Status of Dalit Women: A Human Rights Perspective

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A B S T R A C T

Human rights are essential for every people towards the development of individual personality.This paper studies the socio-economic-constitutional background of Dalit women and their present conditions under the scanner of human rights debate. Further, it has examined the role performed by governmental and non governmental agencies to ameliorate their backward condition. It is produced by both primary and secondary data. The primary data have been collected by interview method from the study area on the basis of purposive sample design. The secondary data have been collected from different books, research articles, newpapers, research reports, internet etc. From the work, the researcher found that the factors like patriarchy, power relations, illiteracy and ignorance have mammoth impact on the condition of Dalit women. Finally, the researcher has prescribed some suggestions to improve the deplorable conditions. It is pertinent to mention that in the present paper the word "Dalit" and "Scheduled Caste" have been used coterminously.

Keywords: Human rights, Dalit women, Scheduled Caste women, Domestic violence, Civil society.

1. Introduction

'Human' is the buzzword in any society and state. Since time immemorial, it has been playing a determining role for dynamism and change of any society. In a long run, human rights have been a core concept of life in the present century. It has become sine qua non for civic life and civilization. Natural rights based on moral universalism, rationalism and scientifismare the foundations of it. This is essential for full fledged development of human personality. According to it's third generation it reflects collectiveness, solidarity and inclusiveness. It has to protect and nourish all the individuals irrespective of any group, caste, colour, creed, religion and sex and it also includes animals and environment impliedly. This aspect of inclusiveness leads to peaceful, full-fledged developed and sustainable world. But, in many cases it is felt and experienced that certain groups and communities are excluded from the process of this inclusive growth and development. And the Dalit/ Scheduled Caste women have been deprived of enjoying their human rights. They have to bear the triple burden of deprivation in terms of caste, gender and poverty. They are forced to enter the labour market at a very early age in order to sustain their families. Traditionally allocated menial and stigmatised works are generally assigned to them. Better paid and dignified jobs continue to be out of reach for them through a systematic denial of rights to higher education, skill training, assets and other productive resources. This process of systematic denial further ensures their exclusion from socio-political scenario and keeps them restricted to the bottom of the society as invisible citizens.

2. Conceptual Framework

Who isDalit/Scheduled Caste?

Scheduled Caste is historically disadvantaged population groups recognised in the Indian Constitution. During the colonial time (since 1885), they were known as Depressed Classes who faced multiple deprivations on account of their low position in the hierarchy of the Hindu caste system.

According to Poona Pact (1932) the agreement, the demand of separate electorate was replaced by reserved constituency for the depressed classes and in this way, the scheduling of castes took place. In 1936, The Government of India, Scheduled Caste Order (Article 26 (i) describes the Scheduled Caste -

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"such castes, races or tribes, or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes, being castes, races, or tribes, or parts or groups which appear to His Majesty in Council, to correspond to the classes of persons formerly known as `the depressed classes', as His Majesty in Council may specify (Mukherjee&Sabhrawal, 2015)1.Further, people belonged to SC community are dalits. So, hereinafter, Dalit and Scheduled caste will be used interchangeably. The literal meaning of Dalits is "broken people" or "oppressed". The caste system is a Hindu hierarchical class structure with roots in India dating back thousands of years. In descending order, the caste system is comprised of Brahmins (priests), Ksyatriyas (warriors), Vaisyas (farmers), Shudras (laborer-artisans), and the Dalits,who are considered so polluted that they are beyond caste. Traditionally, caste, determined by birth and caste system entailed a life of degradation for Dalits. For instance, Dalits undertook occupations that the rest of Indian society found ritually polluting, such as handling carcasses, disposing of human waste (also known as the practice of manual scavenging), sweeping streets, or cobbling considered degrading because of its association with feet and leather. Dalits also received ill treatment from members of higher castes, particularly from Brahmins.

Provisions for Securing the Human Rights of Dalit/Schduled Caste Women

The caste discrimination has always been a subject of human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) are regarded as the weapons to protect the human rights. The articlesincorporated in the Indian constitution have the bearing on Human Rights discourse. They are -Right toequality (Art. 14-18), Right to Freedom (Art. 19-22), Right against exploitation (Art. 23-24), Right to freedomof Religion (Art. 25-28), cultural and educational rights, protection of interests of Minorities (Art. 29-30),articles related to reservations to SC & STs 330,332,335,338,339 &340,articles 38 and 39. Article 17 of the constitution of India has abolished untouchability and its practice in any form hasbeen strictly forbidden. Later, the Parliament enactedUntouchability (Offences) Act, 1955to give effect to Art17. To make it more stringent, the Act was amended in 1976 and was renamed as the Protection of Civil RightsAct, 1955 along with the normal provisions of the Indian Penal Code, had been found to be inadequate inproviding safeguards to the scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes against several crimes. Thus, yet another Act,known as theScheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 was also passed by theIndian Parliament.

