

CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION

The positioning of women in India, can't be determined without considering the caste category from which they belong and their economic status, both of which goes hand-in-hand. It is very difficult to draw a commonality or generalization about the limitations which they face in different realms of the social order, as many primordial identities like caste, community and sometimes, region crisscross the larger framework into many fragments. Women must be seen, not as a homogeneous category, but rather as individuals from various areas of the populace as per the distinctions in their levels of social presence. Keeping these premises as the basis, the present study looks to analyze comparative elements of women belonging to dalit and non-dalit classifications of the society and locate the relative positioning of Dalit women from three different perspective and these are, the gender construct, the caste construct and the intersectionality of these two.

Three primary viewpoints identified with Dalit women's status for example social, economical and political have been the focal points of the present study. The theoretical framework which has been adopted to comprehend Dalit women's situation, is Dalit discourse and discourse of marginalization and exclusion of Dalit women.

An impressive segment of the women's activist scholars argued about the interconnectedness of caste, class and gender overall. Sabharwal & Sonalkar feature in their writings the particular difficulties confronting Dalit women in India in the field of financial (wage work), education, wellbeing status and political interest. A considerable set of scholars contend that women activist's discussions and assessments in India, centers around sexuality and issues of financial, instructive and political strengthening, overlooking the embedded factors that connects factions like caste and gender. Dalit women generally experiences the double marginalization of being a woman and belonging to Dalit fold. The operation of double factors of marginalization placed them at the periphery of margins. Chattopadhyay argues that Dalit women are triply oppressed in society in

the form of caste, class and gender. Rape and molestation are new dimensions of a caste war, used as weapons of reprisal against the Dalits. Soam & Singh in their study finds that deprivation and discrimination with the Dalit women persists in multiple spheres. The HDI Index for the Dalit women is lower than the non-Dalit women. Dalit women face exclusion in political participation and policy making, disadvantages in economic opportunity and vulnerable to poverty. Dalit women comprised around 16.60 percent of India's female populace in 2011. Dalit women's concerns envelop gender and financial deprivation as well as segregation related with religion, caste, and untouchability, which thus brings about the refusal of their social, financial, and political privileges.

Many a times exclusion may also take the form of cultural marginalization, a process in which certain forms of values, norms, and living ways are accepted as set ideals and respected in the society. Galtung says, when society absorbs a culture which accept the subjugation of a group of people, it becomes structural violence. For example, purity and impurity in terms of caste, domination and subordination in terms of gender takes the form of cultural violence which gets converted into structural violence over a period of time. They are not considered as part of dominant cultural construct of society and are placed at the lower ranking in hierarchically arranged social relations. Thus, the exclusion in cultural terms is imbibed in the social structure. Due to this structural violence against Dalits and Dalit women, they are incapable of participating in economic, social and political processing of society. This denial to participate in social decision-making leads to the relative deprivation in other areas and human poverty. Amartya Sen talks about a different concept of social exclusion. He says that “unfavourable inclusion” in various areas of life through unequal treatment may bring some serious effects as “unfavourable exclusion” would bring. Dalit women are ‘unfavourably included’ in the socio-economic construct through the differential treatment as they are included in the society to do the jobs which dominant castes do not perform.

Dalits in this hierarchy-based social system are at the very bottom and the interface of caste and gender placed Dalit women even below them. They are the most suppressed, crushed, powerless and exploited in the society. They have been more powerless and exploited. They are dehumanised in all spheres and live a voiceless

life. But the women within the Dalit fold need special attention because of their threefold deprivation. The findings of the field study reveal that Dalit women have low literacy rate than non-Dalit women which reflects in their economical and political attainment also.

The social, economic and political data on national and state level clearly indicates about the secondary position of Dalit women. The educational data by National Sample Survey Organization, shows the lower participation of Dalit women in higher education at national level. The data of Haryana state does not differ from the national data on education. The literacy rate of Dalit women is lowest than the Dalits in general and women of other categories in all the districts of Haryana. This is the situation of Dalit women despite the fact that there are reserved seats for Dalits in educational institutions. This lack of education leaves them behind in the economic sphere as well.

The NSSO data shows the lowest workforce participation in tertiary sector and lowest self-employment rate among Dalit women whereas their participation is higher as casual labor and in primary sector at all India level. Therefore, the data shows that the percentage of Dalit women aligned in Secured jobs, technical jobs and professional works is much lower than the general women. The data of female and Dalit workforce participation in Haryana shows that women are engaged more as cultivators than agricultural labour, whereas percentage of Dalit women is high in agricultural labor than cultivators in all the districts because they do not own means of production due to certain historical factors and also due to low level of education. Data also indicates the highest percentage of Dalit women as marginal labour. High percentage share in marginal worker indicates more days of unemployment and hence high level of poverty among Dalit women.

