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'*Ya Kriyawan Sa Pandita*' (learned person is one who is ceaselessly active) is the motto of the University of Pune, which was established in 1949. Since its inception, the University of Pune has placed the objective of 'Social Commitment' on the top of its agenda for attaining excellence in higher education. The Centre for Continuing Education established in 1972 was upgraded as the Department of Adult, Continuing Education, as a result of University Grants Commission's Policy (1977). Following the University Grants Commission's Policy (1977), Government of India launched the National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) on October 2, 1978. The responsibility and the vital role given to the Universities in the NAEP was very much instrumental in upgrading the Centres for Continuing Education in various Universities. This trend was accepted by the authorities at University of Pune. Other programmes such as Population Education, Planning Form and Jan Shikshan Nilayams were started and implanted through the university and colleges with the assistance of the University of Pune and University Grants Commission. Lifelong Learning as the cherished goal of the educational process which presupposes universal literacy, provision of opportunities for youth, housewives, agricultural and industrial workers, professionals and other disadvantaged groups of the society to continue the education of their choice at the pace suited to them is one of the main objectives of the University. The Department recognised the need for providing quality education by up gradation of skills of the learners in tune with the developmental needs of the individual and the society. An indispensable endeavour toward enhancing the human resource is to develop strategies for creating an effective learning environment for a Knowledge society. The department has resolved itself to work on some socially important areas viz. National Integration, Women Empowerment, Senior Citizens, Unorganized Workers, Non-Government Organizations, Tribal Development, youth Education, Entrepreneurship & Employment, Counselling, Literacy, Adolescence Education and Lifelong Learning.

## INDIAN JOURNAL OF LIFELONG LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ISSN: 2454 – 6852



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Vol. 3; No.4

October - December, 2015

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## **Livelihood Pattern of Dalit Women and Empowerment**

*Jadhav B.S*

Since Independence, Government and Non-Governmental Organization are working for the empowerment of the poor. But, their effort has been failed to bring out changes and improvement in the quality of life and livelihood pattern of the Dalits. There are many studies which find out the drawbacks of these organizations. Such as, they raised criticism on the role of governmental organization on the grounds that these are centre-oriented, bucreatic in nature, rigid in structure, based on rules and regulations. Therefore, they could not reach to the common people. On the contrary, some NGOs are emerged as catalytic agent, reformer tool in the developmental field. They are claiming that they are working with the people. They are people-friendly, close to the community. They are people-centric, philanthropic, charitable, and flexible in nature, followed bottom to top approach and carried out work with participatory method. NGOs are emerged as important third sector in the field of development. Thus, there is need to understand the effect of these policies on the livelihood pattern of the poor. However, the nature, structure, ideology and function of the NGOs are varied. Even, they are also working on the different developmental issues. But due to the many internal and external forces, they are also failed to bring out changes in the structural and ideological construction of social reality. Hardly, there are very few cases and successful stories in which Dalit are benefited from welfare programs and policies, despite, this, many others are deprived and marginalized from the benefits, even though such program are run by the partnership between public and private organization under the name of welfare, development and empowerment. Thus, Dalit and Dalit women are still struggling for their survival and livelihood. Presently, they don't have

sufficient sources of livelihood pattern to meet their basic needs. Due course of time, Grameen Model of Bangladesh is emerged as tool of poverty alleviation and women empowerment. On the basis of the same ideology and model, Indian Government, Policy makers, NGOs, and Micro-Credit Institution come forward to provide small loan amount to the poorest of the poor those were historically neglected and not credit-worthy. Dalits and poor were not bankable and they were not supported formal credit. They depended upon the informal credit. Therefore, Women movements and feminist scholars also thought that micro-credit will help to generate income and supportive systems to the livelihood pattern of the poor. However, by keeping this broad perspective in the mind, present study analyzes the impact of micro-credit policies on the livelihood pattern of the Dalit women those are supported by micro-finance from the last ten years in the Nanded district, a backward region of the Maharashtra State.

This paper is divided into the major three parts. First part deals with the concept of livelihood pattern and review of literature. Second part focuses on the methodology and socio-economical background of the Dalit women. The last part of the paper covers major findings and conclusion.

### **Livelihood Pattern**

The concept of livelihood is widely used in contemporary developmental literature. Dictionaries, in simple terms, define livelihood as 'a means to a living 'or the way anybody earn money in order to live'. It means to say that it is the sum of ways in which people make their living. Livelihood is very broad concepts which is not only comprises income, but also comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. Thus, livelihood is sustainable when it is able to cope with recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not

undermining the natural resource base. Thus, this is the bottom line of the concept of livelihood. Of the various components of a livelihood, the most complex is the portfolio of assets out of which people construct their living. This portfolio includes tangible as well as intangible assets such as gold, jewellery, cash, resources, and demands and appeals. Carney (1998) identifies five livelihood assets: natural, human, financial, physical and social. There are numerous initial determinants of livelihood strategy. Many livelihoods are largely pre-determined by accident of birth, socialized, apprenticed, education and socio-cultural and economical factors. The livelihood framework suggests two basic types of intervention that communities can pursue in enhancing their levels of subsistence. They are practical interventions facilitating the efforts of low-income households to build their livelihood assets (counselling programmes, education, employment training, economic literacy and savings programmes, and support for small business development). Strategic interventions are directed towards the vulnerability context community building and organizing, alliance building, policy work and advocacy. They work towards the goal of social and economic change at the systemic level. To bring out the changes in the socio-economical life of the Dalit, micro-finance is adopted as practical intervention to provide, employment training, economic literacy and savings programmes, and support for small business development etc to the women.

## **Review of literature**

There are very few studies which critically analyzed the role of NGOs in the implementation of the micro-credit policies and their impacts on the improvement of the livelihood pattern, quality of life of Dalit women. The earlier studies on the NGOs mostly defined and typified NGOs into many categories. Shah and Chaturvedi (1983) classified them as techno-managerial,

reformist and radical. Korten (1990) classified NGOs as relief and welfare organizations, coalitions building community organizations. And Eliot (1987) divided them into three types such as charity, development and empowerment NGOs. However, there is not same understanding among the scholars about the role of NGOs. There are two groups of the scholars' former claims that NGOs are charitable, reformist and more flexible, followed bottom to top approach. They are people-centric and worked at grass root level. They are better implementer of the developmental programs rather than governmental organization. Governmental Organizations are centre-oriented, rigid in structure, based on rules and regulations. However, On the contrary, later group argued that NGOs are emerged as third sector and asserting as agent of development. But many of them are working as agent of imperialism and expanding markets. They are depended upon the foreign aids and followed their guidelines in the implementation of developmental programs. They don't have their own vision and ideology. However, in the literature on NGOs in the context of micro-credit shows both types of stories successful as well as unsuccessful. There are several positive cases which successfully organizing the poor women. The SEWA at Ahmadabad is one such example. Bhatt (1998) has described the activities of the SEWA Bank, one of several organizations working under the SEWA umbrella. The SEWA bank has organized thousands of poor working women and mobilized them to run a co-operative bank, which encourage savings and fulfils their credit requirements for consumption, trading and production purposes. George Mathew (1999) has pointed out several instances in which Panchayats and NGOs have worked together using their complementary skills and resources to achieve common goals. They played very great role on the financial inclusion of the women. According to Chavan and Ramakumar (2002) micro-credit programmes and institutions

have generated a positive change in the incomes of the beneficiaries, but this change is only marginal, there is no improvement on the skills and the technology adopted by the beneficiaries. The programmed had only minimalist impacts on the earnings and employment generation of the rural poor. According to them, a high repayment rate of the Gramin Bank model is ensured through high costs on enforcement. Moreover, a high repayment could not be considered as a success of the programme, because the pressure within the group creates situations of debt cycles. Most of the studies argued that micro-finance is the tool of women empowerment. But in the reality, there are many feminist scholars are not agree with the meaning of the concept of empowerment which is formulated by corporate sector. Among the feminists, Dalit Feminists are criticizing the generalization voice of general feminism. They are criticizing on the ground that Dalit women have different identity and they are more oppressed, victimized group in the society. Their oppression is triple; Caste, Class and Dalit patriarchy are the forces of oppression of the Dalit women in society. Padma Velaskar, Sharmila Rege (2006), John (2004), Eva-Maria Hardtmann (2009), Gopal Guru etc are working on the life situation of the Dalit women through different methods and Dalit feminist perspective. These scholars are taking different standpoint to analyze the life histories, stories, narratives and experiences. They also raised argument against the mainstream feminism which is based on the Hindu patriarchal ideology. They argued that Dalit women have different identity based on their socio-economical condition of their families in the respective societies. Livelihood pattern of the Dalit families are based on the contribution of the Dalit women's labour. They have to struggle a lot to meet the needs of their families.

## **Study Area, Method and Process**

Nanded, a study area is reckoned as backward district of Marathwada region of Maharashtra state. The backwardness of the district is attributed to the several years of rapacious feudal and exploitative role of the Nizam of Hyderabad. Implementation of development programmers like ITDP, IRDP, DWCRA, SFDA, etc since last five decades, has very little impact on raising living standard of weaker section, the district is still under the trap of feudal impact, illiteracy, unemployment, child labour, bonded labour, frequent natural disaster of drought, etc, are common phenomenon. According to the District survey, during 1997 to 1998, it found 1, 32, 518 BPL families. Hence, for removing backwardness of common people a greater reliance is placed on capital formation through savings and investment of households. For this purpose, micro-credit policy is adopted as tool of poverty alleviation and empowerment of the poor. Having failure experience of the earlier welfare and developmental policies and programs which were wholly depended upon the bureaucratic organization, this time, NGOs and semi-governmental organizations are given priority in the implementation of this scheme. Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahmandal, a semi-governmental organization was established on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1975 in Maharashtra. By recognizing its importance, MAVM is declared on 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2003 as Mother NGOs in the field of women empowerment. Onward 2001, central and State government has started to divert all welfare schemes to the MAVM for implementation. These schemes are related to health care, training participation, entrepreneurships, income generating activities, etc. Up to 2007, MAVM reached to 13036 villages from the 332 talukas of the State. MAVM has opened its 34 district headquarter at the each district level. Again it decentralized its branches at the taluka levels after the name of *Lok Sanchalit Sadhan Kendra*. MAVIM is working in 13 talukas of the district and also collaborated with

other local NGOs such as *Shramjivi Mahila Sanghatana*, *Lalit Vishaw Sikshan Samit*, apart from this, there are other local NGOs like *Jan Chaytaiyan Mandal*, *Vanshree* etc also engaged in the formulation of SHGs in the District. Under this policy different schemes are implemented after the names of *Sawsidha*, *Tejeswani*, *Ramai Mahila Saksimikaran Yojana* etc. *Ramai Mahila Saksimikaran Yojana* is sponsored only for the SC, ST and BPL women. Under these different schemes, 7529 Self Help Groups are formulated which comprised 137843 women who belonging to the BPL families. This is the highest numbers in Marathwada region. Under the different plans, the number of SHGs is varied from policy to policies which are implemented in the district. 197 SHGs are formulated under MRCP, 188 are under the SWS, 103 SHGs under the SGSY, 897 SHGs under the SCP and 338 SHGs under the TEJ etc are formulated in the different parts of the Nanded District. Under SCP, 10742 women are joined in the SHGs. By keeping main objective in the mind, the present study selected SHGs from the SCP which is made only for the SC, ST and BPL families. Purposively study selected above six NGOs those are formulating SHGs under SCP. These NGOs graded SHGs into the four (A, B, C, D) strata (each group has 10 to 20 members) on the basis of their performance. Out of these groups, two SHGs are selected from the each NGO from seven talukas which have higher representation of the SHGs. Further, by following stratified sampling method, 155 samples were selected from the A group category of Self Help Groups. Data is gathered by using both types of methods qualitative as well as quantitative. Observation, in depth interviews, interview schedules and group discussion etc are used to collect the information from the different types of respondents SHGs women, executive body members, group secretary, members of the SHG federation, NGOs staff members, Bank officers and government officers etc.

## **Dalit Women Socio –Economical Background**

Women are not separated from her families and communities. They are the products of their social structure. Social structure comprises many elements like institutions, groups, norms and values. Women in the society are not equal as men. Again their status, social position, etc are varied which is depended upon the ideology and social structure which is based on the caste, class, race and gender. Among the feminist, Dalit feminist are taking different standpoint to analyze the life situations, experiences of Dalit women. They are criticizing the general voice of the Indian feminism. They argued that Dalit are still powerless, resource less; they don't have permanent sources to meet their daily needs of survival. They are not provided sustainable sources to support their livelihood pattern. Since independence, the government has formulated many welfare schemes for the poor and Dalit. But any scheme of the state couldn't generate income and support to the livelihood pattern of the Dalit. Even though, NGOs are emerged as tools, catalyst agent and third sector in the field of development, but results are not so impressive and implemented programs are also failed to bring out changes in the quality of life and socio-economical condition of the Dalit. Dalit and Dalit women's problems are structural as well as ideological. The existing social structure is based on caste; class, race, and religion etc. The social structural is not only structural but also ideological. It is based on the ideology of purity and impurity. Dalit are considered impure castes and untouchable groups in the society. Since Independence, Governmental policies have been failed to bring out changes in the existing social structure and its ideology. NGOs are emerged as third sector in the field of development, based on the ideology of reforms and empowerment of the poor. But due to the many internal and external forces, they are also failed to bring out changes in the structural and ideological construction of the social reality.

Hardly, there are very few cases which are benefited such programs and policies, despite, this, many others are deprived and marginalized from the benefits, even though such program are run by the partnership between public and private organization under the name of welfare, development and empowerment. Still the results are not impressive. Empirical insights and available studies and reports argued that still the Dalit women are struggling for their survival and livelihood. In the context of this, the present study will reflect upon the livelihood pattern of the Dalit women, who are the members of SHGs from the last ten years.