Violation of Human Rights of Dalit/Schduled Caste Women

According to the 2011 Census, SC population constitutes 16.6 percent of the total Indian population and 1208 castes are included in the Scheduled Caste list (The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2012). Punjab ranks first in the concentration of SC population (31.9%), followed by Himachal Pradesh (25.2%) and West Bengal (23.5%). Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have nearly 20 percent SC population to their total population. States which have SC population above 15 to 20 percent are Chandigarh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Delhi, Tripura, Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Puducherry. Very low concentration of SC population is found in Goa, Lakshadweep, Andaman-Nicobar, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, North Eastern states except Assam and Tripura. Two major western states like Maharashtra and Gujarat record 11.8 and 6.7 percent SC population in 2011.

Further, the birth rate is declining for both SC and non-SC/ST groups, but in case of SC community, death rate is still higher in all age groups, especially in the age group of 10-14 years and the life expectancy is lower than the Non- SC/ST counterpart. Life expectancy is lower in case of SC women than non- SC/ST women. Thus, in spite of fall in fertility, demographic dividend is not applicable for SC population. This social group is still experiencing higher death rate in all age-sex groups.

The child sex ratio always remains very high among the SC population compared to the national average as well as Non-SC/ST population. It has increased steadily over time. In 1991, the child sex ratio of SC population was 921 compared to 927 in national average and 923 for Non-SC/ST population. It further increased to 945 in 2011 which is much higher than Non-SC/ST population (937) and national average (943).

The SC/ST population records higher infant and child mortality compared to the non-SC/ST social group. Women from these social groups have lesser access to ANC, PNC and institutional delivery. They also record poor BMI and high prevalence of anaemia.Though incidence of poverty has declined among the SCs, more than 30 percent SC are still poor. In 2011-12, incidence of poverty is more than 29% for SC population and 22 percent for all.(ibid.)2.

Factors contributing the violation of Human Rights of Scheduled Caste women

There are several factors which influence the vulnerable status of Scheduled Caste women like weak economic conditions, dependence on the resources of dominant castes, low literacy levels and patriarchal norms. Lack of knowledge about legal rights, government schemes and policies adds to this vulnerability. Almost 51% of Scheduled Caste women in rural areas and 56% in urban locations live below the poverty line (PRIYA, 2013)3 since most Scheduled Caste women earn a living through daily wage.It has been argued that atrocities pertaining to civic facilities are frequently related to lack of essential facilities or limited access to facilities in Dalit localities. The unavailability of basic facilities can be seen in most Dalit hamlets. According to a report published by Human Rights Watch (2007), only 9.84% of households belonging to a Scheduled Caste have access to sanitation and 20% lack a safe source of drinking water. One of the reasons is that residential segregation of the Dalit community results in absence of various facilities available in other sections of the habitation.

3. Research Methodology

In this backdrop, the present work aims to provide a systematic understanding of the status of Scheduled Caste women through a comprehensive review of theoretical and empirical literature, analysis of secondary data and content from various relevant documents to depict the multiple deprivations of them in the broad framework of caste-gender intersectionality.The primary data have been collected from four sample areas of the district of Balasore in the state of Odisha i.e. blocks like Nilagiri, Jaleswar, Bahanagaand Municipal area of Balasore on the basis of multistage purposive sampling design.. The perception of the victims and their relative occupies central place in such an analysis. The perception of the law enforcement authorities and NGOs has also to be accorded no less importance. Victims, moreover, have been categorized like, (i) Victims in domestic and General sphere (ii) Working Women

Victims (iii) Victims in Schools, (iv) Maidservant Victims. Focus has also been on the verification of the hypothesis that which categories of women fall more victims to violation of human rights

4. Objectives

The objectives of this research work are as follows:

(i) To know the reporting/under reporting percentage of cases of violation of human rights of Scheduled Caste women in the district and to find out the determinants of the same.

(ii) To study the attitude of male members of the society towards the female members of Scheduled caste as well as non-scheduled caste women.

(iii) To study socio, economic, education status of victims drawn from Scheduled caste, in comparison to other high caste women in the district of Balasore .

(iv) To determine the nature and impact of the activities of civil society, SHGs, NGOs and Governmental agencies to check violation of human rights of Scheduled Caste women.

5. Hypotheses

The research is based on the following hypotheses:

1. Many cases of violation of human rights of Scheduled Caste women remain under reported/ unreported due to lack of awareness of their human rights and lack of faith on governmental agencies in the district of Balasore.

2. Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribe women are more vulnerable than women of higher castes in the area under study.

3. Scheduled Caste as well as non-scheduled caste Men are biased against the Scheduled Caste women due to the prevalence of patriarchal structure.

4. Socio-economic empowerment leads to protection of human rights of Scheduled caste women.

5. Civil society, SHGs, and NGOs are effective in checking violation of human rights of Scheduled caste women of the area.

6. The Reality: Findings and Analysis

In this research work the researcher has many findings to his credit. He has tested the concerned hypotheses on the basis of the data collected through certain procedure. Further, suggestions have been made for bettering the position of women in the district of Balasore in particular and women in Odisha and India in general.

Awareness of Human Rights and its violation

In the entire district of Balasore 146 victims of different categories have been interviewed. Of 38 Scheduled Tribe, 48 Scheduled Caste, 44 Other Backward Caste and 16 Unreserved category victims 33(86.84%), 38(79.16), 31(70.45) and11(68.75%) victims were found to be unaware of the concept of human rights respectively.

