

A Sociological Study of Dalit Women Administration in Rural Gujarat

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Abstract – *There are huge quantities of studies directed and distributed in the space of PRIs which recommend that sacred alterations and formal guidelines like the 73rd Amendment concerning the support of the denied segments like Dalits and ladies insignificantly affect the working of the Panchayat. It is additionally clear that the arrangement of neighborhood self-government in the provincial India has aided such segments of the general public to make their essence in nearby political foundations. Be that as it may, the aggregate endeavors of the underlined writing come up short on much related point of view regarding the political strengthening of Dalit ladies specifically and at a huge setting of more fragile segments overall. The ideal technique would consequently be to guarantee that more fragile gatherings are engaged and imbalanced to challenge the prevailing gatherings. Really at that time would the Panchayat be able to turn into the great and compelling gatherings to guarantee developing of a vote based system at the grass root level.*

Keywords – Sociological Study, Dalit Women, Rural

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INTRODUCTION

A nation or society can foster just when all kinds of people contribute similarly. Yet, different social, political and monetary makes power ladies stay out of contributory job in India. Panchayati Raj establishments have allowed sufficient degree and opportunities to ladies to partake in governmental issues. India is a nation of towns. A large portion of individuals of India live in towns. Greater part of populace lives in the rustic regions where Panchayat assumes the main part in direction.

In India, the ladies from the rustic region are in the edges with regards to political investment and portrayal. The Dalit ladies from rustic India have scarcely any say in the dynamic interaction and the job that they play is slowly oppressed to their male partners. In India there is arrangement of reservation which empowers Dalits to have seats in the Local Self-government. It has been seen that the Dalit ladies endeavoring for useful use of force face rank barbarities, constrained decisions coming full circle in fierce persecution.

The town local area can thrive considerably on the off chance that there would be cooperative energy. Mahatma Gandhi, perhaps the most regarded heads of Indium had an exceptionally clear impression of towns and made a distinct statement that "India doesn't live in its towns yet in its towns (Joshi, 2002). He, in this way, noticed: "Genuine majority rule government can't be worked by twenty men sitting at

the middle. It must be worked from underneath by individuals of each town." In Village Swaraj, the town being the littlest decentralized political unit is granted with most extreme powers. It is essential that in such an arrangement of Swaraj every single individual would have an immediate voice in the public authority. It is essential to take note of that the individual is the planner of his own administration. The public authority of the Before 70 to 80 years Gandhiji assumed a significant part in the advancement of towns. Mahatma Gandhi set forward different kinds of ideas about provincial advancement giving perspectives on friendly issues. Gandhi used to tell that distance is an injury on mankind.

PR in India has a long history with its starting point in the Freedom Movement most observably and intensely by Gandhiji, definitively in a Gandhian Constitution for Independent India which was composed by Shriman Narayan Agarwal, with a Foreword by Gandhiji where the writer guarantees the peruser that the thoughts in the book are his own thoughts. While Gandhian understanding of town swaraj repeats the accentuation on the independence and opportunity to the town republics, the other huge point of view for example the Ambedkarite viewpoint contract the possibility the town to only a cave of obliviousness and sink of localism given the harsh standing construction that conspicuously rules the financial status of the minimized networks.

Dalit Women

The plight of the Dalit women can be discussed in the backdrop of triple burden of caste, class and gender. Untouchability is acute in villages. Rural Dalit women experience rampant gender and caste discrimination. A severely imbalanced equation of social, economic and political power results in violence. Dalit women are placed at the extreme bottom of caste, class and gender hierarchies in the South Asian context. In India, Dalits who are known as Scheduled Castes 1 in accordance with their constitutional status constitute one sixth of the population. It is a matter of great concern that they are constantly discriminated against despite the constitutional ban on 'untouchability', and the representation of definite legislations such as the Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955 and also the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 with its amendment in 2015.

From the anthropological point of view, tribes in India appear to be gradually merging with the caste system. DR. Ghurey has said that some of the Hindu castes living on the plain are not at all different from the Hindu tribe in terms of language, economy, and religion. In fact he calls them backwards Hindus. The difference between tribe and caste can be tribe live in isolated places in mountains, hilly areas whereas castes live in towns and villages. On the religious basis, religion of tribal is totemism whereas caste is Hinduism. In caste ritualism forms a necessary part of religion. It is known that each tribe has its own dialect but not a caste. Tribals represent the most poorest and backward section than many low caste Hindus. However, an important difference is shown regarding caste and tribe by Max Weber that status of all people is more or less similar in a caste whereas much differentiation of status and rank is found in the tribe. In caste occupation are mostly hereditary. But in a tribe though occupational choice is limited, individuals are not very much compelled to follow a particular occupation. Herbert Risley has found that many tribes convert themselves to caste by accepting the principle of any school of Hinduism or by entering into relations with Hindus without changing one's name.

It is quite apparent that the Dalit women get victimised by multiple forms of discrimination i.e. their social positioning as Dalits, their financial vulnerability as poor, and above all as women. The Indian caste system proclaims Dalit women to be innately impure and 'untouchable'. This further results in extreme form of social exclusion and thereby exploitation from various angles. The socio-economic vulnerability and the lack of political voice combined with the dominant risk factors of being Dalit and at the same time being female. The adversities of Dalit women are not only due to their deplorable economic status or lack of education, but are a result of the stark exploitation by the upper

classes, which is a practice legitimized by Hindu religious doctrines. It is apparent that due to poverty and lack of education female infanticide is more prevalent among the uneducated Dalit families. Educational development among SC women is very bordering because only girls were not sent to school because of the responsibilities at home. Therefore the gender discrimination starts at the very early stage in the life of a Dalit girl.

