



Understanding of Marginalization with Reference to Dalit Women in India

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ABSTRACT

Marginalization exists in many forms and against many groups in society. Marginalization, basically called social marginalization, occurs when a person or groups of people are less able to acquire things or access basic services or opportunities. It is also referred to as social exclusion. Dalit women are attempts at vulnerable conditions in India and part of the marginalization where they come as a scheduled caste in India. The population of Dalit women in India is 9.79 million, which is 48.59% of the total Dalit population in India. The total female population in India is 58.7 million, of which 16.68% is the Dalit population. Of this, 7.4 cr live in rural areas and 2.3 cr in urban settlements. The growth rate of Dalit women has improved as compared to ordinary women. The sex ratio of Dalit females compared to Dalit males according to the national census is 945 against 1000 male. The marginalization of Dalit women affects all areas of their lives and violates basic human rights such as political, social, civil, cultural and economic rights. Through this paper, the author attempts to understand the concept of marginalization by focusing on how Dalit women struggle with poor conditions in their routine lives.

Keywords: Dalit, Women, Marginalization, Challenges

Introduction

Marginalization is both a process that prevents individuals and groups from fully participating in the social, economic and political life enjoyed by the wider society (elliott, 2022). As the lowest in the caste hierarchy in Indian society, Dalits have historically suffered caste-based social exclusion from economic, civil, cultural and political rights. Women from this community suffer not only from gender discrimination but also from caste identity and subsequent economic deprivation. Dalit women constituted about 16.60 percent of India's female population in 2011. Dalit women's problems include not only gender and economic deprivation, but also discrimination linked to religion, caste and untouchability, which in turn leads to the denial of their social, economic, cultural, and political rights. They become vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation because of their gender and caste. Dalit women also fall victim to heinous social and religious practices such as devadasi/yogini (temple prostitution), leading to sexual exploitation in the name of religion. Additional discrimination faced by Dalit women due to their gender and caste is clearly reflected in the disparate achievements in human development indicators for this group. In all indicators of human development, such as literacy and longevity, Dalit women perform worse than Dalit men and non-Dalit women. Thus, the problems of Dalit women are different and unique in many ways and they suffer from the 'triple burden' of gender bias, caste discrimination and economic deprivation (www.theglobaljusticenetwork.org, 2022). 'Woman' in India is not a homogenous category; it is characterized by differences in health status, educational attainment, economic performance measured by human development indicators, especially in the case of women belonging to Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and Scheduled Tribes and Muslims (2022). This article focuses on the challenges faced by Dalit women who are lower castes, especially untouchables. The caste system is based on the division of people into social groups in which the civil, cultural and economic rights of each individual caste are assigned by birth and made hereditary; the allocation of rights between castes is unequal and hierarchical, and this system provides a regulatory mechanism to enforce social and economic organization through instruments of social ostracism (or social and economic sanctions). In the traditional scheme of the caste system, the untouchables, who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, were deprived of all rights and, being at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy, suffered the most from the anti-social spirit and violence from the upper caste Hindus.³ They were denied the right to property, education and civil and cultural rights and limited to so-called "polluting" occupations and manual work. In addition, the untouchables also suffered from the concept of 'untouchability', which is unique to them.⁴ Because of this unique stigma of untouchability, the untouchables are considered impure and polluting and have suffered physical and social segregation and isolation. . This isolation and segregation led to suppression of their freedom and limitation of physical and social mobility, resulting in denial of equal access in various spheres of society, culture and economy (2022). However, the problem of Dalit women is distinct and unique in many ways because they suffer from the triple burden of economic deprivation, patriarchy, and caste- and untouchability-based discrimination (2022). In this article, we attempt to develop such an understanding of Dalit women's issues and present an analysis of the complex intersections of the challenges they face (2022).

