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## Analyzing the Roots and Responses of Gendered Injustice towards Women in Gujarat

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**



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### Abstract

*According 2011 census 20% population of this caste of people have been recorded in India. Dalits are those caste of people who are not only considered as untouchable but there are also unseen, deprived of their basic right to life. Although, in modern times, their rights and necessities are seriously being considered by the Government of India and many rules and regulations have been made to protect people who are called Dalits and women from this caste are more burdened and discriminated on the basis of caste, class and gender. They had been discriminated many times on the basis of gender and were used by almost all class of people including Dalits itself. All human being we got multitude by human rights but dalit women have multitude of duties compare to other class they are economically deprived socially, culturally mired by thousands*

*of supersites and blind beliefs due to illiteracy and politically they don't have any voice due to lack of representation. This paper exposes the original facts and reveals the issues concern with dalit women like violence and the role played by the N.G.Os as well as Government policies in dissolving the problems of Dalit women. This paper prepared on the basis of secondary data like article of news paper, Government reports, books etc. In this paper also suggest some alternatives to combat violation of their right for social justice and equality.*

### Key Words

*Dalit Women, Violence, Social Justice, Equality*

### Introduction

The Vedas glorified women as a mother, they are creator, Devi or Goddess. But their glorification was only mythical, there was no equality given to the women. For example, Yajnavalkya threatened Gargi with cutting her throat and silenced her in the course of a discourse when he saw he could be defeated. (K.C Das; Dalit Empowerment; page no. 184)

In modern India, women faces discrimination at all levels in the society. Their status show poor at everywhere at social level, at political level, health level, educational level even they declining ratio to men. Day by day's crimes has been increasing in the society such as rape, dowry-deaths, murders etc; after 68 years of Independence of India, the Dalit or Scheduled Caste(SC) women are suffer violence's. That violence's meet out from other dominant communities as well as their own caste and family also.

In 2001, on the occasion of Republic Day our President “K.R.NARAYAN” addressed that, though untouchability was abolished by law its shadow was inherent in the outlook sustained by caste system. He deplored that Dalit women were being subjected to most degraded forms of violence, and indignities by the upper caste men.”

Indian history shows that, Dalit class always face the discrimination in the society due to caste system. Historically the caste system classified people by their occupation and status.

Dalit who constitute 20% of the total Indian population, but still they don't get equality in the society. Dalit or Scheduled Caste (SC) women, suffered with triple burden. First she is a woman, she is a Dalit woman and she belongs from lower class of the society. Caste, Class and Gender all three factors affect to women and she became a victim of the violence. It is very true that in a male dominated community women always suffer from the violence, harassment or discrimination but Dalit women suffer more violence rather than other upper caste women.

Legally untouchability in India was prohibited by the constitution. Under the Act there is a penalty and punishment for such a discrimination. But still in India practice is going on, because there is no attitudinal change in upper caste people. Every time Dalit faced the discrimination, their houses burnt, Dalit women always became a victim of the violence.

According to National Crime Research Bureau 2001; data shows that 1000 cases of sexual exploitation of Dalit Women are reported annually.

(UN WOMEN 2011) had done study about the violence against the women in world and they reported that, violence against women in India is very high.

## Global Scenario of Violence Against Women

**Table 1: Violence against women in a comparative perspective**

Country	Proportion of women (%) who have experienced, within their lifetime		
	Sexual violence by intimate partner	Physical violence by intimate partner	Sexual and/or physical violence by anyone
Australia	8.0	25.0	57.0
Bangladesh	17.8	48.7	n/a
China	n/a	15.4	n/a
Denmark	6.0	20.0	50.0
Egypt	21.7	33.2	n/a
Finland	4.3	17.6	43.5
Germany	7.0	23.0	40.0
<b>India</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>35.4</b>
Kenya	17.2	37.0	45.1
Poland	5.0	15.0	17.0
South Africa	4.4	12.5	n/a
United Kingdom	3.8	18.9	n/a
United States	7.7	22.1	55.0
Vietnam	9.9	32.0	38.5

[Source: UN WOMEN (2011)]

Above table shows that in India, one in every ten women reported facing sexual violence by their husbands during their life time. Report shows that 35.4% of the women had experienced sexual or physical violence, during their lifetime by anyone.

We can see that it's violence against women in India then we can imagine the situation of dalit women it is worst situation and very surprisingly Very few studies had done about violence against Dalit Women.