From the study,it is revealed that the reporting ratesboth by SC and ST categories of victims in Nilagiri block is very low in comparison to other two higher caste categories. In Bahanaga block a very poor rate of reporting is among scheduled caste victims. In municipal area of Balasore reporting rate among SCs and STs working women victims is much skewed which explains their vulnerability to the abuse. In the district of 88 working women victims 34(38.63%) did not raise their voice against abuse. Only 12(13.63%) victims reported the matter to police whereas 24(27.27%) victims complained the matter before village panchayat. On the one hand it questions the faith of the victims on police on the other hand it appreciates the ability of civil society to check the problem of human rights violation of the working women victims.

There may be various causes of this skewed reporting. Of them fearfulness for dismissal by the employer is the principal reason. And the worst situation of municipal area in comparison to rural is the result of this reason. Again, all most all the working women in the urban area are immigrants. They have rare job alternative to continue their livelihood. So, they don't dare report the matter of abuse against them. Further, it is a fact that, 80% working women in India face sexual harassment in their work place and 58% among them are absolutely ignorant about Supreme Court's decision on Visakha vs. State of Rajasthan. (Dash, 2012)[4]. This indicates how ignorance helps to decrease the reporting status and increase the violation of their human rights.

Further, it is also revealed from the maximum percentage (82.35%) of response of the police officers that most of the cases are not being reported.And the causes of this under reporting according to police officers are many like illiteracy, rites and customs, threatening by the perpetrators, feeling uncomfortable in the police station. Excluding these factors, 6(42.85%) police officers answered that factors like compromise at the village level, non-cooperation from parents and family members , political pressure not to report the cases both on victim as well as police, family prestige etc are primarily responsible for non-reporting or under reporting the cases of violation of human rights of women. In this regard, through a study it is found that in our country though near about 7 crore women are victims of domestic violence only 0.1%women report the matter to police.(Srichandan, 2010)[5]. This impunity definitely increases the violence by leaps and bound**.**

Vulnerability in a Comparative Perspective

It is found that in the district of Balasore Scheduled Tribe category are more unaware about human rights and they are closely followed by Scheduled Caste category women.Among the ST victims 86.84% responded of lack of awareness against 13.15% response of awareness. Among SC victims this percentage is 79.16% against 20.83%. There are 70.45% victims responded of lack of awareness against 29.54% response of awareness among OBC victims. Further, 68.75% victims responded of lack of awareness against 31.25% response of awareness among UR victims. This higher level of lack of awareness among the Scheduled castewomen becomes the prime cause for their vulnerability to the violation of their human rights.

Further, it is observed that of four sample areas except Jaleswar Scheduled caste women have been more victimised. In Nilagiri 42.10% scheduled tribe respondents have been victimised. In Bahanaga and Municipality 51.72% and 61.53% Scheduled caste women are found to be victimised respectively (fig. no.1).

Fig. no. 1: Victimisation of women by different kinds of abuses in the district of Balasore.
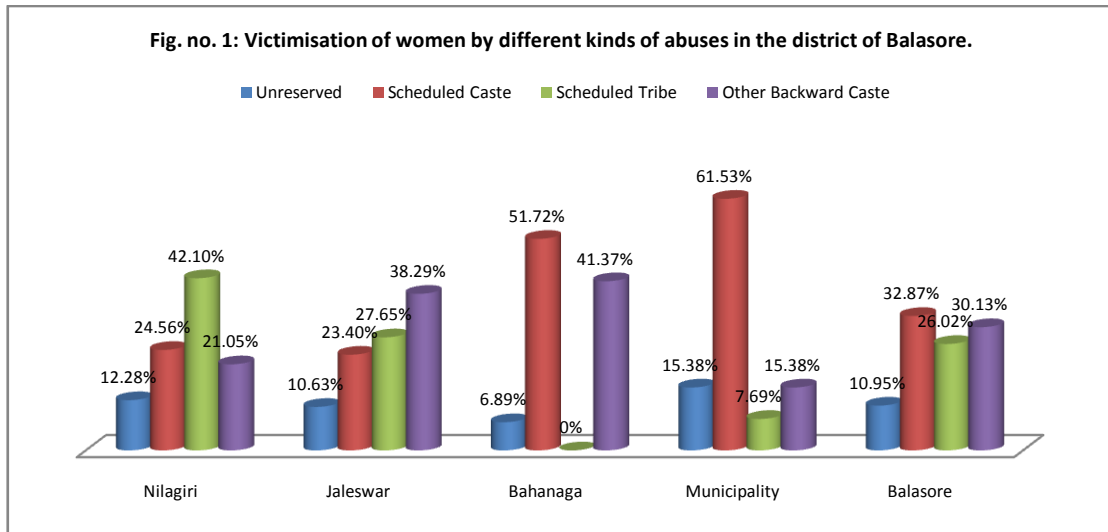
Again, in the district as whole 32.87% Scheduled caste women are found to be victims of different kinds of violation like rebuking/fisting/pulling hair/beating with stick which is more than other categories.