Conceptualization

The Latin root is *margo*, "edge, border or border". Since the late 1920s, marginalization has not referred to a literal edge, but to a powerless position just outside society (dictionary, 2022). The process or outcome of making someone feel as though they are unimportant and unable to influence decisions or events; the fact that it puts someone in a position in which they have no power (definition, 2022). To descend to an unimportant or powerless position in society or a group (merriam-webster). Meaning and definition of Dalit on Wikipedia, the word Dalit originally comes from the Sanskrit 'Dalita' meaning romanized: dalit means "broken/scattered", also known as untouchable, is a name for people belonging to the lowest stratum of castes in India. they were excluded from the fourfold varna system of Hinduism and were considered to constitute the fifth varna, also known by the name Panchama. Dalits now practice a variety of religious beliefs, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, Islam, and various other belief systems. Scheduled Castes is the official term for Dalits under the Constitution of India (Dalit). The Merriam-webster definition of woman is a grown woman, a woman belonging to a certain category (by birth, residence, membership, or occupation) - usually used in combination (women). Woman an adult female human, 54 year old female, interesting young female, married/single women, women and children (definition/woman). Social exclusion or social marginalization is social disadvantage and relegation to the margins of society. It is a term that has been widely used in Europe and was first used in France in the late 20th century. It is used across disciplines including education, sociology, psychology, politics and economics. Social exclusion is the process by which individuals are blocked from (or denied full access to) various rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of another group and that are essential for social integration and respect for human rights within that particular group. Group (e.g. housing, employment, health care, civic engagement, democratic participation, and due process) (Social_exclusion). In the field of sociology, the concept of marginality was first introduced in 1928 in Robert Park's essay entitled "Human Migration and the Marginal Man" (Park 1928), in which Park described the cross-pressures experienced by immigrants through the overlying of different cultures. The resulting lack of integration and "outsider" status with respect to dominant cultures is what Park called "marginality." (Vol.26-Issue9).

Objectives of the study

- To understand the dalit women are marginalized group
- To know the challenges facing by dalit women in India
- To suggest to recover the conditions of dalit women

Methodology

This paper is an explorative and completely based on secondary sources. All sources collected from books, online articles, websites, and online books.

Challenges faced by Dalit Women in India

Dalit women still lack the economic, legal and financial resources needed to lead dignified lives as equals. With more than three-quarters of the Dalit population living in rural India, women are mostly engaged in wage labor where they are forced to work within the village economy due to caregiving and reproductive responsibilities. Due to the agrarian nature of the economy, they receive low wages and unstable employment contracts. As victims of structural violence, Dalit women are often landless, subjecting them to a vicious cycle of poverty and consequently lacking the capital, skills and knowledge needed for self-sufficiency. Having one of the highest levels of poverty in the country and unable to afford education, young women are often married off as teenagers, leading to high levels of illiteracy among Dalit women. Ultimately, illiteracy acts as a dead end in terms of future employment opportunities. As a result, it is not always possible for them to rise above their social status through education (www.ivint.org). Dalit women are victims of religious, social, cultural practices like Devdasis and Jogins. In the name of these practices, village girls are married off to God by their powerless parents. These girls are then sexually exploited by upper caste landowners and rich men and led into human trafficking and prostitution. They do not own any land nor are they aware of their land rights. In health issues, the daily diet of Dalit women is a remnant of family meals, insufficient in quantity and quality. Health services are either not available in case of illness or unavailable even when available. Moreover, due to early marriage and too many pregnancies, their health is always at risk. Their socio-economic status immediately depends on their participation in politics. Political parties in India talk a lot about women's equality but have completely ignored Dalit women. In 1993, the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution allocated reservation to Dalits, tribals and women in local self-government. This amendment mandated that one-third of the seats reserved for Dalits should be filled by Dalit women. In some states, there was little or no acceptance of reservations for lower castes and Dalit women by upper castes. This resulted in atrocities against Panchayat members including women. Dalits contesting elections were beaten and Dalit women were raped and ill-treated. Members of the upper castes, not ready to relinquish power to the lower castes, seized their land. An easier way to retain power is to field candidates for representation but leave control in the hands of the dominant castes, always men. An important obstacle is the distrust of the dominant sections against Dalit women like Pradhan. Rural elites are unable to accept power that has been placed in the hands of poorer and disadvantaged women. This proves that the human rights of Dalit women are being violated right from her family to the society at large. All these factors are largely responsible for the precarious position of Dalit women in terms of their social, cultural, religious, economic, health and political status in society. These factors force them to tacitly accept the violation of their civil and human rights. They thus become victims of general violence (dalit-women-atrocities). Crimes against women Dalit women are often raped or beaten in retaliation against their male family members or relatives who are believed to have committed some kind of offense or offenses against members of the upper caste. They are also subjected to violence in police custody so that officers can detain their family members (condition-dalits-india/). At least 10 Dalit women are raped every day and their vulnerability has increased by 44% over the past 10 years, according to a report by India's National Crime

