

POSITIONING OF DALIT WOMEN IN HARYANA: A FIELD STUDY OF SONIPAT DISTRICT

Dissertation Submitted to the Central University of Haryana for the
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**Positioning Dalit Women in Haryana: A Case Study of Sonipat District**” is an independent research work carried out by Kiran, for the degree of **Master of Philosophy** in the department of Political Science, Central University of Haryana under my supervision. The dissertation has not been previously submitted in parts or full for any other degree of this university or in any other university.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “**Positioning Dalit Women in Haryana: A Case Study of Sonipat District**” submitted by me to Department of Political Science, Central University of Haryana for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is my own work. The content of this dissertation has not been submitted so far in full or part for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDWA	All India Democratic Women's Association
BSP	Bahujan Samajwadi Party
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSW	Commission on Status of Women
DFS	Dalit Feminist standpoint
FEDO	Feminist Dalit Organization
FIR	First Information Report
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
HDI	Human Development Index
IPC	Indian Penal Code
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSSO	National Sample Survey Office
OBC	Other Backward Caste
PCPNDT	Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques
POA	Prevention of Atrocities
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
SC	Scheduled Caste
SLA	State Legislative Assembly
ST	Scheduled Tribes
UN	United Nations

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Conceptual Framework

The history of humankind is believed to begin with the nomadic phase, in which individuals enjoy natural equality and freedom. In the first part of “*Discourse on the origin of Inequality*”, Rousseau portrayed the man in nature: “it was a solid, nimble, and more modest yet more coordinated than the other creatures. His body was his main instrument and his main weapon. His thought was made out of straightforward tasks. He had not many necessities, and for that, he effectively used to figure out how to fulfill them. His interests were those of nature: food, sex, and rest were the main things useful for himself as well as his main concerns were pain and hunger only¹”. He says that interests that create indecencies barely existed in the state of nature, however started to create when individuals framed social orders. He proceeds to propose that societies began when individuals assembled their first huts, an improvement that worked with living together of men and women; that thus created the propensity for living as a family. “With the tender passion of love, there was also born the destructive passion of jealousy. Neighbours started to compare their abilities and achievements with one another, and that marked the first step towards inequality and at the same time towards vice.”² The concept of property denoted a further advance toward disparity since it made law and government fundamental for protecting it. Rousseau mourns the "deadly" idea of property in one of his more-articulate writings, portraying the "horrors" that have come about because of the take-off from a condition wherein the earth had a place with nobody. Those entries in his second Discourse energized later thinkers like Karl Marx and Vladimir Ilich Lenin.³ Since then, inequalities in one or the other form have been presented in every human society. Many hierarchies have been evolved over time based on class, race, gender, ethnicity that

¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau—Major works of political philosophy | Britannica. (n.d.). Retrieved December 24, 2021, from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jean-Jacques-Rousseau/Major-works-of-political-philosophy>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

persist in different societies. Their formation has changed over time but they still exist in one or another form.

In India, the system of caste provides one such grounding. *Manusmriti* divides and arranges the social classes on the basis of 'Guna' (Instinct) and karma (deeds) into four-folds. This is very much similar to Plato's classification of three classes based on three instincts. *Manusmriti* and some other shastras mention four Varna: the *Brahmins* (the scholar and priest) the *Kshatriya* (King and warrior), the *Vaishyas* (agriculturalist and traders), and *Shudras* (artisan and service provider). All those including foreigners, tribals, and nomads, who do not subscribe to the norms of the Hindu society were contagious and untouchables. Another group excluded from the main society was called '*Prajanya*' or '*Antyaja*'. This group of former untouchables or Dalits i.e., downtrodden were considered either the lower section of the Shudras or outside the Varna system altogether. A passage from *Manusmriti* indicates that the Varna system was originally non-hereditary.

Scholars are not of unanimity about the origin of the caste and related system in India. J.C. Nesfield⁴ advanced the occupational theory of caste origin. He says the division of occupation is the basis of the caste system. He provides grading to the occupations. People who are engaged in primitive occupations were part of the lowest caste. Similarly, priests who used to provide education and Kshatriyas, who protected the people from invaders, were at the top two levels respectively. Artisan class was at the third position in the hierarchy. Sir Herbert Risley⁵ proposed the Racial theory of Caste in which he considers Aryans as the invaders, with a patrilineal nature of social order. They took the country's women (who were matrilineal in nature) as concubines or as their wives. Children from these marriages did not get acceptance in society and were called 'chandals'. The traditional theory of the caste system is based on the divine origin which is to be found in Hindus' sacred book *Purshasukta*. According to this theory, there is a fourfold division of society which came from the four body parts of the Brahma. The Brahmans among the four varnas are at the top who were created from the mouth of the Brahma. The second varna, known as the kshatriyas, was created

⁴ *Theories of Caste System in India*. (n.d.). Retrieved December 24, 2021, from <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/caste/theories-of-caste-system-in-india/47378>

⁵ Ibid.

from the arms of the Brahma and they were assigned the work of protectors of the society. *Vaishyas* who come next in the descending order were created from the thighs of Brahma. They were given the task of meeting the material needs of society. The last varna consists of the Shudras who were created from the lower part of the Brahma.⁶

Abe Dubois and thinkers such as Dr. Ghurye⁷ defended *Brahmanical* theory of the origin of the caste system. It is also known as the political theory of the caste system. He wrote that Brahmins in order to retain and maintain their higher position in society created the caste system. They declared all other three varnas inferior to them. Denzil Ibbeston⁸ presented an evolutionary theory of the caste system's origin. According to this theory, the caste system is a result of a long process. It came into existence gradually through social evolution. Conquest by another's army, karma's theory, consistency to one profession were some of the features that contributed to the evolution of the caste system. According to religious theory, different religious norms had given birth to the caste system in India. People who were connected to religious practices were given a higher position in society such as kings and the Brahmins. As people started practicing various Gods, they were given various positions in society because their food habits changed according to their religious practices. After that, restrictions on food habits led to the origin of the caste system.⁹

According to various interpretations, caste is very peculiar to India, in which society is divided among different small social groups. Hierarchy among caste groups, hereditary occupation according to one's caste, social segregation, cultural differences, endogamy, hereditary status, restrictions on food and drink are some of the principal characteristics of the caste system but the most critical feature of this caste system is untouchability which is based on the notion of purity and impurity. Caste groups are unequal, ranked on a scale of hierarchy based on their

⁶ Teli, A. H. (2017). Theories of Origin and Changes in Indian Caste System. *American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, 29–32.

⁷ Ghurye, G. S. (2019). *Caste and Race in India*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

⁸ *Caste System in India—Origin, Theories, Significance and Present Condition—India*. (n.d.). Retrieved December 19, 2021, from <https://www.mapsofindia.com/my-india/india/caste-system-in-indiaand-its-changing-scenario>

⁹ Ibid.

ritual status, from pure to impure. Their status or position in the system determines with whom they can interact and with whom they cannot. The idea and practice of untouchability is an integral part of the caste system. Endogamous marriage and **inter dining** are some of the norms to keep practicing the caste hierarchy.

The term schedule caste emerged through the Government of India Act 1935 when an attempt had been made to notify the depressed castes and tribes. Subsequently, terms such as 'Dalit', 'depressed class', 'schedule caste' has been used as synonyms in different writings and movements. Scheduled castes are at the bottom of this caste system. They are considered untouchables and they have faced discrimination in various social spheres. They faced marginalization in terms of economy, culture, political, education, intellectual field, etc.

Within the framework of caste structure, Dalit women are even more deprived. They face discrimination being as women in general and being as Dalit also, this further leads to deprivation in other spheres as well, like in educational, economical, and social terms. Though feminists in India from the 1970s started raising their voice for women issues in general, they seem to ignore the fact that Dalit women have a different set of problems and they suffer from multiple hierarchies.

Gender, caste and class: An Interface

The tendency for generalization and of creating a grand construct unintentionally somewhere put specificity aside and makes a homogenized image of a section called women, generally in a binary form of a human, the men, and women. This bifurcation strikes out the disparateness and ignores the various realities within a particular category. Plurality, specificity and differentiation make it impossible to draw a truth, which is rather constructed and complicated as said by Lyotard. In 1984 he gave the term "post-modernism" in which "objectivity of knowledge and language and the appropriateness of applying generalized world views to all human beings are questioned."¹⁰

¹⁰ Cannella, G. S. (1998). *Critical Research: Postmodern Methodologies for the Examination of Race, Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in Education*.
http://advancingwomen.com/awl/winter98/awlv2_1pix.html

There are differences among women as well. There are “high-caste”, “lower-caste”, rich and poor, and also women from various religious categories. Women cannot be homogenized in a single category. According to their respective categories, all women faced different problems and also the different benefits of development. The policies which could be beneficial for the women living in high societies or who are working outside, which can have opposite effects for Dalit women. Also, it is not like a high-class woman always get benefit from development. That could bring different sort of restrictions which they are unaware of.

Belonging to a privileged class can help women to overcome barriers that obstruct women from less thriving classes. Gender is certainly an additional contributor to societal inequality, but it does not act independently of class. A congruence of class deprivation and gender discrimination can disrupt the lives of poorer women very severely indeed. It is the interface of these two features of deprivation-being low class and being female-that can massively impoverish women from the less privileged classes.¹¹

Similarly, turning to caste, even though being lower caste is undoubtedly a separate cause of the disparity, its impact is all the greater when the lower-caste women also happen to be very poor. The blighting of the lives of Dalits or people from other disadvantaged castes, or of members of the scheduled tribes, is particularly severe when the caste or tribal adversities are further magnified by extreme barrenness.

“Ruth Manorama, an active member of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights and the National Alliance of Women, once stated that “in a male-dominated society, Dalit women face a triple burden of caste, class, and gender”.¹² Caste discrimination in the form of social deprivation and norms such as untouchability, class marginalization as they are economically deprived and do not have many job opportunities due to lack of education and are exploited due to the patriarchal structure of society in general.

¹¹ Sen, A. (2005). *The Argumentative Indian*. London: Penguin Books.

¹² Valarmathi, T., Jaiswal, S., & Jaiswal, A. (2018). *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Social Science An Anthropological Analysis about the Condition of Dalit Women in India* (pp. 1–8).

Literature review

In the succeeding section, an attempt has been made to review the earlier works on Dalits and Dalit Women. A considerable section of the feminist writers discussed the intersectionality of gender, class, and caste in general. Some of them are discussed here below.

On Dalits

Jodhka (2012)¹³ describes the classical notion of caste which emphasizes the orientalist view to understand caste. He argues that caste is a dimension of power in which status is related to the political and economic relations as landholdings and land relations decide who will plough in fields and who will get what.

Author talks about the most critical feature of caste that is untouchability which was defined by the line of pollution and the notion of purity and impurity. He traces their journey of becoming scheduled castes through constitutional reforms and also examines how the upper caste are having problems with the status given to Dalits and resisting them through various means like social boycotts. Further, he discusses Reform Movements, protests, and Government measures which he feels aim to make sure that untouchables remained within Hinduism.

He argues that the caste system has weakened over the years due to some set of policy interventions, but he argues that these reforms were largely caste-blinds that worked along with the categories of rich and poor or peasants, farmers, and laborers etc. Dalits still face discrimination and exclusion both in the government and private sector.

Guru (2000)¹⁴ discusses some important points related to Dalit marginalization. First, he discusses various processes of marginalization which operate among Dalits like political marginalization, cultural marginalization in terms of restricted symbols, marginalization in the material realm, marginalization in terms of time and space, in the intellectual field. In the later part, author brings in the core-periphery theory to define the political position of Dalits. He says the space created

¹³ Jodhka, S. S. (2012). *Caste: A Short Introduction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

¹⁴ Guru, G. (2000). Dalits From Margin to Margin. *India International Centre*, 111-116.

for the Dalits at the core in politics is just symbolic. This relationship between core and margin is always hierarchical. While concluding, Gopal argued that Dalits are partially forced to accept their marginalization and are forced to remain on the margin. They need some radical changes in their situation.

Shah (2002)¹⁵ is raising concern about using Dalit as a homogeneous category. He says that social scientists must be very cautious while making statements about discrimination against Dalits because these are jati specific. He describes the differences among Dalits with the help of a study conducted in Gujarat while taking into consideration the 'chamar' and 'senwa' dalit castes. According to author there are Dalits among Dalits and hierarchy within Dalits.

Reddy (2002)¹⁶ disagrees with Shah on the point of how he uses the term dalit and makes us see the importance of using the term dalit while addressing larger audiences. While explaining the origin of the term she argued that dalit is not a caste, it is a constructed identity. It encompasses all those considered to be either similarly placed or natural allies. Dalit uses this word very proudly and unites themselves against the other oppressing groups.

Judge (2003)¹⁷ takes consideration of two castes- Chamar, and Churah of Punjab to support the argument made by Shah. He describes how some Dalit castes there like ad-dharmis occupy high caste positions among the Dalits. They benefitted from the economic policies of the British era and established themselves as distinct social groups. He reached to the conclusion that there is a prevalent caste system among the Dalits as well.

Muthaiah (2004)¹⁸ studies the designation of Dalits in different contexts like Chandala, Bahujan, etc., and the politics of both designators and designates behind this. Britishers designated them as a depressed class to prove the legitimacy of their rule in India. Later, different groups tried to include them in their groups with

¹⁵ Shah, A. (2002). The 'Dalit' Category and its Differentiation. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 14, 1317-1318.

¹⁶ Reddy, S. (2002). 'Dalit': A Term Asserting Unity. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 42, 4339-4340.

¹⁷ Judge, P. S. (2003). Hierarchical Differentiation among Dalits. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 38, No. 28 (Jul. 12-18), 2990-2991.

¹⁸ Muthaiah, P. (2004). Politics of Dalit Identity. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (July-Sept.), 385-402.

the intention to swell their respective majority in politics. Gandhi termed them as Harijans for unified opposition to Britishers. He included them in Hindus to make them a majority. Dalits who adopted Christianity saw no change in their condition even after conversion. Protection through acts was denied to those converted Dalits.

The term Bahujan was used by Kanshiram to form the BSP party inspired by Buddha which usually means the tradition of majority welfare. In the conclusion, he contended that these terms should not merely be multiple identities but should be made ideologies to give benefits to all the Dalits and not to the advanced castes within SCs, STs, and OBCs.

Singh (1997)¹⁹ while visualizing the situation in 1997 argues that the Dalit leadership was accommodated in congress earlier in Haryana. But now they are seeking a new independent identity and BSP became the first party there which has mobilized Dalits as a distinct political group in Haryana. Apart from this, he discusses the regional variations in the socio-economic conditions of the Haryana Dalits. The dependence of Dalits gets reduced in the areas near to the city because they have work alternatives there. According to author Chamars have become more politically conscious among Dalits in Haryana.

Guru (2011)²⁰ discussed in details that how marginalized sections deployed the language of self-esteem and self-respect for the articulation of their normative aspiration through the idea of democracy and nationalism. He analyzed the impact of liberal democracy on Dalit pursuit of self-esteem and self-respect. He argued that the legal system also allows the upper caste to deal with dalits much more confidently without showing any respect for law. Then he comes to the roles of educated dalits and toiling masses who does not seem to be averse to the idea of participating in liberal democracy.

Therefore, liberal democracy has promises for a sizeable section. Identity politics also requires liberal democracy. This creates a new class among Dalits known as

¹⁹ Singh, J. (1997). Dalits in Haryana Politics. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32, No. 43 (Oct. 25-31), 2787-2788.

²⁰ Guru, G. (2011). Liberal Democracy in India and the Dalit Critique. *Social Research*, Vol. 78, No. 1, India's World (SPRING 2011), *The Johns Hopkins University Press*, 99-122.

Dalit millennium and leaves behind the others and creates fragmentation between these two classes. Therefore, Ambedkar also argued that how liberal vocabulary of individualism tends to destroy the moral resources necessary to build up solidarity for Dalit emancipation.

Judge (2012)²¹ explores the alternative strategies adopted by dalits in various time periods namely, the medieval period, renaissance, post-colonial modernity, and post modernity to improve their social status in India. They did so through the Bhakti movement, by exploiting economic opportunities provided by the Britishers and then the reservation policies after independence. But it is a postmodern state that the Dalit discourse of equality has shifted its emphasis from inclusion and quality to exclusivity and difference.

Now their attention has shifted from equality to gaining power through identity politics. Identity assertion is one of the tools of doing that. Here, he takes the example of Chamar in Punjab, that how they are trying to create a counter structure.

However, author argues that Dalit discourse in order to come out of the casteism may require the politics of inclusion rather than exclusivity and caste differentiation among them has prevented them to adopt such inclusionary strategies.

On Dalit Women

Malik (1999)²² wrote an article “Untouchability and Dalit Women’s Oppression”. Bela Malik wrote this article after attending a convention against untouchables and dalit women’s oppression, organized by the AIDWA on 20 December 1998. She talks about the gap between the reality of socio-economic conditions of these dalit women and the legal rights that they possess. She discusses how they are deprived of land rights and deprived of access to public resources especially by upper-caste women. She mentions that organization is important to claim their legal rights in reality.

²¹ Judge, P. S. (2012). Between Exclusion and Exclusivity: Dalits in Contemporary India. *Polish Sociological Review*, No. 178, 265-279.

²² Malik, B. (1999). Untouchability and Dalit Women's Oppression. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, Issue No. 06, 323-324.

Irudayam, Mangubhai, & Lee (2006)²³ argue that the violence against Dalit women in the cases that are not spoken out in public by women and the result of this is the creation and maintenance of a culture of violence, silence, and impunity. While giving many case studies they mention cases of violence in a general community like verbal abuse, physical assault, sexual exploitation, forced incarceration. There is violence in families in form of child sexual abuse, female feticide, and infanticide, etc. This happens at workplaces, government places, etc. done by landlords, higher caste people, business people, other Dalit persons, majority by the forward castes. In the later part of the article, they identify some factors of violence- Dalit women's sexual availability and bodily integrity, caste hierarchy, and lack of economic resources and when they demand their civic-political rights. They talk about remedial actions and the effects of violence.

Guru (1995)²⁴ in his article entitled "Dalit Women Talk Differently" argues that Dalit Women's mobilization is a unique epistemological standpoint because it allows real representation of social reality because only Dalit women can represent themselves on the basis of their experience. Rege (1998)²⁵ does not agree with him. She says this can lead to identity politics and limits the emancipatory potential of the Dalit women's organization. She says that Dalit Feminist Standpoint may arise from the intellectual works of Dalit feminists because of their struggles and practices but if it is isolated from the ideas and experiences of other groups, who should be knowing about the historical journeys, struggles, and social relations of those who are marginalized in the society then this Dalit Feminist Standpoint cannot thrive. She argues that non-Dalit writers start considering Dalit's problems as their problems then individuality can be transformed and non-Dalits won't need to write or speak always for the Dalit women or on behalf of them, rather by doing this, they can recreate their identity as Dalit feminists. Therefore, it avoids narrow identity politics based on the direct experiences of Dalit women. Hence, Dalit women should not be a homogenized category.