In caste category wise analysis it is found that both in Nilagiri and Balasore Municipal area, working women from scheduled tribe category are more victimised by the abuse of their human rights. Also, most of the scheduled caste category working women are victimised in Bahanaga block. Even, in the whole district of Balasore most victimised category is scheduled tribe with 36.36% followed by scheduled caste category with 23.86%.

Again, another interesting finding came to the fore is woman trafficking. Normally the frequency of approach made to the victims by the broker to go outside has been taken as the yardstick to know what extent the trafficking problem.In caste category analysis, it is observed that 46% ST and 28% SC working women victims have been approached to go outside for job. These percentages are more than the victims among UR (10%) and OBC (16%) category victims. The above figures show that more Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe working women victims are falling in prey to trafficking problem.

From this research study, it is also found that Scheduled caste category maidservants are most victimised in the district of Balasore with figure at 42.59%. This category was followed by scheduled tribe with a record of 27.77% of victimisation. In all most all study areas most of the scheduled caste maidservants have been victimised. In Nilagiri 35.71% percentage of Scheduled Caste maid servant has been victims. 50% each SC maid servants have been victimised in Jaleswar and Bahanaga block. 40.90% SC maid servants have been victimised in Municipal area. The detailed figure has been depicted through figure no. 2 below. This situation is also prevailed in Indian scenario. From the studies of the different organizations, it is also observed that women from the poorer, uneducated sections especially from marginalized castes form a substantive group of domestic worker with much vulnerability (Kaur, 2006)[6].

Fig. no. 2: Percentage of category wise maidservants victimised by different abuses.
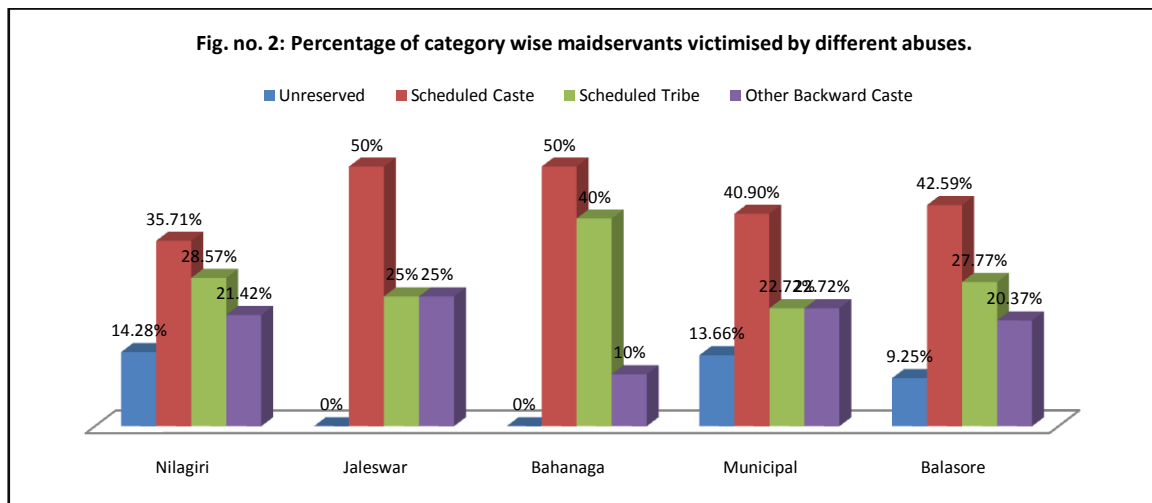
Very interesting finding is that they do all sorts of work for their masters with all sorts of pain and problems. As there are no standard norms that decide working conditions for domestic workers specified working hours does not exist for them. The live-out workers work from 8 to 18 hours a day while live-in domestic workers are on call 24 hours each day. However, there is nothing like amenities and facilities like rest room, healthcare, toilet facility except in rare cases. These are essential for any normal person. Moreover, women require urgently these facilities within a minimum time gap. It is experienced that 73.13% victims responded to have been availed nothing like essential amenities in their masters' house. Only 19.40% and 7.46% maidservant victims admitted to have been given the facilities like health care and toilet facilities. Further, no single victim admitted to have been given rest room in masters' house. Again, the leftover food given to the maidservants seemed to have degraded their self respect as human being. From the study it is revealed that 46.26%, 14.92% and 10.44% victims responded to have been given left over, low quantity and low quality food. Other 10.44% victim-respondents informed to have been offered no food at all. Only 17.91% victims replied to have been given good food by their masters. Another interesting finding is also found in this study. It is found that maximum maidservants victimised are in the age group of 0- 15 yrs. This makes them more vulnerable.