### **Livelihood Sources of the Families**

The following table reflects on the livelihood pattern of these families which revealed the facts that mostly these families are landless, near landless and marginal farmers. In the most of the cases, they got land under the land ceiling act of the State government schemes. Even today they are struggling to get surplus land and regularize their patta on the name. As it already mentioned in the preceding discussion that all these families are from the poverty and below poverty line. BPL and Below poverty line categories comprise those families which have not sufficient livelihood sources to meet their practical needs. Livelihood pattern of these families are based on the agriculture, labour and collection of NTFP. Labour, agriculture and small enterprises are the major sources of livelihood pattern of these families. But, only 15.50 % families have land and the size of their patta is not sufficient to meet their needs. The nature of land is not also irrigated and fertile. Land is very important sources of income and livelihood source of the families in the India. Ownership of land is determined the social and economical status of families and their members in the villages. Land is the permanent source of the families from generation to generations. But, the distribution of land is not equal. Mostly the

communities like Dalit and tribes are landless and near landless families. They work as labourers in the villages on wages in agriculture. If the labour is not available in the villages, they migrate to the other villages and the urban places. Almost 45.50% families are exclusively depended upon the labourers. 17.40% families have less land, therefore, they engaged in the both types of activities agriculture as well as labourers. Out of these 155 families, there are only three family members having government jobs and another three families are involved in the business. After joining in the micro-fiancé, 10.30 % families have started income generating activities. 5.20% families started income generating activities related to the agriculture. They started to take land on lease basis, and started to increase their agricultural income with support of purchasing buffaloes, sheep and cows etc.

**Table No.1: Livelihood Sources of the Family**

Sr. No.	Livelihood Sources of The families	Frequency	Percent
1	Agriculture	24	15.5
2	Labour	71	45.8
3	jobs	3	1.9
4	Business	3	1.9
5	Entrepreneurships	16	10.3
6	Agri + Entrep	8	5.2
7	Agri + Labour	27	17.4
8	Others	3	1.9
	Total	155	100

### **Ownership of Animals**

Animal husbandry is also occupation but due to the lack of own land for providing grass and grazing for the cattle, it is very difficult to keep cattle for the landless people. It is supportive and suitable occupation for the cultivators those

have their own lands. Therefore, the poor people kept very less animals with them to support to their livelihood systems. Most of them kept goats, because cows and buffaloes are very costly. Again they required more grass and feeding. But, now we can find some poor families have possessed some cows and buffaloes because of the micro-finance. But, during the summer they faced many problems of fodder and water to feed them, in the most of the cases, they sold them in low prices and tolerant a loss. Micro-finance provided tiny amount to the Dalit families, due to the lack of professional training, and market knowledge, mostly, SHGs women prefer to invest in the traditional occupation like animal husbandry and agriculture and related to them like milk and vegetable selling etc. More than 40% SHGs women have invested micro-finance in the purchasing animals. The following table clearly shows that out of 155 families, 58.70 % families have not kept animals. Other has possessed animals, but there is also variation in terms of their ownership pattern of the animals. Only 5.2 percent families have possessed bullock. They are being used in the process of land cultivation. 13 families have kept cows. 10 families have possessed buffaloes. 28 families have kept goats. And another 5 families have possessed others types of animals like pigs, hen, etc.

Table No.2 : Ownerships pattern of animals

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Types of animals</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	No Animals	91	58.7
2	Bullock	8	5.2
3	Cows	13	8.4
4	Buffaloes	10	6.5
5	Goats	28	18.1
6	Others	05	---
7	Total	155	100

## Family Income

Family played very important role in the life of its members. It provided socio-economical support to its members. If the family is economically sound, the member of the same family has not struggled financially lot. Because, Family supported to him/her in financial crisis also. But in the case of Dalit families, member couldn't get financially support of their families due to the lack of resources and landlessness. Credit is identified as essential for the poor. Formal credit institutions were not creditable to the them. Therefore, poor were depended upon the informal credit which was provided by money lenders and village *Sahukars* to them on high interest rate. Therefore, they were bound to their power and exploitation. Overall observation and collected data from the field revealed the facts that there is no gross root changes in the family incomes after joining in the SHGs. Study found many reasons that women are not allowed investing money in the income generating activities. They are forced to hand over the money in the hands of the head of family. Another reason is that loan amount is used mostly on the non-income generating activities. And another important reason was that loan amount was so tiny, which was not sufficient for investment. Therefore, micro-credit has not helped to add and increase the annual income of the families.

The following table reflects on the annual income of the SHG member and their families. However, the present study shows the present income of the SHGs. The table shows the variation in terms of income pattern of the families. 20.60 percent families had income up to 60,000 to 70000 rupees. Only 13.50 percent families have income above 1, 00000 rupees. 12.90 percent families have income up to 70000 to 80000 rupees. Only one family has income up to 10000 to 20000 rupees. 1.90 percent families have income up to 20000 to 30000 rupees. 4.50 percent families have income up to 30000 to 40000

rupees. 18 families have income during 40000 to 50000 rupees. Overall observation indicates that out of 155 families, 21 families have income above 1, 00000 rupees. 18 families have income up to 50000 rupees. Eleven families have annual income less than 50000. Thus, above analysis shows that there is hardly any effect on the family income. Micro- finance has failed to increase family income of the SHGs women. Because most of the cases, women spend money on the apart of the income generating activities. They spend on the consumption, festivals, health, cloths, education and purchasing gadgets at the home.

Table No.3 Family Income

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Family Income</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	10000-20000	1	.60
2	20000-30000	3	1.9
3	30000-40000	7	4.5
4	40000-50000	18	11.6
5	50000-60000	32	20.6
6	60000-70000	30	19.4
7	70000-80000	20	12.9
8	80000-90000	15	9.7
9	90000-100000	8	5.2
	Above 100000	21	13.5
	Total	155	100

The preceding discussion indicates that after joining in the micro- finance and remained member as ten years to be continued has not brought any changes in the socio-economical condition of the Dalit women. Women are deprived, marginalized and excluded groups of the society. Further, Dalit women are the more oppressed groups in the society. Women are facing problems in their day to day life. All of them are not educated; they are not getting sufficient food, health facilities, physical and social security. These are their real problems. They joined in the micro-finance with hope and desire that this

scheme will support to their livelihood systems by providing permanent and sustainable source.

In the case of SCP, NGOs are following four stages formulas in the implementation of micro-credit policy. NGOs are financially supported by the central government. They are provided 10,000/- rupees to formulate one self -help group (minimum 10 to 20 women). The aid is received through four instalments after every six months. Each instalment covers Rs: 2500/- rupees. During the first six months, NGOs identified the clients according to the guidelines of the donor agencies. They visited to the clients and meet their family members especially, head of the family. Family is based on the patriarchal ideology. Even though there is general notion among the people that Dalit women are free as compared to the women of the higher castes, it is true in the context of the public places in which women have to come as wage labourers to meet the needs of the family, but in reality, they are not free at their home. They are also controlled their sexuality, mobility, power by their men in the internal patriarchy. They don't have voice and power in their families as well in the communities. They are called in the public places and market with the consent of their male and head of the families. During the first six months, NGOs send their field staffs in the field for motivation, guidance and help to the SHGs for formulation and create joint liability among the groups. They also motivated for saving and opening bank accounts. In the next stage of SHGs, Nurturing stage, they motivated for income generating activities, use of loan, and repayment of interest and loan amount in time. In the third stage (performing stage), NGOs motivated and guided women for income generating activities. They provided entrepreneurships development training. They also linked them with different agencies. On the fourth stage (storming stage), women are guided to participate in the social and developmental programs. They are also motivated to raise issues against violence, atrocities, oppression and their rights.

However, NGOs are following this four stage formulas and claiming that women are now in the storming stage at the process of empowerment. But in the reality, women are not overcome and internalize one their own power. Each and every stage, they are called to join in the process. We come to across many interesting finding related to women's participation in the various activities. Even joining in the SHGs is also not individual choice they are called by their family members and NGOs staff members. NGOs don't identify their need, interest and choices, just they completed their target.

Study come out with the findings such as, the general background of members indicates that all of them are below poverty line (BPL). In social aspects, they lack resources based entitlements like land titles, property rights, credit etc. They are commonly engaged in wage labours in various informal sectors like agricultural, construction of roads, collection of forest product, stone cutting etc. Massive environment degradation, decimation of surrounding forest, low availability of forest based economic activities, et are some of the factors contributes to their low income. This leads frequent migration of their men folk to Nagpur, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Gujarat, etc for livelihood.

Micro- finance is adopted as tool for poverty alleviation and women empowerment, implementing agencies (NGOs) with collaboration of Banks, Government officers were provided guidance, training, services related to the different types of activities, like formulation of SHGs, writing records, arranging meetings, celebrating social-cultural ceremonies, participating in democratic process, election of the executive body members of SHGs, village gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samiti, Gilla Parichad, participated in developmental programs and social movements. They also motivated them to join in the SHGs federations, stalls and marketing.

In the most of the cases, NGOs workers, field investigators, Sayogini, supervisors, project officers, are not gender sensitized. They don't have conceptual understanding. Study found that NGOs are motivating to the women to open beauty parlours. They are also motivating to organize *Haladikunmkunm*, *Makar Sankaratar* which indirectly reinforcing patriarchal ideology on the women. NGOs have undertaken many programs at one time. They are bound to many responsibilities and have target to complete them in time, in case of micro-credit programs, one NGOs staff members, Say " Now, we have stopped to visit the SHGs. We have completed our target. Now we are working on other issues. In the real sense, even if these NGOs are arguing that they are philanthropic and charitable in nature, but they are guided by the donor and aid agencies. They are bound to the funding agencies. They don't apply their own vision, ideology and practices. Study also found that NGOs have their own internal problems. They don't have educated, skilled, trained and permanent staff. NGOs staff members are getting very less salary. Sayogini are getting only three thousands per month. Therefore, in the most of the cases, Sayoginis and field workers were collected some charges to the SHGs women in terms of providing services and guidance such as helping in the writing records, accounts, helping in opening accounts and receiving loan from the banks. They also took charges in the form of commission for getting subsidies from the DRDA.

In the most of the cases, Sayogini left jobs due to the family problems and low salary. NGOs couldn't find other field workers in time. Due course of time, another NGOs visited to the same groups and linked with them and provide them loan on the joint liability. Among the different types of micro-credit NGOs, they are competing each other at the field levels. Basix, Spandana, L&T, Garmin Cutta etc. These organizations are also collaborating with the local NGOs. They are providing funds, and

technical support to target SHGs groups and their federation for loan. Due to this collaboration, they easily identified the available groups based on the ideology of saving, good recovery rate and joint responsibility of the repayment.

## **Conclusion**

Study concludes with major findings and some observation in the context of livelihood pattern of the Dalit women and their empowerment. Local NGOs are emerging as agent of social reformers and claiming micro-credit policy is the tool of poverty alleviation and women empowerment, but these arguments are far away from the realities. Micro-credit policy has been failed to bring out changes in the livelihood pattern of Dalit women and their empowerment. However, micro-credit policy is providing small amount as loan and subsidy to the self help groups on the joint liability. Provided amount is so small, which is not sufficient to start any income generating activities independently. Under the income generating activities, they have started to make pickle, papad, selling milk and vegetables etc. In the economical sense these activities are not required more capital but they required markets and customers. NGOs and Governmental agencies available places like stalls in melawas at the regional, district and taluka levels. But in such places women revealed the bitter and failure experiences in the stall markets and melas. They don't attract customer to purchase their products at the regional and district levels. Because, there is competition among the National and multi-national companies and their products in the markets. At the village level, they don't have customer because of their caste background and social stigma. Thus Dalit women are in trapped in the clutches of social hierarchy. Even group activities are not successful because of the lack of individual freedom, marketing skills, sufficient capital, raw materials and guarantee of the sale. Mostly, they spent money on the consumption heads such as food, cloths,

festivals, marriages, health and education. NGOs are motivated women to organize movements against alcohols, atrocities, land rights, water etc. They are also motivated and trained to join in the Panchayt Raj Institution and developmental programs on one sides, and on the contrary, they organized women to celebrate *haladi-kunkum*, *Makar Sankarat* etc. Thus, in the context of empowerment, NGOs thought that brining women into the public places will change their socio-economical status in the families and communities. But, directly and indirectly NGO also failed to bring out structural changes in the livelihood pattern through productive activities. Even they also failed to bring out changes in the patriarchal ideology also. NGOs faced many problems at their own levels. The nature of their problems is external as well as internal. Externally, they don't have their own finance, technical support, infrastructure and internal level; they don't have permanent, skilled and trained staffs. They don't have their own vision, ideology, and programs. They are depended upon the aid and funding agencies. Thus, NGOs-led micro-credit program also failed to generate capital and provide sustainable source to the Dalit families.

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## **Multi-Sectoral District Development Programme: A Flagship Programme for Addressing the 'Development-Deficit' in Minority Concentration Districts in Rural India**

*Dr. Pardeep Kumar*

### **Summary**

As per the Constitution of India, which is the supreme law of the land, India is a sovereign socialist, secular, democratic republic. Liberty, equality and fraternity are the hallmarks of our democracy which is enshrined in the preamble of the Constitution. The fundamental rights clearly envisaged the right to equality before law and prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and equality of opportunity in jobs. Though our country consists of people belonging to different castes, communities, races, religions, languages and cultures, our strength lies in unity in diversity. The welfare, safety, security and development of minorities are among the Government's priorities. Based on this principle, the present United Progressive Alliance (UPA) launched a very ambitious flagship programme called Multi-sectoral District Development Programme (MsDP) for the welfare of minority communities. It is a special area development programme launched during 2008-09 in 90 Minority Concentration Districts (MCDs) to improve the socio-economic parameters of basic amenities for improving the quality of life of the people and reducing imbalances in MCDs during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period with a plan allocation of Rs. 2750 crore. Identified 'development deficits' would be made up through a district specific plan for provision of better infrastructure for school and secondary education, sanitation, pucca housing, drinking water and electricity supply, besides beneficiary oriented schemes for creating income generating activities. Absolutely critical infrastructure linkages like connecting roads, basic health infrastructure, ICDS centres, skill development and marketing

facilities required for improving living conditions and income generating activities and catalyzing the growth process would also be eligible for inclusion in the plan. The total amount released to the States under the programme is Rs. 1243.87 crore and expenditure reported by the States/ UTs is Rs. 253.27 crore which is 20.36 per cent of the releases made and under the programme, district plans of 80 districts have been approved, of which 15 MCD plans have been fully approved and 65 district plans have been partially approved till March, 2010.

### **Introduction**

India is a sovereign socialist, secular, democratic republic. Liberty, equality and fraternity are the hallmarks of our democracy which is enshrined in the preamble of the Indian Constitution. The fundamental rights clearly envisaged the right to equality before law and prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and equality of opportunity in jobs. Though our country consists of people belonging to different castes, communities, races, religions, languages and cultures, our strength lies in unity in diversity. The welfare, safety, security and development of minorities are among the Government's priorities.