²³ Irudayam, A., Mangubhai, J., & Lee, J. (2006). *Dalit Women Speak Out: Violence against Dalit Women in India*. Chennai: National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights; National Federation of Dalit Women; Institute of Development Education.

²⁴ Guru, G. (1995). Dalit Women Talk Differently. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 30(41/42), 2548–2550.

²⁵ Rege, S. (1998). Dalit Women Talk Differently: A Critique of 'Difference' and towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 33, Issue No. 44, WS39-WS45.

Datar (1999)²⁶ criticizes the Dalit standpoint as an alternative on many bases. According to him Rege placed the current feminist debate within a narrow framework of feminist versus post-modernist stream and did not represent eco-feminism. Datar says, “who regenerate both natural and societal resources can claim a standpoint and their knowledge becomes liberatory and becomes an alternative standpoint. In assuming Dalit women as an alternative torch-bearing force for the women’s movement, it copies the same act of collapsing the categories of class and caste which Rege accuses the left of doing”. Datar talks about the ‘*Brahminisation*’ and ‘*Sanskritization*’ in terms of politics as they encourage bargain politics for seats. While supporting his argument Datar says, caste oppression started by denying access to natural resources, therefore, there is a need to claim these resources instead of living them to the savarnas.

Rege (2000)²⁷ wrote as a response to Datar’s article. She argues that Datar misrecognizes the DFS as being located within the narrow confines of postmodernism versus feminism rather it emerged from a concern with the emphasis on ‘differences’ in feminist politics.

Eco-feminism as a standpoint ignores many works done by women. Rege argues the point of discussion should be locating historically how the different new social movements have not addressed each other’s issues. Internal critique means recognition of connections of power that exist between women. It is, speaking about the space between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’.

According to Rege, while talking about *Sanskritization* in politics, Datar fails to note the significant spaces within the anti-caste struggle made by Dalit and Bahujan women. Datar misunderstands the standpoint theory as a practice to certain organizations. DFS is a collective subject position and not to be seen in terms of the aggregate of individuals.

²⁶ Datar, C. (1999). Non-Brahmin Renderings of Feminism in Maharashtra: Is It more Emancipatory Force?. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 34, Issue No. 41, 2964-2968.

²⁷ Rege, S. (2000). ‘Real Feminism’ and Dalit Women: Scripts of Denial and Accusation. *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol. 35, No. 6 (Feb. 5-11), 492-495.

Guru (2012)²⁸ defines the empowerment of dalit labour women in terms of their intellectual/spiritual stamina to produce the language of resistance through oral poetry. It is their experience of labour activity that triggers off the intellectual imagination. He gives certain reasons for that-it is clean labour that leads them to creative imagination, collective form of labour makes knowledge-generation a participatory activity, and this form of presentation does not require any interpreter. He further discusses various dimensions of these labouring intellectualism-they enjoy freedom from dalit patriarchy and from dalit cultural establishment, the logic of possessive intellectualism (fight for copyright) did not overwhelm their intellectual creativity. Their experiences made their literary creations resonate with Ambedkar's thoughts. Guru argued that but there is a decline in this labouring intellectualism because of TV serials, because of professional dalit singers, and because of individualization of interest as they are aware of fixed working hours and rights and migration to urban sectors. Meanwhile, there is also the emergence of critical thinking.

CSW in Beijing Declaration and platform for Action's 59th session urges to address the link between caste and gender. In this report, it was mentioned how dalit women suffer from forced and bonded labor forced prostitution, and don't have land ownership. They face discrimination in education, health, and decision-making power. Certain forms of violence have been described in this report. Recommendation has been given to states and Commission on the Status of Women and UN Women to stop discrimination, to organic regional South Asian Study. A specific and time-bound action plan is needed. According to this report intersection between caste and gender is the structural factor for poverty and as a root cause of structural inequalities in the post-2015 development framework.²⁹

²⁸ Guru, G. (2012). Laboring Intellectuals: The conceptual world of Dalit Women. *India International Centre quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 3/4, WINTER 2012-SPRING 2013, 54-68.

²⁹ (2015). *IDSN Input on Dalit Women in relation to the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of women: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. New York: International Dalit Solidarity Network.

Sabharwal & Sonalkar (2010)³⁰ highlights the specific challenges facing Dalit women in India in the field of economics (wage labor), literacy, health status, and political participation. She argues that mainstream feminist discourse and evaluation in India focuses on gender discrimination and issues of economic, educational, and political empowerment, ignoring the realities of the link between caste and gender. She analysis various theoretical discourses-On Gender and Patriarchy, citizenship and rights of women, Feminist Discourse with respect to Social/cultural Groups (black feminism, Feminist Discourse in India, and Dalit Women Discourse). Authour argues that it is their exclusion-induced deprivation that differentiates Dalit women's problems from the rest of the women. This requires a dual solution- in general policies against discrimination and poverty of women, second policies for dalit women.

Rao (2005)³¹ argues that democratizing and modernizing rather than eliminating caste, they constitute the form of identity through which gender and also sexuality can be reimagined and reshaped. She accepts that the caste system subordinates both the upper caste and lower caste women. To describe that she discussed 'dasiputras', how the upper caste women were not allowed to marry a lower caste. They do this due to their supposed responsibility of preserving the caste system by maintaining chastity and purity of body. After 1989, it was recognized that Dalit women are burdened with double oppression-from upper caste and from Dalit men.

Govinda (2006)³² with the example of women who work with regional organizations, argues that caste identity still determines the place that women activists are given by villagers in their feedback and within women's organizations. The article also explores how Dalit women are using their caste identity, alongside their identity as village-level activists, to further their interests beyond the realm of women's activism. They do that to make a difference and to

³⁰ Sabharwal, N. S., & Sonalkar, W. (2010). *Dalit Women Rights and Citizenship in India*. New Delhi: IDRC; Indian Institute of Dalit Studies. Retrieved from czech-in.org: http://www.czech-in.org/EES/Full_Papers/19.pdf.

³¹ Rao, A. (2005). Sexuality and The Family Form. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40, No. 8 (Feb. 19-25), 715-718.

³² Govinda, R. (2006). The Politics of Marginalized: Dalits and Women's Activism in India. *Gender and Development*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Marginalised Peoples (July), 181-190.

change the system. This confirms that they are aware that political society operates differently from civil society. They understand the importance of political power.

Chattopadhyay (2003)³³ 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. She especially mentions the 'Debdasi' ritual in some of the regions of south India. But now Dalit women are courageously speaking out. They are now pursuing higher education and securing jobs. They are participating at various platforms like the National Federation of Dalit Women. There are now 33% reserved seats for Dalit women in panchayats though with all its loopholes.

In the wake of growing rape cases in the state of Haryana and Maharashtra Teltumbde (2014)³⁴ criticizes the very idea of democracy in India. He says, for Dalits, democracy has been a veritable rule of demons. He argues that rather than *Brahmanical* mindset, the very secular intrigues of this democratic system have created the demons that lynch and rape Dalits with impunity. He highlights the ignorance of the political system and media towards such cases.

Soam & Singh (2019)³⁵ in their study find that deprivation and discrimination with the Dalit women persist in multiple spheres. The HDI Index for Dalit women is lower than the non-Dalit women. Dalit women face exclusion in political participation and policy making, disadvantages in economic opportunity, and are vulnerable to poverty. They are 'unfavourably included' in the socio-economic construct through the differential treatment or they are included in the society to do the jobs which the dominant caste does not perform.

Research Gap

The problem within the discourse is that women are usually seen from the gender perspective and they are considered within the traditional boundaries of the binary division of men/women which makes us unable to see the differences among the

³³ Chattopadhyay, M. (2003). Dalit Women ask for Human Rights. *The Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 64, 878-882.

³⁴ Teltumbde, A. (2014). Dance of Democracy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 49, No. 23, 10-11.

³⁵ Swati Soam & Rajeev Kumar Singh (2019). Insecurity and Exclusion among Dalit Women: A Case Study. *Indian journal of Political Science*, Vol. LXXX, No.4, Oct-December, 633-642.

women themselves. In India, caste-constructed culture puts the triple burden of caste, class, and gender on Dalit women. Despite this fact, there are also differences in the form of structural violence in the regional culture. These different forms of structural violence do affect the personal and social dignity of women differently, according to their culture. Therefore, the study on Dalit women should also be regionally specific. **Haryana has been selected for the field study as here Dalits are not unified though they construct more than 10% of the population and the stories of marginalization on Dalit in Haryana are very less in the academic field.**

There is rare literature on the socio-economic positioning of women in Haryana. The work which is based on Dalit women in Haryana is mostly based on sexual abuse and violence. Questions like discrimination among Dalit women have also not been addressed yet. The present work seeks to rectify some blind spots in earlier done works by addressing some additional questions and this makes it more significant to understand the situation of these women in Haryana.

Aims and Objectives of the study

Discriminatory practices against females persist all over India due to the belief in deep-rooted patriarchy. Over the years Haryana has been the state which is been successful in reserving its position as the state which has the lowest sex ratio. The birth of a girl child is generally not welcomed in Haryana. Sex-selective abortion has been indeed a matter of great concern here. Females of Haryana have to face many numbers of crimes like sexual violence, rape, kidnapping, etc. Haryana has a long history of honor killing and subjugating cultural norms for women. This along with the caste hierarchy in Haryana brings more plight when it comes to the Dalit women which consist 47% of the total population of scheduled castes in Haryana according to the 2011 Census. Along with the crimes mentioned above, there is a long roaster of problems that these women have to face being Dalit as well. Some of the problems faced by them are following:

- ❖ Physical abuse and violence from upper-caste men
- ❖ Eve teasing

- ❖ Work as Labourer in other's field
- ❖ Domestic violence from their family members
- ❖ Doing works like sweeping, cleaning, and mopping as a domestic worker due to poverty and caste specificity
- ❖ Humiliation and untouchability
- ❖ Political and Economic deprivation in both public and private spheres etc.

The main aim of this study has been to examine the social, economic, and political status of Dalit women in Haryana. It is anticipated that the development of any demographic area in terms of social, economic, and educational spheres may bring changes in beliefs and attitudes of women concerning independence, equality, and individuality. When socio-economic and demographic variables pertaining to Haryana's social structure are examined it is seen that the situation of women in Haryana is highly pathetic. The institutional norms related to age-old traditions and patriarchy in rural areas of Haryana still restrict women to participate actively in social, economic, and political areas. While taking into consideration these factors, this study has tried to observe whether there is unanimity between value patterns of social structure. Therefore, taking into account the above stimulation, the following are considered as the objectives of the present study: -

- ❖ To assess the socio-economic positioning of Dalit women in society in general and in the Dalit fold in particular
- ❖ To find out the nature of subjugation and structural violence and the role of the dominant cultural construct for the Dalit women
- ❖ To find out the role of Dalit women in the caste consciousness movement in Haryana.

Hypotheses

Following are the hypothesis to test for the present work:

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

- ❖ Dalit women are socially and economically more marginalized not because of their class character but also of their caste 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.
- ❖ Violence against women in India is structural and cultural in nature and dalit women are no exception.

Methods and Tools of Data Collection

The present research is descriptive and analytical in nature. The study made an attempt to describe the socio-cultural and political construct of the Dalits in Haryana in general and of Sonipat in particular. Also, the present work tried to analyse the factors which led to the marginalization of the dalit women and existing multi-level hierarchies within the gender and dalit fold especially in the context of the universe of study.

Data for the present study was collected through both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. For the purpose of quantitative methods, the interview schedules were used for collection of Data from the field. In qualitative methods, empirical evidences were collected from the field through observations. Along with in-depth focused group interviews, some informal interviews were also conducted in sample villages.

An informal schedule was prepared pertaining to the variables identified in the study. The schedule contained questions related to socio-economic background of the respondent and questions related to status indicators. Both primary and secondary sources of information were used for collecting the data. Research reports and documents published by government sources have been used for secondary data. It includes various government's published materials such as census reports, National Crime Bureau Records, data from Ministry of Human Resources and Development, data from National Sample Survey Office, and other official records which were relevant to the topic. Newspaper clippings were also

used wherever required. Electronic sources are also used as per requirement. Appropriate tools are being used for analysing the data.

Field of Study

In the present study, empirical evidence has been collected from the district Sonipat, which lies in the northern part of the Haryana. The Sonipat district has progressed economically a lot in the last two decades. It is known as the education city. More medical facilities have been developed here. Sonipat is becoming a hub of public and private industries. But that does not bring desired changes in the social structure of this demographic area. It is still lagging behind in social and cultural development. The sex ratio of Sonipat district is 856 out of 1000 males, which is one of the lowest in Haryana state. The rate of female literacy is 69.80 in Sonipat. It is ironic that despite having the highest female literacy rate comparatively the sex ratio here is the lowest.³⁶

The reason to choose the Sonipat as the field of study is that the Dalit population here is 18.62. Dalits in the other regions of Haryana like in Jind and Hisar are still politically aware of their rights. But in the northern part of Haryana, they are more fragmented and are at the margins of society. The Sonipat district is divided into seven blocks. The three blocks have been selected for the study. Purposive Random Sampling methods are being used for the selection of the blocks and villages therein. Areas are chosen according to the proportion of Dalit community in respect to the population there. It includes villages like Pabnera from Murthal block, Haryana Kalan from Sonipat Block, Patti Kalana from Gohana block. These are the villages that have Dalit population above 40%. It is going to be a combination of primary data collected on the basis of the experience of Dalit women and secondary data collected from some government or private sources.

³⁶ *Census of India Website: Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.* (n.d.). Retrieved December 19, 2021, from https://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/dchb_haryana.html

Chapter Plan

1. Introduction
2. Positioning Dalit women in India
3. Positioning Dalit women in Haryana: In special reference to Sonipat district
4. Field study
5. Findings and suggestions

CHAPTER-2

POSITIONING DALIT WOMEN IN INDIA

Social Exclusion

The term social exclusion deals with the various structural dimensions of societal marginalization and poverty. But the concept first appeared in the discourse of France in the mid 1970's. There is a consensus among academicians of various fields that the history of these concepts can be traced back to the publication of Rene Lenoir in 1974. "In France, René Lenoir, as Secrétaire d'Etat a l' Action Sociale of the French Government, spoke of the following as constituting the "excluded"—a tenth—of the French population: "mentally and physically handicapped, suicidal people, aged invalids, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, multi-problem households, marginal, asocial persons, and other social 'misfits.'"³⁷

However, the discourse that followed the work of Rene Lenoir added a long list of exclusions to it. The concept of social exclusion, generally in developmental literature has been defined as an inability to choose or lack of capability to fully participate in the development of a society. In India, social exclusion revolves around some sections of the population particularly Dalit, Adivasi, women, and minorities.³⁸ It defines the relative position of any group or individual as compared to the whole view of society. One type of social exclusion can lead to the other type of disadvantage of that particular group. For example, Dalit minorities in India are usually economically disadvantaged as well as deprived in cultural and political terms and that, of course, perpetuates their economic disadvantages. The whole process is cyclic in nature. It includes a whole set of forces and not just the poverty dimension. The concept of social exclusion has moved beyond the traditional concept of poverty or lack of resources alone. Rather, it talks about a number of other rights, resources, privileges, etc.

³⁷ René Lenoir as cited in Sen, A. (2000). *SOCIAL EXCLUSION: CONCEPT, APPLICATION, AND SCRUTINY*. Philippines: Asian Developmental Bank.

³⁸ Singh, R.K. (2009). Manual Scavenging as Social Exclusion. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 521-523. Vol 49, No. 26-27.

Sometimes exclusion may 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. The exclusion based on culture give birth to the concept of others. Irrefutably, diversity and difference are two wheels of culture and it is not necessary that all forms of cultural differences take form of cultural exclusion. The cultural exclusion occurs when certain group of individuals are kept outside the social realm on the basis of their cultural practices, their birth fate, when they are culturally outlawed, impermissible to participate in social decisions. They are not considered as part of dominant cultural construct of any particular 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. Because the behavior of other members of society with them and their interaction is based on this relationship which defines that how the social structure of that society is. “Social structure is sometimes defined simply as patterned social relations-those regular and repetitive aspects of the interactions between the members of a given social entity.”³⁹

The result of exclusion among the groups which are excluded intrinsically hangs on the working of economic and social institutions and to what extent they are discriminatory and exclusionary in their results. Social exclusion is when an individual is incapable of participating in the economic, social, and political processing of society. Buvinic says that if the interaction between various groups in society occurs in a hierarchical or power-subordinate manner then evidently it will have a substantial impact on an individual’s access to equal opportunities. The form of social exclusion which takes place in India is mainly ascriptive in nature which cannot be altered because they are beyond individual control.⁴⁰

Social exclusion is a multidimensional concept and it takes into consideration various conditions to decide whether a person or a group is socially excluded or

³⁹ Form, W., & Wilterdink. (2020, November 19). *Social Structure*.
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-structure>

⁴⁰ Buvinic, M. (2005). *Social Inclusion and economic Development in Latin America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

not. If a person is excluded from the following areas, then it is evident that he/she is socially excluded.

- 1) Exclusion from labour market
- 2) Exclusion from legal citizenship rights
- 3) Exclusion from participating in civil society
- 4) Exclusion from public areas⁴¹

Amartya Sen⁴² talks about a different concept of social exclusion. He differentiates between “unfavourable exclusion” and “unfavourable Inclusion”. He says that either type can generate adverse effects. “Unfavourable Inclusion” in various areas of life through unequal treatment may bring some serious effects as “unfavourable exclusion” would bring. In the former, people are forcibly kept outside or left out, and later, they are forcibly included. He gives an example of the bonded labourer in a backward rural economy who may suffer particularly from unequal inclusion. There are conditions when people have to take part in some social activities like the market but when they work, there, under unfavourable or unequal conditions then it takes the form of “unfavourable Inclusion”. He aligns the concept of social exclusion with the capability approach. According to him, the capability approach to poverty has various dimensions because there is a wide range of capabilities and functions that have to be valued. He termed it as Aristotelian approach. Social exclusion is a part of capability approach for two reasons. First, we all have good reason skills of not getting excluded from social relations. Second, if one is excluded from social relations then it may lead to deprivation in other fields as well. Therefore, social exclusion is a part of capability deprivation and also a cause of various capability failures. Sen differentiates between “active and passive exclusion”. Active exclusion takes place when people are excluded intentionally through some government actions, policies, or through any other means whereas “passive exclusion” takes place through social interactions and behaviours when there is no deliberative attempt to exclude.

⁴¹ Aasland, A., & Flotten, T. (2001). Ethnicity and Social Exclusion in Estonia and Latvia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 1023-1049.

⁴² Sen, A. (2000). *SOCIAL EXCLUSION: CONCEPT, APPLICATION, AND SCRUTINY*. Philippines: Asian Developmental Bank.

Thorat⁴³ manifested the idea of social exclusion to the caste and ethnicity-based exclusion in India. It is obligatory to understand the interrelation between various societal groups and institutions to understand the various dimensions of social exclusion and how this led to exclusion of particular groups and their deprivation in various spheres that could be civil, cultural, economic, and political. In India, this exclusion hinges on the societal interrelationship and institutions that deliberately discriminate, exclude and deprive certain groups on the basis of their identities like caste, religion, and ethnicity.