The crime data shows that the registered cases of crimes against Dalit women at national level are less in numbers than the registered cases of crimes against general women. The NCRB data at state level also presents the low number of crimes against Dalit women under various IPC sections. However, these are the cases which are reported to the police and the number unreported cases are much greater than this. Many of the cases go unreported because of the low literacy rate, low participation in bureaucracy and less awareness about the rights among Dalits

and Dalit women. Only the severe cases get registered, sometimes after the pressure from community or from societal groups.

Caste based exclusion and discrimination also leads to the marginalization and incapability of Dalit women to participate in political processing of society. Out of the 17 reserved seats in State Legislative Assembly (SLA) elections of Haryana, Dalit women have not secured even 1/4th seats in any of the election till now. The participation rate of Dalit women in SLA elections is comparatively very low than the general women. It emerged from the data that the Dalit women are the most politically deprived section of the society. However, percentage of Dalit female voter is higher than the general women in the last two elections. This confirms that they are aware that political society operates differently from civil society and have understanding about the importance of political power. Dalit women are using their caste identity to further their interests. The data of PRI elections shows that the predominance of SC women is entering through seats held explicitly for them. But their representation is very low through the seats which do not have government intervention. The seats which are reserved for the general women are dominated by the women belonging to upper caste whereas the seats which are reserved by the SCs are explicitly occupied by the Dalit males. Therefore, it is evident that the patriarchal norms are becoming more stringent within the scheduled castes because of the low literacy rate among SCs.

The investigation and portrayal relating to social, financial and political factors for Haryana's social construction portray that Dalit women are in an exceptionally disadvantageous circumstance. The particular types of discriminations that Dalit women battle against are delivered by the consolidated load of caste, class and male centric society. Social convictions about populace, the monetary impulses of being reliant upon upper castes for work and job, and the weakness forced by sexual orientation subjection make the existences of dalit women particularly hard.

Empirical evidences from the field have been collected with an objective to assess the socio-economic and political positioning of Dalit women in Haryana in general and specifically in Sonipat district, to find out the nature of subjugation and structural violence and the role of the dominant cultural construct for the Dalit women. To understand the social construct, the factors which have been chosen by

the researcher to study the social positioning of Dalit women, are education and health. For investigating economical viewpoint, researcher has selected participation of Dalit women as agricultural labor, domestic labor and participation in other works. To evaluate the political viewpoint, political participation of Dalit women in State legislative assemblies and local bodies has been taken into consideration. Along with that crime rate against Dalit women is also a focal point of the present study.

The study examines the social, financial and political positioning of Dalit women in comparison to the Dalits and non-Dalit women in Haryana in general and specifically in Sonapat district. An attempt has been made to bring major findings of this study which shouldn't be taken as one or the other as distinct or even as legitimate in light of the fact that the researcher has just managed an element, which is part of the changing social phenomenon. Following are the major findings that emerge from the primary and secondary data involves in the study: -

- a) The social, economic and political data on national and state level proves the secondary position of Dalit women. The district data of Sonapat district is adding some more proofs to it. But the data cannot be generalized for each and every village and region. In Patti Kailana village, the departure from the earlier traditions has been noticed in an emancipatory way in terms of education level. Whereas in other two villages, the parochial tendencies are being carried out.
- b) After the study of all the three sampled villages it was found that in the Harsana Kalan village where Dalits are poor and they are less in numbers, the cases of Eve teasing occur more with the Dalit women. In Pabnera village, Dalits are in majority but mostly caste groups are poor, there the incidence of eve teasing are common for all the women in the villages and such incidences are not based on the caste identities. The case is same in the Patti Kailana village where Dalits are economically well-off and they are not less in numbers.
- c) In regard to health facilities, the condition of Dalit women varies in all the three villages. In Patti Kailana village, Dalit women are more aware about their health conditions due to high literacy rates and better economic conditions.

Whereas in Pabnera village, all the women irrespective of their castes have access to government health facilities but due to poor economic conditions and low literacy rates, Dalit women have negligible knowledge about sanitation. In Harsana village also, it emerged from the field study that the sanitary conditions of Dalit women are not good because of the poverty and low literacy rates among Dalits.