India is a welfare State committed to the welfare and development of its people in general and of vulnerable sections in particular. Preamble, Directive Principles of State Policy, fundamental Rights and specific sections, namely article 38, 39 and 46 in the Constitution of India stand testimony to its people. As a matter of strategy the Government of India has resorted to planned development for minimizing inequality in income, status and opportunities for its people. This strategy is directed to secure distributive justice and utilization of economic resources to subserve common good. Programmes are directed to promote educational and economic interests of weaker sections in general and those of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled

Tribes, backward Classes and Minorities, in particular to avoid injustice and exploitation. Development planning is introduced to improve the quality of life of the people.

The Indian Constitution is clear in its objective to promote equality amongst citizens and assigns responsibility to the State to preserve, protect and assure the rights of minorities in matters of language, religion and culture. This is enshrined in the well known doctrine of 'unity in diversity' found within the Constitution. All developed countries and most developing ones give appropriate emphasis to looking after the interest of minorities. Thus, in any country, the faith and confidence of the minorities and the functioning of the State in an impartial manner is an acid test of its being a just state.

Development is essentially a process of change initiated with an objective of improving the quality of life. For certain sections of society, who are considered as weaker sections, the process of change would aim at bringing them into the mainstream of socio-economic system. Left to itself the process of change even if initiated by an external stimulus, would not be sustainable for these sections. Ideally, development processes should remove or reduce economic and social obstacles to cooperation and mutual respect among all groups in the country. If development processes are misdirected, they may unfortunately have the opposite effect. It is this aspect which is important and needs to be addressed so as to give confidence to minorities. The Sachar Committee in its comprehensive report on 'Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India' observed that Muslims have been left behind the growth and development process. It inter-alia recommended that a Multi-sectoral Development Programme to provide basic amenities, and improve opportunities for employment, to be launched in selected backward minority concentration districts.

### **Multi-Sectoral Development Programme (MsDP):**

A special area development programme known as the Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) in 90 Minority Concentration Districts (MCDs) is being implemented from 2008-09. In order to ensure that the benefits of schemes and programmes of government reach the relatively disadvantaged segments of society, 90 minority concentration districts were identified on the basis of minority population and backwardness parameters in May, 2007. The process of identification of minority concentration districts has been carried out as follows:-

- (a) Districts with a 'substantial minority population' of at least 25% of the total population were identified in 29 States/UTs.
- (b) Districts having a large absolute minority population exceeding 5 lakhs and the percentage of minority population exceeding 20% but less than 25% were identified in 29 States/UTs.
- (c) In the six States/UTs, where a minority community is in majority, districts having 15% of minority population, other than that of the minority community in majority in that State/UT were identified.

The focus of the programme is on rural and semi-urban areas of the identified 90 minority concentration districts. A Task Force has recommended that the towns falling in the minority concentration districts, that are part of the 338 towns, should be developed as per the suggestions of the Task Force and may be excluded from the multi-sectoral development plan being made for such districts. There are 77 such towns in the identified districts. To enable focused attention of government programmes and schemes on these districts, the following has been advised to the Central Ministries/Departments to prepare

their plans in a manner that these districts get the required attention and resources:-

- (i) The schemes and programmes for poverty alleviation, education, health and other welfare schemes of government may be focused in these districts.
- (ii) Existing schemes for infrastructure development, such as rural electrification, road connectivity (PMGSY) etc. may be taken up in these districts on a priority basis.
- (iii) The provision for basic amenities such as pucca housing, safe drinking water supply, water closet toilets and electricity for each household may be made.
- (iv) Schemes included in the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities may be implemented in these districts vigorously targeting each minority household and village.
- (v) In the districts with low socio-economic conditions under sub-category 'B 1', special focus should be on schemes of poverty alleviation, employment generation, literacy etc.
- (vi) In the districts with low basic amenities, under sub-category 'B 2', the primary focus should be on schemes for infrastructure development and basic amenities.
- (vii) In category 'A' districts, the focus has to be on both types of schemes.
- (viii) In the minority concentration districts in the States of Jammu and Kashmir, Meghalaya and Mizoram, where a minority community is in majority, the schemes and programmes should be focused on the other minorities.

The programme aims at improving the socio-economic parameters of basic amenities for improving the quality of life of

the people and reducing imbalances in the MCDs during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period. Identified 'development deficits' would be made up through a district specific plan for provision of better infrastructure for school and secondary education, sanitation, pucca housing, drinking water and electricity supply, besides beneficiary oriented schemes for creating income generating activities. Absolutely critical infrastructure linkages like connecting roads, basic health infrastructure, ICDS centres, skill development and marketing facilities required for improving living conditions and income generating activities and catalyzing the growth process would also be eligible for inclusion in the plan.

**Implementation:** It is proposed to implement the MsD plan for MCDs with the objective of completing them during the Eleventh Plan period. The Department in the State/UT dealing with minority affairs/welfare shall monitor preparation of the multi- sectoral development plans for the districts and DPRs by the line departments/agencies assigned projects. It shall also forward projects and clarifications made by the line departments/agencies, ensure proper implementation of the sanctioned projects, monitor each individual project, report the progress of implementation of projects and the district plan to the State Level Committee for implementation of the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities and the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The programme will be implemented by the Panchayati raj institutions/line departments/agencies/Scheduled Area councils in accordance with the implementation mechanism in practice in the State/ UT.

## **Progress under Multi-Sectoral Development Programme (MsDP)**

In 2009-10, 98 district plans, both new and revised, were considered and approved in Empowered Committee meetings. Rs.973.02 crore was released in 2009-10. The remaining amount of about Rs.10 crore could not be released due to non-receipt of proposals from NCT of Delhi and UT of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Till date, 31 meetings of ECs have been held. District plans are approved for Rs.3780 crore. So far, 63% (Rs.2374.94 crore) of Rs.3780 crore has been approved. It should be possible for the Ministry approve 37% (Rs.1405 crore) by end of December, 2010.

In the Annual Conference of State Secretaries held on 14th May, Secretaries assured that most of revised plans would be submitted by June and all remaining by July, 2010. court case regarding the district plan for Kokrajhar has been vacated and will now be submitted soon. He assured that North Cachar Hills The Assam State Secretary stated that the district plan would also be submitted soon. Arunachal Pradesh has started the process of preparing plans and would be submitting by June. The districts are - East Kameng, Lower Subansiri, Changlang, Tirap, Tawang, West Kameng and Papum Pare.

Budget provision for MsDP is Rs.1400 crore for 2010-11. It should also be possible to release upto Rs.1210 crore under MsDP without much difficulties i.e. Rs.50 crore for projects taken up in 2008-09 as second instalment; Rs.600 crore for 2nd instalment of projects taken up in 2009-10; Rs.60 crore for fresh district plans and Rs.500 crore for revised districts plans. The in-principle approved cases total to Rs.413.07 crore and, of this, it should be possible to release about Rs.200 crore. 9 Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) have been appraised and cleared by the line Ministry concerned. Having DPRs appraised by line

departments is envisaged in the scheme as MOMA has no domain expertise to appraise DPRs.

There was initially delay in transfer of funds from State to district as State Governments were not able to provide funds in their budgets. This was mainly due to appropriate budget heads and provisions not provided in the State budget for MsDP. The pace of transfer of funds has since improved. Almost all projects sanctioned under MsDP involves construction work. It takes roughly 6 months for implementation of smaller projects like construction of houses under IAY, anganwadi centres, additional class rooms and installation of hand pumps. Other projects like construction of Community Health Centre, Primary Health Centres, ITIs, school buildings, hostels, drinking water supply, etc. take about a year.

**Housing Sector:** Under housing sector, 219,208 IAY houses have been sanctioned for eligible beneficiaries in minority concentration districts. 27.29 per cent of the total amount approved, is devoted to this sector. The IAY hoses are sanctioned based on the available BPL waiting list of the districts.

**Health and Nutrition:** Better health and nutrition facilities needs be provided for the minorities. To ensure better access and availability to health and nutrition, 2,154 health centers (Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres, Sub-centres, Labour Rooms, Female wards etc.) and 23500 Anganwadi Centres have been sanctioned under the programme.

**Education Sector:** First and foremost is the spread of literacy and modern education among the minority communities including Muslims. However, majority of the Muslim community needs exposure to modern education as a mechanism of social integration with socio-religious groups (SRCs). Under the programme to enhance the educational opportunities among minorities, 6854 additional class rooms, 774 school buildings, 8

boys and girls hostels have been sanctioned in minority concentration districts.

**Skill Development Sector:** Because of the lack of education, most Muslim working men and women are found in self-employment categories. They have either petty businesses or they work as itinerant peddlers, as artisans (lock- umbrella. repairers), spinners, weavers, fruit-sellers, tailors, masons and construction supervisors, chicken-mutton shopkeepers or as self- trained petty technicians, drivers, cleaners, garage-workers, or simply as daily wagers. It is these self- employed groups who are most vulnerable in the times of economics crisis, industrial recession, droughts, communal riots, and the like. Hence, some economic safeguards need to be provided to them and opening of Polytechnics and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in minority concentration areas is one of them. Therefore, under the programme 8 ITIs have been approved and 47 ITIs have been approved in-principle for these districts. Besides, 8 Polytechnics have been approved in-principle for these districts.

**Drinking Water:** To improve availability of safe drinking water facilities for the minorities, 26690 numbers of units of hand pumps, tube well, drinking water sippy etc. have been sanctioned for minority concentration districts.

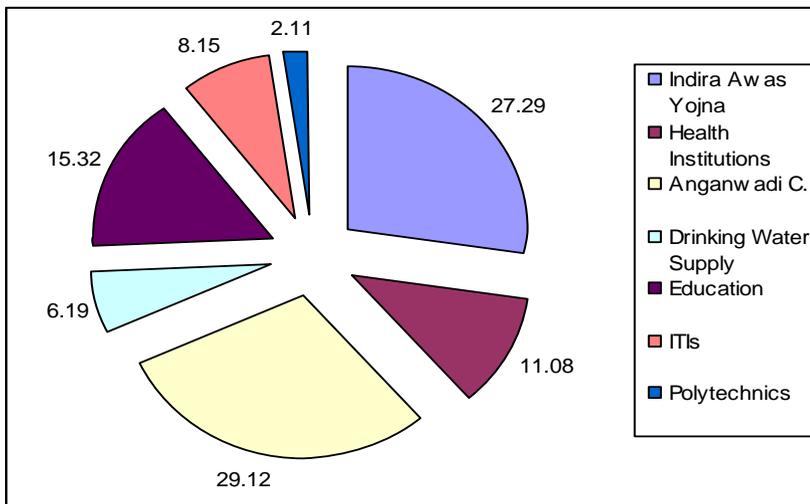
The sector wise details of funds under the programme are given in the table below:

**Table 1: Sector-wise Funds Approved under MsDP**

Scheme	No. of units approved	Amount approved (in crore rupees)	Percentage of total amount approved
Housing (Indira Awas Yojna)	2,19,208	639.59	27.29
Health & Nutrition Health	2,154	259.63	11.08
Anganwadi Centres	23,500	684.21	29.19
Drinking Water Supply	22,787	145.18	6.19

Education: Additional Class Rooms School Buildings	6,854		
Construction of Hostels (In- Principle)	774 8 (62)	359.15	15.32
Construction/ gradation of ITI (In- Principle)	Up 8 (47)	218.14	9.31
Construction / Up gradation of Polytechnic (In- Principle)	Up (8)		
Others [solar lanterns] (In- Principal)	16,414 (5,815)	34.84	1.62

Source: [www.minorityaffairs.gov.in](http://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in)



**Monitoring & Evaluation:** Under the programme, the State Government/UT administration shall report the progress in

respect of each project at the end of the quarter. The project-wise progress of implementation shall be reported on quarterly basis in the proforma (QPR) prescribed for this purpose and on-line when the IT enabled systems are in place. Any additional information may be furnished along with the format. Such hard copy of the QPRs should reach the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Minority Affairs within 15 days of the end of the quarter under report.

To further strengthen monitoring, the Ministry of Minority Affairs shall nominate one representative from the Ministry to the quarterly review meetings at the State level.

State will carry out project inspection periodically. The quarterly review report of the State would contain a separate and distinct section on the findings of the project inspection. I.T. enabled monitoring programme shall be set up in the State/ UT and districts for reporting the progress of implementation of the plan.

State shall nominate a 'nodal officer' for each project of the line department concerned who would be responsible for project implementation and monitoring at departmental level. Besides, software for monitoring the implementation of MsDP in MCDs including online transfer of progress reports by States has been developed. IT Cells have been set up in the districts, directorate and State departments for this purpose.

Besides, State and District level committees have been constituted under Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for welfare of minorities as per the guidelines. The mandate of these committees is to monitor all the programmes meant for welfare of minorities including MsDP.

## **Conclusion:**

Since its inception i.e. 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2006, the Ministry of Minority Affairs is playing a pivotal role in furthering the welfare of minorities through overall planning, coordination, evaluation and review of regulatory framework and development programmes towards inclusive growth agenda of the Government. The components of inclusive growth such as poverty reduction, increase in quality & quantity of employment, social sector development, reduction in regional disparity etc. are being addressed through various programmes including MsDP.

## **The Status of Dalit Women in India: Some Reflections** **Vijender Singh Beniwal**

*Kapil Sikka*  
*Md Irfan*

Even after over six decades of Indian independence, the condition of SCs/STs in general and Dalit women in particular have not improved much. They not only remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy but also face multiple challenges in accessing their rights. The Dalit community constitutes about 250 million people and almost half of them are women. Dalits are the most marginalized caste group in the hierarchy of Indian society (Mittal, 2010) and highly prone to incidents of violence against them, ranging from verbal abuse to physical assault, sexual harassment, rape and even murder. The studies on Dalit women in India show that these women are subordinated, in terms of power relations, to men as well as their communities in a patriarchal society. Dalit women are placed at the absolute bottom of the social hierarchy as they face systemic and structural discrimination threefold: as Dalits, as poor, and as women. The vast majority of Dalit women are poor, landless wage labourers and lack access to basic resources. They are subjugated by patriarchal structures, both in the general community and within their own family. This paper attempts to analyze the status of Dalit women in India in era of globalization. This study also uncovers main challenges being faced by Dalit women in daily life. The study reveals that weak economic conditions, dependence on the resources of dominant castes, low literacy levels and patriarchal norms and religious practice among others are the main factors which accounted for the vulnerable status of Dalit women.