Galtung⁴⁴ identifies social injustices in terms of structural violence. When no subject is directly involved in an act of hurt then it is called structural violence. When society absorbs the culture then 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. Six weapons are mechanisms of structural violence:-

1. Linear ranking order – there is a complete ranking order which undoubtedly tells who is at the higher rank.

2. Acyclical pattern of interaction –acyclical itself means that all the actors can interact in only one single way and that is hierarchical in nature

3. Correlation between rank and authority– the higher the rank is, the more authority it would have.

4. Consistency between the systems – all the interaction networks are similar in structure.

5. Consonance between the ranks – position in one system tends to be the same in another system. It means if a person is at a higher rank in one system, then he would also be in the same position if he participates in another system and

⁴³ Thorat, S. (2010). On Social Exclusion Addressing Inter-social Group, Graded and Multiple-group Inequalities Through Inclusive Policy. *Centre for Social Studies*.

⁴⁴ Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 167-191.

6. High-rank integration between levels – an actor at one level has the vote of the highest-ranking actor of his level to get representation at the next level.

The lower-ranking actors are deprived of resources and bare minimums because the structure deprives them of possibilities to organize and collectivize their power to fight against the top hierarchies, as “voting power, bargaining power, striking power, violent power”, because they are atomized and not collectively organized, because they are highly intimidated by the topmost hierarchies.⁴⁵

There are three factors of social exclusion that define its character. First, the group which is excluded faces refusal of equal opportunities in various spheres of life. Second, this denial leads to relative deprivation in other areas as well and results in deprivation and human poverty. Third, the process of social exclusion is embedded in the interrelationship of various societal groups and individuals. It is a process through which individuals or groups are kept outside the full participation in society that could be fully or partially.⁴⁶

According to David Bryne⁴⁷, the term social exclusion is inherently dynamic and clearly systemic. It happens in times of history and it affects the lives of those individuals and groups who are being excluded and who are not excluded. It signifies the character of the social system. Some people are made a victim in exclusion by other people of the system. He says that it is important to differentiate between the idea of social exclusion and poverty. Social exclusion is an arising phenomenon that is beyond nominalism.

He supports his own idea with the help of a definition given by Madanipour, which is as follows: “*Social exclusion is defined as a multidimensional process, in which various forms of exclusion are combined: participation in decision making and political processes, access to employment and material resources, and integration into common cultural processes. When combined, they create acute forms of exclusion that find a spatial manifestation in particular neighbourhoods.*”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Haan, D. (2003). Extreme Deprivation in Remote Areas in India: Social Exclusion as Explanatory Concept. *Conference on Chronic Poverty*.

⁴⁷ Bryne, D. (2005). *Social Exclusion*. Berkshire: Open University Press; McGraw-Hill Education.

⁴⁸ Madanipour, as quoted in Bryne, 2005

Grounds of social exclusion in India

Many studies provide a careful examination of the various grounds of social exclusion all over time. Race, ethnicity, religion, social status, economic status, and gender identity have been grounds of social exclusion all over the world. In India, caste and gender are two such groundings that need to be examined.

Caste

The word caste seems to derive its origin from the Spanish word '*casta*' which has parlance in the Portuguese language also. However, the context in which this term was used in Europe is not similar to Indian usage. In India, the use of this word became prominent with the advent of Britishers.⁴⁹ Omvedt⁵⁰ says that caste feudalism in India was integrated with the help of the union between the power of state and *Brahmanism*. Later, when Britishers came to India, they used this structure of caste for their own benefit and to strengthen their rule.

“Varna, Jati, or Zat and many other similar terms have been in use in different parts of the South Asian region for a very long time. They describe a variety of prevailing social divisions and hierarchies of status and class. This indeed includes the idea and practice of pollution or untouchability.”⁵¹

The early book on the Indian social order i.e. “Manusmriti” divides and arranges the social classes on the basis of Guna into four-folds. This is very much similar to Plato’s classification of three classes based on three instincts. Manusmriti and some other shastras mention four Varna: the *Brahmins* (the scholar and priest) the *Kshatriya* (King and warrior), the *Vaishyas* (agriculturalist and traders), and *Shudras* (artisan and service provider). All those including foreigners, tribals, and nomads, who do not subscribe to the norms of the Hindu society were contagious and untouchables. Another group excluded from the main society was called ‘*Prajanya*’ or ‘*Antyaja*’. This group of former untouchables or Dalits i.e.,

⁴⁹ Origin of the term ‘casta’ as defined in Jodhka, S. S. (2012). *Caste: A Short Introduction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁵⁰ Omvedt, G. (2014). *Dalit and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. New Delhi: SAGE publications.

⁵¹ Jodhka, S. S. (2012). *Caste: A Short Introduction*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

downtrodden were considered either the lower section of the Shudras or outside the Varna system altogether. A passage from Manusmriti indicates that Varna system was originally non-hereditary.

Dalit in India is a class that is historically known as untouchables. The caste system in India separates the Dalits from the rest of the society. The term Dalit has its origin in the Sanskrit word 'dal'. It means crushed, suppressed, downtrodden, underprivileged, destroyed, and broken. The term Dalit is a translation of depressed class from Hindi and Marathi languages. This term was later energized in the 1970's during the Dalit Panther Movement in Maharashtra. Earlier, this word was used in the 19th century by Jyotiba Phule for the victims of the Indian caste system. For him, Dalit was another word for the outcastes and untouchables who were oppressed. They were given various terms by different people. The word 'broken people' for Dalits was used by B.R. Ambedkar. Mahatma Gandhi termed them as 'Harijans' which means children of God. Britishers called them as 'depressed class'. Later they were termed as Scheduled castes in the constitution.⁵²

Generally, this class of Dalits are those people who are known as 'untouchables' in India. They are known by various names as *outcastes*, *Bahujan*, *harijans*, *exterior caste*, *depressed class*, *scheduled castes*, *chandalas* etc. in various parts of India according to their regional culture. Untouchables were those who were kept outside the varna system described in the pronounced text called "manusmriti".

"Untouchability is largely an outgrowth of the system of caste, and caste in its turn is the illegitimate child of the concept of Varna. But, in the absence of any historical evidence, it is difficult to say with any precision or finality as to when the three or four Varnas or occupational divisions of society into Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra came to be multiplied into numerous castes. The origin of untouchability also is lost in antiquity."⁵³

There are various features of the caste system in India that prove it as inhumane to society. Some of them are social segregation, untouchability, the notion of purity

⁵² Michael, S. (1999). *Dalits in Modern India: Vision and Values*. New Delhi: Sage Publication.

⁵³ V.S. Nargolkar's article Removal of Untouchability published in 1969 by The Indian Journal of Social Work as defined in Hunashimarad, D. S. (2014). Origin and Development of Dalit Community. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 84-87.

and pollution, hierarchy, restrictions on foods and drinks etc. Dalits as a depressed class are deprived even of the basic necessities of life which made their lives even more pathetic. Due to the traditional notions related to the caste system, Dalits in earlier times faced crisis to live a life of dignity and that makes them penurious till the date. They were forbidden to enter into the temples and were not allowed to take water from the well. They were not allowed to take any sort of education. Dalits were engaged into menial works like cleaning of villages and scavenging. Even the shadow of an untouchable was not permitted to come into the contact of any twice-born and if it happened then there are discussions of harsh punishments for Dalits in the Manusmriti. However, Dalits have not been able to completely shatter the boundaries which were traditionally decided for them by the structure of caste system. Some of the age-old customs related to notion of untouchability are still continuing till date. At some places Dalits are still not allowed to reside within the areas which are traditionally meant for the upper castes only. They are still carrying the baggage of humiliation and impoverishment because of the effects of their historical deprivation.

Though Dalits are provided the identification of scheduled category in the constitution and on the basis of this they get reservations in various educational institutions and government jobs. However, there are apprehensions that identification of Dalit category as scheduled caste further vitalized the division along with the lines of purity and pollution. Thence, more legislations were added to the constitution of India to finally abolish untouchability. These include article 17 of the Indian constitution, Protection of Civil Rights Act in 1976,⁵⁴ Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993. But despite these legal measures the desired result has not been achieved.

Gender

Gender, according to World Health Organization, are some socially constructed values, that are carried by women, men, girls, and boys. This includes the

⁵⁴ Protection of Civil Rights Act is an amended version of Untouchability (offence) Act of 1955. Untouchability Act makes practice of Untouchability an offensive act and prescribes penalties for the same. Later, this Act was amended in September 1976.

characteristics, roles, and behaviour related to being a woman, man, girl, or boy and their relationship with each other.⁵⁵ Kamla Bhasin says “gender in new incarnation is used for the socio-cultural definition of man and woman and how the society gives them different roles on the basis of their sex”.⁵⁶

In India, women are historically considered secondary in socio-cultural terms. The Vedic culture believed that men and women are created as equals. But then a changeable turn came in history to subjugate women. ‘Manusmriti’, a Sanskrit scripture which was written between 1500 B.C. and 200 A.D. proved to be a significant turning point. According to Hindu traditions, it is believed that all societal laws should be governed by Manu. In *Manusmriti* there are Twelve chapters and 2684 verses that are directed to the general public. The separate laws for Husband and Wife are mentioned in chapter 9 which discriminates against women. Here, it is mentioned that the duty of husband is to “carefully guard his wife, in order to keep his offspring pure”. “a husband must constantly be worshipped as a god by a faithful wife”⁵⁷ Historically, women are deprived of all property rights, their life and decisions were controlled by others and their freedom was restricted in several ways.

Amartya Sen in one of his seminal articles in 1991, introduced the concept of “missing women” to the world. He brought into attention the problem of the Imbalance sex ratio in India. The sex ratio in India was the lowest at that time (927/1000).⁵⁸ However, the last two decades have shown a slight increase in sex ratio. According to 2011 census, the sex ratio in India is 943/1000.⁵⁹ Due to ownership of property, the males are seen as the “breadwinners” of the family. Within the family, men play the role of bourgeois and women represent the proletariat class. This transition started with change from primitive society to the feudal stage when people started owning private property. The most important consequence of the ownership of private property was the dominance of the man.

⁵⁵ There is a difference between sex and gender. Gender as defined by Who, is a socially constructed term whereas Sex is just a biological term. Source: *Gender and health*. (n.d.). Retrieved December 19, 2021, from <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/gender>

⁵⁶ Bhasin, K. (2000). *Understanding Gender*. New Delhi: Kali for Women.

⁵⁷ Razvi, M., & Roth, G. L. (2004). Socio-Economic Development and Gender Inequality in India. In *Online Submission*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED492144>

⁵⁸ Sen, A. (1992). Missing Women. *British Medical Journal*, 587-588.

⁵⁹ Census of India, Source <https://www.census2011.co.in/sexratio.php>

At this stage, the household lost its public character and became a private sphere. “The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production”⁶⁰

However, girls are seen as a burden because of many reasons. Dowry system is winning to the degree that the birth of a girl child is viewed as a burden to the family in various communities. Further, the female isn't viewed as a replacement as she would continue on to another family. Therefore, the expenditure on her education is also considered as a burden. Laws battling these worries stay on papers alone. Notwithstanding existing severe laws against pre-birth sex determination and sex explicit feticide, the situation is totally unique.⁶¹ One important reason for considering women as a burden is violence against them and the objectification of women's bodies in society. Janet Wolff writes that body's “pre-existing meaning, as a sex object, as an object of the male gaze, can always prevail and re-appropriate the body, despite the intentions of the woman herself.”⁶² Therefore the body of a woman is considered as a cause of their devaluation and oppression. Male chauvinism and domination have been established in Indian society due to economic backwardness and lack of self-confidence in women. Females are considered as material objects by society, as a response to it, sexual crimes, rapes, harassment of women at workplaces are increasing in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau's report of 2020, the rate of crimes against women during 2018-2020 is 56.5 (as per one lakh of the population). There are 226 registered cases of murder with rape or gang rape in 2020. There are 7045 dowry deaths in all over India. Most of these dowry deaths are planned as fatal accidents like cylinder blasts in the kitchen etc. Women face cruelty in some or other ways in their natal families, sometimes by their husbands or by their relatives. There are 112292 such cases in 2020 according to NCRB.⁶³

⁶⁰ The first edition of the book ‘The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State’ by Fredrick Engels was published in 1884 in ‘Zurich’.

⁶¹ Rao, G. P., Vidya, K. L., & Sriramy, V. (2015). The Indian “girl” psychology: A perspective. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 57(Suppl 2), S212–S215. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.161480>

⁶² Wolff, J. (1990). “Reinstating Corporeality. Feminism and Body Politics.” In *Feminine Sentences. Essays on Women and Culture*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, p, 121.

⁶³ National Crime Records Bureau, Crimes in India 2020, Source: <https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/CII%202020%20Volume%201.pdf>

Therefore, due to such patriarchal norms, there is a strong preference for sons over daughters. This goes hand in hand with sex-selective abortion and female feticide. Despite the fact that the Government of India has passed the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PCPNDT) in 1994, “nearly 4.6 crore (45.8 million) females are ‘missing’ in Indian demography in the year 2020, mainly due to pre and post-birth sex selection practices stemming from son preferences and gender inequality, United Nations Population Fund report said.”⁶⁴

Women are generally confined to the private space or within the fourfold of the house. It is believed that the public sphere is not meant for women and it is their natural duty of rear and caring for the children and members of the family. In the 1960s, second-wave feminism made an effort to culminate this public-private distinction. Though the era of globalization has given them opportunities to move out from the private space but this has created a different set of problems for women. Women who are working outside, are loaded with a double burden. It means they work as paid labours at their workplaces and also have to render their responsibility of unpaid work at their homes as a mother, wives, etc. Even the responsibility of home is considered as prior to them. Despite this, when they manage to work outside, they are paid unequally for the same work which men do. Women make up one-half of the workforce still they are less paid. “The massive entry of women into active economic life has only rarely been matched by a corresponding improvement in their living or working conditions. Inequality of treatment marks virtually all aspects of women’s working lives, beginning with wages and employment opportunities and extending to access to decision-making and managerial positions.”⁶⁵ Working women also face sexual harassment in various ways at their workplaces. In 1997, in Vishaka Case, it was realized that sexual harassment of women at workplaces needs serious acknowledgment. While considering the seriousness of the matter the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act was passed in 2013 to protect women from sexual harassment at their workplaces.

⁶⁴Sarkar, S. (2020, July 1). *The week*. Retrieved from theweek.in: www.theweek.in

⁶⁵*International Labour Organization*. (1995, august 25). Retrieved from ilo.org: <https://www.ilo.org>

In India, women are not given even basic human rights. “The prevalence of a dominant ideology which confines girls and women to definite roles and obligations leads to their devaluation and discrimination in a range of areas. The basic assumption is that girls are inferior, physically and mentally weak, and above all sexually vulnerable.”⁶⁶ They are not privileged to have access to material resources and if they do so then it is only according to formal laws. Indian society is prominently governed by customary laws and traditionally, women are given secondary status. Thence, this lack of access to property led to the economic backwardness of women as a category. That backwardness prevails in other sectors as well. Women are not considered worthy to get education, especially in rural areas. “The main reasons associated with this is that the parents expect girls to look after the siblings while they are at work, working with the parents as seasonal labour during the cultivation period and managing the household work while the parents are at work, the parents take more interest in boys’ education as against the girls as they feel that the girls are to be married off, increasing cost of education, etc. Thus, the universalisation of primary education in India remains a remote daydream for the women.”⁶⁷

But the condition of women cannot improve until and unless there is a change in the perception of society. Exploitation and maltreatment of women, including by and large viciousness, are admissible in nations where women have mediocre economic wellbeing by standard or formal law. Violence against women is an immediate conclusion of their subordinate status in the public arena. “Crude societies have convictions, standards, and social organizations that legitimize and subsequently sustain brutality against women. Abused women in emerging nations will generally acknowledge their mediocre status and embrace the conventional upsides of accommodation and servility”.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ karlekar, M. (1998). Domestic Violence. *Economic And Political Weekly*, 1741-1751.

⁶⁷ Saryal, S. (2014). Women’s Rights in India: Problems and Prospects. *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, 49-53.

⁶⁸ Cohen, M. F. (2006). The Condition of Women in Developing and Developed Countries. *The Independent Review*, 261-273.

Caste, Class, and Gender

In India, being a Dalit is a quite acceptable remark to get humiliated, to suffer from poverty, and to face a degraded life. Being a woman is a reason enough to work as unpaid labour, to get controlled by the males, to get exploited, and to bear unwanted burdens on the name of sex. But the women within the Dalit need special attention because of their threefold deprivation in terms of gender, caste, and class. Women from the scheduled caste communities experience the ill effects of segregation dependent on their sex as well as caste character and resulting in monetary hardship. Dalit women comprised around 16.60 percent of India's female populace in 2011. Dalit women's concerns include sexual orientation and financial hardship as well as separation-related with religion, station, and unapproachability, which thus brings about the forswearing of their social, monetary, social, and political freedom.⁶⁹

The tendency for generalization and of creating a grand construct unintendedly somewhere put diversity aside and makes a homogenized image of a section called women, generally in a binary form of a human, the men, and women. This bifurcation strikes out the disparateness within a particular category. There are differences among women as well. There are “high-caste”, “lower-caste”, rich and poor, and also women from various religious categories.

Aslop, Fitzsimons, & Lennon (2002) say, that even respectable endeavors, like women's activist thoughts, may have the unseen side-effects of further settling the twofold women/men as 'regular'. This happens basically in light of the fact that placing all ladies in a similar classification is very much like doing it for men-overlooks the regular variety of ladies' experience, yet additionally oblivious to the diverse power structures in which ladies all over the world live.⁷⁰

Ruth Manorama, a functioning individual from the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights and the National Alliance of Women, once stated that “in a male-

⁶⁹ SABHARWAL, N. S., & SONALKAR, W. (2015). Dalit Women in India: At the Crossroads of Gender, Class, and Caste. *GLOBAL JUSTICE : THEORY PRACTICE RHETORIC*.

⁷⁰ Aslop, R., Fitzsimons, A., & Lennon, K. (2002). *Theorizing Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

dominated society, Dalit women face a triple burden of caste, class, and gender”.⁷¹ “Caste discrimination in the form of social deprivation and norms such as untouchability, class marginalization as they are economically deprived and do not have many job opportunities due to lack of education and are exploited due to the patriarchal structure of society in general”.⁷²

Dalit women are oppressed not only by upper-caste males but by the males of their community also. Rape and physical assault have been traditional weapons against Dalit community. The works they do are very pitiful. Violence against them is manifold. They are exploited by landlords in terms of physical violence and economic when comes to paying them wages. They work outside in the fields of others and after coming home, tolerate their alcoholic husbands. They bear the economic burden of the family and even after that, they are deprived of all the economic resources. The crimes which are committed against scheduled castes, women are at the top of that. Most of the crimes among them are committed against Dalit Women. “The National Family Health Survey – NFHS (2006) showed that the prevalence of violence is much higher against women belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes as compared to women outside these categories. The percentage of SC women facing physical violence is 41% while that of ST women is 39.3%, Other Backward Classes (OBC) women is 34.1% and that of other women facing physical violence at the domestic level is 26.8%. In terms of emotional violence, SC women account for 19%, ST women 19.5%, OBC women 16.9%, and other women 20.9%”.⁷³

In her study, Sujatha⁷⁴ talks about the main reasons for domestic violence against Dalit women and this includes male alcoholism, dowry demands, the man’s suspicious nature, husband’s extramarital relations, and the complex social situations related to inter-caste marriages. Rape and sexual abuse of Dalit women by men of the dominant caste and classes are quite common in India. She criticized

⁷¹ Valarmathi, T., Jaiswal, S., & Jaiswal, A. (2018). *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Social Science An Anthropological Analysis about the Condition of Dalit Women in India* (pp. 1–8).