- d) In Patti Kailana village, mostly Dalit families own land therefore, the women folks work in their own fields. The number of Dalit female agricultural labour is less in comparison to the other two samples villages. No Dalit women use to work as domestic worker in this village due to the better economic conditions of the Dalits. However, differences were observed among the Dalit community itself. The Women from the Chamar caste community are highly educated than the other Dalit women therefore, they are engaged in some other prestigious jobs than the others whereas in Pabnera village, the main occupation for Dalit women is agricultural labor. However, in Pabnera village, it was observed that Dalit women only from some particular caste groups do the work of domestic help. Though they won't do such jobs which are traditionally meant only for Dalits. There are Rajput and Chamars who would work only as agricultural labor. In Harsana Kalan village, Dalit owns hardly any land. Therefore, the Dalit women work either as agricultural labour or domestic worker except women from Chamar caste community. The women from Chamar caste community are engaged in some other works such as shopkeeping or selling milk. However, no women from upper caste communities in all the three sampled villages was found to be working as domestic worker or agricultural labour.
- e) In Patti Kailana and Pabnera villages, the cases of domestic violence and economical abuse are common for women irrespective of their caste identities. It is the cultural construct and patriarchal mindset of the people in the village that justifies such cases on the name of traditions. Such incidences of Domestic violence are no exception to the upper caste women in both the villages whereas in Harsana Kalan, it was observed that Dalit women are more prone to Domestic violence as compared to upper caste women.

- f) In all the three sampled villages no major difference between Dalits and Non-Dalits was noticed in the attitude towards women contesting elections. The common fact which was observed in all the three villages is that politics is still considered to be a public sphere where women are not allowed to enter. This may be the case in rural areas only. But in rural areas it is same for the Dalits and non-Dalits.

Following are the hypotheses, taken for the present study: -

- Along with the division of labour between the public and private sphere Dalit women also face division of labour in terms of caste.

The findings of the present study reveal that as far as the economic parameters are concerned, the situation of women in Haryana is quite precarious. However, it emerged from the data that work participation of women in particular spheres is quite less than the male workforce participation. This public and private division of labour hampers the economic status of women in India. But Dalit women along with division of labor between public and private sphere are more deprived because of the division of labor on the caste basis. In all the three sampled villages, women who work as the agricultural labor and domestic worker belong to scheduled castes only. However, no woman from upper caste communities, irrespective of the fact that many of them belong to poor families, in all the three sampled villages was found to be working as domestic worker or agricultural labour.

- Dalit women are socially and economically more marginalized not because of their class character but also of their caste character.

In villages where Dalit families are wealthy enough, Dalit women would often do such works in which the presence of upper caste women could not be marked. For example, in Patti Kailana village, mostly Dalit families are wealthy enough but it emerged from the field study that Dalit women would help upper caste families as domestic help very often in some functions and during marriages. Whereas in Pabnera village, mostly families are poor including the upper caste families of the village however, it emerged that

only Dalit women would be engaged in works such as agricultural labour. Therefore, caste character plays a more significant role in Dalit women's marginalization than the class character.

- A multi-layered hierarchy exists among the Dalit category itself which hampers any unity among themselves even against the atrocities from the patriarchal structure itself.

It was observed during the field study that due to some historical reasons and economic processes some specific caste communities from scheduled castes like Chamars, have been able to uplift their economic status and also trying to uplift their social status in caste hierarchical system. Instead of providing leadership to the other oppressed castes, these economically uplifted caste communities are utilizing their new status in asserting their authority against other scheduled castes. Therefore, as Shah points out, there are Dalits within the Dalits. This multilayered hierarchy within the Dalits itself hampers any unity among themselves. It was even pointed out by many of the respondents in Harsana Kalan village, that Dalits are now fragmented among themselves. This is the reason that upper castes are now more dominating in the village than before.

- Violence against women in India is structural and cultural in nature and Dalit women are no exception.

The unbending demeanor against women is supported by the predominant approved patriarchal culture in Haryana which isn't just the trademark elements of upper caste groups regularly called the dominant groups but on the other hand is viewed as amazingly obvious among the educated segments of scheduled castes. For example, in political realm, the presence of Dalit women is negligible on the unreserved seats and on the seats which are reserved for scheduled castes only. It indicates that within scheduled castes the patriarchal construct is even more stringent because of low literacy rate and this implies double subjugation on Dalit women. Dalit women therefore, have to face multiple exclusion because of caste, class and patriarchy.