**Key words:** Dalit, India, Women, Social exclusion.

## **Introduction**

Caste-based discrimination remains a wide-spread practice across the globe, with an estimated 260 million people considered to be 'outcastes' (Dalits) worldwide. This deep-rooted discrimination causes marginalisation, social and economic exclusion, severely poor work conditions, and limited access to basic services such as water, sanitation and employment (Independent, 2013). In many countries, including India, caste systems divide people into many social groups (castes) where their rights are determined by birth and are fixed. Unequal and hierarchical, those at the top enjoy comfortable social positions, while those at the bottom struggle without any rights. This unjust system operates on principles of purity and pollution, influenced by the notion that dalits are impure. In India, 'untouchables' as they are formerly known, have chosen to be known as dalits, meaning 'broken people'. Officially named 'scheduled castes (SCs)', they constitute beyond 16 per cent of India's population.

Dalit women and girls are especially vulnerable, experiencing not only the discrimination of caste, but also of class and gender – 'triple discrimination'– leaving them in a vicious cycle of marginalisation and exploitation. National crime statistics indicate an average of over 1,000 rape cases against Dalit women are reported annually, the highest of any social group. And although such discrimination has been outlawed in India since 1955 – consequently leading to the introduction of the Prevention of Atrocities Against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (STs) Act 1989, as well as safeguards in education, public employment and legislature within the Indian Constitution – unfortunately most of this legislation is poorly implemented and the country's dalits continue to suffer discrimination and exclusion. Additional sub-caste

discrimination further divides lower castes into numerous sub-castes, making the caste system rather complex.

This paper attempts to analyze the status of Dalit women in India in era of globalization. This study also uncovers main challenges being faced by Dalit women in daily life. The paper has been divided into three parts. First part tables the present scenario of the status of Dalit women in India. The main challenges faced by Dalit women are discussed in the second part. The final part contains concluding remarks.

### **The Status of Dalit Women in India – The Present Scenario**

Numerous factors such as lack of political participation, weak economic conditions, dependence on the resources of dominant castes, low literacy level and weak health among others which engender low and vulnerable status of Dalit women. These are as following:-

#### **Economic Status**

Almost 51% of Dalit women in rural areas and 56% in urban locations live below the poverty line. Since most Dalit women earn a living through daily wage employment, they are also more frequently unemployed than the general population. Further, given their low social status and stigma of being 'untouchable', there are fewer employment options available to them. Majority Dalit women are landless labourers. They come into contact with landlords and enforcement agencies more often than upper caste women, thereby making them more susceptible to abuse. There are frequent cases where landlords use sexual abuse and other forms of violence and humiliation against Dalit women as tools to inflict 'lessons' and crush dissent and labour movements of Dalit communities (Human Rights Watch, 2007). The National Commission for Women (NCW) has commented, 'In the commission of offences against SC women, the offenders try to establish their authority and humiliate the

community by subjecting their women to indecent and inhuman treatment, including sexual assault, parading naked, using filthy language, etc.' (NCW, 1996, p. 33). Wage discrimination against Dalits is also a rampant problem in India and this is acute when it comes to Dalit women. According to Shah *et al.* (2006) caste discrimination compels most uneducated and illiterate Dalit women into degrading work, such as manual scavenging and manually cleaning dry latrines (Zaidi, 2006).

### **Political Status**

It has been found in several studies that the political participation of Dalit women as a large minority community in India remains disproportionately low. The current Lok Sabha has only 12 Dalit women MPs, a mere 2.2% of Parliamentarians.<sup>6</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) reports that Dalit candidates, especially women, are very often forcibly prevented from standing for elections. And if they get elected, they are forced to resign from village councils or other elected bodies. Many Dalits are not allowed to exercise their mandate or are otherwise denied the right to vote; their names are not included in electoral rolls. CERD further reported that the involvement of Dalit women in politics in local governance institutions is noticeably low and full of challenges (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Notwithstanding successfully elected to local governments studies show that only very few Dalit women were able to freely and independently exercise their right to political participation against tremendous odds. Most women were made to act as proxies for dominant caste men. Most elected Dalit women feel they are treated differently from other local government representatives primarily due to being female and Dalit. Many times Dalit women are told they are not even allowed to sit on a chair, but must take their place on the floor.

## **Educational Status**

Lack of education is another important problem. Presently around half of urban Dalit women and two-third of rural Dalit women are illiterate in India. In 2001, the literacy rate among Dalit rural females (aged 15 and above) was 25 percent, compared with 41 percent for non-dalit women. The literacy rate among Dalit women in urban areas was 48 percent, compared with 70 per cent for non-dalit women. The dropout rate among Dalit women is also relatively high at every stage of education. The high dependence on casual labour, with relatively low earnings coupled with inadequate exposure to education, among Dalit women induced a high degree of deprivation and poverty among them. (Thorat, 2008)

## **Health Status**

The high degree of deprivation among Dalit women is reflected in other indicators of wellbeing - under-nutrition and health. According to Ministry of Health, about 56 per cent of Dalit women respectively suffered from anaemia. In 2004-2005, 23.2 percent of Dalit children under-four years of age suffered from malnutrition (based on weight-for-age). Only 27 percent of Dalit women give institutional deliveries in India. Similarly, infant mortality and maternal mortality rate are very high among Dalit women due to lack of access to basic health amenities.

## **Main Challenges for Dalit Women in India**

Caste-affected Dalit women face myriad serious challenges such as cultural and religious prejudices, lack of access to resources, lack of political participation and empowerment, violence against them and so on. Some of these are as following:-

## **Cultural and religious**

The very fact of being a Dalit signifies a subordinate position vis-a-vis the rest of Hindu society, and exclusion from cultural activities is a clear way of demonstrating this. Consequently, Dalits are routinely prevented from taking part in religious and cultural rituals and festivals, with clashes ensuing if they choose to disobey the prohibitions. There are very strict prohibitions on marriage and other social interactions between Dalits and non-Dalits. Extra-judicially punishment such as public lynching, murder, rape, beatings and other sanctions are inflicted against the couple and their relatives for the violation of social norms and practices. For instance, in 2010 Mirchpur (Haryana) witnessed a ghastly scene of inhumanity and caste prejudice in form of the burning of Dalit houses by a mob belonging to upper (caste) community from the same village.

## **Political Participation and Empowerment**

Dalit women are politically marginalised, but rural Dalit women are given even less of a voice in the decision making process. In India, there is a quota for Dalits women to have seats in the local panchayat, but the role Dalit women play is consistently subordinated to their male counterparts. Dalit women who attempt to utilise their power in the panchayat are met with male and dominant caste backlash, pressure and sometimes violence. Many times Dalit women are told they are not even allowed to sit on a chair, but must take their place on the floor. In the majority of instances a Dalit woman has no ability to exercise her voice in the panchayat because her husband represents her and makes the decisions while she is forced to stay at home until he can usurp the panchayat seat for himself.

### **Limited access to key resources**

Poverty in India has been 'feminised' as well as 'dalitised'. It has been argued that atrocities pertaining to civic facilities are frequently related to lack of essential facilities or limited access to facilities in Dalit localities. The unavailability of basic facilities can be seen in most Dalit hamlets. According to a report published by Human Rights Watch (2007), only 9.84% of households belonging to a Scheduled Caste have access to sanitation and 20% lack a safe source of drinking water. One of the reasons is that residential segregation of the Dalit community results in absence of various facilities available in other sections of the habitation. Residential segregation of Dalits is prevalent in the project villages. Besides segregation of residential locations, the same can also be seen in schools, in access to public services and in access to services operated by private players.

According to the UN special report on the right to education, teachers have been known to declare Dalit pupils 'cannot learn unless they are beaten' (Human Rights Watch, 2007). The effect of such abuse is borne out by the low literacy and high dropout rates for Dalits. Upper caste hostility toward Dalit education is linked to the perception that Dalits are either incapable of being educated or, if educated, will pose a threat to village hierarchies and power relations.

Dalit girls face far more problems in accessing formal educational facilities, as there are insufficient government schools available at the local level. Lack of access to health facilities emerged as another serious issue. Caste based occupations (such as scavenging) that many Dalit women are made to perform routinely exposes them to serious and sometimes fatal health hazards. In addition, the Dalit community in general and Dalit women in particular are frequently refused

admission to hospitals and denied access to health care and treatment (Shah et al., 2006).

### **Violence against Dalit Women**

Dalits are the most marginalized caste group in the hierarchy of Indian society (Mittal, 2010) and highly prone to incidents of violence against them, ranging from verbal abuse to physical assault, sexual harassment, rape and even murder. In 2007, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) delivered its concluding observations regarding India's compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). The Committee's report found that 'de facto segregation of Dalits persists' and highlighted systematic abuse against Dalits including torture and extrajudicial killings, and an 'alarming' extent of sexual violence against Dalit women. The concluding observation of the committee confirms that India has failed to properly protect Dalits and tribal communities (Human Right Watch, 2007).

The table 1 below shows that regrettably there has been a continuous rise in registered cases. One of the many reasons for the upswing in crimes against Dalits has been attributed to the increase in the voices raised by Dalits in the last few years. Invariably violence is used as a tool to suppress and teach Dalits a lesson for the future. Attempts by Dalits to assert themselves in the late 1990s, thus, were met by violent repression from backward castes anxious to defend their status and dominance (Gorringe: 2013).

### **Conclusion**

The status of Dalit women in particular and Dalit community in general is very low and vulnerable. Atrocities and violence against Dalit women has become a regular feature of Indian society. The Dalit society is fragmented and not much unity

persists among the marginalized. Because of 'vote politics', the politicians are not ready to bear the cost of social reform to tackle the issue of Dalit women. For instance, in Mirchpur violence, no politician(s) of high standing has spoken on this issue in parliament. The need of the hour is to immediately implement land reform so that agrarian relation can be changed in the favor of marginalized sections of the society. The road towards a casteless and egalitarian society will be long and tortuous. The divisions between Dalits and non-dalit [caste Hindus] will prove hardest of all to bridge. All- politicians, authorities and community are partly culpable for caste polarisation and any ensuing violence. Without misgivings many aspects of caste and untouchability continue to be embedded in the make-up of Indian society. To get rid of this dirty blot on Indian society we have to confront and address the issues of institutionalized casteism in India.

**Table I: Crime Against the Dalit Community in India (2001-2012)**

Crime	Year											
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Murder	763	739	581	654	669	673	674	622	629	572	673	651
Rape	1316	1331	1089	1157	1172	1217	1349	1453	1350	1350	1557	1576
Kidnapping & Abduction	400	319	232	253	258	280	332	477	511	510	616	490
Dacoity	41	29	24	26	26	30	23	50	42	41	36	27
Robbery	133	105	70	72	80	90	86	81	67	75	54	40
Arson	354	322	204	211	210	226	238	224	195	150	169	214
Hurt	4547	4491	3969	3824	3847	3760	3814	4134	4322	4344	4247	3855
Protection of civil rights acts	633	1018	634	364	291	405	206	279	168	143	67	62
SC/ST (POA) Act	13113	10770	8048	8891	8497	8581	9819	11465	11037	10419	11342	12576
Others	12201	14383	11401	11435	11077	11808	13490	14645	15091	15039	14958	14164
Total	33501	33507	26252	26887	26127	27070	30031	33430	33412	32643	33719	33655

**(Source:** National Crime Record Bureau)

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## **Dalit Educational Status - A Study**

*Dr. Rashmi Joshi*

### **Introduction**

Ensuring access to education for the Dalits of India has been the greatest challenges for the Indian Government in diminishing the social efforts of the caste system, which still remain entrenched in Indian Society. There have been many different reasons proposed as to why the Dalits suffer from the lower rates of literacy & primary education enrolment, but the most realistic one describes history and unequal access as the causes. The ancient caste system of India, which has resulted in the social and economic oppression of the Dalits continues to play a dominant role in India. The Dalits have experienced consistent denial to access to education since the 1850, when the British established control over India. To improve the Dalits education. After independence of India Government policies designed to increase primary education rates, but it was much lower than the rest of India & to increase the education rate of Dalits is very necessary.

### **Historical Concepts of Dalit Education:-**

Deeply entrenched in Indian Society is the complex social stratification of individuals known as the caste system. It is a division of society traditionally based on occupation and family lineage. In India separate classes. The highest class in Indian Society is that of the priests & teacher or Brahmins, followed by the warrior class, the Kshatriyas third ranked are those who fall in the farmer & merchant class, the Vaishyas, followed by the fourth ranked laborer class, the Shudras. The fifth group which was seen as being so low as to not deserve being placed in a caste, were the Dalits. Often referred to in Indian culture as the untouchable, these were the people who

have the harshest and most unjust restrictions imposed upon them. (The caste system in Hinduism –Desai & kulkarni.)

In rural areas, Dalits were excluded from temples & education. (Nambissan 1011) Toda, the Dalit population represents of 16% of the country population & still struggles to achieve social equality.

The Dalits have experienced a bit of progress in establishing an eqal position in Indian Society under the Poona pact a reserved number of seats in the national legislature were reserved for Dalits candidates. Only who would be elected based society on the votes of their Dalits constituents. (Bob.) Their movement has also been encouraged b slow societal shifts towards a grater acceptance of Dalits equality and a greater role played b local & international non-governmental organizations (bob 173)

All over this history of Dalits education is a very sensitive issue for study. The 1991 census of India reported that Dalits communities were one of the least literate. Social group in the country with only 30% of Dalit Children recognized to have basic reading & writing skills.

These high levels of illiteracy are result of insufficient access to education. Reasons proposed for this low primary education rate among the Dalits have ranged from blaming family values to universal acceptance of social behavior . In realty it is a history of constant oppression and missing incentives that have been the reason why India's lowest caste has struggled to take advantage of public education programs.

For centuries, the Dalits population of India was forbidden from gaining access to education. During the 1850 , the British began the long process of increasing the accessibility of education to all citizens of India signed in April of 1850, the caste disabilities removal Act theoretically to coincide Dalits

were granted permission to attend schools, the primary education. The most realistic reasons for the Dalits have failed to taken advantage of their access to education is a vicious cycle of illiteracy & poverty.

The lack of success in increasing educational enrolment rates for Dalits should be a issue of discussion.

### **Challenges of the Dalit's Education**

- 
- 1. Social weakness of dependency & self doubt.
  - 2. Not to transform & redirect the feelings.
  - 3. Faith on superstitious things such as karma.
  - 4. Self-blaming self-wounding.
  - 5. Careless about their own families.
  - 6. Unemployment hidden hunger & malnutrition among women & male drunkenness violence.
  - 7. Just look themselves as electoral vote banks but not look as leadership.
  - 8. Lack of Dalit intra family communication.
  - 9. Neglect ion towards competitive competence, efficiency & social resilience.

