

FACTORS OF INCREASING VIOLENCE AMONG SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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Abstract:

Violence has been identified as a biggest problem in our society. Any attempt to disobey the social order is met with economic retaliation is called violence. It is differentiated from injury or harm that result from unpremeditated actions and occurrences. It focuses not only on physical force but also on actual power that individuals use. Violence is defined not only as resulting in physical injury but also resulting in psychological harm, maldevelopment or impoverishment. According to 2011 Survey, Dalit Women are becoming victims of prostitution, murder, domestic violence, eve teasing, harassment etc in every 18 mins. National Crime Records Bureau Data reports that everyday more than four dalit women are being raped. Dalit people face many types of violence in comparing with other caste of people in our country. Dalit Women are exploited by upper caste of people and by the police in pursuance of their male members. This research paper is based on secondary data and has exploratory and descriptive research design. It highlights the Factors of Increasing Violence among Scheduled Caste Women.

Keywords: *Violence, Scheduled Caste, Women, Exploitation and Impoverishment.*

Introduction:

Violence is the attack which is used by an individual to convey their negative feelings such as anger, frustration or sadness to another individual. In other words, Violence can be termed as a form of manipulation for individuals to try and obtain what they want or need. Violence is defined by the **World Health Organization in the World Report on Violence and Health (WRVH)**, “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation”.

According to **Ancient Indian System**, Dalits are those people which do not belong to any of the four castes i.e., Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. They are rejected by other caste of people and do not belong to any of these impure works such as sweeping roads, cleaning toilets, removal of rubbish etc. Dalit or Scheduled Caste is a class for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchable. In India, The highest number of population of this class of people has been recorded. Scheduled Castes are those castes of people who are not only considered as untouchables but also deprived of their basic rights to life. Dalits were considered to be lower caste people.

Dalit Women are more burdened and exploited on the basis of caste, class and gender and are deprived not only by upper caste people but also by dalit males. Parliament of India has made an act for the protection of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people i.e. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. This act was implemented on 9 Sept 1989. It gives special protection and rights to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This act was formed to prevent atrocities and offences against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people. It is also called as POA (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Categories of Violence:

The WRVH divides violence in two ways:-

1. It divides violence into three categories according to who has committed the violence:
 - Self- directed Violence
 - Interpersonal Violence
 - Collective Violence
2. It divides violence into four categories according to the Nature of violence:
 - Physical Violence
 - Sexual Violence
 - Psychological Violence
 - Involving Deprivation or Neglect Violence

Prevention of Violence:

The most important outcome is to enhance the scope and to prevent its occurrence of violence. Prevention activities can be classified in three stages:

- **Primary Prevention:** It is the most effective form of prevention but also the most difficult to achieve. It aims to stop violent incidents which occur in the society. Policy initiatives to contend with poverty and inequality in relation to violence. It is acknowledged to improve outcomes for children and reduce their risk of becoming victims.
- **Secondary Prevention:** It aims to trash once harm violent incident which occurs in the society and focuses on immediate responses such as emergency services or treatment for sexually transmitted diseases such as rape. It includes interceding in situations of high risk such as minimising the risks of sexual exploitation in refugee camps, better training of protection forces and internally displaced person settings through better planning of facilities.
- **Tertiary Prevention:** It aims to behave victims in a good way and rehabilitate them. It focuses on long term care of violence such as rehabilitation and reintegration, and seeks to reduce disability and trauma. It includes psychological therapies for children, screening and support services for victims of intimate partner and domestic or family violence.

Constitutional Provisions for Scheduled Caste and Women:

The Constitution of India empowers the Scheduled Caste to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women.

- Equality before Law for women (Article 14).
- The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them (Article 15(i)).
- Abolishes Untouchability (Article 17).
- To promote Justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunity for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities (Article 39 A).
- The State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article 46).
- Not less than one- third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in the Panchayat [Article 243 D (3)].
- Not less than one- third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the scheduled castes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipalities to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in the Municipalities [Article 243 T (3)].

Special Initiatives for Women:

- National Commission for Women, 1992.
- Reservation for Women in Local- Self Government.
- The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child, (1991- 2000).
- National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001.

Significance of Study:

The status of Scheduled Caste Women has worst impact on the society. Women have to fight for their own basic rights. The Constitution of India has given equal rights to women with men. But, Women are unaware of their basic rights same as Scheduled caste women. Violence against women is the serious problem in India and scheduled caste women face much discrimination than women because they live below poverty line. Scheduled Caste Women are unaware of their social, economic and political rights.