⁷² Razvi, M., & Roth, G. L. (2004). Socio-Economic Development and Gender Inequality in India. In *Online Submission*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED492144>

⁷³ Sujatha, D. (2014). Redefining Domestic Violence: Experiences of Dalit Women. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19-22.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

the writings which argue that Dalit families are matriarchal in nature and have scope for democratic space in the families of Dalit community.

Dalit Women are those cases that are not spoken out in public by women and the result of this is the creation and maintenance of a culture of violence, silence, and impunity. There is violence in families in form of child sexual abuse, female feticide, and infanticide etc. This happens at workplaces, government places etc. done by landlords, higher caste people, business people, other dalit persons, majority forward castes. Believe in Dalit women's sexual availability and bodily integrity, caste hierarchy and lack of economic resources are some of the factors of violence against Dalit women.⁷⁵

Sabharwal & Sonalkar⁷⁶ highlight the specific challenges facing Dalit women in India in the field of economics (wage labor), literacy, health status, and political participation. She argues that mainstream feminist discourse and evaluation in India focuses on gender discrimination and issues of economic, educational, and political empowerment, ignoring the realities of the link between caste and gender. The author argues that it is their exclusion-induced deprivation that differentiates Dalit women's problems from the rest of the women. This requires a dual solution- in general policies against discrimination and poverty of women, second policies for Dalit women.

Here in India, the social structure is hierarchical in nature in which the Brahmins and Kshatriyas are at the very top and untouchables are at the bottom. But in each of these strata, the women of that particular caste are powerless and kept outside the decision-making process. They live at the mercy of the males of that caste. The situation of women in each stratum is most pathetic. Dalits in this hierarchy-based system are at the very bottom and the Dalit women are even below them. They are the most suppressed and crushed in society. They have been more powerless and

⁷⁵ Irudayam, A., Mangubhai, J., & Lee, J. (2006). *Dalit Women Speak Out: Violence against Dalit Women in India*. Chennai: National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights; National Federation of Dalit Women; Institute of Development Education.

⁷⁶ Sabharwal, N. S., & Sonalkar, W. (2010). *Dalit Women Rights and Citizenship in India*. New Delhi: IDRC; Indian Institute of Dalit Studies. Retrieved from czech-in.org: http://www.czech-in.org/EES/Full_Papers/19.pdf.

exploited. They are dehumanized in all spheres and live voiceless life. Some of the issues faced by the Dalit women are: -

- Educational deprivation
- Economical deprivation
- Gender-based discrimination
- Caste-based sexual violence
- Lack of accessibility to public resources

a. Educational Backwardness

One of the most prominent concerns is the low literacy rate among Dalit women. According to NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) data, the participation of Dalit Women in Higher Education in 2017 was 16% of Males and 17% of all other females. It was 11,703 in SC women as compared to 68708 in Upper Caste Women. The dropout of Dalit girls in schools is another issue faced by Dalit women. According to the Ministry of Resource Development, the SC female enrolment in Primary level education during 2015-2016 was 124 lakhs and when it came to secondary level of education it came to just 64 lakhs. Further NSSO data indicates that the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of other females in higher education is 23.5 and whereas GER for SC female students at Higher education is just 19.⁷⁷

Dalits are usually aligned in the informal sectors. The male and female both earn for their families. The girls, at a very young age within the Dalit community, are imposed with the responsibilities of the household chores and family's well-being. They get married at a very young age. Therefore, when it comes to their education, Dalit girls become the first ones to get fired by the family. This lack of education leaves them behind in the economic sphere as well.

⁷⁷ Source: https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/ESAG-2018.pdf

b. Economical Deprivation

According to a recently conducted survey by official sources such as the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), most Dalit women lack access to regular employment and income-earning assists. According to NSSO data of 68th round, the female workforce participation per 1000 in regular wage salaried work was just 118 during 2011-2012 as compared to 213 of other females. In casual labour it was 458/1000 for SC female workforce and it was just 151 for another female category. The self-employment was just 424 among Dalit women as compared to 636 for others, whereas in industrial sector their participation is more in Primary sector. It is 636 per thousand in the primary sector and 158 per thousand in the tertiary sector. This number is much higher for the females of another category. Thence, it is seen that though work participation in labour is more in SC females but they do not work informal sectors. Dalit Women are more dependent on working in the agricultural sector. Their participation in the informal or casual sector is much more as compared to self-employment. Dalits are the ones who do not own much agricultural land and if in certain cases they own some then Dalit women are not allowed to have its ownership. They work as labourers in other fields and earn on daily basis. The percentage of Dalit women aligned in secured jobs, technical jobs, and professional works is much lower than the other females.

Moreover, Dalit women are engaged in scavenging, polluting occupations, and unhygienic works like cleaning and mopping in others' houses. They work as house helps. Due to the stigma of pollution related to such occupations, Dalit women who are aligned with such works are not given work as a cook or other household works. Even doing work as domestic helps they have to face humiliation in one or the other ways. They are not allowed to go into the kitchen. Their dishes are kept separate from the others'. They are usually called by their specific castes. "Unlike women from the dominant castes, dalit women are used to working outside the home and their labour is considered crucial for the survival of the family. More often than not, the home runs on her income since the man tends to spend his on himself, including for alcohol. In rural areas, 70% of the Dalit women are agricultural labourers. Their struggle revolves around procuring food, fuel, and water for their families. In urban India, they work as domestic servants,

construction labourers and casual labourers”⁷⁸ The practice of caste-based exclusion and discrimination thus necessarily involves failure of access and entitlement not only to economic rights, but also civil, political, and cultural rights.⁷⁹

c. Caste Based Violence

“Dalit women suffer both gender and caste-based violence. The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women has noted that Dalit women face targeted violence, even rape, and murder, by the state actors and powerful members of the dominant castes used to inflict political lessons and crush dissent within the community.”⁸⁰ According to National Crime Record Bureau's recent report, the cases of assault on Dalit women with intent to outrage her modesty during 2020 were 3488 which were much higher than normal crime cases. There were 619 total cases of sexual harassment under Section 354A IPC during 2020. These are the cases that are reported to the police and the number of unreported cases is much greater than this. Only the severe cases get registered, sometimes after the pressure from the community or from societal groups.

Though there are many government provisions to stop atrocities against Dalits. Prevention of atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1989 addresses the atrocities against Dalits. The rape cases against Dalit women are being fought under the POA Act and various sections of IPC. But in the actual operation of the POA Act, the actual purpose for which it was designed to counter and address has been orderly denied. Because of the caste system in the Haryana Justice System, this act continues to be a beacon for the Dalit movement in their quest for justice for Dalit women and girls. The increased cases of crimes against Dalit women raise serious concerns regarding the empowerment of Dalit women as a category. Their bodies become the weapon for upper-caste males which can be

⁷⁸ Sujatha, D. (2014). Redefining Domestic Violence: Experiences of Dalit Women. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19-22.

⁷⁹ Singh, R.K. (2009). Manual Scavenging as Social Exclusion. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 521-523. Vol 49, No. 26-27.

⁸⁰ Source

<https://www.ohchr.org/documents/hrbodies/cedaw/ruralwomen/fedonavsarjantrustids.pdf> (This paper 'The Situation of Dalit Rural Women' was submitted to Discussion on CEDAW General Comment on rural women-Article14 by Navsarjan Trust (India), FEDO (Nepal) and the International Dalit Solidarity Network in September, 2013.

used publicly whenever anyone from their community is overstepping the caste hierarchies. It is considered by upper-caste males that the bodies of Dalit Women are sexually available whenever they want. Therefore, in most of the rape cases of Dalit women, the Culprits are from upper castes.⁸¹

d. Lack of Accessibility to Public Resources

Dalits even today are dependent on the goodwill of upper castes to access the public resources. “Dumont observes that upper castes prefer their water sources separate from that of lower castes, and where there is a shared source, water becomes the very locus of untouchability, wherein the purity of water is dependent on who collects it.”⁸² Troubled with the onus of fetching water, the circumstance becomes intricate for dalit women as they are forced to bear different biased practices from the upper castes while getting water from the normal assets. Due to a lack of awareness, they don’t have access to basic public health services. Uterine prolapses are still a major concern for Dalit women. Most of the Dalit households don’t have access to sanitation facilities. “According to NFHS-4(National Family Health Survey-4) amongst Dalits, 74.4% of women reported problems in accessing health care. Dalit women die at an average age of 14.6 years (National Family Health Survey-4 2015-16). One in four Dalit women in the 15-49 age category is undernourished.”⁸³

“In a study on ‘untouchability’ in 1589 villages in Gujarat, the NGO Navsarjan Trust found that Dalits were not allowed to fetch water from a tap in a non-Dalit area in 71.4 percent of these villages. In 66.2 percent of them, non-Dalit midwives refused service to Dalit women. One of the many unnecessary hardships of a Dalit woman’s life is being denied access to basic services, particularly maternal health services. In another study conducted by Navsarjan Trust, the findings showed that 46.5 percent of Dalit women never received the legally required antenatal and postnatal visits. Worse, 54.8 percent of pregnant women and new mothers from the

⁸¹ Teltumbde, A. (2015, October 31). Rape as Atrocity in Contemporary Haryana: Women Against Sexual Violence and State Repression. *Economic and Political Weekly*, pp. 47-56.

⁸² Dumont as cited in Dutta, S., Sinha, I., & Parashar, A. (2018). Dalit Women and Water: Availability, Access and Discrimination in Rural India. *Journal of Social Inclusion Studies*, 4(1), 62–79. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2394481118774487>

⁸³ Chinnasamy, A. V. (2020). *Financial Distress and Healthcare: A Study of Migrant Dalit Women Domestic Helpers in Bangalore, India*. 21(5), 15.

Valmiki sub-caste, who are traditionally manual scavengers, reported never receiving antenatal or postnatal care visits.”⁸⁴

e. Gender-Based Discrimination

Apart from caste-based sexual violence, Dalit women face severe domestic violence within the family as well. However, not much studies have been done to find out forms of violence against Dalit women within the households. Dalit women work outside to earn along with their counterparts for survival and when they come home, they have to bear their alcoholic husbands who reciprocate their oppression by perpetuating violence against their wives in various forms. It occurs in the forms of beating, verbal abuse, physical assault etc. The other forms of violence are dowry demands, extramarital relations of their husbands, bearing the extra burden of work, and so on. They have to bear Gender-based discrimination in both public and private both spheres.

The other forms of violence are dowry demands, extra marital relations of their husbands, bearing the extra burden of work, and so on. Sometimes Dalit Women are pressurized by their husbands to fulfill their demands of money and they are beaten sometimes in failure to do so. The problem of domestic violence becomes more severe when it is a case of inter-caste marriage. In such cases of marital relationships, a Dalit woman has to face violence from other family members and the community of her husband as well who find it hard to accept her because of hierarchical social norms of society. She is called by her Caste and gets dehumanised all the time. She loses her decision-making power within the family in cases of inter-caste marriages. In such instances, it is apparently the Dalit Community that gets banned by the society and upper castes gets to escape.

This Gender and caste inequality is sanctioned by the religious and cultural norms of the society. The Dalit women are traditionally given such positions in social strata where they are marginalized. This cultural construct and sanction to the

⁸⁴ Source

<https://www.ohchr.org/documents/hrbodies/cedaw/ruralwomen/fedonavsarjantrustids.pdf> (This paper ‘The Situation of Dalit Rural Women’ was submitted to Discussion on CEDAW General Comment on rural women-Article14 by Navsarjan Trust (India), FEDO (Nepal) and the International Dalit Solidarity Network in September, 2013)

hierarchy have created a kind of structural violence towards this particular section of the society. It is this 'avoidance-initiated hardship' that separates Dalit women's concerns from those of other women, and it likewise makes their concerns more serious and confounded from other ladies. For Dalit women, the beginning of this prohibition incited hardship lies in the way that they are viewed as sullied, contaminating, distant, inaccessible, and 'unseeable'; all in all, not good for a social and actual relationship with others. This has tremendous ramifications on the basic liberty and human pride of Dalit women.

CHAPTER-3

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF DALIT WOMEN IN HARYANA

Introduction

Following 75 years of freedom, India is close to accomplishing the situation with one of the world's biggest powers. It has accomplished large numbers of those dreams which were seen by the Indian Constitution makers. For example, right to education which was one of the directive principle earlier has been included in fundamental rights, therefore, making it free and necessary for those who cannot afford it. Women are given reservations in local self-government institutions consequently, fulfilling the dream of various political reformers. The projected Gross domestic product positioning of India at the world level in 2021 is sixth. Be that as it may, notwithstanding such accomplishments there are numerous objectives that are still left to be accomplished for India. There are incongruities within the social order on different premises. As examined in the last chapter, caste and gender are two significant grounds of disparities in India. At the point when Indian culture is inspected based on caste stratification, it could be observed that the Dalits have not been able to arrive at the same level of achievements in numerous areas where other caste groups are. The same is relevant to the circumstance of women in India. However, what is more, essential to see here is that when the groups who are women and Dalit simultaneously, circumstance turns out to be much more terrible for them. Their condition is more terrible among all. There are contrasts in the status of upper-caste women and lower-caste women in social, economic, and political fields. These current contrasts and disparities have brought about various effects of social changes on different caste groups. Along these lines, it becomes important to learn about the imbalances that different caste groups face.

The following chapter proposes to examine the status of Dalits, women, and Dalit women in a comparative manner. The three aspects have been selected pertaining to our dimension of research i.e., social, economic, and political. The various

subsections have been selected within these three aspects for the concentrated study of Haryana. The following sections have been included in the present chapter: -

- a. Literacy
- b. Work participation
- c. Crimes against women and Dalit women
- d. Political Participation

I. Education

Literacy rate according to World Health Organization is “the proportion of the adult population aged 15 years and over which is literate, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population, total or for a given sex or group, in a given country, territory, or geographic area, at a specific point in time, usually mid-year. For statistical purposes, a person is a literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life.”⁸⁵

It is widely believed that the literacy rate among women highly affects their health, knowledge of family planning, sex ratio, birth rate, death rate etc. There is a saying which says, ‘if a girl gets educated, then the two families get educated along with her.’ It signifies the urgency of girls’ education. Table 3.1 shows the literacy rate of Dalits, Women, and Dalit women.

Table: 3.1 (District-wise Literacy Rate in percentage)

Sr. No.	District	Dalit	Women	Dalit Women
1	Ambala	64.0	67.3	57.1
2	Fatehabad	47.2	51.5	39.5
3	Jhajjar	63.2	63.6	54.2
4	Karnal	55.0	58.4	47.4
5	Mewat	55.6	28.2	45.2
6	Panipat	57.6	57.7	48.7

⁸⁵ Source <https://www.who.int/data/gho/indicator-metadata-registry/imr-details/1141>

7	Sirsa	46.7	53.2	39.9
8	Bhiwani	57.2	55.5	47.5
9	Gurugaon	64.9	67.7	56.3
10	Jind	52.9	53.2	44.0
11	Kurukshetra	57.4	60.8	50.0
12	Palwal	54.8	45.0	42.5
13	Rewari	65.0	61.3	54.4
14	Sonipat	60.5	61.0	51.4
15	Faridabad	58.5	63.7	48.7
16	Hisar	53.4	54.6	44.3
17	Kaithal	49.9	51.8	41.3
18	Mahendargarh	63.7	57.3	52.2
19	Panchkula	61.5	67.0	54.7
20	Rohtak	59.5	63.2	51.0
21	Yamunanagar	63.3	63.0	56.3

Source: Census of India 2011 (district handbook)⁸⁶

According to the census of 2011, the average literacy rate in Haryana is 75.6%. The literacy rate among the Dalits in all districts is below the average literacy rate of Haryana. That shows the secondary positioning of Dalits in terms of education. The literacy rate of women is also below average literacy rate but it is more or less equivalent to the literacy rate of Dalits. What is more worthy to note here is that the literacy rate of Dalit women among all the three categories is lowest in all the districts of Haryana, there is just an exception of Mewat district. This is the situation of Dalit women despite the fact that there are laws for progressive reservations for them in the field of education.

II. Economical Profile

a) Work participation in Cultivation

A person is considered a cultivator if he/she is working to cultivate land as the employer, either as a single worker or with a family. That land could be owned or

⁸⁶ Census of India 2011, Source: https://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/dchb_haryana.html

purchased from any private institution or person or government for payment in money. Payment could be done on the basis of sharing of crops or in kind or in money.⁸⁷ Table 3.2 shows the percentage share of cultivators out of the total population of concerned groups of Dalits, women, and Dalit women.

Table: 3.2 (percent share of Cultivators among Main workers according to categories)

Sr. No.	District	Dalits	Dalit Women	Women
1	Ambala	0.9	0.2	9.4
2	Fatehabad	2.5	1.2	4.9
3	Jhajjar	0.9	0.5	3.4
4	Karnal	1.4	0.5	1.3
5	Mewat	1.0	0.4	2.3
6	Panipat	0.7	0.3	1.3
7	Sirsa	2.6	1.2	3.3
8	Bhiwani	3.2	1.4	6.0
9	Gurugaon	0.6	0.2	0.8
10	Jind	1.4	0.7	5.8
11	Kurukshetra	0.9	0.1	0.7
12	Palwal	1.3	0.5	1.9
13	Rewari	0.7	0.4	3.7
14	Sonipat	0.8	0.3	2.6
15	Faridabad	0.5	0.2	0.3
16	Hisar	2.3	1.2	6.4
17	Kaithal	0.9	0.3	2.6
18	Mahendargarh	1.0	0.4	4.1
19	Panchkula	1.0	0.6	1.1
20	Rohtak	0.7	0.3	2.6
21	Yamunanagar	0.9	0.1	0.4

Source: Census of India, 2011

⁸⁷ Source <https://labourbureau.gov.in/WL%20K5-6%20Chap%201.htm>

The percentage of cultivators among women, in general, is higher than the percentage of cultivators from Scheduled castes except for Kurukshetra, Faridabad, and Yamunanagar districts. The above data makes it clear that the women who work as cultivators own land either on their own or on the name of their family. The low percentage of cultivators among Dalits establishes the fact that Dalits own a very less amount of land. Among all the three groups the percentage of cultivators among Dalit women is the lowest in all the districts. It demonstrates the economic backwardness of Dalit women in terms of owning land.

b) Agricultural Labour

Agricultural labour is a person who works on others' land for wages. Wages could be given in form of money, in-kind or share in production/crops. Generally, the employment as agricultural labour is irregular therefore the income, they get is also not regular or permanent and it is very low in amount. The land on which agricultural labour works is not owned by themselves. Being an agricultural labour demands lot of manual workload. Therefore, the work as agricultural labour which needs more physical labour are assigned to the males such as ploughing the field. Females do work such as harvesting, transplanting the samplings etc. Table 3.3 shows the percentage of agricultural labourers out of the total population of concerned groups of Dalits, Women, and Dalit women from all the districts of Haryana.