During 1995-2005 A joint study had done by "National Federation of Dalit Women and Institute of Development Education Action and Studies (IDEAS)", in four states (Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu and Bihar). This study had based on 500 in-dept case studies. There were some indicators for category of various level of violence against women. That are as follows; forms and manifestations, frequency, caste and social status of preparations, causes, effects and responses to violence against Dalit women over the study period.

When analyse reveal the multiple layers of violence that pervade their lives and Dalit women endure violence in both that is in public sphere and private spheres.

According to this study 12 major forms of violences constitute like:

- Nine(9) being in the "Public" sphere - Physical assault, rape, sexual harassment and assault, rape, sexual abduction, forced incarceration and medical negligence and Three (3) falling within the "private" sphere – female foeticide and infanticide, child sexual abuse within the family and domestic violence.
- Among the frequent forms of violence were verbal abuse (62.4%), physical assault (54.8%), sexual harassment and assault (46.8%), domestic violence (43.0%) and , rape (23.2%).
- Meera Anand wrote a book of "Dalit women fear and discrimination" . in this book she quoted that, atrocity on dalit women are in increasing trend. They are victims of landlord, police, and goondism. In all instances of caste system, dalit women became victimized.
- There were also some cases of discrimination faced by the Dalit women elected representatives also. Due to reservation she became Sarpanch but people can't accept her and always denied her decisions at every level, even she could not have a right to sit in a chair, because she is dalit. Dalit women face several barriers in accessing their rights.
- A study done by Navsarjan N.G.O on atrocity data obtained through RTI on Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamilnadu found that between December (2004-2009), "there were convictions in only 0.79 percent of cases (there cases) of violence by non-dalits across the three states. But very surprisingly in Gujarat there were no conviction at all". So, we can see that even judicatory systems has not working properly for them.
- In Gujarat Dalit women faces worst condition, they become the target of upper caste men outside, and at home from their family members. According to the Navsarjan organizations study, In a year 2004 and 2009, there were 379 cases of violence against Dalit women by non-dalits. However, the outcomes of only 101 cases (26.6%) was known to have been decided in year 2011, so even Judiciary system is also not functioning properly for them.
- One more study had done by Navsarjan NGO at (Tamil nadu ,Gujarat and Maharashtra) study shows that , there were 76 reported cases of rape or gang rape (20 in Gujarat, 35 in Maharashtra and 21 in Tamilnadu). On other side violence on Dalit Women by the community itself (including their family) 15 women being murdered and 37 cases of rape or gang rape were reported.
- UN special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that, "Dalit women face targeted violence even rape and murder by the state authorities and powerful members of dominant castes used to inflict political lessons and crush dissent with the community.
- In India, Dalit women are often met with violence when attempting to assert their rights in areas such as access to housing, drinking water, the public distribution system (PDS), education or open spaces for open defecation. In a study on 'untouchability' in 1589 villages in Gujarat, the NGO Navsarjan Trust found that Dalits were not allowed to fetch water from a tap in a non-Dalit area in 71.4 per cent of these villages. In 66.2 per cent of them, non-Dalit midwives refused service to Dalit women.

- One of the many unnecessary hardships of a Dalit woman's life is being denied access to basic services particularly maternal health services. In another study conducted by Navsarjan Trust, the findings showed that 46.5 per cent of Dalit women never received the legally required antenatal and postnatal visits. Worse, 54.8 per cent of pregnant women and new mothers from the Valmiki sub-caste, who are traditionally manual scavengers, reported never receiving antenatal or postnatal care visits.
- In Hindu Times Newspaper reported that, "In Gujarat's Mehasana District, Dalits cannot sell milk to cooperatives because it comes from "Dalit" cows".
- The study, "Gender – violence and Access to Justice for the Dalit women: Final Report December 2011", it has focused on three districts of Rajkot, Kutch and Bhavnagar. It covers the atrocities cases on Dalit women registered from (2004-2009), the report says that; 50.27% of crimes by non-dalits on dalit women.
- Due to economic inequality, many women are victims of trafficking or compelled to practice prostitutions. The lack of economic opportunities is a major factor that has exacerbated domestic violence against women. Because of their financial dependency, women are forced to endure mental and physical abuse.