### **Education based programmes for Dalit.**

1. To give Dalit children an education without exposing them to the harshness of upper castes.

2. To follow the caste Disabilities Removal Act- by British Government .
3. To design the District primary Education Programme.
4. To develop special textbooks & curriculum in the subject for the Dalit.
5. To provide the positive learning environment.
6. To develop methods to gain education.
7. To look the methods at how effective they really were.
8. To think about to increase access to education.

### **Conclusion**

There have been man attempts over the past one hundred and fifty years to help increase the quality to life for the dalits of India through development focused on enrolment in primary education. Education provides individuals with the means to increase their income & to engage in economic activities. In action, it can help empower individuals to lobby for social change through political activism. The lack of incentives to pursue education for the dalit of India can be traced back to a long history of mistreatment & oppression caste harassment cause to neglect towards paying on their children's education.

Twentieth century policies helped to decrease in equality between groups. So that the Indian government could have a greater focus on national enrolment rates. Throughout the DPEP. To supply of additional textbook should be effect on increasing the enrolment development organizations must continue to explore varying levels of incentives & pursue national social equality in India throughout education system, to complete today's globalizing India.

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## **Social Exclusion: I am a Creature of**

*Yogesh Suthar*

Regardless of our race, caste or religion, WE ALL ARE CITIZENS OF INDIA. Dalit or Harijan may belong to Hindu, Muslim, Buddhism, and Christianity or any other religions but foremost he/she is a Human being having all the rights to live like any other human being is having on this earth rather than to be considered as untouchables. Dalits on the one hand are forced into the labour market because of the need to sustain themselves and their families. At the point of same time they have to do only those occupations that are available and traditionally allocated to them which no one else would prefer to do. Better paid and dignified occupations continue to be out of reach for them through a systematic denial of rights to education, training, land and other livelihood resources. Author begins this paper with the aim to conceptualized and theoretically understand the social exclusion and discrimination in contemporary world. Secondly, to understand the impact of social exclusion and discriminatory practices on inter group inequalities, poverty, human rights violation, inter-group conflict and economic development of the marginalized social categories. Thirdly, what are the laws for protection of interest of the marginalized society and explore the initiatives and strategy have adopted by the government for empowerment of Dalits. Lastly, come up with a policy for building an inclusive society through empowerment of the socially excluded groups in India.

### **I. History of Social Legislation in India**

You Had To Give Me This Birth  
Why Give Me Birth At All?  
You Cast Me Away To Be Born; You Were Cruel.  
Where Were You At The Time Of My Birth?  
Who Did You Help Then?

Chokha Says: Lord, Keshava, Don't Let Me Go

## **Chokhamela**

Social discrimination is a universal phenomenon which is reflected in various forms among different people across regions. Caste, however, is a unique determinant of social discrimination in the Indian Sub-continent. There are various forms of discrimination experienced by the Dalits in different spheres and by different personnel and health is also one such area where caste-based discrimination is experienced. Historically, Indian has witnesses" sustained interventions by social reformers who have worked consistently towards disseminating awareness about the lack of any rational basis for the discrimination on caste consideration. Such awareness led to the assertion of rights by the "depressed Classes" and was responsible for signing of the Poona Pact on 16th August 1932 between Gandhi and Ambedkar. The pact was significant because it became the basis for subsequent constitutional/legislative safeguard and other measures for the social integration of the SCs. Even before the constitution of India came into force, several legislation had been enacted and were localized to an extent. Some of the prominent ones were:

### **Karnataka**

1. The Removal of Civil Disabilities Act, 1934 (Maysore Act XLII of 1943)
2. The Coorg Scheduled Caste (Removal Of Civil And Social Disabilities ) Act, 1949 (Coorg Act I of 1949)

### **Kerala**

1. The Travancore-Cochin Removal Of Social Disabilities Act, 1825 (Travancore-cochin Act VII of 1825)

## **Bihar**

1. Harijan (Removal of Civil Liabilities) Act, 1949 (Bihar Act XIX of 1949).

## **Uttar Pradesh**

1. The United Province (Removal of Social Disabilities), Act 1947 (Uttar Pradesh Act XIV of 1947)

“Dalit” is a self-chosen and largely accepted, but not unanimously approved, term used to refer to the ex-untouchable caste-communities in India<sup>1</sup>. Here question arises, what is the contemporary nature and extent of the deprivation, discrimination and exclusion suffered by these groups and especially for women. Certain kinds of violence are traditionally reserved for Dalit women: extreme filthy verbal abuse and sexual epithets, naked parading, dismemberment, being forced to drink urine, branding, pulling out of teeth, tongue and nails, and violence including murder after proclaiming witchcraft, are only experienced by Dalit women. Dalit women are threatened by rape as part of collective violence by the higher castes. The Devadasi system of temple prostitution is the most extreme form of exploitation of Dalit women.

## **II. Practice of Untouchability and Atrocities**

Caste is perhaps the oldest form of social stratification in India. Sanctified by religious texts and solidified through norms of inter-marriage and inter-dining, the caste system essentially orders different groups in the Hindu Indian society into an occupation-based hierarchy. The Brahmans and Kshatriyas at the top undertake relatively “purer” tasks (teaching and ruling respectively). They are followed by the Vaishyas (traders) and at the bottom the Shudras and the erstwhile untouchables who engage in demeaning and stigmatized occupations (scavenging or dealing in bodily waste, for instance). In the traditional and

formal sense, the caste system is characterized by three interrelated and intricately intertwined principles. These are the ascription of social, cultural, religious and economics rights for each caste, the unequal and hierarchical division of these rights between the castes: and the provision of strong social ostracism mechanisms supported by social and religious ideologies.

While the first two principles define and describe the framework of caste system, the third principle designated and enforced the social mechanisms for its enforcement. The form of the social ostracism vary from social and economic boycott to various types of physical punishment meted out to low caste SC"s, particularly those who initiate change and display mobility of sorts as ageist the tradition rule caste behaviour. The perpetual threat of violence and atrocities against SCs, and the deep entrenchment of caste discrimination, prompted the government to promulgate the protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Prevention of Atrocities(POA) Act. The objective of these Act clearly emphasize the intention of the government to deliver social justice and enable the SCs to live their life with dignity, without fear of violence and atrocities. For the same purpose the Act incorporated strong compensatory and punitive measures. Unfortunately, even the presence of such elaborate statutes doesn"t act as a deterrent- the perpetuation of crime against the SCs and their discrimination in secular public spheres continues unabated.

## **2.1. Practice of Untouchability: Contemporary Evidence**

### **National Basis: Macro Level**

The practice of untouchability continues in India even through the government has passed a legislation, the Anti-Untouchability Act 1955 (renamed the Civil Right Act). The Annual report of the Commission for SCs and STs provides data

on the registered cases of untouchability. It emerged that annual cases registered under the Anti-Untouchability Act numbered 480 during 1950s, 1903 during the 1960s, 3240 during the 1970s, 3875 during the 1980s and 1672 during the half of the 1990s.

### **Regional Basis: Micro Level**

The Karnataka Study<sup>ii</sup> for 1973-74 based on a fairly large sample of 76 villages, 38 urban centers and 3330 households. Of the total households, 73% are former untouchables. Little more than half of the dalits were not allowed to draw water from the public wells in villages. Nearly 20 years later, another study was conducted in Karnataka with 941 respondents from 52 villages and from the most districts<sup>iii</sup>. Discrimination was much less regarding sitting or drinking tea together in political spaces such as panchayat office.

The Orissa study was covered 65 Dalit respondent from the two villages for 1987-88. In nboth villages, the settlements of the Dalits were separated from those ofg upper castes. An overwhelming majority 80% of respondent in small village and 70% in the large village were prohibited from the drinking water from the public open well and public tube well<sup>iv</sup>.

The study in Gujarat conducted in 1971, was based on survey of 69 villages. A repeat survey was done in 1996 to gauge changes in practice of untouchability. In 1971, the practice of untouchability in the sitting arrangements of the students in the village schools had been negligible : it had disappeared in 1966. SCs and Non SCs student intermingled in school freely. Open or subtle untouchability was practiced in panchayat meeting in 30% of villagers in 1996, as against the 47% in 1971<sup>v</sup>.

## **2.2. Legal Framework: Equality and Non Discrimination**

India has ratified several international human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Economic Social

and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

### **Equality and Non Discrimination**

*All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law*<sup>vi</sup>. Enjoyment of human rights based on equality must be understood comprehensively. Formal equality assumes that equality is achieved if a law or policy treats men and women in a neutral manner. Substantive equality is concerned in addition, with the effects of laws, policies and practices and with ensuring that they do not maintain, but rather alleviate, the inherent disadvantage that particular groups experience. *Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status*<sup>vii</sup>. **The Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** Article 14(2) (h) states: *State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right...(h) to enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications*<sup>viii</sup>. **The International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 1966 (ICESCR)** affirms that *State Parties have an obligation to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant*<sup>ix</sup>.

## Right To Food

The human right to food has been recognized as a distinct human right since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, *which proclaims that Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food...*<sup>x</sup>

In constitution of India, *the State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties*<sup>xi</sup>. The ongoing public interest litigation in the Supreme Court, ***PUCL vs. Union of India***<sup>xii</sup>, popularly known as “the right to food case”, focuses on the general need to uphold the right to food, which follows from the fundamental “right to life” enshrined in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

## Right To Work

The human right to work is essential for realizing other human rights and forms an inseparable and inherent part of human dignity. ICESCR recognizes right to work and the related rights of

1. Right to enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work
2. Right of everyone to form trade unions as well as the right of trade unions to function freely<sup>xiii</sup>.

The right to work as a human right has the following elements<sup>xiv</sup>:

1. ***Availability***: States parties must have specialized services to assist and support individuals in order to enable them to identify and find available employment
2. ***Accessibility***: The labour market must be open to everyone.

### **III. Government Initiative for Dalit Empowerment and Strategy Against Discrimination**

The caste system as a social organization of Hindu society is based on highly unequal entitlement to economic and social rights. This inequality involves the historic exclusion and discrimination, in term of denial of rights, of certain groups and castes, particularly the SC's, in multiple societal relations-economic, social, political and cultural<sup>xv</sup>. Considering the magnitude and extent of discrimination and deprivation , it was essential to have constitutional provisions that would enable an equitable distribution of opportunities through reservation policy, and by providing the protection against the social dogma and socio-economic exploitation, and added the specific provision for the Scheduled Case and Scheduled Tribes and enable them by providing some financial assistance. These provision are contained in part III,IV,VI,XIV, XVI and XIX of constitution. These provisions related to the fundamental rights, Directive Principle of State Policy and the appointment of the ministers for the welfare of SCs. It also contains the provisions for reservation for the SCs in lower and upper houses of people both at union and state level, outline provision for claims by the SCs to services and posts, and Calls for the establishment of a permanent National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (NCSCST)<sup>xvi</sup>.

*The Constitution of India guarantee equality before the law (Article 14) and enjoins the state to make special provisions for the advancement of socially-economically backward class or for SCs (Article 15[4]) further, it enjoins to promote, with special care, the educational and economical interest of the weaker section of society-in popular SCs (Article 46). Reservation of seats in democratic institution (Article 330) and in services (Article 335) etc.*

Further the Government's approaches and interventions towards the uplift of the SCs are primarily based on two major considerations:

- To overcome the multiple deprivations that SCs have inherited due to their past and to extent possible to bring them at par with other in society
- To provide the m protection against the discrimination and exclusion in the present by encouraging their effective participation in the socio, economic & political access.

To these end government's approach meant a two-fold strategy consisting of anti-discriminatory or protective measures, and development and empowering measures. Anti discriminatory measures include the enactment of the Untouchability Offence Act, 1955 (renamed as the Protection of Civil Rights Act (PCR) in 1976), and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities (POA) Act, 1989. Under the former, the practice of untouchability and discrimination in public place and services is treated as offence and latter provides legal protection to SCs against violence and atrocities by higher castes. Further government has initiated several development social sector schemes, The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was one of the earliest programme designed for this purpose; it enabled duly identified rural poor families to supplement their income through providing credit based productive assets. Also special assistance provided by the centre government to state under Special Central Assistance (SCA) to the Special Component Plan for SCs.

### **3.1. Educational Policies**

Pre-matric scholarships (PMS) for the children of those engaged in unclean profession, this scheme was introduced in 1977-78 with objective of financially assisting the children of

scavengers of dry latrine and sweepers who had traditionally link with scavenging activity provided scholarship rates ranging from Rs 25 per month for classes I to V, Rs 40 per month for classes VI-VIII, to Rs 50 per month for classes IX-X. National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 that lays emphasis on the attainment of minimum level of learning at all stages of education-primary, middle and secondary- and on the overall personality development of the child.

### **3.2. Employment Policies**

If we analyses the magnitude, trend and patterns in the employment of scheduled castes in government services, public sector undertaking(PSUs), nationalized banks and insurance sector, and ratified whether the total allocated share of the SCs in government sector has been fulfilled or not. Government had introduced several programme such as Training of Rural Youth Self -employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children In Rural Areas (DWCRA), these programme were integrated with IRDP. The Self Employment Scheme for Educated Unemployed Youth (SEEUY) was started in 1983 with an annual target of 25000 beneficiaries<sup>xvii</sup>. It is largely based on data drawn from the annual report of various ministries of the government. In 1960, the total number of SCs employed in government services was 228,497 with their participation almost doubling to 540,220 in 2003. On the other hand the total number of non-SCs/STs in government services increased from 1600,528 in 1960 to 2517,780 in 2003. In these 44 years, the absolute net changed was 311,723 for Scs and 917,252 for non SCs and STs<sup>xviii</sup>. In relative terms, in the 1960 the percentage share of SCs and non-Scs/Sts to total employee in government services was 12.2% and 85.4% respectively. In the 2003 the percentage of SCS to total employees in Government services was 16.5%<sup>xix</sup>. But total employment of Scs in government job grew at very low rate of 0.67% per annum during 1979-2004<sup>xx</sup>.

Scs male employment rates (46.2% in rural and 45.8% in urban area) were lower than the employment rates of non Scs and Sts male (48% in rural and 49.6% in urban) but female employment rates was higher than for the former social group as compared to the latter by about 3% points<sup>xxi</sup>.

### **3.3. Literacy Attainment**

Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write with an understanding in any language. The decades changes in the literacy rates for the SC and the non-Sc/St population show that the growth of literacy rates in India has been rather slow. In 2009-2010, about 62.8% & 61.6% of the SCs and STs respectively in rural areas, in 2001, about 55% of the SC population was literate, an increase of nearly 45 % point in a span of 40 years from 1961-2001<sup>xxii</sup>.