Table: 3.3 (Percentage of Agricultural labourers among Main Workers according to categories)

Sr. No.	District	Dalits	Dalit Women	Women
1	Ambala	7.0	1.5	0.7
2	Fatehabad	13.2	5.9	2.8
3	Jhajjar	5.2	2.0	0.8
4	Karnal	10.2	4.2	2.1
5	Mewat	2.9	0.8	0.9
6	Panipat	5.6	2.4	0.4
7	Sirsa	16.0	6.5	3.1

8	Bhiwani	8.2	3.8	1.5
9	Gurugaon	2.5	1.0	0.4
10	Jind	11.0	5.3	2.1
11	Kurukshetra	12.6	5.4	2.5
12	Palwal	3.9	1.6	1.0
13	Rewari	2.4	1.1	0.5
14	Sonapat	7.7	3.9	1.9
15	Faridabad	1.4	2.5	0.3
16	Hisar	12.0	6.5	2.7
17	Kaithal	10.6	3.9	1.7
18	Mahendargarh	2.4	1.0	0.5
19	Panchkula	2.6	1.0	0.5
20	Rohtak	4.7	1.9	0.8
21	Yamunanagar	8.8	1.3	0.6

Source: Census of India, 2011

According to presented data, the percentage of agricultural labour is high from Dalit category whereas in cultivation women from general category consist the high percentage. It indicates that most of the Dalits do not own land and work as wage laborers in the fields owned by others. If the status of Dalit women and women would be compared then it becomes clear that women are engaged more as cultivators than agricultural labour whereas the percentage of Dalit women is high in agricultural labour than cultivators in all the districts. It means that Dalit women are engaged more in works that demands manual labour because they do not own means of production and because of their low level of education. Whereas women from the upper caste do not prefer to work as agricultural labour because of the good household income. Family abundance significantly affects the will of individuals to chip away at low wages. Consequently, the business status of other relatives and dissemination of pay inside the family could be significant determinants to comprehend the work status of women.

c) Marginal workers

According to Labour Bureau of Government of India, the worker who works for at least six months or more in a year are known as the main workers whereas Marginal worker is those who work for less than 183 days or six months in a year are termed as Marginal workers.⁸⁸ A high percentage share in marginal workers indicates more days of unemployment and hence a high level of poverty. Generally, landless labourers and people who work as agricultural labourer consist most of the marginal workers. Figure 3a shows the percentage share of marginal workers out of the total population of the concerned groups of Dalits, Dalit Women, and Women.

According to the given data in graph 3a, the percentage share of Dalits as a whole is higher as marginal labour except five districts Hisar, Kurukshetra, Jind, Sirsa, and Fatehabad. In these five districts, Dalit women's percentage as marginal labour is the highest of all. Women's percentage share as marginal labour is the lowest of the three categories in all the districts. It indicates that the group which remains jobless in major part of the year majorly consists of Dalit and Dalit women. One reason for being a marginal labour is that Dalits are the one who does not own much land and work as agricultural labour throughout the year. Though the job of agricultural labour is seasonal and it is not regular, therefore, they are termed marginal labours. It also highlights the level of poverty among the Dalits.

It emerged in many studies that the Dalit women who belong to families having low level of household income tend to have higher work participation even if it is for the marginal time. According to the periodic Labour Force Survey of 2019-2020, the female work participation rate of Scheduled Caste during 2019-2020 was 22.7 whereas it was 17.2 for the females from the 'other category' at all India level.⁸⁹ The literacy rate among general women is comparatively high. They usually have degrees in higher education and education plays a convincing role in providing a satisfactory job in labour market. There is higher illiteracy rate among scheduled caste women. They do not have enough opportunities to participate in

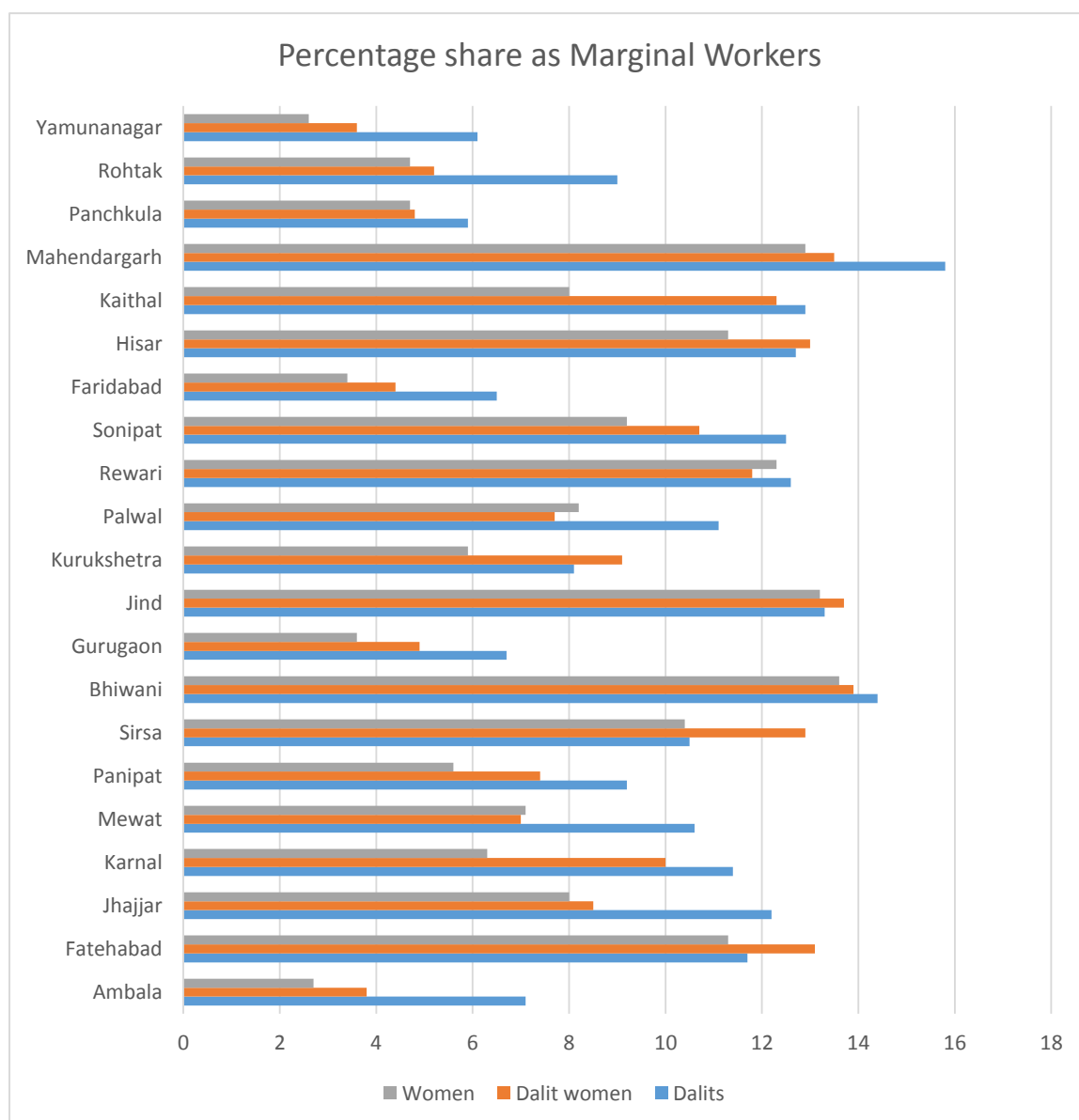
⁸⁸ Source: <https://labourbureau.gov.in/WL%20K5-6%20Chap%201.htm>

⁸⁹ Source

https://www.mospi.gov.in/documents/213904/301563//Annual_Report_PLFS_2019_20m1627036454797.pdf/18afb74a-3980-ab83-o431-1e84321f75af

educational activities and Dalit families usually have low household income. Illiterate women tend to participate more in works of manual labour even on low wages. Therefore, there is a high rate of work participation of scheduled caste women as workforce and despite this fact, they get low wages and are highly discriminated against in labour market.⁹⁰

Graph: 3a (Percentage share of marginal workers according to categories)



Source: Census of India, 2011

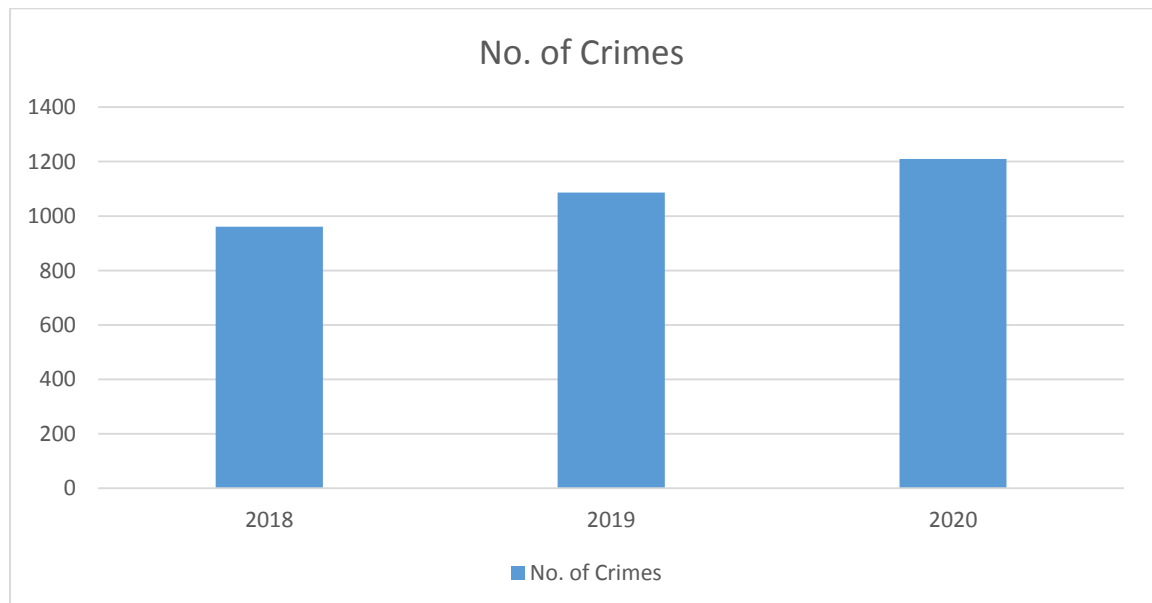
⁹⁰ Singh, P., & Pattanaik, F. (2020). Unequal Reward for Equal Work? Understanding Women's Work and Wage Discrimination in India Through the Meniscus of Social Hierarchy. *Contemporary Voice of Dalit* 12(1), 19-36.

III. Crimes against Dalit Women

Crimes against Dalits in India are usually systematized and utilized to reaffirm structural caste hierarchies against Dalits. According to the data of the National Crime Record Bureau 2020, a person from a scheduled caste faced crime in every 10 minutes in India in 2020. The total cases registered for Crimes against Scheduled castes in 2020 were 50,291. There is an increase of 9.4% from the previous year. This is the case despite the fact that there was a pandemic and laws against such crimes. The Prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 has been enacted to for the prevention of atrocities, discrimination, and hate against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

Graph 3b shows the data related to crimes against SCs in Haryana. All the Cases mentioned here are done by non-SCs. According to NCRB there are 961, 1086, and 1210 such registered cases in 2018,2019, and 2020 respectively. There is an increase of 11.4 in crimes that occurred in 2020 from the last year in Haryana. The rate of crimes against scheduled Castes in Haryana is 23.7 in 2020.

Graph: 3b Number of registered cases of crimes against SCs by Non-SCs in Haryana.



Source: National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India, 2020⁹¹

⁹¹ NCRB data, 2020, Source www.ncrb.gov.in

The crime rate against women in India through the year 2020 was 81.1 according to NCRB data. The number of total cases of crimes against women in the year 2020 was 3,71,503. However, when it comes to Dalit women in India, they face discrimination under the intersectionality of caste, class, and gender. Crimes such as Rapes are used as intended weapons to reinforce hierarchies against Dalits and to oppress the scheduled Caste women. According to NCRB data of 2019, in India, around 10 Dalit women are Raped every day in India.⁹² In the year 2020, the rate of rape against women (per lakh population) in Haryana is 10.0 and it is 3.8 for Dalit women.

These are the gross facts when many cases of sexual violence in India remained unreported. Data from National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-2016), highlighted that 99% of cases of sexual violence remain unreported in India.⁹³ The cases which are intentionally targeted against women are termed as ‘Crimes against women. Such cases are classified into two categories.

a) Crimes under Special and Local Laws (SLL)

- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- The Dowry (Prohibition) Act, 1961
- The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929
- The Indecent Representation of women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

b) Crimes against Women under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC)

- Acid Attack (Section 326A and 326B)

⁹² NCRB Data, 2019, Source <https://ncrb.gov.in/hi/node/2974>

⁹³ NFHS data, 2015-2016, Source <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/AV3sIKoEBAGZozALMX8THK/99-cases-of-sexual-assaults-go-unreported-govt-data-shows.html>

- Rape (Sections 375, 376, 376A, 376B, 376C, 376D and 376E)
- Attempt to commit rape (Section 376/511)
- Kidnapping and abduction for different purposes (Section 363-373)
- Murder, dowry death, Abetment of Suicide, etc. (Section 302, 304B and 306)
- Cruelty by husband or his relatives (Section 498A)
- Outraging the Modesty of women (Section 354)
- Sexual Harassment (Section 354A)
- Assault on women with intent to disrobe a woman (Section 354B)
- Voyeurism (Section 354C)
- Stalking (Section 354D)
- Importation of girls up to 21 years of age (Section 366B)
- Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman (Section 509)

Some of the data has been collected from the National Crime Record Bureau of 2020 related to crimes against women and Dalit women under different sections of IPC which is as follows.

Table 3.4 (Cases of outraging the modesty of a woman, Section 354)

Category	Victims	Rate (per lakh population)
Women	2585	19.1
Dalit women	175	3.4

Source: National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India, 2020

Table 3.5 (cases of Sexual Harassment, Section 354A IPC)

Category	Victims	Rate (per lakh population)
Women	890	6.5
Dalit Women	54	1.1

Source: National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India, 2020

Table 3.6 (cases of Assault or use of Criminal Force on women with Intent to Disrobe, Section 354B)

Category	Victims	Rate (per lakh population)
Women	385	2.8
Dalit Women	20	0.4

Source: National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India, 2020

Table 3.7 (cases of Stalking, Section 354D)

Category	Victims	Rate (per lakh population)
Women	432	3.1
Dalit Women	14	0.3

Source: National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India, 2020

Table 3.8 (cases of Insult to the Modesty of Women, Section 509)

Category	Victims	Rate (per lakh population)
Women	183	1.3
Dalit women	9	0.2

Source: National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India, 2020

Table 3.9 (Cases of Rapes against women for three years 2018,2019 and 2020 under Section 376)

Category	2018	2019	2020
Women	1296	1480	1373
Dalit women	171	221	195

Source: National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India, 2020

The Data shows a low number of Crimes against Dalit women under all mentioned sections. The data in respect to crimes against Dalit women is leaning on registration of FIR⁹⁴ under Prevention of Atrocities Act,1989. However, Dalit women and girls who are victims of sexual violence usually gets threat and pressure from the dominant castes, from society, from other communities, from

⁹⁴ FIR is a First Information Report which gets filed by the Police on receiving any information about a knowable offence. It is an official document. It could be filed by the victim of the offence or someone else could file on behalf of the victim.

their own family etc. A big failure is on the part of police department in lodging a FIR against such crimes under Prevention of Atrocities Act. “Due to pressure from high-level politicians to clamp down on caste-based atrocities within the state, district-level authorities aim to bring down the number of rape cases registered under the SC & ST (POA) Act.”⁹⁵

One important factor for not lodging an FIR is the low literacy rate among Dalits and Dalit women. Education leads someone to know more about the laws and legal procedures and it is evident from the data that the literacy rate is high among non-SCs and non-STs therefore, the number of reporting cases is high for them. Whereas the literacy rate is comparatively low amongst the Dalits. In Most of cases of crimes they do not even know that if there are any provisions against such crimes in the Indian constitution or not. For example, crimes such as stalking and eve teasing. Crimes such as these are considered as day-to-day incidences and people or Dalit women do not wonder to file any complaints regarding the same.

A survey was conducted by Swabhiman society and ‘Equality Now’ organization in Haryana state and take into consideration the 40 cases of rapes committed against Dalit women and girls in a time period between 2009-2020. The survey found out that in more than 80% of cases, “all the accused involved were from dominant castes and in more than 90% of the cases, at least one of the accused persons was from a dominant caste.” The report also mentions data of 2019 by the State Crime Record Bureau of Haryana which states that in 2019 out of 105 rape cases committed against Dalit women, in 88.5% of the cases the culprits were from the dominant castes. Out of the total 40 cases, 12 cases were dropped during police investigation, 8 cases were dismissed or acquitted by the court and in 3 cases FIR was not even registered. 10 cases are still going on in courts. These data show the

⁹⁵ G.C.Pal, Caste-Gender Intersectionality and Atrocities in Haryana: Emerging Patterns and State Responses (2018), published by Journal of social Inclusion Studies as cited in Report: Justice Denied: Sexual Violence & Intersectional Discrimination – Barriers to Accessing Justice for Dalit Women and Girls in Haryana, India – Equality Now, Published by Swabhiman Society and ‘Equality Now’ organization. Source: <https://www.equalitynow.org/resource/justicedenied/>

barriers for Dalit women in accessing Justice and casualties on the part of the Administration.⁹⁶

IV. Political Participation

India has rich democratic culture in terms of the participation of women in Politics. It is also evident from the female participation during the freedom struggle. Female leaders like Pandita Ramabai, Sarojini Naidu, Savitribai Phule were such ladies who participated in the freedom struggle with no less courage and enthusiasm than the males. Women got their political right of suffrage even before the independence period. In 1918, women who owned property were given some limited suffrage rights. Later, all women got the right to vote gradually between 1919-1929. However, in the first Lok Sabha election after independence, there was 4.4 percent elected women of the total seats. there has been a steady increase in their participation in Politics. The 17th Lok Sabha election has the highest women participation till now and it has increased to 14 percent in 2019 elections. In any case, Haryana is a state where the male-centric standards began getting difficulties from society a lot after we got independence. Chasing after the present examination, it becomes important to be familiar with the political portrayal of women in Haryana. There is data related to the performance of contesting candidates in Haryana in Table 3.10 on the basis of males and female in the years 2009, 2014 and 2019.