From the study, it is revealed that girl students are victims of different kind of abuses like rebuking, beating, sexual harassment and sexual assault respectively. From this it is clear that rebuking has been a normal mode of abuse in the schools. It is pertinent to mention that they have also emphatically said that they were victimised without mistakes on their parts.The researcher has found deplorable situation among scheduled caste girl students in the district. It is experienced that maximum number of scheduled caste girl students are victimised. They are mostly victimised in all the sample areas. In different schools of blocks like Nilagiri, Jaleswar and Bahanaga girl students were interviewed. It is observed that in each block 50% of scheduled caste girl students are victimised with different abuses. 44.44% and 48.57% scheduled caste girl students have been victimised in municipal and the district as whole respectively. The scheduled tribe girl students are followed by the scheduled caste ones in this regard. The detailed figures have been depicted through the figure no. 3 below. These categories are mostly victimised for lack of awareness, low vigilance and illiteracy among the parents as well as general public.


Fig.no. 3: Percentage of girl students victimisation in different Schools in Balasore : Caste category wise.
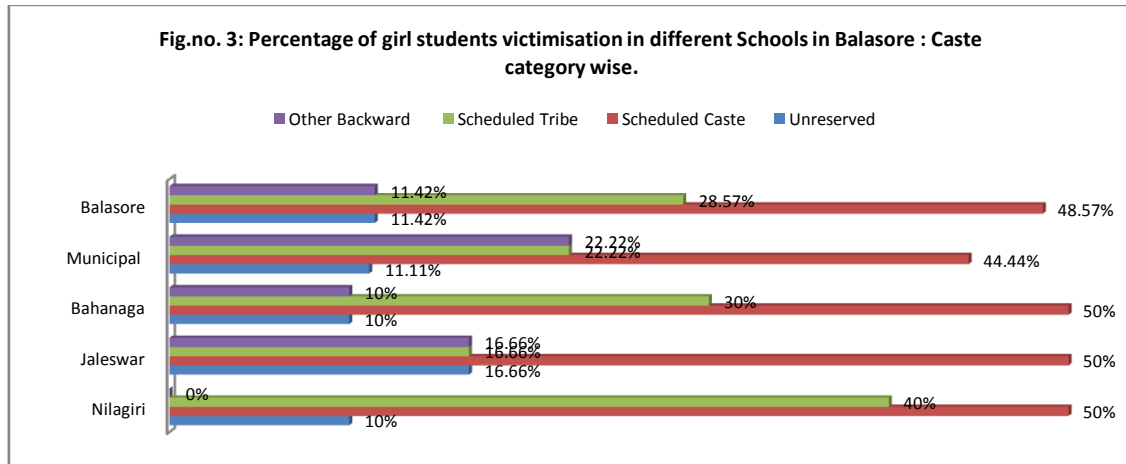
Role of Socio-economic Initiatives

From the study, it is revealed that less educated women from Scheduled Casteare more vulnerable to violation of their human rights. Especially, illiterate women are the most targeted group in this respect followed by the women under matriculation. This statistics has been presented through the figure no. 4. In study areas like Nilagiri, Jaleswar, Bahanaga and Municipal 41.37%, 33.33%, 62.06% and 32% under matriculates have been victimized respectively.

Fig. no. 4: Women with less education are more vulnerable to human rights violation.
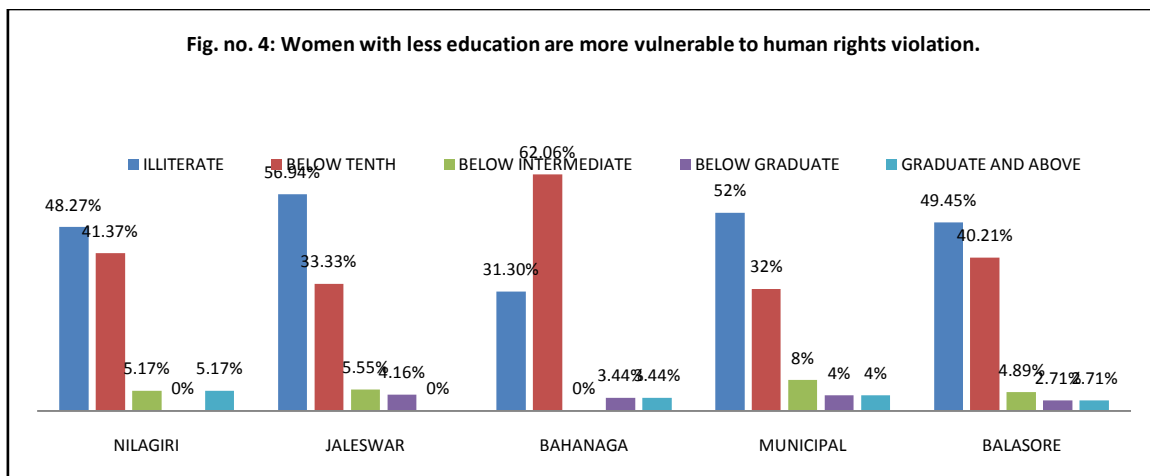
It is also observed that in overall district of Balasore 49.45% illiterate and 40.21% under matriculate women have been subjected to different types of violations of their human rights. On the other hand, the intensity of abuse is very negligible in case of women having higher qualification. And it is experienced and an admitted fact that the increasing conversion from illiteracy to literacy and again to higher education has been possible through different educational programmes and schemes adopted by governments. Ultimately this literacy among women has some extent prevented violations of their human rights.