Records Bureau. A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report found that one of the reasons why Dalit women are more vulnerable to violence is that they make up the majority of India's landless and scavenger populations and a significant percentage of them are forced into prostitution or sold into brothels. Because of this, Dalit women are more likely to come into contact with landlords and law enforcement agencies, which can then easily abuse and exploit them with impunity (www.dw.com).

Analysis and Discussion

Failure of policies: Policies are inadequate to minimize handicaps and past handicaps and narrow the gap between them and the rest of Indian society. Dalit women continue to suffer high levels of poverty, gender discrimination, caste discrimination and socio-economic deprivation.

Violence: Girls face violence at a younger age and at higher rates than women of other castes. According to the National Family Health Survey, by age 15, 33.2% of scheduled caste women experience physical violence. For women in the "other" category, it is 19.7%. Violence continues, largely due to a sense of impunity among the dominant castes.

Political power does not help: Even when Dalit women gain political power, such as when they are elected sarpanches, there is often no protection against societal power that sanctions violence and discrimination against them. In a village with a dalit woman sarpanch, a dalit woman was cremated but no action was taken.

Attitude of dominant castes: There is a mindset among the dominant castes that makes them feel that they can do whatever they want with Dalit girls and get away with it. The discrimination faced by Dalit women at the cost of the Brahminical obsession with 'purity and pollution' has had a detrimental effect on all dimensions of development. Even today, Dalit women with their families are routinely clustered in segregated hamlets on the outskirts of the village or mohallas in one corner of the village, lacking civic amenities, drinking water, health care, education, access roads, etc. In urban areas, their homesteads are mostly located in slums, which are commonly found in very unsanitary environments. Their abuses in the name of religious like 'Nude worship' practice of devdasi system and similar other similar practices make them more subject to violence and discrimination. The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women has noted that Dalit women face targeted violence, even rape and murder, by state officials and powerful members of dominant castes used to impart political lessons and suppress dissent in the community.

Cases withdrawn and lack of justice: Very often, cases are withdrawn and witnesses become hostile due to pressure from outside the system without adequate protection. Sanctioned impunity for perpetrators is a major problem in India, and the police often deny or purposefully neglect and delay Dalit women's right to legal aid and justice. There is a consistent pattern of delays in reporting and irregularities in criminal proceedings, leading to widespread impunity and creating serious obstacles to justice for Dalit women.

Workplace violence: Risky workplaces coupled with a lack of measures to protect labor rights make migrant women more vulnerable to occupational injury. In addition, the emerging problem of subcontracting short-term work makes it more difficult for them to claim compensation when they are injured in the workplace. Dalit women are most vulnerable to exploitation by employers, migration agents, corrupt bureaucrats and criminal gangs. Slave trade also contributes to the migration of a large number of Dalit women (www.insightsonindia.com).

Suggestion and Conclusion

So, we need stricter laws to protect the rights of Dalits and provide relief under conditions where their rights have been violated. Entrusting powers to protect people's rights and judiciary should take significant steps to solve the problems faced by Dalits and these people should not be deprived of their rights and freedom as a common citizen of India. Rising violence and caste-motivated crimes against Dalits should be curbed and both the legislature and judiciary should ensure and protect the rights of Dalits (condition-dalits-india). Some of us who draw from a Phule–Ambedkarite perspective are firmly rooted in an understanding of the intersectional nature of women's subjugation and the violence they suffer. We are aware of the interconnectedness of caste and gender subordination, exploitation, subjugation and the vulnerability and violence that women face at the intersections of caste and class. For us, the issue of violence, subjugation and exploitation of women is not just a gender issue but a caste and class issue. The issues we addressed and our attempts were therefore aimed at questioning the multiple forms and intersectional nature of the vulnerabilities faced by women (www.epw.in, 2021).

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