Review of Literature:

Government of India Report (1999). Violence which serves as a pivotal social mechanism to maintain Dalit women's subordinate position in society is the essential outcome of gender-based inequalities escalated by caste system. This situation exists in India today constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination on the basis of caste and gender (Article15(1)), the right to life and security of life (Article21) and the constitutional directive to specifically protect Dalits from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article46). A key law is the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989. The presence of laws without collateral implementation to ensure personal security to Dalit women, and without concerted efforts to emancipate the Dalit community and suppress entrenched gender and caste biased conception of inequality and justice.

Visaria (1999) in his article "**Violence against Women**". He did study in Gujarat. Illiterate women were facing more violence than literate women. He has been found the relationship between abusive behavior and level of education. The percentage of literate women is between 20% to 50% in Gujarat except Banas Kantha. The total percentage of literate women is lesser than 20% in Banas Kantha (kutch). The main focus of the study is wife battering. His findings point out that husband's occupation, employment of women and family income were not co-related with wife battering. Some of the worst forms of violence reported in her study as beating with sticks or iron rod, knives, blades, utensils, bushing their heads against the walls and throwing women against objects. In addition, Men were kicked or forced women for doing sexual intercourse were reported by 10% of the women. They concluded that some of the women who have hitted and injuries in their private parts cannot notice by anyone and they would be ashamed to talk about it.

UNICEF (2000) discussed the burden of domestic violence globally and its implications over the women and highlighted that how the women face various forms of discrimination in her life. Violence against women is considered as a global epidemic by which the victim women face different forms of violence such as physical, psychological, sexual abuse and torture and death. Women are deprived from equality, security, dignity, self-worth and their right to enjoy fundamental freedom due to this violation. Some forms of violence exist across the culture, class, education and age. It is shocking that all form of violence prevails between 20-50 percentages of women who experiencing violence from close relationship.

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women (2001). The Indian Government has recognized the empowerment of underprivileged groups such as Dalits and Women as priority strategies for development of the nation in its 10th Five Year Plan 2002-2007. All forms of violence against women and the girls, which is primary objective of the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in striving to bridge the gap between de jure equal status and de facto gender inequality as the National Policy of the States. All forms of violence against women, physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels dealt with a view to abolish its occurrence. A special emphasis will be laid on programmes and measures to deal with trafficking on women and girls.

Irudayam, Mangubai and Lee (2006) in their book “**Dalit Women Speak Out: Violence against Dalit Women in India**”. They did a study of 500 women from 32 panchayats unions/blocks in 17 districts of four states namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. It showed that the most frequent forms of violence committed on Dalit women. These forms included verbal abuse (62.4%), physical assault (54.8%), sexual harassment and assault (46.8%), domestic violence (43%) and rape (23.2%). Other forms of Violence were included as forced sex work, kidnapping, sexual exploitation and child sexual abuse. They said that business persons, police officials and dominant caste landlords who impose violence on dalit women. They concluded that in 40.2% of the cases, women were unable to get justice from the law and community while only in 1.6% of the cases; women were able to get informal form of justice.

Ramakrishna and Mahaprashata (2009) in their “**Anti-sikh Violence**”. They took a study of 500 Dalit women from Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. They presented a shocking picture of the conditions of Dalit women. Dalit Women face the worst atrocities. A research study conducted by the NCDHIR (Dalit Women Speak Out) 2006. The study showed different forms of violence such as physical, sexual and mental forced on Dalit women. They called for comprehensive measures to be put in place to eliminate caste discrimination and violence against Dalit women with measures to help Dalit women to achieve their rights.

Research Methodology:

This research is based on Secondary Data sources collected from different published papers. The secondary data are conducted and collected from various sources like books, articles and research journals. This research has descriptive and exploratory study. It explains the factors of increasing Violence among Scheduled Caste women.

Objectives:

1. To explore the Causes of Violence among Scheduled Caste Women.
2. To identify the Factors of Increasing Violence among Scheduled Caste Women.