Another interesting finding was also derived from the study. It is observed that women from less income group are more victims of the different types of violation of their human rights. The women from nil income groups is the most affected in all the study areas including the district except Municipal area. The abuse is found to be decreased in keeping pace with the increasing trend of the income of the group. But the situation of Municipal has little different from other areas. The victimization rate among women from income ranges of Rs 1/- to Rs 1000/- is more than women from nil income. Also it is found that women from income range of Rs 2001/- to Rs 5000/- are more victimized than women from income range of Rs 1001/- to Rs 2000/-. The detailed statistic has been given in figure no. 5. On the other hand the intensity of abuse is very negligible in case of women having higher income except municipal area.


Fig. no. 5 : Women in less income group are more victimised of their human rights.
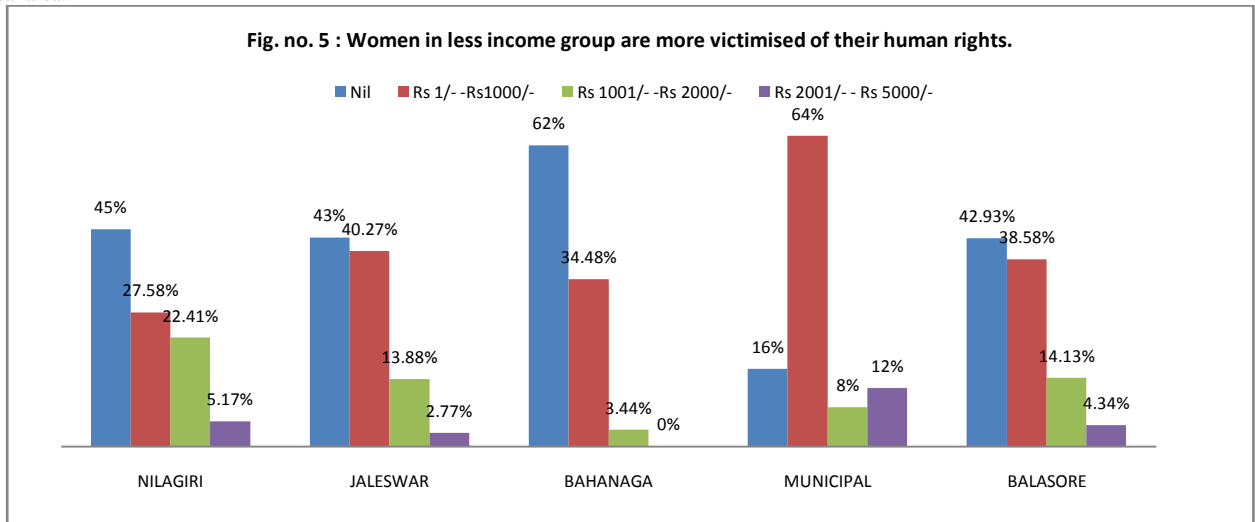
And it is true that the increasing income capability has been possible through different self employmentprogrammes and schemes like Mission Shakti, The Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)-SABLA, MGNREGA, Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) etc adopted by governments. Ultimately this good income among women has some extent prevented violations of their human rights. Hence, it is to be noted that empowerment of women through different schemes and legislations targeting to develop their economic status will be a check to the frequent occurrence of violation of their human rights.

Role of Civil society, SHGs and NGOs

     In the present time the role of SHGs and NGOs has been matter of discussion so far the subject is concerned. So the result of their activities has been analyzed by the researcher. From the study, it is observed that in Jaleswar and Balasore district as whole more members responded to have not achieved anything by these activities. But in other sample areas like Nilagiri, Municipal area and Bahanaga maximum members admitted to have achieved success. And they also felt proud of these activities.

Fig. no. 6: Success rate of Members through SHG and NGO Work Activities.
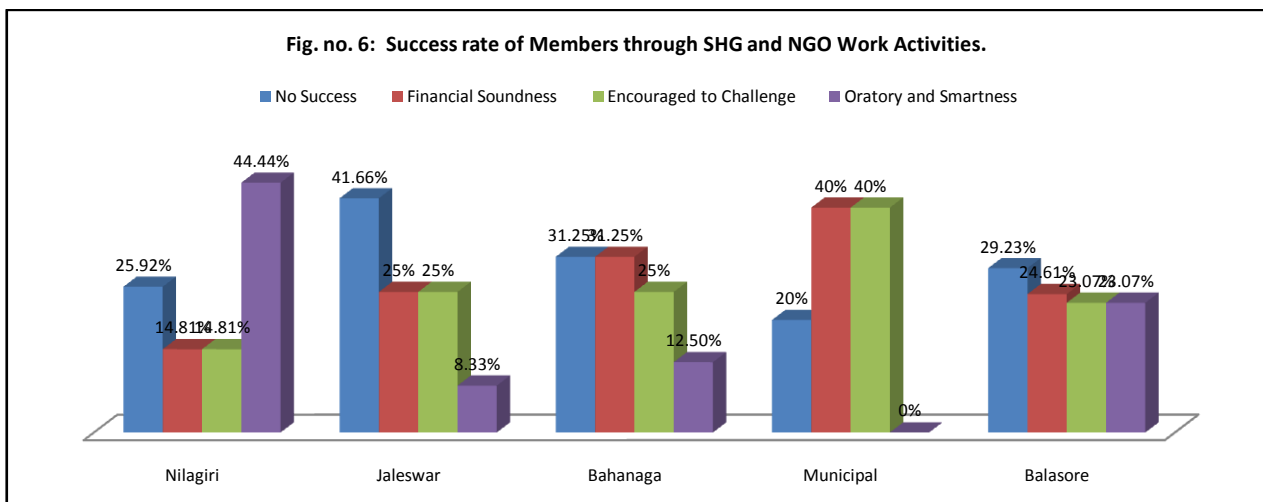
Again, it is true that in all the sample areas percentage of members responding unsuccessful is much lesser than the members responding successful. This statistics has been presented through the figure no. 6. And they have been successful by having financial soundness, encouraged to face any problems and also being good communicator and smart to deal with the society. On the other hand, the chemistry behind the rate of response regarding unsuccessful (29.23%, 25.92%, 41.66%, 31.25% and 20% in the district of Balasore as whole, Nilagiri, Jaleswar, Bahanaga and municipal respectively) is either illiteracy or low education among the members.