Table3.10 (Performance of contesting candidates in State Legislative Assembly Elections)

Year of election	2009		2014		2019	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
No. of contestants	1153	69	1235	116	1061	108
Elected Contestant	81	9	77	13	81	9

Source: Election Commission of India

⁹⁶ Report: Justice Denied: Sexual Violence & Intersectional Discrimination – Barriers to Accessing Justice for Dalit Women and Girls in Haryana, India – Equality Now, Source <https://www.equalitynow.org/resource/justicedenied/>

The above table shows data of Contestants and number of contestants won in state legislative assembly elections of Haryana in respective years. The percentage of seats won by female contestants in 2009 is just 10 percent of total seats. It increased to 14.4 percent in the year 2014 and there was steady decline in the percentage share of females in 2019 elections. Again, females were able to secure only 10 percent of seats.

Table 3.11 (Elector’s performance in State Legislative Assembly elections)

Year	2009		2014		2019	
Category	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
No. of Electors	7149834	5967308	8796794	7506938	9874523	8511907
No. of electors who voted	5238707	4243222	6737327	5674868	6778736	5710221
Percentage of electors who voted	73.27	71.11	76.59	75.59	68.65	67.09

Source: Election Commission of India

According to the above table, the percentage of female electors in all the three state legislative assemblies is less than the male electors. That indicates the low level of female participation in Politics.

Political representation of Scheduled castes has been always a controversial issue even before independence. There are always debates on reservations provided to the marginalized groups. Reservations are the special privileges provided to downtrodden people to help them overcome historical injustices and caste-based discrimination. “Presently, central government-funded higher education institutions reserve 22.5 percent of seats for SCs and STs (15% and 7.5% respectively). This has been raised to 49.5 percent by including 27 percent for OBC groups. In the lower house of Parliament and State assemblies, the same percentage is followed for the SCs and STs although demographics often dictate percentage of reservation.”⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Verma, V. (2019). A Crisis of Representation: Interests, Identities and Politics. *Journal of Social Inclusion Studies* 5(1), 1-18.

But even after representation, there is not enough political representation of Dalits. The situation become worse when we talk about the women from scheduled castes. The percentage of Dalit women as contestants as well as electors has always been the lowest of all categories. In the Haryana State assembly out of total 90 seats, 17 seats are reserved for scheduled castes.

Table 3.12 (Nomination Filed, Contesting Candidates and Winner in State Legislative Assembly elections)

Year	2009			2014			2019		
Category	Dalit Men	Dalit Women	General Women	Dalit Men	Dalit Women	General Women	Dalit Men	Dalit Women	General women
Nomination Filed	245	53	219	234	68	257	221	63	212
Contesting Candidates	181	10	59	178	31	85	167	32	76
winner	15	2	7	14	4	9	14	3	6

Source: Election Commission of India

In table 3.12 the data is given for Dalit men, Dalit women, and general women contestants for the year 2009,2014 and 2019. According to the data, Dalit women occupied just 2.2 percent of seats in 2009 elections, 4.4 percent in 2014, and 3.3 percent of total seats in the year 2019. However, the percentage share of seats occupied by Dalit male is higher than the general women. It is maybe because of the reservations Scheduled castes have in state assemblies. No one else than Scheduled Caste can contest election on the seats reserved for SCs. But out of these 17 reserved seats Dalit women have not secured even 1/4th seats in any of the elections. In 2009, SC women secured only 11.7 percent of the reserved seats, 23.5 in 2014 and it was17.6 in 2019 elections.

Table 3.13 shows the data related to voter turnouts of Dalits, Dalit women, and general women in State legislative Assembly elections of the year 2009, 2014, and 2019. After so many years of women getting suffrage right, politics is still

considered a sphere meant for men. Therefore, the percentage of voter turnouts for males is always higher than the female voters. The data given in table 3.13 indicates that the voter percentage of the Dalit male is higher than the Dalit women and general women. However, the percentage of female voters was lowest in the 2009 election. But it is higher than the general women in last two elections. Dalit women are using their caste identity, alongside their identity as village-level activists, to further their interests beyond the realm of women's activism. They do that to make a difference and to change the system. This confirms that they are aware that political society operates differently from civil society. They understand the importance of political power.⁹⁸

Table 3.13 (Electors' performance in State Legislative Assembly elections)

Year	2009				2014				2019			
Category	SC Men	SC women	General Women	General Women	SC Men	SC women	General women	General women	SC Men	SC women	General women	General women
No. of electors	1360883	1143286	4824022	4824022	1601997	1374595	6132343	6132343	1770854	1533475	6978432	6978432
Electors who vote	988165	797753	3445469	3445469	1242800	1047766	4627102	4627102	1245512	1053548	4656673	4656673
%age of electors	72.6	69.7	71.4	71.4	77.5	76.2	75.4	75.4	70.3	68.7	66.7	66.7

Source: Election Commission of India

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 furnished constitutional sanctity to Panchayats as the third sphere of self-governance in India. It enlarged the space for people's representation and their agency in matters of governance and moved decision-making closer to them. The Act particularly sought to correct the

⁹⁸ Govinda, R. (2006). The Politics of Marginalized: Dalits and Women's Activism in India . *Gender and Development*, 181-190.

prolonged marginalization of poor, marginalized, and underrepresented people such as women, scheduled tribes (STs) and scheduled castes (SCs). This Act along with the ensuing State Acts on Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) provided for mandatory provisions of (a) reservation of seats and (b) the obligatory gram Sabha meetings have given SCs in villages an opportunity to participate in the political decision making. After, 73rd amendment to Panchayati raj, it is seen that ladies have shown strong fascination with involving panchayat workplaces and executing capacities for the individuals. Additionally, women's portrayal in each panchayat political race has expanded past 33% reservation laid in the constitution. Because of affirmative actions of the Act, SCs are occupying leadership positions in local bodies. However, their leadership has yet to achieve significantly social acceptance, as envisaged in the spirit of the Constitution. Caste-based identities and practices still continue to exclude them from exercising their leadership roles. Socio-economic vulnerabilities limit their capacities to articulate and to act upon their claims and concerns. The gap between the formal recognition of the right to participate and its actualization still remains large even after 19 years of constitutional mandate. Table 3.14 shows the data related to candidates belonging to the reserved category elected against the UR seats in the 2010 PRI elections of Haryana.

TABLE 3.14 (candidates belonging to reserved category elected against the UR)

Panch			Sarpanch			Member of Panchayat Samiti			Member of zila Parishad		
SC	SC(W)	W	SC	SC(W)	W	SC	SC(W)	W	SC	S(W)	W
426	101	566	79	17	215	37	7	57	2	2	9

Source: State Election Commission, Haryana

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 above table shows that the representation of women through unreserved seats is highest among all the three reserved categories mentioned here. The representation of Dalits and Dalit women is low comparatively. Along with that, the seats which are reserved for the

general women are dominated by the women belonging to the 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. Another reason for patriarchy coming out so stiff among Dalits is that the advantages of globalization and modernization has not reached to them yet. They are still struggling to come out from their historically structured caste identities.

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 above investigation shows that the particular types of separation 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 to make the existences of dalit women particularly hard. The issue of untouchability, separation and other common freedoms infringement of Dalits must be examined in an appropriate point of view particularly in regards to women.

CHAPTER-4

POSITIONING OF DALIT WOMEN IN HARYANA

The plight and suffering of Dalit women cannot be analysed in a single framework, and therefore the field study has been conducted through the openended interview schedule. In the present study, the three villages from three different blocks of Sonipat district were selected on the basis of purposive random sampling for the field study so that the theoretical and literature framework can be corroborated and compared with the help of empirical evidences. It includes villages *Pabnera* from Ganaur block, *Harsana Kalan* from Sonipat Block, *Patti Kailana* from Gohana block. These are the villages which have Dalit population above 40%. Out of these 3 villages 34 respondents were selected on the basis of purposive random sampling. This study was conducted during the covid-19 period, hence a limited number of respondents can be taken into consideration.

Pabnera is small village in Murthal block of Sonipat district of Haryana under Ganaur tehsil. This spot is the border of the Sonipat and Panipat districts. Nearby cities are Ganaur, Sonipat, Samalkha and Panipat. This village is situated slightly away from National Highway No. 1. Harsana Kalan is a village under Sonipat Tehsil. It is near to the Uttar Pradesh State border. Language spoken here are Hindi, Haryanvi, Punjabi and Urdu. Patti Kailana is a village located in Gohana Tehsil of Sonipat district. It is situated 30 km away from district headquarters Sonipat. Gohana is the nearest town to this village. Languages spoken here are Hindi and Haryanvi.

A mixed response was received during the field study. Researcher was accompanied by one or two native families of the respective villages during the field study. The respondents were very sceptical about the researcher very initially. The justification behind being suspected with regards to the researcher was that culturally, researcher was not looking similar to them. There were wary looks, solid obstruction and indifferent demeanour for her in the village. In any case, when researcher began examining the underlying point with the women in local language that is Haryanvi, then individuals felt much associated and familiar with her. Yet, circumstance was very little positive for analyst. Individuals would

scarcely associate with her in the village. In her endeavours, specialist attempted to connected with the women in their discussions.

The field areas or villages opened before the researcher as an unfriendly spot with a viewpoint of a female researcher. It appeared to be troublesome at the outset to move toward individuals and participate in a discussion when researcher was not accompanied by some known male folks on some visits. Yet, being a lady assisted her with communicating serenely with the Dalit women. Some respondents seemed to be familiar with the researcher as a female was inquiring about the things which are personal in nature. It was as yet hard for her to get data on some delicate issues like abusive behaviour at home, sexual harassment, etc. However, subsequent to paying 3-4 visits to per town and conversing with the women, they were guaranteed that specialist was no administration representative who needed to simply get their monetary data for some government schemes.

The present chapter deals with data analysis which was collected during field work. The data was collected by using focused group interviews and observations. Considering the aims and objectives of this study, the interviews were conducted to collect the information on social, economic and political aspects of Dalit Women. The reflections from the field have been subdivided into four subparts:

1. **Social and economic background of the respondent.**
2. **Social status of dalit women.**
3. **Economic status of dalit women.**
4. **Political status of dalit women.**

Social and Economic Background of the Respondents

It is doubtless to mention that a detailed evaluation of status of Dalit women demands us to look at the social, economic and political dimensions pertaining to the status of Dalit women in Haryana. Therefore, to get information about the economic and social background of the respondent a field-based study was conducted from the three sampled villages which have Dalit population more than 40%. Firstly, the socio-economic status of Dalit Women has been discussed in context of Sonipat district.

Table: 4.1 (Population of Dalits within three chosen blocks)

Block	No. of households with Sc as head	Total Population	Males	Females
Sonipat District as a whole	52,701	269,935	144,516	125,419
Gohana	4,650	23,360	12,543	10,817
Ganaur	6,814	34,269	18,477	15,792
Sonipat Block	7,613	38,685	20,734	17,951

Source: Census of India, 2011 (District Handbook)

The above table shows the number of SCs population in selected blocks. It is clear from the given data that the population of Dalit women as compared to Dalit males is very less in numbers. The sex ratio is 862, 854, 865 in Gohana, Ganaur and Sonipat block respectively which is lower than the average sex ratio of Haryana.

The table 4.2 gives the socio-economic data among SCs in all the three chosen blocks and Sonipat district as a whole. It emerged from the given data that the literacy rate of Dalit women is comparatively low. The literacy rate of Dalit women to SC in Sonipat district is 51.4 percent as compared to 68.5 percent of Dalit men. It is 47.4, 43.4 and 51.7 percent in Gohana, Ganaur and Sonipat Blocks respectively. The participation of Dalit women as labour force is likewise less in every one of the areas. The percentage of Dalit male workforce in Sonipat district is 49.3, whereas it is just 20.1 in Dalit women. The difference is noticeable here.

Table: 4.2 (Socio-economic data of Dalits in chosen blocks)**For Scheduled Castes:**

Block	Male Literacy	Female Literacy	Male Worker	Female Worker	Male Household Industry Worker	Female Household Industry Worker	Other Male Worker	Other Female Worker	Male Marginal workers	Female Marginal Workers
Sonipat District	98994	64,475	71,286	25,303	941	301	32,131	6,159	20,511	13,480
Gohana	8,334	5,137	6,175	2,922	65	26	1,897	395	2,401	1,726
Ganaur	12,456	7,806	9,153	3,160	154	115	4,427	3,598	3,147	1,813
Sonipat Block	14,466	9,292	10,434	4,366	183	116	4,411	857	2,538	2,299

Source: Census of India, 2011 (District Handbook)

As indicated by the District census handbook of 2011, the scheduled caste population in all the three sampled villages ranged between 51-75. In terms of percentage, it is 52, 48.3 and 31.1 percent in Patti Kailana, Pabnera and Harsana Kalan respectively.

Table:4.3 (Population of Dalits in three sampled villages)

Village	Total Population	Total Dalits	Dalit males	Dalit females
Patti Kailana	150	78	36	42
Pabnera	2169	1048	558	490
Harsana Kalan	2191	682	346	336

Source: Census of India, 2011 (District Handbbok)

Chamar, Dhanak, Valmiki were the major SC castes and Jaat, Punjabi, Brahman were from Upper castes in Patti Kailana village. In Pabnera village, there were

Audh, Churah, Rajput and Chamar from SC category and other than that, there were Saini, Muslims, Jaats, Brahmans. The Jaat and Brahmans, the dominant castes of the region are only 10-15 percent of total population. The Rajput caste was migrated in the village from the Pakistan during Partition. Later, they were included in SCs for one or the other political reasons. Nevertheless, they still use Rajput as their surname. Valmiki, Chamar, Dhanak are major groups of SCs in Harsana Village.

Table: 4.4 (Socio-economic Profile of Respondents)

Serial No.	Village	Caste	age	Education	If working	Type of work	Individual Income	Property
1.	Patti Kailana	Chamar	48	10th	yes	Anganwadi worker	7000	4 kile
2.	Patti Kail.	Chamar	34	5th	yes	School peon	3000	4.5 kile
3.	Patti Kail.	Chamar	26	M.com	No	-----	-----	4 kile
4.	Patti Kail.	Dhanak	23	B. tech	No	-----	-----	1 kila
5.	Patti Kail.	Dhanak	38	8th	yes	Agricultural laborer	250/day	1.5 kila
6.	Patti Kail.	Dhanak	28	12th	No	-----	-----	2 kila
7.	Patti Kail.	Valmiki	43	-----	yes	Agricultural laborer	-----	2 kila
8.	Patti Kail.	Valmiki	25	M.sc	No	-----	-----	1 kila
9.	Patti Kail.	Valmiki	36	12th	No	-----	-----	2.5 kila
10.	Pabnera	Rajput	45	Nil	yes	Wage laborer	150/ day	3 bigha
11.	Pabnera	Rajput	47	Nil	yes	Wage laborer	150/ day	5-6 bigha
12.	Pabnera	Chamar	45	Nil	yes	Wage laborer	-----	5 bigha
13.	Pabnera	Chamar	53	Nil	yes	Wage laborer	150/day	1 bigha
14.	Pabnera	Chamar	35	5 th	No	-----	-----	4 bigha
15.	Pabnera	Audh	24	10th	No	-----	-----	6 bigha
16.	Pabnera	Audh	42	5 th	yes	Wage laborer	150/day	5 bigha
17.	Pabnera	Churah	21	10th	No	-----	-----	Nil
18.	Pabnera	Churah	33	5 th	yes	Wage laborer	150/day	1 Bigha
19.	Pabnera	Churah	43	Nil	yes	School Peon	3500	-----
20.	Harsana Kalan	Chamar	39	8th	yes	shopkeeper	-----	2 kila
21.	Harsana	Chamar	30	12th	yes	milkwoman	-----	1 kila

22.	Harsana	Chamar	45	nil	No	-----	-----	2 kila
23.	Harsana	Chamar	43	5th	yes	milkwoman	-----	1.5
24.	Harsana	Chamar	50	nil	No	-----	-----	1
25.	Harsana	Valmiki	62	nil	yes	Househelp	700/month	-----
26.	Harsana	Valmiki	37	8th	yes	Sweeper in school	4000	2 bigha
27.	Harsana	Valmiki	43	Nil	Yes	Househelp	850/month	-----
28.	Harsana	Valmiki	44	Nil	yes	Wage laborer	150/day	1 bigha
29.	Harsana	Valmiki	34	10 th	No	-----	-----	-----
30.	Harsana	Valmiki	42	5th	yes	Village sweeper	-----	-----
31.	Harsana	Dhanak	35	5th	Yes	Wage laborer	200/day	-----
32.	Harsana	Dhanak	40	Nil	yes	Wage laborer	200/day	4 bigha
33.	Harsana	Dhanak	32	5 th	yes	Househelp		-----
34.	Harsana	Dhanak	46	Nil	-----	-----	-----	2 bigha

The status of Dalit women is different in all the three villages due to regional and cultural variations. Patti kailana village is also known as Ujjad Kalan. The reason to call it by this name is, in 20th century people from other villages bought agricultural land here and got settled later. Therefore, all the families own property in this village. The factor of being wealthy enough also effects the education, health and economic status of the Dalit women here. In Pabnera village most of the families does not own much land be it SC family or any other Family. In Harsana village, due to its demographical location most of the SCs have moved to cities for one or the other reasons after 2011. So, the population of SCs is not in majority there now. Being less in numbers have a significant impact on their traditional roles in society.

Social status of Dalit women

a. Education

The level of education of Dalit Women in all the three sampled villages is different. **In Patti Kailana** village, the Dalit Girls of age group between 22-26 years are pursuing higher education. Most of the Dalit women are literate. It indicates the departure from the earlier traditions in an emancipatory way. This

departure from the age-old notion is true to all the communities and Dalit women are no exception to it. When an anganwadi worker from Chamar Community was interviewed she said that she has four children and three are girls among them. All the three girls were pursuing higher education. Another Valmiki woman who, works as agricultural labourer, was asked if she thought there were more educational opportunities for the girls from upper caste. She said those are the things of past, and now her daughter studies in 8th standard and they would let her study until the time she wants. There is no economical barrier for them. They purchased a considerable lot of land in Patti Kailana town quite a while previously and acquires a decent sum out of it. In this village the situation of their community is not as it used to be in earlier times. The women from various caste groups in the village who are above 40 years have studied up to secondary school but their girls are now enrolled in colleges for higher education.

In Pabnera village, there is a continuation of tradition. Most of the girls have studied up to 10th standard, whether they are from SC community or any other. The cultural construct of Pabnera Village does not allow women to go out of the village for higher studies. There is no school for higher education in the village, told by a group of interviewed women. When a 47 years old Dalit lady was asked that why didn't she permit her daughters to get advanced education, she answered that primary education is enough for them. They are not financially proficient. Therefore, they can't spend much money on their daughter's education. In response to the same question, another respondent replied from the community that most of the families in their village are poor and landless. The fundamental priority for them is to earn enough for the day. They cannot spend money on education.

During the course of field study, when inquired from a 21-year-old respondent from Churah Caste community that what you think that why don't her parents allow her to pursue education further and why are boys allowed to study, she responded that first reason of not letting them continue with their education is financial. Most of the families in her village are poor. There are rare cases that the boys of the village have studied beyond the secondary level. They prefer to work after a certain age. Pabnera village does not have a school for further studies and their parents won't allow them to go outside the village for pursuing higher

education. In response to the same question, another respondent replied that the main reason for not sending their girls out is fear of eve-teasing. When they were asked, whether the situation differ for the girls of other caste communities or not, another lady responded that ‘Girls are girls. Caste does not matter for the girls.’ If they would go outside then the cases of eve-teasing are common for them. Upper caste women are not an exception to it.