## **IV. Suggestions and Recommendations**

### **What should we do?**

Despite of government efforts the conditions of these classes are still unfavorable. Government had implemented many social sector schemes & set up many commissions for socialization of these people. As a respected & responsible citizen of this country we are also under an obligation to follow up our duties rather than claiming for our rights only. We have to build up such a strong friendly environment for these exploited classes. We have to come forward, hold their hands and give wings to their ambition in order to sustain their life as a dignified human being. The Civil Society and NGOs can start awareness campaign with the help of local/ state government.

- We need to ensure training to labours for up gradation of skills and capabilities to enhance their employment opportunities. We have to clear away our wicked

mentality and respect the” Right of Equality Before the Law”.

- We need to have a monitoring mechanism in partnership with civil society organizations to ensure that the existing schemes, policies of law are implemented.
- We need to have a mechanism to bring about radical change in the social mind set of people. Because there is a strong sense of social exclusion for Dalit women in various forms. The customary practices are rooted in a structure which is class biased and community biased.
- We need to have a mechanism to bring about radical change in the social mind set of people. Because there is a strong sense of social exclusion for Dalit women in various forms. The customary practices are rooted in a structure which is class biased and community biased.
- The monitoring report should be produced periodically. NGOs may be appointed to monitor and evaluate the implementation of government policies.

### **National Level**

- The Central Government needs to have some kind of redressal mechanism which is not only about receiving complaints. All the commissions are under staffed and have no recommendatory power either. The existing system should be made more effective and should be strengthened.
- The Government must criminalize the violations that are done to Dalits . ESCR violations are very difficult to prove. Within the Judiciary, can we have a mechanism wherein we can criminalize the gross violations with serious repercussions.

- The National Human Rights Commission must pay greater attention on violation of human rights on the basis of caste and related factors, in matters such as school admission, access to resources such as land and drinking water, access to places of worship, and denial of political rights.

### **Discrimination is a Cancer: Choice Is Yours Death or Life**

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- <sup>i</sup> See Gopal Guru 2001 for a discussion of the changing positions within the Dalit community on this and other alternatives for self-description.
- <sup>ii</sup> Pravathama, C. ,“ *Schedueld Castes and Tribe-Social Economic Survey*”, New Delhi: Ashish Publication (1984).
- <sup>iii</sup> Khan, Mumtaz Ali. 1995. *Human Rights Dalits*. New Delhi: Uppal Publishers.
- <sup>iv</sup> Tripathi, R.B. 1994. *Dalits- A Subhuman Society*. New Delhi : Ashish Publication.
- <sup>v</sup> Shah G. H. Mander, S. Thorat, S. Deshpande and A. Baviskar, “*Untouchability in Rural India*”: New Delhi: Retrospect: Jawaharlal Nehru University: New Delhi, (2006).
- <sup>vi</sup> UDHR, Article 7.
- <sup>vii</sup> UDHR, Article 2, Para 1.
- <sup>viii</sup> COHRE, 2000, Legal Resources for Housing Rights- International and National Standards.
- <sup>ix</sup> CEDAW, Article 1
- <sup>x</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 25(1).
- <sup>xi</sup> Constitution of India, Article 47
- <sup>xii</sup> Writ Petition [Civil] No. 196 of 2001.
- <sup>xiii</sup> ICESCR Article 6,7 and 8.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Based on CESCR, General Comment No. 18 on the Right to Work.
- <sup>xv</sup> National Commission for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled

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Tribes, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, Sixth Report.

<sup>xvi</sup> Part III, IV, VI, XIV, XVI and XIX of Constitution of India 1950.

<sup>xvii</sup> Goswami, B. 2003. Constitution safeguard for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, pp. 7-9. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publication

<sup>xviii</sup> Annual Report, Minister of Personal Grievances and Pension, 1985-86,1989-90,2004-05, Government of India, New Delhi.

<sup>xix</sup> Ibid

<sup>xx</sup> S. Thorat and C. Senapati,2006, "Reservation Policy in India-Dimensions and Issues", Working Paper series, Vol. I, No.2, IIDS, New Delhi.

<sup>xxi</sup> National Sample Survey, 1999-2000, Employment and Unemployment Situation in India, 1999-2000, 55th Round Delhi, Central Statistical Office.

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## **Disparities in Reproductive Health Status and Service Utilization among SCs, STs, OBCs and Others: Evidence from NFHS-3 India**

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In India, class and caste go together. It is a known fact that SCs and STs are most deprived in Indian society. It would be interesting and revealing to examine the disparities in the reproductive health status among SCs, STs, OBCs and Others. Thus the objectives of this paper are: (i) to find the disparities in the reproductive health status of SCs/STs/OBCs and Others; (b) to compare and contrast the same; (c) to find the extent of utilization of reproductive health services among them; and (iv) to make policy recommendations. Data from NFHS-3 India are made use of.

We find substantial disparities by caste and class in fertility and family planning use. For example, TFR for SCs was 2.9, STs 3.1, OBCs 2.8 and Others 2.4. Current practice of any contraceptive method among SCs was 55%, STs 48%, OBCs 54%, and Others 62%.

Disparities are noted in the utilization of services too. The percentage who delivered in health facility was the least among the STs (17.7) and the highest among the Others (51). Lowest percentage of ST women had live births delivered by a skilled worker (25). Further as much as 67% of ST women did not get the (first) post-natal check-up.

Thus SCs and STs have low reproductive health status and lower use of related services compared to OBCs and Others. Their poverty and low educational status (as recorded by NFHS-3 too) seem to account for this. This requires strong policy

measures which aim at increasing their educational levels and per capita income.

## **Introduction**

In India, class and caste go together. It is a known fact that SCs and STs are most deprived in Indian society. It would be interesting and revealing to examine the disparities in the reproductive health status among SCs, STs, OBCs and Others. Thus the objectives of this paper are: (i) to find the disparities in the reproductive health status of SCs/STs/OBCs and Others; (b) to compare and contrast the same; (c) to find the extent of utilization of reproductive health services among them; and (iv) to make policy recommendations.

## **Source of Data**

Data from NFHS-3 India (2005-060) are made use of. In NFHS-3, a total of 124,385 de facto woman aged 15-49 in the 29 states of India were interviewed. Among the total women respondents, 23,125 belonged to Scheduled Caste (SC), 10,119 belonged to Scheduled Tribe, 48,880 belonged to Other Backward Class (OBC), 41,207 belonged to 'Others' and 649 belonged to the category 'Don't Know' i.e. who did not know their caste or tribe. These percentages of women are in keeping with their respective percentages in the total population of India.

NFHS-3 India provides elaborate data on fertility, family planning and maternal health services by caste/tribe. Therefore in this paper data from NFHS-3 India are used for our analysis.

## **Disparities in Reproductive Health by Caste/Tribe**

We have selected the variables fertility and family planning to understand the disparities in the reproductive health by caste/tribe. First we examine the disparities in fertility and then move to disparities in family planning use.

## Disparities in Fertility by Caste/Tribe

Total fertility rate (TFR), Wanted fertility rate and mean no. of children ever born to women age 40-49 years are chosen as indicators of fertility. In Table 1, variations in the total fertility rate, wanted fertility rate, and the mean number of children ever born to women age 40-49 by the background characteristic of caste/tribe are presented. By caste/tribe, the TFR is 0.6 children higher for scheduled caste women, 0.8 children higher for scheduled-tribe women, and 0.4 children for women belonging to other backward classes (OBC) than for women who do not belong to any of these groups.

**Table 1 Fertility by Caste/Tribe**

Background Characteristic	Total Fertility Rate	Wanted Fertility rate	Mean number of children ever born to women age 40-49 years
<b>Caste/Tribe</b>			
Schedule Caste	2.92	2.0	4.45
Schedule Tribe	3.12	2.1	4.59
Other Backward Class	2.75	1.9	4.12
Other	2.35	1.7	3.52
Don't Know	1.98	1.4	3.55

Further, we observe that even though the differential in wanted fertility and mean no of children ever born is marginal between SCs and STs, it is significant when we consider OBCs and Others and compare the same with SC and ST women.

## Disparities in Family Planning Use by Caste/Tribe

Differentials in contraceptive use among currently married women age 15-49 by their background characteristic are presented in Table 2. There are marked differences in the use of different contraceptive methods among currently married women by caste/tribe.

By caste or tribe, contraceptive prevalence is highest among women who do not belong to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, or other backward classes (62 percent), followed by women from scheduled castes (55 percent) and other backward classes (54 percent). Contraceptive use is the lowest among women from scheduled tribes (48 percent). The prevalence of female sterilization is highest among women from other backward classes (40 percent), but use of modern and traditional spacing methods is the highest among women from 'other' castes (51.4 and 10.3 respectively).

**Table 2 Current Use of Contraception by Caste/Tribe**

Background Characteristic	Any Method	Any modern Method	Any Traditional method	Not currently using	Total	Number of Women
Caste/Tribe						
Schedule Caste	55.0	47.1	8.0	45.0	100.0	17,372
Scheduled Tribes	47.9	42.7	5.2	52.1	100.0	7,632
Other Backward Class	54.2	48.0	6.2	45.8	100.0	37,198
Other	61.8	51.4	10.3	38.2	100.0	30,131
Don't Know	65.8	58.6	7.2	34.2	100.0	462

### **Disparities in the Use of Maternal Health Services by Caste/Tribe**

Now let us try to analyze the disparities in the use of maternal health services. We have chosen antenatal care, place of delivery, assistance during delivery and post-natal check-up as the aspects of maternal health for analysis. In our view, the analysis of the indicators related to above aspects would give a true picture of how good or bad is the maternal health of the women by caste/tribe.

Disparities are noted in the utilization of services too. In Table 3, the data on above indicators are provided. Antenatal

care is very important for the good health of pregnant woman and the foetus. NFHS-3 gives data on “no antenatal care by any provider.” The percentage of women who reported that “no one” provided antenatal care is the highest among the STs (29.4) and second highest (25.9) among the SCs. This percentage of women is similar between SCs and OBCs but it is the lowest among the ‘Other’ category (15.2).

When women deliver in a health facility, we can expect the mother and child to get medical care in case of an emergency. The ideal of an egalitarian society would be that each and every pregnant woman should deliver in a health facility. We find that the percentage of women who delivered in a health facility is the least among the STs (17.7), the second lowest (32.9) and the highest among the Others (51).

Further, for healthy mother and baby, it is expected that a skilled provider should deliver the baby. We find that the disparities in assistance during delivery by a skilled provider are substantial. The lowest percentage of ST women had live births delivered by a skilled provider (25) and the second lowest was among the SCs (40).

Post-natal check-up is very important for new mothers and the infant to maintain good health. We observe that the percentage of women who did not at all get the first post-natal check-up is the highest among STs (67%), and the second highest among the SCs (62.9).

**Table 3 Utilization of Maternal Health Services by Caste/Tribe**

Background Characteristic	No ante natal care	%age of women who delivered in a health facility	%age of women were delivered by a Skilled Provider	No first post-natal check-up
Caste/Tribe				
Schedule Caste	25.9	32.9	40.6	62.9
Scheduled Tribes	29.4	17.7	25.4	68.6
Other Backward Class	25.5	37.7	46.7	59.8
Other	15.2	51.0	57.8	47.4
Don't Know	11.1	43.4	54.2	54.5

Thus an examination of data on reproductive health among women by caste/tribe reveals that SCs and STs have low reproductive health status and lower use of related services compared to OBCs and Others.

### **Factors Accounting for Disparities in Reproductive Health and Use of Related Services**

What could be the reasons? Their poverty, low level of literacy/educational status and low level of exposure to mass media could be some of the reasons that seem to account for this. NFHS-3 India provides data on levels of literacy and education and exposure to mass media among women by caste/tribe. Let us examine these data.

In the following table (Table 4), data on levels of literacy and education among women by caste/tribe are provided. A perusal of the table, as expected, reveals that the percentage of women with no education is the highest among the STs and the second highest among the SCs. Also, the percentage of literate is the lowest among the STs and the second lowest among the SCs. So also is the percentage of women who have completed standard 6 or higher.

**Table 4 Level of Education among Women by Caste/Tribe**

Background Characteristic	No Education	%age Literate	Completed Standard 6 or Higher
<b>Caste/Tribe</b>			
Schedule Caste	50.9	43.8	34.1
Schedule Tribe	61.7	33.4	25.1
Other Backward Class	43.9	51.8	41.3
Other	25.6	70.9	59.8
Don't Know	44.3	43.1	36.8

Data on exposure to mass media among women by caste/tribe are provided in Table 5. A cursory glance at the data in the table, reveal that the percentage of women who are 'not regularly exposed to any media' is the highest among the STs and the second highest among the SCs.

**Table 5 Exposure to Mass Media among Women by Caste/Tribe**

Background Characteristic	Not regularly exposed to any mass media
<b>Caste/Tribe</b>	
Schedule Caste	38.9
Schedule Tribe	57.4
Other Backward Class	36.8
Other	24.1
Don't Know	33.6

Therefore, we can conclude that the lower literacy and educational levels and lower exposure levels to media among ST and SC women, seem to be two important factors in explaining the disparities in fertility, family planning use and use of maternal health services.

### **What are the policy recommendations?**

We can suggest that there should be more concerted efforts to improve the levels of literacy, education and exposure to media among the ST and SC women at community level, NGO level and Government level.

Further, more sincere efforts are required to reduce the poverty levels among the above two deprived groups at the community level in general and at gender level in particular. This requires a strong will among the community leaders and strong policy measures at the government level both at framing and implementation levels.

Some special discussion is necessary in case of tribal population. To a large extent, their deprivation is due to their economic and social marginalization in the large Indian society. Whatever measures we adopt to increase family planning practice in the larger society should be successful among them also if the authorities work sincerely among the tribals.

However it is usually observed that tribals exhibit higher infant mortality rates compared to other groups. Here special programs are needed. Also tribal areas report malnutrition deaths of children. For example, in Maharashtra, in the interior of Thane district and in the Melghat area, tribal children died due to malnutrition. This had become an issue for discussion in the Vidhan Sabha.