Fig. no. 7 : Percentage of Members interviewed with their education status.
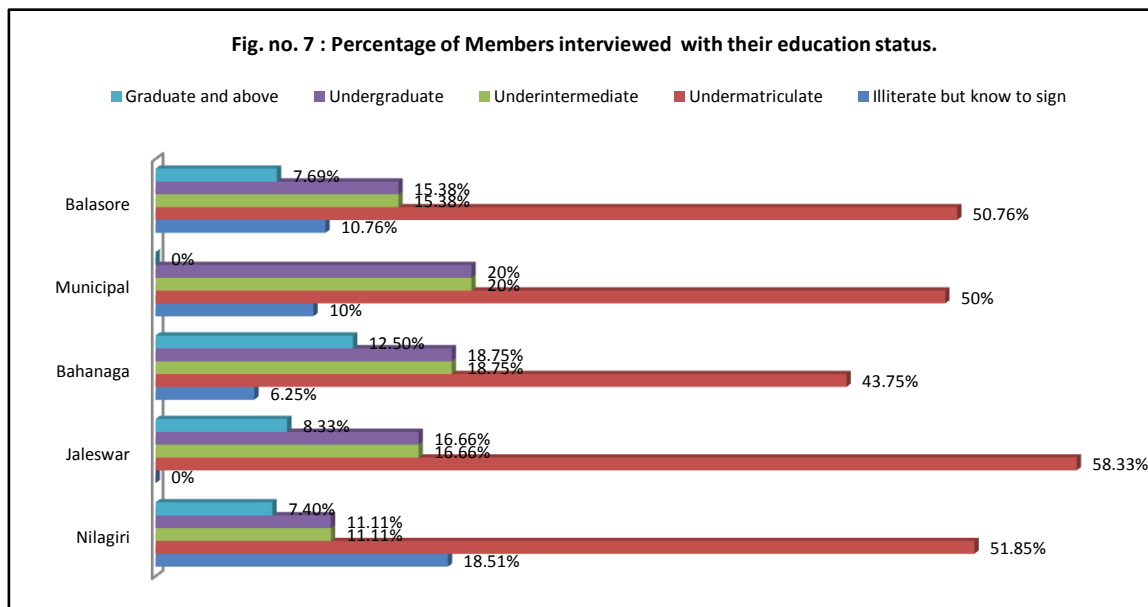
It is also a fact that during the interview the researcher has found maximum numbers of illiterate or low educated members. These figures have been presented through the diagram no. 7. Of total members interviewed, 10.76% and 50.76% illiterate (but with ability to sign) and under matriculate females are found in the district as whole. So, it is presumed that this total 61.52% illiterate and under matriculate females are the cause for 29.23% response of unsuccessful as earlier mentioned. In this way, in Nilagiri the sum of 51.85% under matriculation and 18.51% illiterate members may be cause of 25.92% response about unsuccessful in their activities. Likewise, in other sample areas the sum of response of under matriculation and illiterate respondents has become responsible for response about the unsuccessful in the group activities in the concerned sample areas. The researcher has also experienced that some SHGs are in dormant condition due to lack of highly educated members.

The study also reveals reporting frequency to panchayatwhich is constituted by village headmen, assembly, well wishers, and judicious persons in the village/panchayat/local areas. It is understood as civil society. The civil society acts as reliable institution for the victims in many instances.

From the study it is found that except Nilagiri, in all other sample areas including district as whole a sizable number of victims have reported the matter at panchayat next to reporting to the police. Thus, it may be interpreted that panchayat might have some extent redressed the problems of the victims earlier. So that they immediately report panchayat as they reposed faith on that. So, it is understood that panchayat or civil society is some extent actively working to check the human rights violation of general as well as Scheduled Caste women. But, as Nilagiri is tribal dominated area civil society has not been much active as in others.