**Table 2:** Atrocities Act cases against Dalits Registered in 22 Districts of Gujarat, 30th January 1989 to 31st December 2006

District	Atrocity Act cases against Dalits		Rape and murder cases against Dalit women			Deputy Superintendent of Police led investigations	
	Ranked by greatest number of Atrocity cases	Total Atrocity Cases against Dalits	Ranked by Greatest number of rape and murder cases	Rape cases	Murder cases	Total Atrocity cases led by Dy. S. P.	Percent of Atrocity cases led by Dy. S.P.
Banaskantha	I	2177	4	30	16	1156	67%
Ahmedabad	II	1678	8	15	11	378	23%
Kutch	III	1651	1	43	29	1234	15%
Rajkot	IV	1631	2	33	27	834	52%
Junagadh	V	1257	5	26	18	656	52%
Surendranagar	VI	1253	18	9	9	1005	80%
Vadodara	VII	1124	7	19	16	885	79%
Patan	VIII	1041	10	13	10	306	29%
Bhavnagar	IX	820	6	22	18	650	79%
Sabarkantha	X	755	17	10	3	186	25%
Surat	XI	749	3	35	18	655	87%
Godhra	XII	697	16	11	3	254	36%
Anand	XIII	657	13	11	7	629	96%
Kheda	XIV	634	11	14	8	619	98%
Jamnagar	XV	579	9	18	6	542	93%
Gandhinagar	XVI	577	14	10	5	471	82%
Amreli	XVII	532	11	8	14	264	50%
Valsad	XVIII	370	20	2	3	155	42%
Narmada	XIX	302	21	0	0	157	52%
Dahod	XX	242	14	10	5	117	48%
Navsari	XXI	240	21	0	0	105	44%
Porbandar	XXII	162	19	5	2	85	52%
TOTAL		19080		344	228	11612	61%

**Note:** Ahmedabad City, Mehsana, Bharuch, Dang and Ahwa are not included in this information.  
Source: Information collected from the District Superintendent Police Offices of Gujarat

This table shows the scenario of violence against dalit women in Gujarat. That total cases of Atrocities of 61% during the year 1989-2006. It has registered cases but many more are not registered and they never get any justice also.

## Conclusion

It is very clear that Dalit women are facing various kinds of violence on their human rights, that figures also shows that among to all the varied violence that rape-brutal sexual violence is the most.

Issues of Dalit women have remained largely unexplored by academic, feminist organizations and other human rights groups in India. The intersection at which Dalit women are placed often creates further challenges to visibilize the issues of violence within mainstream frameworks of analysis and action. In January, 2013, the European Parliaments adopted a resolution on violence against women in India which include several references to caste discrimination and the situation of Dalit women in India. The resolution expresses “ deep concern about the widespread violence committed against Dalit women and girls in India, including sexual harassment committed by men of dominant castes and their class.

To understand the root cause of the situation it is essential to examine basic factors responsible for their vulnerability. In order to identify the issues of violence, the reality of Indian society in general, and the Dalit community and Dalit women in particular, an analysis of caste-class-gender dynamics is very critical and very essential.

India is a male dominated society and its impact shows is seen in every aspects of life beginning from Female foeticides, discrimination of girl children, dowry related deaths, rapes and murders, and gender based violence across the nation.

Dalit women are in worst situation , than Dalits in general, in terms of sex ratio, wages, employment, occupational aspects, educational, health, social mobility and political participation. The recent year has also seen a rising the degree of violence is increasing and dalit women activist are also at greater risk. They have been silenced using various forms of pressure and violence including threats, kidnapping and sexual violence.

## Suggestions

1. There should be information dissemination about the SC/ST (POA)Act and the existing legal services available to Dalit women.
2. There is a extreme need to create awareness of laws, acts like (POA) 1989.
3. Legal services authorities should be appointed in every block as it has been done in some states.
4. There should be special provisions for the rehabilitation of Dalit women, which would be different from that provided for women in general, as the problems in rehabilitating Dalit women are entirely different.
5. Short stay homes should be created for temporarily rehabilitating dalit women who are going through the trauma of violence and fighting for justice. These homes should fund by the State, but should be run by the State along with NGOs and other such organizations.
6. In Gujarat GRC (Gender Resource Center) is working at Government level. And Navsarjan is specially working for Dalit Women.
7. Set up village level Human Rights Committees for to protect violence against women and Dalits.
8. Visits and fact finding team which is set up by Governments.
9. Organized public mass gathering (or awareness programmes)
10. Activist training of NGO's. give education to women about legal awareness .
11. Special fast track courts for the women violence and Dalit atrocity cases.

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