**Reference:** NFHS-3 India Report (2005-2006).

## **A Study on Dalit Women Participation in Panchayati Raj Institution**

*Pramod Kumar Narikimelli*

### **Introduction**

Panchayati Raj is not a new phenomenon in the country. Its illustration in history goes back to more than a 1000 years. It has its roots in Ancient Indian Institutions when the villages were little republics governed by their Panchayats. During this period, it was not that women could not join politics, but the fact was that they did not take interest in it due to a patriarchal set up. The British through their ruthless method of revenue collection and the introduction of zamindari land tenure system almost destroyed these ancient republics and as well the involvement of women in politics. The British were of the view that "Vote of Women" would be premature in the Indian Society and continued to enforce purdah and prohibition against women's education (Bhagat 2005).

After Independence, despite having a constitution, which embodies lofty, ideals like equity and equality, social-justice could not be achieved so far. Even when India had a woman Prime Minister for quite a number of years, the situation of women at large did not change for the better. Women's participation in politics remained quite insignificant in India even after 59 years of self-rule (Nanda 2006). From October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1959 when the first Panchayati Raj was inaugurated, on April 24, 1993 after the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act came into force it has been an uncertain and undulating journey for Panchayats.

The structure and process of Panchayats are equally pivotal as they bring to bear and entitle role member therein to perform. If the overall scenario of Panchayats was largely despairing, another disquieting aspect is that almost one half of rural population was virtually kept out of Panchayat arena. In

the traditional Custom Panchayats, Village Panchayats and in the British Scheme of local governments women remained entirely excluded (Nagendra 2004).

In establishing Panchayats most state government apprehend the provision of co-option of two women in case no women could come through direct elections. Prevalent practice during 1960's and 1970's was the co-option of two women at best for each PR body, as women could not come through direct elections, even though the requirement of co-option of women was not followed uniformly for all PR bodies and in every state, for instance Uttar Pradesh Jammu and Kashmir, did not follow the scheme (Institute of Social Studies Trust 1995).

From the outset, women's involvement in PRIs was dominated by two inter-related themes: representation of women in these bodies and effectiveness and outcome of their participation. Co-option of few women was the only available option for women to participate and it was a travesty for it could not produce the desired and verify no results at all. The co-option method, of course provided one convenient scope for the dominant caste/class leaders to install their family women such as wife; mother as their yoke and the very purpose of the policy was led to fall flat.

It took 43 years to realize and recognize that women are yet another disadvantaged group and they also require a solution to their discrimination. Women have received a preferential consideration and that too only in the sphere of political representation and that again in local governments (Rao 1996).

Women are changing the governance in India. They are being elected to local councils in an unprecedented numbers as a result of amendments to the constitution that mandate the reservation of seats for women in local governments. In India,

we call this new system the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI). The women whom PRI has brought into politics are now governing, be it in one village, or a larger area such as 100 villages or a district. This process of restructuring the national political and administrative system started as recently as January 1994, and thus it is too early to assess the impact of women's entry into formal structures of the government. The sheer number of women that PRI has brought into the political system has made a difference. The percentages of women at various levels of political activity have shifted dramatically as a result of the constitutional change, from 4-5 % before to 25-40 % after. But the difference is also qualitative, because these women are bringing their experience in the governance of civic society. In this way they are making the state sensitive to the issues of poverty, inequality and gender injustice.

Palanithuri (1997) in a case study 'New Panchayati Raj System at Work: An Evaluation of Tamil Nadu' reported that they were not informed or invited to the meetings in male headed Gram Panchayat. Women members have always projected the issues relating to women. It is common that the husbands of the members used to accompany them (women) when they come to attend the meetings. Pai (1998) according to his field notes in Meerut District 'Pradhanis in New Panchayats' revealed that many of the Pradhanis were illiterate and only able to put their signatures on official papers. Regarding their roles, the study revealed that they were almost insignificant in the functioning of Gram and Block Panchayat bodies. As they belonged to better off families in the villages, they do not work outside their homes. They agreed to stand for elections due to family pressure and also the decision of their community and not because they were keen to do so. The reservations provided by the Government had forced them to contest elections; provision of reservation has not led them to participate in decision-making in local bodies.

Nambiar (2001) in her study of 'Making the Gram Sabha Work' noted the difference utilities in organizing the Gram Sabha. Majority of women reported that they were not informed or invited to the meetings. While other was hesitate in participating in meetings in the presence of a large number of elder members. However, they have to forego their day's wages or household duties just to identify beneficiaries as to convey what the gram Panchayat would do in future. In this context, the present study was undertaken to know the Leadership Qualities

- I. To know the obstacles for women in Panchayat and role performance in Panchayat.
- II. To highlight the factors which overtly or covertly tend to promote or prevent women members from performing their roles.
- III. To know the nature and extent of participation and role performance in decision-making.

## **Methodology**

The present study was conducted in East Godavari district. Out of ten divisions only two divisions were selected viz., Rajahmundry and Kakinada for the purpose of this study. Out of these ten divisions of Rajahmundry, only five mandals were selected and five mandals from the division of Kakinada were selected for this purpose. In all 35 women elected representatives were selected from each of the two divisions, 20 WERs were selected from Rajahmundry and 15 WERs from Kakinada were selected. Purposive sampling technique was used for selecting the sample from different blocks of East Godavari district. Interview schedule and focused group discussions were used to elicit the required information. The interview schedule comprised of three sections viz., (a) demographic profile of the respondents (b) factors affecting women members from performing their roles (c) expectations and suggestions for

better leadership. The data was collected in the month of March-April 2013.

## **Results and Discussions**

The present study was conducted with the aim to study the “A study on Dalit Women Participation in Panchayati Raj Institution”. The information was elicited as per the objectives of the study.

### **Respondents Profile**

Out of total (35) respondents, 24 belong to middle age group varying from 30-50yrs. one respondent was old (above 70 yrs) the respondent is a reelected candidate since the last Panchayat election. It may be stated here that age factor is off course a significant factor. A matured age reflects quite sound and reasonable views in conformity with the needs and necessities warranted by the circumstances (Table 1).

Out of the (35) majority of respondents (19) were married and rest five were widow and possessed of academic qualification in the grades of graduates-20, Inter mediate-5 and primary-5. Further out of thirty five respondents, ten belong to the age group of 51-70 yrs with only one having graduate degree and rest possessed of primary or secondary qualifications. However out of total respondents (35) five had no academic qualification.

Hazel (1998) observed that the average age of WER's was 45 years. It indicated that they tend to enter the Panchayati Raj Institutions when they had become relatively free of family responsibilities regarding children.

**Table 1: Respondents profile (N=35)**

Age (in years)	No	Marital status		Education	Income		
		Widow	Married	Illiterate	Low	Middle	High
30-50	24	5	19	3	4	6	10
51-70	10	-	10	1	7	2	2
70 & Above	1	1	-	1	-	-	-

Manikyamaba (2000) in her study in Andhra Pradesh revealed that the extent of participation of the young and the middle age is generally more than that of old age. It may be also placed here that the data collected after detail survey corroborates the view that the middle age group possessed of necessary educational background, duly figure in and get associated with the activities of the Panchayat substantially.

It is interesting to know that no women Panchayat members were paid any honorarium for her work. It thereby shows that no women Panchayat member was paid any honorarium for her work. It thereby shows that these WERs were working on self fewer bases for an overall general welfare and development of the people and that of the women interests in particular.

### **Political Profile of Respondent**

Majority (35) of the respondents were elected in the year 2001 in PRIs. There was only one Panch member who unanimous came as an elected Panch in 1980 and got reelected in 2001. Majority (10) of the respondents contested elections as general candidates while rest twenty five contested election from reserved seats, ten from schedule tribe and fifteen from schedule caste. It is found that twenty seven women respondents were not members of any organization. Four of the respondents were members of local organizations like Mahila Mandal. Majority (10) of the respondents had no political affiliation they belonged to general category and contested

elections as independent candidates. Twenty five respondents were supported by one or the other political party out of which eighteen respondents were from congress party, six were from TDP (Table 2).

**Table 2: Political profile of respondent (N=35)**

Category			Member of Organization						Political Party						Present Position			
G	R		Mahila Mandal		Co-operative		Village Dev. Committee		TDP		Congress		Independent		Sarpanch		Panch	
	SC	ST	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R
10	15	10	2	2	1	-	1	-	6	-	18	1	10	-	1	-	2	10

The support from any party however does not always imply that the person is an active member of the party. It has been observed that primary membership and affiliation to political party become more active and articulate. It may be added here that some respondents seek membership of political party after their successful context in the elections. However, in some cases sometimes the respondents enjoyed backing and support of a political party as well.

Ambedkar (2006) also highlights that almost 50% of the women Panchayat leaders belong to one or the other political party. Only few mentioned that they had no particular political affiliation and contested as independent candidate. Ambedkar (2000) showed that larger size of participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institution could take place because of reservation of seats for the women candidates.

Gowda (1998) also showed that the women leaders had links with one or the other political party as such members were persuaded and astonished by their political mentors who were already in politics. Till date we come across that women are supported by political parties reason being affiliation to such political and constitutional change is making women to some

extent as a puppet in such organizations. This is also fact that there is a change in number of women coming into political activity and is struggling hard. However, it is too early to assess the impact of women's entry into formal structures of the government.

### **Reason for Contesting Elections**

Majority (23) of the respondents wished to help people in the society and to work for the development of the concerned village. Ten respondents mentioned that they had pressure from the family especially from their husbands and father-in-law's. Five respondents entered Panchayat to hold power and to prove their identity, political parties motivated five respondents and the same number mentioned that since there was no other women member available she, thus, contested elections (Table 3).

**Table 3: Reason for contesting elections**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Hold power	5
Help people in society	23
Pressure from family members	10
Pressure from party	5
Non-availability of women representative	2

Panda (1999) study observed that the most of the women entered the Panchayat Raj Institution due to persuasion by their family members and pressure from the village community, pressure from political party and their personal interests. Ambedkar (2006) reported that women entry into political arena particularly at the state level depended on their support within the party than support from electorate. Twenty of the respondents contested elections for non-availability of women representative in Panchayat.

### Meetings Attended by WER's in Panchayat

Majority (29) of the respondents had complete freedom of expression in the meetings. They were not found meek or mute; they usually raised their point and view in the Panchayat meetings. They actively participated actively in the discussion and debates regarding future plan of action. They were free to determine areas required more of development and financial assistance required for the betterment of the people. Six respondents expressed that they weren't free to put forth their point of view. Gender disparity was found to be the major reasons for not entertaining their viewpoints, as male member's view points were preferred in male headed penchants other reason being that they felt hesitant to present their views in front of the male members. Six respondents reported that it was difficult for women to attend the meetings reason being odd topographical consideration and domestic constraints (Table 4).

**Table 4: Meetings attended by WER's in Panchayat (N=35)**

Respondents		Attended meetings		Convening of unscheduled meetings	
Yes	No	Regularly	Sometimes	Yes	No
29	6	25	10	27	8

Reasons for not attending meetings

1 Domestic constraint

2 Topographical considerations

Palanithuri (1999); in his study revealed that women members are facing lot of problems in Panchayat and male members do not cooperate with elected women ward members. The reservation of women in such organization alone will not help them to make decisions unless she becomes assertive. The

reservation of women in such organizations alone will not help them to make decisions unless she becomes assertive.

### **Freedom of Speech and Expression**

Majority (20) of the respondents had complete freedom of expression in the meetings. They were not found meek or mute; they usually raised their point and view in the Panchayat meetings. Fifteen respondents expressed that they were not free to put forth their view points. Gender disparity was found to be the major reasons for not entertaining their view points as male members view points were preferred in male headed Panchayats. Other reason being that they (WERs) felt hesitant to present their views in front of the male members (Table 5).

**Table 5: Freedom of speech and expression (N=35)**

<b>Freedom of opinion</b>		<b>If no, Reasons for not entertaining views</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No interest</b>	<b>Gender Disparity</b>	<b>Caste</b>
20	15	5	10	1

Nanda (2006) also reveals that in spite having a constitution and the 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment act which reinforces the equity and equality and social justice, women is insignificant and not into decision making in such bodies/organizations.

### **Reaction of WER's to the Non-Cooperation of Panchs**

Twelve respondents who had no freedom of speech in Panchayat meetings gave out the reason of their disinterest in such meetings due to factors like, due to their inability in motivating their colleagues, frustration of not being heard and some of the members keeping away because of non-cooperation.

Table 6 reveals that out of total respondents, five WERs did not find support from their colleagues during Panchayat meetings and while not being supported, they try to motivate them to their best. Three of them felt frustrated and four of them

remain absent from meetings as they felt useless to attend the meeting, if their views were not taken into considerations.

**Table 6: Reaction of WER's to the non-cooperation of Panchs**

<b>Reaction</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Try to motivate them	5
Frustration	3
Remain absent from meeting	4

As also reported by Nambiar (2001) that women were hesitate to attend such meetings because of frustration of not being heard and are only to communicate to the beneficiaries the plan of action of gram Panchyat. Mandal (2003) also reported that 28% of the total women members took refutation of their points in the meetings without any form of protest or any pressure to take note of their views.

### **Problems Faced By WER's**

Problems faced by WERs from their colleagues out of the total respondents, ten stated that they face problems from other panches due to their self-motive; Panchayat members were exclusively guided by their personal interest. Whereas seven respondents argued non cooperation that they primarily face on the basis of gender discrimination. The women representative thus felt hurt for not having been heard or supported and even if they presented befitting and relevant arguments. Two respondents even faced abusive language from the male counterparts when they place their views for the development purpose of the area. One respondent alone revealed that even the female colleagues for their personal views and differences did not support her (Table 7).

**Table 7: Problems faced by WER's. (N=12)**

<b>Problems</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Abusive language	2
Self-motive of panch members	10
Interference	7
Lack of support from male members	7
Lack of support from female members	1
Inhibitions in speaking in front of elders	5

Multiple responses

### **Ways to Overcome Constraints**

WERs adopt numerous methods to overcome constraints. An average number (5) of respondents reported that they motivated the Panchayat members to inculcate the interest for a positive approach in the overall interests of the area. Three respondents reported that they built confidence among themselves to face such situations and dispose of matters even differently in a positive manner. Two respondents revealed that they regularly attended the meetings to keep themselves updated and an equal number opine that they opine that they avoid the situation reason being that it was all futile exercise to push the matter any further (Table 8).