Further, it is revealed from the maximum percentage (82.35%) of response of the police officers that most of the cases are not being reported. And the causes of this under reporting are many like illiteracy, rites and customs, threatening by the perpetrators, feeling uncomfortable in the police station. Excluding these factors, 6(42.85%) police officers answered that factors like compromise at the village level, non-cooperation from parents and family members , political pressure not to report the cases both on victim as well as police, family prestige etc are primarily responsible for non-reporting or under reporting the cases of violation of human rights of women. Among them, it is also seen that maximum respondents opined that village compromise has been major cause for non- reporting of these cases. Hence, it is presumed that village panchayat which is part of civil society has been accepted as a faithful mechanism to settle the matter.

7. Suggested Measures

From the above findings and analysis of the work inductively the following suggestions can be suggested for elimination of the problems of the Scheduled Caste women regarding their human rights:

1. It may be suggested that police personnel should be sensitive to the cases of women in general and to those belonging to SC, and ST communities in particular. Orientation programmes need to be conducted for this purpose. The confidence building measures will help the reporting of the cases. Presentlymore police stations need to be opened. The laws governing sexual assault should be defined in terms of women's dignity and bodily integrity (Kashyap, 2011)[7].Further, legal education to report the matter in proper way needs to be imparted to them.

2. Frequent awareness programmes are to be organized to sensitize the people through both audio as well as videos with intelligible language. The anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, SHGs members, local youth, local community organizations and associations are to be involved to mitigate this problem at the grass root level. Above all the awareness should reach each family. The employers and employees should be sensitised on violation free work environment. Strong surveillance system is to be availed to prevent trafficking.ExcludingUnorganized Workers Social Security Ac 2008 there should be separate law on domestic workers. The registration of names, address and other particulars of masters' as well as maidservants' are to be mandatory under the purview of law. From different studies it is observed that informal sector workers, particularly women workers have been overlooked by the conservative practice of labour organization and the trade unions (Baruah, 2004)[8]. This attitude of the leaders of the trade unions should be changed and domestic maid servants are to be trained to keep check on their human rights violations.

3. For a longer understanding between man and women both of them need to stop offering the method of caring they would prefer and start to learn the different ways their partners think, feel and react. Both man and woman should follow win-win philosophy instead of win-lose philosophy in their life time (Gray, 2012)[9]. And this process ought to be covered even at the level of family. Because at the family level there is more chance of gender inequalities not only in work, education, allocation of food, health care and fertility choices but also in household chores- cooking, cleaning, collecting fuel and water and caring elderly and children (Arokiasamy, 2002)[10]. Even it is also observed that girl children in many families are victims of the male bias which directly affect their health leading to more rate of female child mortality. This condition prevails in all parts of the country (Mosley and Chen, 1984)[11].

4. The girl students are victimised due to remoteness of the rural schools and communication problem. Again vigilant parents and conscious citizens or members of civil society are very much essential to check these problems. The parents should regularly be present in every guardian's meeting. In other words, there should be school-community partnership for the prevention of abusive school environment (MacDonald & Frey, 1999)[12].

5. Higher education among women is an effective check against the violation of their human rights. For higher education of the women firstly unfavorable attitude of the parents is to be countered. Child marriage is to be strictly prohibited. In most of the cases education and good income are co-related. Women with good income background must be properly educated. So, they can upgrade their economic status by utilizing their educational ability and intelligence.

6. Moreover, attempts should be made to uplift the socio-economic status of women. To check trafficking problem among women frequent orientation programmes on awareness, capacity building, various types of self employmentetc are to be organized by both governmental as well as non-governmental organization. And special treatment is to be needed for remote rural areas. Local resources are to be fully utilized so that huge local employment will be created. Besides above programmes huge benevolent programmes and schemes are to be launched with strong vigilance. The process of the schemes to get the benefit should be simple and easily accessible. Feedback/follow-up part is the key for every scheme. So, feedback/follow-up system should be conducted by efficient, qualified, strategic and trust worthy persons.

7. In connection with checking of violation of human rights of women SHGs, NGOs and civil society are to be more facilitators. Sufficient resources are to be allotted to enhance their work capacity. Especially, SHG members are to be imparted proper management skill. Highly educated women with inclination towards the group activities should be brought within the fold. Even, government should appoint educated women to supervise and assist the groups.

8. Conclusion

Dalit/Scheduled Caste women needs specific policies and programme to address the issue of multiple deprivations. Though India has various affirmative policies for the socially marginalised groups and women and also ensures the right to education for all, SC women and girls are still facing the curse of illiteracy and underage marriages. Dropout rate is higher among the SC girls in the higher secondary schools and underage marriage is more prevalent among them. Dalit women require comprehensive policies on health, especially on the maternal and child health because infant and child mortalities are higher among them. Economic data reveals that though Dalit women have higher Work participation Rate, they are mostly concentrated in low paid jobs, and unemployment rate is the highest among SC women with graduation and above degrees. Similarly, political participation is low in the LokSabha and State Assemblies. Therefore, Dr.Ambedkar's main strategy for women empowerment, 'Educate, Organise and Agitate' is far from the completion.

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