Causes of Violence among Scheduled Caste Women:

Gender Inequality, Discrimination and Lack of Power, Poverty and Unemployment, Illiteracy and Women's Position in the Family are the Causes of Violence among Scheduled Caste Women. These are following:

1. **Gender Inequality:** Gender Inequality is a crucial reality. It has been a social issue in India. For the Centuries, The birth of the male is being celebrated while the birth of a female filled with pain. Males are encouraged to be tough and outgoing but females are encouraged to be shy and homebound. All these gender differences are gender inequalities and they are created by society.
2. **Discrimination and Lack of Power:** Discrimination is the unjustified treatment of different categories of people on the basis of gender, caste, class of other people. The issue of Caste discrimination occurs in Scheduled Caste (men and women). Discrimination against Scheduled Caste in the labor market and workplace as they are less educated and unaware about their rights. They have lack of power to fight with upper caste people.
3. **Poverty and Unemployment:** Poverty is a condition in which a person or community lacks the financial resources and standard of living. It is one of the widespread socio-economic problems. It is closely related with unemployment. Unemployment is concerned with those men and women, who constitute the labor force, are able-bodied and willing to work but are not fully employed. Every third person belong to the scheduled castes are poor. Poor not only on income basis but also on nutrition, health, education and living standards.
4. **Illiteracy:** Illiteracy is prevalent among the Scheduled Caste Women in rural areas. Families are less willing to educate girls. They give more importance to boys for providing facilities and education, good clothing, but not to speak of other things. Therefore, women face struggle against discrimination within the family. When they grow up they face discrimination from within and outside the family. Hence, they suffer discrimination or exploitation throughout their life.

5. **Women's Position in the Family:** Women perform various roles as a wife, partner, mother, teacher, disciplinarian, organizer in the family. They have performed more roles than men but occupy second position after men and do not have equal right to take the decision. This position creates discrimination between man and woman.

Factors of Increasing Violence:

Risk Factors:

A variety of factors occur at the individual, relationship, community and society (including the institutional/state) levels intersect to increase the risk of violence for scheduled caste women. Risk Factors for both intimate partner and sexual violence. These Factors include:

- Lower levels of Education.
- Witnessing Family Violence.
- Harmful use of Alcohol.
- Anti-social Personality Disorder.
- Community Norms that benefit higher status to men and lower status to women since birth.
- Low levels of Women's access to paid Employment.
- Women's membership in marginalized or excluded groups.
- Limited Economic Opportunities.
- Conflict and Tension within an intimate partner relationship or marriage.
- Attitudes and Practices that reinforce female subordination and tolerate male violence (eg. dowry, bride price, child marriage).
- Low levels of Awareness against violence.

Protective Factors:

That reduce scheduled caste women and girls' risk of violence include:

- Completion of Secondary Education.
- Social Norms that promote Gender Equality.
- Women's Economic Autonomy and access to skills training, credit and employment.
- Quality Response Services (Judiciary, Security, Protection, Social and Medical) staffed with knowledgeable, skilled and trained personnel.
- Access to support Excluded Groups for scheduled caste women.
- Availability of safe spaces or shelters.

Steps have to be taken to protect Scheduled Caste Women:

There are many steps which have to be taken to protect them such as:

1. Effective implementation of government policies made for the Dalits. But, Dalits are not aware for it and not getting benefit of all of them. Therefore, proper implementation is necessary.
2. Government should take effective policies to eliminate caste based conflicts and discrimination and to enact strict rules.
3. Mass campaign programme which will spread knowledge about rights and freedoms of Dalit women. Mass campaign programmes by media and NGOs will add to the efforts of government to remove caste based violence.
4. Limited use or prohibition on alcoholic drinks as they work as catalyst in increasing violence. More strict rules should be made for consumption and use of alcoholic drinks.
5. Making effectiveness policies to increase literacy rate in Dalit women. Rules have been made for free education to children and to spread literacy.

Conclusion:

The situation of Dalit women in India is becoming worst day by day and its needs immediate attention of Government of India. There are many policies being made for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people but there is no policy among Scheduled Caste women to solve the problems of them and therefore it has become mandatory to enact such policies.

Violence against scheduled caste women can be domestic as well as public, physical, emotional or mental. Women have fear of violence in their mind which causes lack of participation in various fields of life. Fear of violence has been intense which cannot be out easily in their mind even after complete removal of violence against scheduled caste women in the society. Violence against scheduled caste women is rooted in gender-based discrimination and gender stereotypes that perpetuate such violence. Violence against dalit women in the country is getting more frequent. It is creating pressure and heavy responsibility over the shoulders of every citizen. However, there is urgent need for women to be empowered and responsible to themselves to understand all the rights and take benefits.

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