**Table 8: Ways to overcome constraints (N=12)**

<b>To overcome constraints</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Regularly attended meetings to keep themselves update	10
Participated in discussion at village level	8
Building confidence	8
By motivating panchayat members	6
Avoid the situation	4

Multiple responses

### Decisions Taken by Women in Panchayat

Majority (19) of the respondents took decisions at their own level in Panchayat meetings as they opined that they are confident enough that decisions taken by them will benefit the people of their village. The reasons for their indifferent behavior in Panchayat meetings were gender decimation and male domination. Eight WERs stated that only male members held the right to take decisions on their own. Due to this, six respondents opined that they never wanted to attend Panchayat meetings. One respondent was of the view that she usually stands unaware about the agenda thus could not comment on any deliberation. Another respondent felt hesitant to participate in the discussions in presence of male members present in the meetings, partly because they lacked confidence (Table 9). Nambiar (2001) also reported that women were not informed or invited to the meetings.

**Table 9: Decisions taken by women in Panchayats (N= 35)**

Decision taken		If no, Reasons			
Yes	No	Lack of confidence	Views are not considered	Unaware about agenda	Never attended meetings
19	16	1	6	1	8

### Stumbling Blocks in Family

Out of thirty five respondents ten faced constraints from the family. Three of the respondents believed that the family had no progressive or a social standing in the community. The family was still taboo ridden and victims of ignorance and guided by old traditions. Ten of the respondents stated that family members do not help them in household chores so household chores act as constraint in their work. Whenever women take up Panchayat works and role seriously, some oversight in family

responsibilities will only be inevitable simply because they will not be able to devote the same amount of time and energy compared to when they were not Panchayats members. One respondent faced constraints like family interference in their work; still another respondent faced lack of support by family that is family did not support them economically. On the whole it may be concluded that the panches were between the fire and the frying pan. Neither the governments neither gave them any dole or incentive to inspire their importance and position in the family nor were the panches themselves on their own of any assistance to the family in the performance of its daily chores of the life.

Kumtakar’s (1999) study revealed that a majority of women leaders admitted that their husbands discouraged them from attending the meetings or hindered their activities. In most cases, it is the husband who made the decisions for Panchyat and the wives put their signature or thumb impressions on the official documents.

**Table 10: Constraints faced by WER’s from family (N=35)**

Yes	No	If yes, Constraints faced	Frequency
22	13	*family interference	1
		*family interference	1
		*lack of support by the family members	6
		*household chores	10
		*economic constraints	1
		*no social standing of the family	3

Multiple responses

**Problems faced by WER’s While Dealing with the Administration**

Majority of the WERs (23) revealed that they received support from government and administration whereas eleven WERs did not receive support from the administration reason

being the male domination of the administration who were either discourteous, or corrupt showing utter disregard on gender basis morally, materially which also at times resulted in complete and total disassociation with the administration (Table 11). Ambedkar (2006) in his study reported that women leaders mentioned the officials as corrupt men.

**Table 11: Problems faced by WER's while dealing with the administration (N=35)**

Support By Govt. officials		If No, Problems faced			
Yes	No	Corruption	Harsh language	Discourage women	Never dealt with officials
23	12	7	5	8	5

Multiple responses

### **Changes Required in Family and Community**

An average number (20) of respondents wanted economic support from the administration so that they could perform better developmental activities in their village. Eight respondents required help from family members to perform family chores, ten of the respondents mentioned that they want liberal outlook from the family and community so that she can prove their mettle in the Panchayat (Table 12).

**Table 12: Changes required in family and community (N=35)**

Changes	Frequency
Freedom from restrictions by family	1
Freedom from restrictions by community	2
Economic support from government	20
Help in household chores by family members	8
Liberal outlook	10

Multiple responses

## Performance for Better Leadership

Majority (22) of the respondents wanted freedom from family and community which would make them to perform as better leaders. Further ten respondents felt that ability to speak would serve as an asset for convening public and invoke their confidence and moral support. Nine respondents preferred literacy, self confidence and skill training for performance as an efficient leader for welfare and development of the people. Eight respondents believe that experience, self decision making power and honorarium would strengthen their leadership qualities. Thirteen respondents preferred self initiative and organizing capacity for income generation. Thus, the survey of this study would make one conclude that it is somewhat not fair to expect the women to make wonders when she is as a first timer asked to that the primitive Indian society never encouraged the woman to come out of her domestic shell and play a role with her counterpart, the man. She was always a domesticated tool in the hands of the male patriarch. It is this imperative that she needs a thorough helping programmes that would provide her education and confidence building initiatives which could chisel her participation of activities required for becoming representative of people in one form or the other (Table 13).

**Table 13: Performance for better leadership (N=35)**

Changes	Frequency
Community and family restrictions	23
Literacy	9
Self decision making power	8
Honorarium	8
Village co-operation	5
Support services	5
Self confidence and self-initiative	10
Ability to speak in public	10
Orientation programme for Panchayat members	13
Experience	8
No male domination	5
Training for leadership skills	7

\* Multiple responses

### **Factors that Motivate Women to Take Part in Panchayat**

Out of total respondents 12 reported that economic independence, family encouragement, transparency in PRIs and administration, support from government officials would go long way in motivating the women folk to participate in panchayat. Four respondents revealed that their dedication and commitment play an important and positive role for joining penchants (Table 14).

**Table 14: Factors that motivate women to take part in Panchayat**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Economic Independence	9
Family Encouragement	5
Commitment to Service	9
Transparency	9
Support	9
Communication Skills	5

Multiple responses

### **Conclusion**

In Indian Constitution, there are provisions for equal rights for all citizens irrespective of their social and economic status. However such provisions exist only in pen and paper for millions of economically and socially disadvantage people in India especially SC's, ST's and Women. In India women are in much worst position than men not only in terms of sex ratio, literacy rate, work force participation, life expectancy, but also in terms of their assess to power structure which controls and guides the development programmes of a society. Since access to political opportunities and participation in political decision making process are important components of capability and

autonomy, discrimination in this respect leads to wastage of women's talent and efficiency which are necessary for all around development of the country. One of the three variables used in the construction of the Gender Empowerment Index (GEM) is the relative share of women in administrative and managerial position (UNDP 1995). Women need to be involved in decision making process in order to bring their demands in the national agenda. In order to ensure empowerment of women in political arena, the issue of reservation of 1/3rd of the seats for women in grass root levels of the organizations was taken up by different women's organizations and social thinkers. Accordingly, the Government of India passed the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment, which was followed by the 74<sup>th</sup> amendment mandating reservation of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the seats of women in all village block and district level elected bodies.

The role of female Panchayat members in the political decision making process has been examined critically on the basis of data collection by interviewing the WER's of two blocks of East Godavari District. The present study entitled "A study on Dalit Women Participation in Panchayati Raj Institution" is a study conducted to know the extent of women's participation in decision making and stumbling blocks for women in their respective roles.

The study shows that the significant number of WERs attended Panchayat meetings regularly but few members have full freedom of speech and expression in the Panchayat meetings and they usually raise their points. Ten respondents mentioned that their views were not considered. The major reason being patriarchal set up and thereby non co-operation. As a reaction the respondents got frustrated and choose to abstain from the further meetings. However, a fraction of members from within the Panchayat thought of overcoming the awkwardness of the situation by organizing themselves to attend meetings as usual

to face and challenge the somewhat a critical face. They build confidence among themselves to establish their self-entirety. A minimal number of the WERs revealed that they no doubt received support from the government officials and administration. Whereas a majority held the opposite view reason being that the male members would not encourage any progressive measures for the women and they were not in any way prepared to reconcile with either a superior or even an equal position for their women members. However, it is gratifying to observe that women representatives ignored the non co-operative behavior of their colleagues and pushed further their own efforts to resolve the problems of the area. The data indicates how the panchyat members feel about increasing and accelerating the efficiency of working in the Panchayats. They feel that there should be practically no interference from the family and community stalling the independent functioning of the panchyat women members. The panchayat members complained that they get no assistance and help from family members in the discharge of their domestic work. A majority of the respondents revealed that financial assistance is a necessary ingredient for their self esteem, their independent functioning and their committed concern and approach to the needs and urges of the people of the area.

In conclusion it may be considered that to achieve the women empowerment, advancement can be facilitated with the co-ordination of different sections of the society such as male gentry, religious heads, political leaders who should come forward and shun their interpersonal interest even ego to understand and appreciate that the women are equally as important segments of society as men. Male chauvinism must go the sooner so much the better. Unless the male ridden society is transformed and replaced by a better socio-economic set up where men and women are equal co-workers, the future of human set up appears to be bleak.

## Suggestions

1. It is evident that men's attitude towards women's entry into politics has begun to change from that of total rejection to limited encouragement and in some cases even to active encouragement. This trend needs to be strengthened through orientation courses and training programmes for officials and elected representatives, both men and women. Besides there is a need to train the women leaders at regular intervals to enable them to manage the responsibilities assigned to them in the Panchayats at all the levels. Since the hard up women members found it difficult to forgo their wages for attending training programmes, these must be organized at their doorstep and some of the articulate Panchayat leaders should be involved as the trainers.
2. Another important effort required for real empowerment of rural women is to bring about an attitudinal change in both men and women. The feeling that women are meant for household activities and rearing children needs to be transformed into a feeling of equal partnership of women and men. To inculcate this they should be imparted education for bringing about social and political awareness among both.
3. Studies on women in politics have emphasized that contact with outside world makes women more alert and also active in the political process. There could be two ways of doing it. Firstly, interaction between enlightened rural women and illiterate elected one's should be encouraged. Secondly, these women could be taken out to the urban areas and their interaction with educated urban elected women representatives be arranged.

4. The women should also be encouraged to organize themselves. The Mahila Mandals in the village can be effectively used as instruments to mobilize them for this purpose. Some successful women's organizations can also act as catalytic agents for encouraging the women's participation in social and political activities. The Government should provide finances and infrastructure to some of the deserving and successful women organizations to take up the responsibility of encouraging the women elected representatives. The leaders of women's movement in the country could also take up this task. They too can provide support to sensitize the rural women.
5. Incentives play a vital role in ensuring the participation of elected representatives in decision-making. It has been noticed that there are certain very active and enlightened women leaders at all the levels of Panchayats, who have been successfully implementing the developmental schemes and have ensured overall development of their constituencies. Such leaders need to be encouraged by publicizing their leadership qualities and honoring them in public meetings. It will certainly encourage other women representatives and their success stories and good practices will get replicated.
6. The media both print as well as electronic can play an important role in creating awareness in the rural society. It can act as an agent of political socialization for inculcating the values of gender equality and gender justice.

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## **Phule- Ambedkarite Legacy and Analysis of Problems of Women**

*Vilas Adhav*

It is very important to take the review the strong support of Mahatma Phule and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar for the women who had protest for the suppression of women. Some Brahmins and activists from Satyashodhak movement had criticized Pandita Ramabai and Tarabai Shinde for their path breaking activities but, Phule had a severe blow though his writings in Satsar- Part- I and Satsar Part- II. He had represented the fact through his writing. Women are marginalized and living pathetic life due to not only Brahmins but the men of all castes. He has taken the side of women at first. This thought was not only for the humanist attitude or protest for practice of sati but also for the independence and end of slavery of women.

Phule says in Satsar Part- II that, “the day women of Brahmins could know about the scandals of Aryans in the puranas, they would really smash these books and puranas in the temple”. He has given the glimpse of the vibrant movement of women if they could understand the fact in the history. Phule has written in Satsar that men are shrewder, cruel and evil minded by giving some examples from history. We could find this in the history of the world and India as well. Phule says-

- Men can marry with end number of women, if he did not like first but, finding husband ill mannered or ill cultured, she is not allowed to marry another man and live in the same house. We never find this reference in the books of Aryans. So that, men are cheaters and partial.

- Do women make to dance any young and attractive man and celebrating night with him? Women never do such things.
- All the battles to win the countries have been fought by men and so lot of man power is killed in the battle. Productive life gets destroyed and families are disturbed. It gives more pain to women. These battles are the proof of cruelty of men.
- Phule gives an example from Harriet Beecher Stove's novel '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*' that the orthodox people in America and Europe continent had treated the people of Africa continent as slaves and had their business. It reveals the cruelty of men.
- The most hilarious example of cruelty of men in India is the practice of sati. This practice is not made compulsory to men in Brahmin society.

Through this projection, we realize that, Phule has taken a vibrant stand for the emancipation of women. There must be a discovery of truth for the redemption from patriarchy and exploitation. He also co-relates the government, power and slavery with war and violence which causes patriarchy and male dominated society. The innovative contribution of Phule has crossed the boundaries of time to represent the accumulative truth in the traditional and orthodox society. The society which stands on the foot of exploitation is truly male dominated and patriarchal. Resultantly, the end of exploitation and government-free society can give a blow to it. So, the end of caste and class based exploitation cannot prove as an end to this thought.

In '*Shetkaryancha Asud*', he proposes for the communal society which is without patriarchy and male dominance oriented towards democracy. The kingship has been emerged due to daring nature and dacoit's culture. The government has

emerged because of legal violence and loot. It was mostly initiated by male so, it is the beginning of patriarchy and male dominated society.

In verse '*Akhand*', he portrays the life of woman under the title '*Kulambin*' that, '*Kunbara*' a woman working tenaciously in the farm. After spends nine '*Akhand*' on this issue, he describes the negativity of Brahmin women. In thirteenth '*Akhand*' he has explained it in detail.

Mahatma Phule portrays the life and exploitation of Brahmin women who don't indulge into laborious life. He also tells the need based action to stop it for their well being. This was initiated by him personally. So, the life of Brahmin women and '*Kulambin*' (working women in farm) are different from each other in great way. This inter-difference must be noted while having the quest for exploitation of women. If these Brahmin women have to stand against this exploitation, at first they have to protest against Brahmin, caste system and economic exploitation.

If you want to create history, the approach should be innovative nevertheless it could be false one. These thoughts prove to be revolutionary as they work for the emancipation of women. We can get the way for the fight of women to eradicate the class, caste and sexual operation. All the women are oppressed but others must engage themselves into this great fight so, that it can end the oppression of women.

If we neglect history, then it is hazardous to women's liberation movement. These are some hurdles in the path of the movement so, there s a great need to cut the roots of this exploitation. Mahatma Phule has told the way to analyze this problem and solve it.

Phule has written in '*Sarvajaneek Satyadharm*' that, mother carries the child in her womb but she never does such a

politics like men so, she is called '*Abala*' (helpless woman). Here Phule has referred the word '*Abala*' for the person who is not violent, shrewd and evil minded and he has co-related this word with carrying a child for nine months in womb. Phule says, "There is an emergence of greed among men and so that it gave rise to hate and technicality which resulted into all evil and vices.

It has got premier importance to calculate the participation of men-women in producing sexual relations to bring awareness among them. This view to look at history will prove supportive for the revolutionary and materialistic history writing.

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Published quarterly by the  
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Education and Extension,  
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