In Harsana village, the schooling level among Dalit girls is exceptionally low. A group of Dalit women was asked, up to which class the girls pursue education in their village. The interview revealed that average Dalit girls study up to 8th standard and maximum up to 10th standard. In Harsana village, there are economic differences among the various caste groups. The SCs are numerically less here. An old lady aged 62 years from Valmiki caste responded that the upper caste controls all public resources. Therefore, there is less presence of Dalits in public institutions such as schools. The upper castes are economically well-off to send their girls to cities for further studies. However, a woman aged 43 years said that the Dalit community also supports their girls to study more they did before, but sometimes, they cannot afford to educate them beyond a certain level due to economic reasons. It was observed that there were not many diversions in the education of Dalit girls’ education except Chamar caste. After interviewing the families of Chamar caste community, it emerged that the girls in their families are now pursuing higher education and getting better jobs unlike girls from other caste communities.

b. Eve Teasing/Physical Abuse

After the study of all the three sampled villages, it was found that in the villages where Dalits are poor and they are less in numbers, the cases of Eve teasing occur more with the Dalit women. In the villages where Dalits are in majority and mostly caste groups are poor, there the incidence of eve-teasing is common for all the women in the villages, and such incidences are not based on the caste identities. The case is the same in the villages where Dalits are economically well-off and they are not in minority. Some of the interviews are mentioned below to prove the same.

In Patti Kailana village, Dalits are in majority and they all own a good measure of property and procure a fair sum. Only a couple of families function as workers. A woman aged 36 years from Valmiki community said that in early times the main reason for the domination of upper caste was that earlier Dalits had to work in their fields, but in this village, all the families from Dalit community have a property and they work in their own fields. Secondly, the population of upper caste is significantly less in this village. Therefore, the situation of Dalits and Dalit women is not like any other village. However, that does not mean that their daughters are safe everywhere. It was told by a woman from the Chamar caste community that their girls might face eve-teasing at some of the points when they go outside for studies or a job. But nobody knows about their caste at such places, and no one is a wonder to ask about the same before passing comments. Some unsocial elements are always there in society. Within the village boundaries, all the girls are safe irrespective of their castes.

In Pabnera village, the Dalits are in majority, but most of the caste groups are poor, including the backward castes and Muslim families. A group of Dalit women was interviewed and asked that how often the girls from their community face incidence of eve-teasing. A Daughter-in-law from an Audh family aged 24 years counter questioned the researcher and said if any girl from any other community steps outside the home, then won't she face eve-teasing? 'These boys are all same. They don't ask for the caste before harassing the girls. They would pass comments on any girl they would see'. However, the cases of eve-teasing do not happen on the basis of caste identity in this village. Girls who belong to upper castes are equally scared of moving out of their houses. Here, the Dalits are in majority and the upper caste groups live in cooperation with Dalits. Another woman aged 35 years from Chamar caste community was interviewed individually. She also replied in same manner and said, all are poor here and work on a daily basis except a few. Therefore, all the villagers live in unity. Daughters who belong to any caste group are daughters of village. They don't face eve-teasing from the people of their own village.

In Harsana village, the demographic location of the houses of SC caste is based on the traditional norms. Their houses are built on the outskirts of the village. Only

the Chamar caste community has mixed houses with the upper castes' houses. During the course of study, Dalit women were asked questions such as How often do Dalit women face cases of eve-teasing by the upper caste males? How does their family react to such cases? Do they resist them? Do they feel that the Upper castes would get more united if such incidences happened with them?

A 35-year-old lady from Dhanak caste community responded to the question related to the cases of eve-teasing by upper-caste males. She says that when it gets dim, the upper caste males would become inebriated and would wander in the region where the places of Dalits are constructed. They would pass remarks on their daughters, wives, or other women and they would mishandle them. Male from the Dalit caste community is not intense enough to say a word to them since they themselves are tipsy constantly. Assuming the same would have happened to their women folks, all the upper caste males would have to join to ensure them. This is all since they have financial reinforcement to go through some cash for one another. Dalits are poor, and this is their predicament to face such incidences.

A 44 years old lady from the Valmiki caste community said that though there was a notion of purity and pollution earlier, there was cooperation between the upper castes and lower castes due to economic interdependence. Dalits used to work in the fields belonging to upper castes and in their houses without any fear. However, today it's not time to send daughters or daughters-in-law to their fields or houses for work. Dalit women would be constantly in fear of getting abused by them if they work within the fields of upper castes. When she was enquired that why does she think that the working environment has changed for Dalit women and why do Dalit women not feel comfortable working with the upper caste, then she replied that the Dalits used to be organized earlier. There was an organization of Dalits in the village. But Dalits are now fragmented among themselves. They do not care about each other, whereas the upper communities are now more organized. This is the reason they are now more dominating in the village than before. Dalits cannot raise a voice against them even if they abuse or tease Dalit girls. Therefore, it is better for Dalits to protect their daughters and not letting them work in their houses.

c. Health and Sanitation

It was observed during the field study that accesses to health facilities and sanitation is proportionally related to the economic status of any family. Dalits are usually believed to be poorer than the upper castes. Within Dalits, women's condition is more pathetic when it comes to providing them health facilities. According to Oxfam report, on average, a woman from a dominant caste lives fifteen years longer than a Dalit woman.⁹⁹

The conditions of Dalit women in all three villages, in terms of health and sanitation, were different from each other. In Pabnera village, a Dalit woman aged 24 years from Audh community, who was pregnant, was interviewed about the maternal health facilities provided by the government in the village. She was asked that if Dalit women face any difficulty in accessing the health facilities provided by the government, she replied that there is Aasha worker in the village who pays visits regularly. Women who are pregnant, irrespective of their caste status go to the hospital for medical checkups only. Otherwise, all pregnant women get all the medicines here through Aasha worker. She was then asked about the caste identity of Aasha worker appointed in the village and whether Dalit women feel any sort of biasedness in her behavior while dealing with women from different caste groups, then she responded that the Aasha worker of the village belongs to Chamar caste community. Any woman in the village does not feel any type of difference or biasedness while dealing with her. Here, the majority are from SC castes and she herself is from the SC community. 'She cannot refuse to provide service. It's her duty.'

When she was asked that whether all deliveries are institutional deliveries or some child deliveries are still done with the help of local midwives, she responded that earlier was the time when people used to take help from midwives but nowadays, no one wants to take risks in regard to health. Moreover, when such facilities are provided by the government for the people who cannot afford expenditures or private hospitals then no one would want to take risks in such cases.

⁹⁹ (2021). *Inequality Report 2021: India's Unequal Healthcare Story*. New Delhi: Oxfam India.

A 33-year-old lady from Churah caste community also responded in the same manner regarding access to government health facilities. But it was observed that when it came to sanitation, the situation of 5-10 percent women who belong to upper caste is better than the Dalit women who are poor. Though majority of the houses in the village were having toilets but 8-10 families are those who do not have toilets within their houses. Those women are not even aware of the mutilation or genital diseases they might get from defecation. All such families are from SC castes and women of such families have to go outside for open defecation. Most of the women from the upper caste use sanitary napkins during their menstrual cycles, whereas women who are Dalit and poor, use traditional methods such as clothes. Along with that when asked about the contraceptive measures, it was found that most of the Dalit women are not aware of modern methods and if they have knowledge then they found those methods expensive which they cannot afford. But the poor women from other castes are not an exception to this. The average age of getting married, according to the interviewed Dalit women, in this village is 19-20 years. It shows the deviation from the earlier tradition when women used to get married by the age of 14-15 years.

No casualties were observed in Pabnera village in accessing public resources by Dalit women. When a Dalit woman from Churah community was asked about the difficulties in accessing water resources, she replied that each family is having access to the government water supply so, women in the village do not need to rush to wells and public water pumps. Earlier also, the case was same in our village.

In Harsana village, the sanitary condition of Dalit women is still the same as what it used to be traditionally. A 62 years old lady from the Valmiki caste was interviewed. She was asked that do houses belong to Dalits have inbuilt toilets, then she replied that no one from the Dalit community have a bathroom or toilet within their house except 4-5 houses. When she was inquired about the reason of not having toilets despite having “pukka” house and where do they go for defecation, she responded that Dalits don't have inbuilt toilets because their houses are small in size. If they make toilets within the house then where would they live? Families who do not have inbuilt toilets within the house go to the nearby vacant

places and it is very difficult for girls and women to go there alone because there are no houses around that place. Therefore, there is always a fear of getting abused or even teased from some unsocial elements.

Due to poor economic conditions, Dalit women in Harsana village don't have access to high-tech health facilities. When a group of five women was asked about the contraceptive measures they used, one of them was even not aware of the word and she replied that "it's not in someone's control, when it has to happen it happens". Only one girl among those who were interviewed was sanitary napkins during menstrual cycle. Others are stuck to the traditional ways because they can't afford the modern methods. All the houses have access to government water supply connections. However, not much deviation from old conditions was noticed among Dalit women regarding their health, whereas among upper-caste women, the situation has changed in Harsana village. Upper caste women are more aware of the positive effects of using contraceptives, about maternal health and hygienic environment. They know that good family planning affects the health of a mother as well. Earlier, they also used to go outside the home for defecation but the situation has changed for women in upper-caste families.

In Patti Kailana village, due to the high literacy rate and better economic conditions, Dalit women are more conscious about their health conditions. There are presently two anganwadi workers who belong to chamar and Dhanak castes respectively. They solely take care of the nutrition of lactating women, adolescent girls, and kids. As told by a group of Dalit women, all Dalit women have easy access to such government facilities without any caste biasedness. All the interviewed women were using new age methods such as napkins and menstrual cups during their menstrual cycles. A 38 years old lady from Dhanak caste was interviewed about the accessibility of water resources to Dalit women. She was asked that from where do Dalit women get drinking water? Is there any well or handpump and if yes then do any Dalit women ever feel any sort of discrimination while accessing that resource? Is it easily available to all the caste groups, then she responded that there is a water supply connection provided to each house in the village. It was provided to all the villagers almost 5-6 years back. Before the public water connection was provided to the people, everyone used to fetch water from a

public hand pump which is nearby. She responded that Dalit women never face any discrimination on the basis of their caste identities while accessing any public resources within the village. she also mentioned the reason behind this and said, the property of this village has been given to the Dalits in “*milkiyat*”. The higher caste bought the property in the village much later and the Sikhs came after the partition. Therefore, the Dalits are the first who owned this land. They are still in majority here. Therefore, they never faced difficulty in accessing the temples or water resources in the village.

Due to the high proficiency of education for girls in Dalit families, the average of marriage has also increased for them. The average age of marriage for girls, irrespective of their caste identities, is now between 20-26 years. It shows the divergence from the old notions of getting girls married at the very early age. When inquired about the toilet facilities, it was informed by the women of the community, who was interviewed, that all the families in the village are having toilets built within the houses.

Economic status of Dalit Women

a. Agricultural labour

In Patti Kailana village, out of nine Dalit women who have been interviewed only two works as agricultural labourers. It was found that working in the fields of others depends upon the ownership of property by one’s family. A woman aged 36 years from Valmiki caste community was questioned that does she find that the pattern of working has been changed or like earlier times, everyone used to do paternal work, then she replied that things don’t work like that now. No one does the traditional family’s occupation. Dalit families also own property in this village. Therefore, the women of those families work in their own fields. Dalit women either work in their own fields or do jobs in companies. She was asked, does every family own property and what amount of land a family owns on an average basis, she responded that earlier a Dalit family used to own 10-12 Kila on an average basis. But over a period of time, it got divided among their kids. Now, the families belonging to Chamar caste community own up to 3-4 Kila, whereas other castes

own 1-2 Kila on an average basis. Every family in the village owns property except 1-2 houses.

After interviewing in the Patti Kailana village, it emerged that there are variations within the Dalit community as well. The Chamar caste community is in the better economic situation than the other Dalit Castes due to some historical reasons. All the women from the Chamar caste either use to work in their own fields or do jobs. The girls from Chamar caste pursue education up to a higher level. Out of nine interviewed Dalit women, only two are works as agricultural labourer in others' fields. The women who work in their own fields are not considered as agricultural labour. However, not a single woman from upper-caste family was found in the village who use to work in other's fields. The women who work in other's fields do not get equal pay. The daily wage labor for women is 150/day whereas it is 300/day for a man.

It was observed that even after owning land and being in better economic conditions, the attitude of the upper caste towards the Dalits of the village is still preoccupied with the old notions of considering Dalits as inferior to themselves. A 64 years old man from the Jaat community, Balbir Singh was interviewed and asked that do people from "upper castes" still believe in the old values of considering Dalits as inferior to upper castes, then he replied that both the communities in the village, upper castes and the scheduled castes live in cooperation with each other. The people from the upper caste provide "them" with economic help in their daughter's marriage or any other such functions. If anyone from the upper caste community needs "them" for work then they help with their labour in fields. When he was asked that do females from the upper caste families also help Dalits in their fields then he answered that women from the upper caste do not work in other's fields. They work either in their own fields or stay at home. They would not be allowed to work in other's fields even if they are not economically well-off.

It emerged from the interview that no women from the upper caste would work in Dalit's field even if Dalits are equally well-off in economic terms, however, Dalit women are still available for labour in the fields of upper castes.

In Pabnera village, the most common occupation for Dalit women is to work as agricultural labour. It was also observed that most of the women from the Dalit caste groups work due to the poor economic conditions of the family. Out of ten interviewed Dalit women, five use to work as a daily wage labourer in agricultural fields. However, the women who are below the age of 30 years, be it, daughter or daughter-in-law, do not go for labour work. A group of Dalit women was interviewed. They were asked a question such as why do the work of agricultural labor is the most common occupation for women here? Whose farm do they work in? How much pay do they get for working in fields? Is it the same as the men get? Do they get work on a daily basis?

One of the respondents from the group who was interviewed answered that there is no choice for Dalit women to work in their own fields because Dalit families do not own much land and some families even do not own land at all. They have to earn something to eat. The income of one person is not enough for the family. Another respondent said that there are some families of Jaats and Brahmans in the village itself who has large fields. Women from the Dalit community either work in their fields or sometimes they go to the neighboring villages for the same.

While responding to the question of wages, one of the women replied that women, who work as agricultural labor, get 150/day and it is 250 or 300/day for the men. Further, she added that agricultural labour is not a permanent job where one can get permanent income. They don't get work on a daily basis. Whenever they get some work then they get it done. Otherwise, there are days when there is no work at all.

It emerged from the field study that the work is not available all the time for women. Due to poverty, Dalit women are more prone to do work as labourer along with household chores. Women don't get equal pay for doing the same work in the fields, whereas the women from the upper caste do not work in other's fields. Either they work in their own fields or they do some other jobs. Due to better economic conditions, the upper caste women are not in urgent need to do work on low wages like Dalit women. The options of going out of the village and doing some other works are limited for Dalit women because of the geographical location of the Pabnera village. It is far from the urban area.

In Harsana village, a divergence was seen from the old tradition of doing bonded labour in the fields of upper castes. It was told by a group of Dalit women that earlier they used to work on fields of Zameendar or landlords. But now, they would rather prefer to go to the city for other labour works. Dalit women are now more aware of the humiliation, they used to face earlier, in the name of caste. Out of fifteen interviewed Dalit women, only one woman from the Valmiki caste community works as an agricultural labourer in the fields. It was found that within the Dalits, women of Chamar caste community are in a better position than the else. They won't work as an agricultural labourer in other's fields unlike other females from scheduled castes.

A woman aged 34 years from Valmiki community was asked that do Dalit women still work in the fields of upper caste in the village, then she responded that, unlike earlier times, Dalit and Dalit women are not bound to do work in their fields. People from scheduled castes have other options to do. They have the choice to go to urban area near the village and find some other works for themselves. The researcher then asked her why don't Dalit work in their fields now, she answered that earlier both the communities were dependent on each other. People from upper communities needed Dalits for their work necessities and Dalits needed them for some economical support. Dalits are now being replaced by the migrated labour from other states. Secondly, the Zameendar doesn't pay Dalits, a good amount for their labor because of less bargaining power. Therefore, it is better to look for other options if they do have a choice.

Whereas after a group of upper-caste women was interviewed, it was observed that the Upper caste women would rather prefer to stay at home instead of working in other's fields on low wages or doing such works which are traditionally meant for Dalits only. There were no single women found in upper-caste families who work as agricultural labour. Because of the fact that Dalit women do not work for upper caste communities as they used to do earlier, there is a negative perception among the upper caste towards their emancipation. One of the women from the Brahman community, aged 63 years said that Dalits are having a different attitude now because of the reservation system, they are far developed from other communities, they deny to help even if anyone from the village demands their help. A woman

from Dhanak community mentioned that untouchability has not vanished completely. It is present within the boundaries of upper caste houses but if they need labour outside their houses, then untouchability became the secondary factor for them because they cannot force anyone to work for them now.

b. Domestic Worker

The job of a domestic worker is not considered as a prestigious job in Indian society. Therefore, the person who has other choices to do would always avoid being a domestic worker. The same happens in the Patti Kailana village. No single Dalit woman out of nine, who were interviewed, is working as a domestic help in this village. However, it was observed that only the Dalit women, whose families are not economically well-off, are those who help the upper caste women during some functions or ceremonies in their houses. But that does not happen vice-versa.

A woman aged 36 years from Valmiki community was interviewed and asked that do Dalit women work as domestic help in upper-caste houses or does any of the women from scheduled castes go to the city to work as domestic help, then in response to this, she replied that most of the families in the village own some farmland. All Dalit women work in their own fields. Though there are a few houses that do not own land but women folks of such families might get work in other's fields but they won't work in their houses. They may help them in other ways like during functions in their houses. But no one is a regular domestic worker. No women from the village go to city areas to work as a domestic workers because the city area is far-off from this village. They would end up expend more on travelling and time than they earn.

A woman from the upper caste also said that Dalit women help them in their work sometimes and in return, we provide them with some economical help during marriages in their families or in some other needed times. However, if any Dalit woman has any other options as an income source, then she won't prefer to perform such works which were earlier stigmatized as inferior and to be meant for the Dalit women only.

In Pabnera village, the main occupation was agricultural labor, as told by a group of Dalit women. But a few women from the Dalit community also work as

Domestic help in the Upper caste houses. It was observed that Dalit women only from some particular caste groups work as domestic help. There are Rajput and Chamars who would work only as agricultural labour. It was complained by a group of women when they thought researcher to be a government servant, that no (Jamadaar) sweeper come in our village for cleaning the street. Though there are families from those caste groups which traditionally meant to do the job of a sweeper. Therefore, it could be noticed that women could do the job of a domestic worker within the houses when they get paid in return but unlike earlier times they don't act as the committed sweeper of the whole village and get nothing in return except some food.

