many parts of India. This region mostly covers rural areas where discrimination on basis of caste has been highest. Perhaps, it is the quandary nature of women that made them suffer more as neither the higher caste including the officials in judiciary in ancient India helped them nor the public at large accepted them which made women more vulnerable and hence the present state.

But the situation of Dalit women, which earlier referred to 'untouchables', made the case worst as they were mostly neglected by the society and forced to work as prostitutes. The scenario in modern world did not made any difference to Dalit women and they are still being discriminated and forced to work as prostitutes, also involved in human trafficking etc. According to 2010 survey, every 18 minutes, Dalit women are becoming victim of forced prostitution, murder, rape etc' Also, not only they are abused and discriminated by upper caste of the society but also they are being abused by Dalit men also. The triangular combination, (being women, lower caste and Dalit), have made the scenario worst for Dalit women. As Dalit men are becoming victim of various crimes and socio-economic conditions, they release all their frustrations and tension on Dalit female, generally their wife, and therefore the condition is becoming more and more serious.

7. International Scenario on Dalit Women's

After UDHR, came International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)¹⁴, came into force on March 23, 1976 consist of civil and political

rights of all the individuals in human family. It includes right to life, freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment, right of detenu to be treated with humanity, freedom of movement, freedom of opinion and expression, right to take part in public affairs, etc. It has been accepted universally that, these right are given to all the human being including Dalit women. Although the enforcement of such rights are still in question. India, being a signatory, have ratified in its domestic laws and accepted almost every right as fundamental right of every citizen, as codified in Constitution of India, 1950, but the abuse and inhuman treatment to Dalit women are still continued to be in practice.

Internationally, there have been many covenants and treaties made in order to protect women rights. Mostly covenants enacted by United Nations and resolutions passed by United Nations are been accepted by most countries including India. Initially, the United Nations have passed Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)¹³ which consists of basic rights of people all over the world and it has binding effect on all the nations. According to UDHR, right to life has been granted to all the individuals of the world and it is considered to be the basic and most important right of every human being for survival. Except from right to life, many other freedoms and rights such as right to movement, right to speech, right to personal liberty, right to equality, etc. Have also granted under UDHR. It has accepted that such rights and freedoms are necessary for all the human being to live life with liberty and prosperity.

8. Suggestions

- 1) The GOI should bring out a guideline to serve a protocol to be followed by all investigations officers in the cases of sexual violence – particularly rape and gang rape cases.
- 2) Dialogue with governments, relevant UN bodies, the private sector, local authorities, national human rights institutions, CSOs and academic institutions needs to be promoted and sustained with a view to identify, promote and exchange views on best practices related to violence and discrimination against women

- 3) The Government Of India (GOI) should bring out disaggregated data based on caste and gender and build schemes to address the needs of Dalit women.
- 4) The GOI should take effective measures to prevent atrocities and multiple forms of discrimination against Dalit women as recommended by CEDAW, CERD, and the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

9. Conclusion

The situation of Dalit women in India is becoming worse day by day and it needs immediate attention of Government of India so that to form and implement such policies specifically dealing with problems of Dalit women. Since ancient times, the violence against Dalits especially Dalit women are carried and after many ages, the eco of pains and problems can be heard in modern times also. These ancient practices needs to be stopped or banned immediately which force Dalit women to indulge in prostitution or other immoral acts. There are many policies being made for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people but there is no such policy among at solving problems of Dalit women and therefore it has become necessary to enact such policies. According to convents and other international treaties, the government is at obligation to make such policies which will ensure the protection of women in the country and accordingly the rules are being made in Constitution of India, 1950 and other enactments. But perhaps it is the implementation procedures which are not as effectiveness as they should. In future, it has been expected that India may become superpower, therefore it is necessary to protect all its citizens in order to succeed.

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