Though not a single woman among the interviewed women was working as domestic help. However, it was told by a woman aged 33 years from Valmiki caste that the work Dalit women are assigned to do in houses of the upper caste is specific. They would only do cleaning and sweeping. They are not allowed to go into the kitchen in their houses. They are not allowed to wash the dishes. Due to the distant location of the village from the city, Dalit women could not travel to cities daily to do work. However, no divergence was observed from the old traditions in that sense. There are notions of purity and pollution within the houses of the upper caste and Dalit women who have no option to do other works still have to face such humiliation.

The situation of Dalit women is even more pathetic in Harsana village. There are two main works done by Dalit women. One is working as domestic help or agricultural labour within the village and second is going to city areas for labor work. There are two types of Dalit women who work as domestic workers, one, who works in the village's upper-caste houses. Second, who works in the city as a domestic worker. A group of women who work within the village were inquired first and asked that from which caste do the families, usually, belong in which Dalit women work as domestic workers? What type of work they are assigned to do? Are domestic workers belonging to scheduled caste allowed to go in kitchens? A woman from the Dalit community replied that the houses in which Dalit women function as domestic workers usually belong to Jaats, Brahmans. They are usually

assigned the works such as sweeping and mopping in their houses. Sometimes they pick up animal dung and do garbage disposal work.

Another respondent in response to the question related to entry in the kitchen area told that the perception of some people is changing regarding the notions of purity and pollution. In some houses, Dalit domestic help are allowed to go in the kitchen and they also wash dishes there. However, some families are rigid in such terms and they do not allow them to visit their kitchen or temple area. One more respondent while dictating her part of the story said that once she used to do a sweeping job in a Jaat family. But after 2-3 days the grandfather in the family forbidden her to visit the area of the house in which he was staying. Of course, there are some families which serve them tea in the same dishes but in some families, the dishes are even kept separately for Dalits. It happened with her. Dalits are usually called by their specific caste identities and not by their names. When she was asked that how do domestic workers who function within the village get their payment? Is it in cash or material things? She replied that mostly it is in material things. They give them milk, food, old clothes at festivals etc. the amount of cash they get in return is very less.

A widow aged 62 years from the Valmiki caste community is having only 6 daughters. She lives alone in a house which has no paint and plaster on it. She works as a domestic worker in 3-4 houses of upper castes. As a domestic worker, she mops the floor in their houses. She uses to sweep the street to earn. In return, she gets food to eat and old clothes to wear. The cash, she earns, is only around 700-1000. It varies according to work.

A woman aged 32 years from Dhanak caste community uses to work as domestic help in a city area near the village, along with others. She was inquired about her experience as a domestic worker in urban areas. She was asked that why do Dalit women go to urban areas to work when they can do the same work here, then she replied that women, who work as a domestic workers within the village, don't get the good amount and along with that, they feel humiliated when they go to the houses of upper caste. They keep their dishes separately and call the Dalits by their caste identities. There is a change in people's attitude towards Dalits in city areas. Earlier, Dalit domestic workers were not allowed to enter in their kitchens but now

they pay them for cooking in their houses. People from scheduled castes also deserve respect and they are now aware of it. The places where they don't get respect, they do not prefer to work at such places.

It was observed that the situation of women, who function as a domestic workers within the village, has not been changed from earlier times. The attitude towards the Dalit women who are domestic workers is still the same among upper-caste villagers, whereas, in urban areas, there is a change in people's attitude that has been observed by the Dalit women also. They are aware of the rights and respect they deserve. But along with this, it is also important to notice that the stigmatization regarding doing the job of the domestic worker is still persisted in our society. It is still the Dalit women who are assigned these works. No upper caste woman could be found in these villages who does the job of domestic worker anywhere despite being poor.

c. Other works

Apart from the two above-mentioned occupations, some Dalit women from all the three sampled villages are engaged in some other informal works as well. However, the numerical strength of such women is very low. The Dalits who own land, their women folks use to work either in their own field or they are confined to do domestic work within their own houses. Dalit woman, whose family do not own land, has to work in other's field as agricultural labour. Some Dalit women from specific caste groups are engaged in the traditional work of cleaning and sweeping as domestic workers but the working environment has been changed for them at some places. Usually, in all the three villages, it was observed that the Chamar caste community who has gained many benefits due to some historical reasons (as they were engaged in leather business) and because of benefits of reservation policies are in much better economic conditions than the other scheduled castes. They are more tilted towards moving away from traditional boundaries of occupation. They are moving towards other options for income. Such secular jobs have uplifted their status in society.

In Patti Kailana village, a woman from Chamar caste community who uses to work as an anganwadi worker was inquired and she said that the families from Chamar

caste community own more farmland than the other scheduled castes in the village. The girls who belong to this community are more educated, therefore, they get more prestigious jobs than the others. She said that the Dalit woman, whose family do not own much farmland, either works in the fields of others or goes to urban areas for doing jobs in factories. Some Dalit women who own cattle are doing the work of selling milk within the village. A woman from the Chamar caste community, whose house is near the government school of the village, works as a peon in the school.

In Pabnera village, mostly Dalit women work either as agricultural labour in other's fields or as domestic workers. Most of the Dalit families and backward castes are poor in Pabnera village. People don't have money to invest in some homemade small businesses. Some women do the sewing work at their home but not in a cooperative form. They do it on an individual basis. The women are not much educated in Pabnera village. Therefore, the option of doing a job in the formal sector, which needs to be educated, is not available to the Dalit women of Pabnera village. The city area is far from the village so women don't even have the choice to go to the city to do some other works.

The geographical location of Harsana village is near the urban area. Other than doing the job of a domestic worker, Dalit women go to the nearby city for doing labour work in factories and at construction sites. Some women do the job of cleaning and sweeping in hospitals and schools. The women within the village have no options other than doing the work of agricultural worker and domestic help. The Chamar caste community of the village is in better economic condition than the other SCs. The houses of the Chamar caste are built within the village along with the houses of upper castes rather than the outskirts of the village, unlike other scheduled castes' houses. The women folks of Chamar caste community, usually, sell the milk of cattle to add some more amount to the household income of the family. Two women work as a shopkeeper in general store of their own. Other Dalit women who are confined to work within the village could not have moved away from the old stigmatized notions of purity and pollution.

Political Status of Dalit Women

Politics is usually seen to be a male-dominated arena and which makes women even weaker in social realm. This male-dominated politics often posed distinction and even opposition between personal and political problems. Pertaining to the same the slogan that the “personal is political” became important during the second wave of feminism. This term was first used by Carol Hanisch in 1970’s in an essay named as personal is political. She argued that woman’s personal experiences are the result of her positioning within a power relationship system. She says that any relationship in which one has the power and the other is oppressed is highly political in nature and that is a form of political action. Hanisch argued that women’s personal problems become political problems because they are caused by women’s inequality in public or social spaces. These problems are not created by women themselves. This realization of considering women’s personal problems as having a bigger political dimension was in response to an allegation that women are themselves responsible for their problems. It led to the fact that these problems cannot be solved by staying in personal space or by personal solutions rather they need social change.¹⁰⁰ Some of the policies and laws like against domestic violence, sexual violence, etc. were drafted in response to this women’s liberation movement.

a. Domestic violence

Domestic violence is not only about physical abuse or emotional abuse rather it also includes economic abuse which is considered to be normal in our society.

In Patti Kailana village, a group of Dalit women was inquired about the incidences of domestic violence faced by them, it emerged from the interviews that some of them are not even aware of the fact that they are suffering from domestic violence. The irony is that the forms of domestic violence are considered to be the natural and very fate of the women in society. That is why women are ignorant of it. It is observed during the survey of all the three sampled villages that violence against women in the family is directly proportional to the economic situation of the

¹⁰⁰ Kelly, C. (2017, May 1). *the personal is political*. Retrieved from Encyclopedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/the-personal-is-political>

family and level of education of the women. In Patti Kailana village, the Dalit women are educated and Dalit families are also equally prosperous. Most Dalit women are working and they also contribute to the earnings of the family. It was found that the cases of physical abuse against Dalit women, by their male counterparts, are very rare in the village and such cases are no exception to the upper caste women also. However, the financial assets, property, and income of the house are controlled by the males in all the houses, be it either Dalit or upper-caste families. It is called financial or economic abuse which women are not aware of. A Dalit woman, aged 25 years from the *Valmiki* caste community was asked that does her mother also earn money and if yes, then Is she allowed to keep money with her or does she give it to her husband, then the respondent replied that both of her parents are working and earning for the family. Her mother works as agricultural labour and her father works at a petrol pump. She further added that isn't it very obvious that it is her father who takes care of all the earnings of the house and he is the one who decides where to spend. He is the head of the house and fathers are the heads in all the families. She was inquired that does it mean that he is the one who owns the property also and how far do she or her mother find it fair that despite earning equally, her mother could not decide where to spend? She responded and said, presently her father is the owner of the property of a family. However, the property will be divided among her two brothers. While talking about her viewpoint on finding it appropriate, she said "*Hamare yhna aise hi hota hai ji*" (this is how it happens in this village). Does anyone see anywhere that females are taking care of the money and spendings of the family?

This form of financial control is a form of economic abuse which women in Patti Kailana village, find very natural. The same phenomenon was observed in the upper caste families of the houses. Therefore, it is the cultural construct of the village that gives all the males the authority or legitimacy to control the financial resources and decide where to spend even the earning of their female counterparts. However, people find it weird when it happens the other way round.

In Pabnera village, women found it uncomfortable to talk about domestic violence. Though it was observed that like Patti Kailana village, the Dalit women were suffering from economic abuse. Dalit women were interviewed in groups. During

the interview the daughters and daughters-in-law were sitting along with the elder women of the families. Whenever they were asked questions about domestic violence and as soon as they started speaking, other elderly women would interrupt them. It shows that their voice would have been suppressed even in the house if it happens to them outside the house as well. But again, that was not something peculiar to the Dalit women only. Heating arguments with the wife and forcing her to keep quiet are acts of day-to-day life. When a woman was asked that how does she react when she is not allowed to speak in any of the discussions with the other family members, then she replied, what can she do to that. It is a daily routine and it happens in every family. One has to keep quiet to resolve the matter but unfortunately, it is always the woman who does that. A neighbour of Jaat family, when enquired about the cases of domestic violence, told that the husband of their neighbouring lady (in Jaat family) often shouts at her so loudly, that neighbors can hear him and he abuses her, beats her. After knowing that, the same lady from the Jaat family was questioned. She was alone at the home therefore, when promised to hide her identity, she agreed to talk. She said that whenever her husband gets frustrated, he shouts at her. He beats her sometimes. When she was asked that does he drink, then she denied it and said he never drinks. But he sometimes gets frustrated from his work. She was asked why doesn't she leave him or file a complaint against him, then she replied that he is a nice guy otherwise, "*mard hai kabhi kabhi ho jata hai gussa*" (he is male so, he gets angry sometimes). Where would she go if she leaves him. she has to stay with him. It was observed that it was the patriarchal theory and culture of the village that justifies domestic violence on such a basis. Dalit women are not the only one who face such type of violence within the house, Upper caste women also suffer from this patriarchal mindset.

In Harsana village, the Dalit women were more prone to physical violence as compared to upper caste women. A group of Dalit women was asked a straight question that do they think that the cases of domestic violence are faced more by the Dalit women. A woman from the Dhanak caste community out busted angrily and said, absolutely yes, first they work outside as labour in fields, in other's houses and whenever they reach home, they have to do their household works. When that is not enough then their husbands come home drunk and they would

abuse them, beat them. While describing her own husband she said, her husband would have forcible sexual intercourse with her, whenever he gets drunk. Isn't it enough to say that Dalit women are a victim of domestic violence?

A woman from *Valmiki* community aged 37 years, who works as a peon and sweeper in college, was inquired and she replied that earlier, she used to work as a domestic worker in the village itself. She said that her husband would beat and abuse her regularly. He drain her hard early money in consumption of alcohol. She has to look after the nurturing of her three son and also to manage all the household expenses. She has borrowed money from many people in the village and in return, she uses to work in their houses. When asked why does not she leave him if she earns on her own, she answered that "*pati ka hona bhot jruri hai, warna nikalna mushkil ho jata hai*" (it is very necessary to stay with husband otherwise a woman can't work out without getting taunted by other people). The families in which she used to work were also asked questions. One of the women said that she used to take at least two leaves in a week because her husband used to beat her every day. Sometimes she has shown us the wounds she got from his beating and she worked even after this. Her husband is an alcoholic and he beats her whenever he gets drunk.

b. Sexual violence

The cases of sexual violence against Dalit women in all the three sampled villages were not reported in any of the concerned police stations. By talking to the people in the villages it emerged that the violence against Dalit women such as rape, attempt to rape, sexual harassment, gang rape, are used as weapons against the Dalits as a whole. Cases such as these happen at those places where the Dalits and non-Dalits happen to be in a brunt relationship. First, the people of the village were enquired about such cases within the village.

In Patti Kailana village, when a group of three Dalit women was interviewed and asked that how are the relations between Dalits and non-Dalits in the village? Has any dispute occurred between various caste groups in which Dalit women were made the victim of sexual assault or harassment? It was told by those Dalit women and other people of the village that instead of notions of purity and pollution and

untouchability, the factor of politics plays a more important role in Patti Kailana village. There is a Sikh community, who has been migrated from Pakistan after partition and they have got the Voter identity card pertaining to the concerned constituency. Their population has been increased over a period of time. Therefore, if any dispute occurs in the village, then it is not between Dalits and non-Dalits rather the Sikhs and Jaats remain in a contentious relationship. Because of this, the upper castes and Dalits always live in cooperation. However, no woman has been made a victim in any of the disputes that happened to be between Sikhs and Jaats. The village was formally established after 1970's. All the caste groups are not natives of the village. All the caste groups happen to be in better economic condition, therefore, the situation in Patti Kailana village is different from the other villages.

In Pabnera village also, due to the majority of the Dalit population and better economic status of all the caste groups, no dispute was observed among various castes. The majority of the population consists of Muslims. When a group of eight Dalit women was asked the same questions which were asked in Patti Kailana village, one of them said that because all the families are economically on the same level, that is why all are dependent on each other. All the people in the Pabnera village are migrated from Pakistan at the time of partition. Therefore, more than the notion of purity and pollution or untouchability the main question for them at that time was of survival and getting settled in the new cultural construct. So, anyone cannot see the domination of any particular caste group here. Of course, it may happen that due to economic conditions some might work for others. The issues related to women are same for the one or others and till now no such dispute has happened in this village in which women of any community are targeted. Later, that was confirmed by the concerned police station of Murthal.

In Harsana village, no case of sexual harassment and sexual assault has been registered in the concerned police station as of now but the case of Harsana village is far way different from the other two sampled villages. Unlike the other two villages, the Dalits and non-Dalits are in a stiff relationship here. Most of the caste groups are original natives of the village. Therefore, they have not completely moved away from the age-old boundaries of purity and pollution, and

untouchability. Dalits are not allowed to enter by some upper caste families in some specific temples which were built earlier by Brahmans like Shivji temple. But despite such cases of contestations no incidence has occurred between Dalits and non-Dalits so far in which Dalit women have been targeted to victimize.

c. **Political Participation**

The strong patriarchal structure of villages in Haryana is not in favor of encouraging the democratic rights of women. But government's initiative of reserving 1/3rd seats in local Panchayati governments is providing a commendatory environment for women's participation in politics. Women are provided 33 percent representation in Gram Panchayats, Block Smitis, and Zila Parishads. The 73rd and 74th amendments of the Indian constitution have been proven milestones in encouraging women's political participation. What is remarkable about these amendments is that they have provided 1/3rd representation to women who belong to scheduled castes in the form of elected representatives. It means that Dalit women have the right to contest elections for both, reserved constituency and open seats.

Haryana Panchayati Raj Act was made in 1994 and it tried to ensure the representation of women in local self-government institutions. However, women were not much keen on contesting elections in the first two election cycles of 1995 and 2000 respectively. But in the third election cycle of local self-government in Haryana, women understood the importance of political participation. There was fierce competition to elect even among the Dalit women. They understood the power of politics to address the grievances of Dalits and Dalit women.

In all the three sampled villages, no major difference between Dalits and Non-Dalits was noticed in the attitude towards women contesting elections. In Patti Kailana village, it was observed that there was a passive attitude towards unmarried girls having voter Id card. It was asked from a group of women consisting of Dalits and non-Dalits both that do daughters of your family, who are still unmarried, also carry a voter Id card. Women from both the caste groups answered in the same manner. A woman from Chamar caste community said that 'today or tomorrow, our girls going to be Daughter-in-law in some other village'.

What is the point to make them have voter card here? It is just a matter of 3-4 years. It is the same mindset in the upper caste families also. It was observed that the daughters are not considered as permanent residents of the village and therefore, they are not encouraged to have voter Id cards.

All the women who were interviewed and married were having Voter Id cards. Women including Dalits are, usually, educated in Patti Kailana village. Therefore, when asked about the criteria to vote for the contestants it emerged that most women do not vote according to caste preferences rather, they vote according to the manifesto of candidates. Some women cast their votes according to the suggestion of other family members. But that is not the case-specific to any particular caste group. The main contestation of power in this village is not between Dalits and non-Dalits, it is between the Sikh community and the Upper castes of the village. Therefore, it is very obvious that how Dalits are kept outside the arena of power politics. Though the percentage participation of women in casting their votes was almost similar within Dalits and non-Dalits.

In Pabnera village, there was a passivity among people towards unmarried girls having voter Id cards, as they are going to move to other villages after marriage. It is a very nuance concept of keeping the younger generation away from politics. When a group of Dalit women was asked that have there been any female sarpanch from scheduled caste, they were not even aware of it. One of them answered that we don't know much about politics, for that you have to ask from any male of the village. Women were not even aware from the fact that there is separate reservation in local self-government elections for women belonging to scheduled castes. It was observed that, politics is not considered as a matter, something women should be concerned about. The lack of awareness about politics among women in Pabnera village goes hand in hand with the low level of education. As women including the Dalit women are not educated, therefore, their votes are depending upon the authority of males in their respective families. The situation is not different for women of upper-caste families. Though no scheduled caste female has been elected as sarpanch in Pabnera village so far. There has been only one female sarpanch named Poonam who belong to the Backward class and not

scheduled caste. As told by people, most works pertaining to the post were handled by her husband Parveen Kumar.

In Harsana village, the same level of ignorance was noticed among women. 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. Lack of education, patriarchal system, and economic dependency of women on male members were found as main reasons for low participation of women in politics. Their votes are depending on the choices of the male members of the family and not on their own choices. When asked by a group of Dalit women that if they can contest elections on the seats reserved for women in general then why don't they contest, then one of them replied that, firstly, we are poor and we don't have money to invest on elections. Secondly, if we do contest elections it is impossible to win as no one from the village wants to see some Dalit woman as their sarpanch when they do have other choices. No one would even allow us to contest elections. When the same question was asked from a group of upper-caste males who were playing cards, one of them said "*isa time bhi na aaya ke hum ib inne sarpanch bnawein*" (the time is not that worst that we would make "them" sarpanch). The Dalits and non-Dalits are in a stiff relationship in Harsana village. Therefore, no Dalit women have contested elections so far on the seats reserved for women because they already know it is not worth contesting.

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.

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