The forms of discrimination which Dalits face in everyday life such as the 'unclean' occupations open to them, the triple burden of Dalit women, who suffer gender, class and caste discrimination, the upper-caste violence with which any Dalit self-assertion is met. Dalit efforts to overcome deeply entrenched caste hierarchies and assert their right to live with dignity. While the evidence presented here suggests that the more blatant and extreme forms of untouchability appear to have declined, discrimination continues and is most prevalent in the religious and personal spheres. The notion of untouchability continues to pervade the public sphere, including a host of state institutions and the interactions that occur within them. There does not appear to be ample number of qualitative studies on Dalit women elected representatives experiences within the caste-class-gender nexus thus the intersections between the social construct of gender, economic class, political participation and caste still needs to be essentially explored.

The Situation of Dalit Rural Women

In Indian rural society a larger proportion of Dalit women are disadvantaged, landless wage labourers lacking access to basic minimum resources. They are subdued by patriarchal structures, both in the community in general and within their own family in particular. The forms of caste based and gender based violence and barbaric, inhuman treatment culminating in the forms of sexual oppression, rape and even naked parading are practiced by the upper class or castes as a mechanism in Indian society to maintain the subordinate position of the Dalit women in society. The dominant castes target them as one of the many ways of humiliating the Dalit community in general. The concept of "Dominant caste" was propounded by M.N. Srinivas. It was for the first time appeared in his essay on the social system of a Mysore village called Rampura and the finding was first reported in 1955. According to Srinivas a caste is dominant when wields economic or political power and occupies a fairly higher position in the caste hierarchy. Srinivas says that the existence of dominant caste is not particular to Rampura only. It is found in other villages of the country also. For instance, in Mysore villages, Lingayat and Okkaliga; in Andhra Pradesh, Reddy and Kamma, in Tamilnadu, Gounder, Padayachi and Mudaliar; in Kerala, Nayar; in Maharashtra, Maratha; in

Gujrat, Pati-dar; and in northern India, Rajput, Jat, Giyar and Ahir are dominant castes. It was in 1962 that M.N. Srinivas specified the following three characteristics of a dominant caste:

- i. A caste dominates when it wields economic and political power.
- ii. It has high rank in caste hierarchy.
- iii. It has numerical strength.

Rural Local Self-Government

The three tier system at the three levels: Gram Panchayat (Village level), Panchayat Samiti (Block level) and Zilla Parishad (District level) have been instrumental in deciding the nature and direction of the prospects of rural development in India. The passage of the constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 marked a new era in the federal democratic set up of India. It provided the much needed constitutional sanction to the local government in the form of the PRIs for functioning as an organic and integral part of the nation's democratic process. The 73rd and 74th amendments of the Constitution were passed by Parliament in December, 1992. The constitution of India addressed the issues of women's development through special provisions for women.

The women in general represent one of the marginalised sections in the Indian society. But the socio-cultural experiences among women; especially the Dalit women are not similar from the non-Dalit women. The constitutional provisions and legal devices thus would be of major importance in case of the Dalit women in their fight against oppression at all levels. Before 73rd amendment act it was very difficult for Dalit women to participate in politics. In this background, 73rd Amendment of the constitution has given new decision making process at grass root level as forerunners of the development.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. Study on Conceptualizing Dalit Women
2. Study on Rural Local Self-Government

METHODOLOGY

Dalit women constitute 16.3 percent of the entire Indian female population (2001 Census). They are discriminated both by the people of higher castes and by the members of their own communities (Ruth Manorama, 2005). The life of Dalit women is now being seriously affected by decisions pertaining to macro-political and economic areas leading to the increase in conflict and violence resulting in severe social insecurity. In our country Dalit women have suffered for centuries. They are placed at the very bottom of India's caste, class and gender

hierarchies. The Dalits remained socially out caste, economically dependent, politically powerless and culturally backward. In a male dominated society, Dalit women are suffered unimaginable oppression, not only by caste discrimination but also by gender oppression.

DATA ANALYSIS

The study of any society essentially involves the study of its demographic characteristics which play a vital role in understanding the nature of society as they provide the basic insights for the socio-economic analysis. The sociological studies concentrate on much of their efforts to understand the basic demographic features such as age, sex, numerical size, linguistic composition, civil conditions, income, household size, rural-urban distribution of the population, occupational distribution and patterns, density and literacy level in order to provide scientific base to their studies in a given society. These details unquestionably help not only in finding facts about the nature and content of interpersonal interactions in society but also provide answers to questions that may arise in the course of scientific investigation. In the Indian context, in addition to the above fundamental demographic features, the social aspects like religion and composition across sub castes of the population also serve as basic variables in the scientific investigation.

The enhancement of power of negotiation for Dalits due to reservation in PRIs is indeed a step forward that helps them to assert their positions in the PR system in an emphatic manner. The Indian villages are embodiment of social inequality. During the course of the debate in the constituent assembly the liberalists and democrats led by Nehru supported Ambedkar and finally the Drafting Committee accepted individuals as the basic unit of governance. Traditionally, leadership in the village was confined to 'rural elites' who were, generally speaking. Aged and moderately educated, belonging to the higher castes with links to state political leaders and bureaucracy (Chakraborty and Bhattacharya, 1993).

Age, Marital Status and Nature of Family

Age is a significant demographic variable which essentially influences the demographic composition and structure. It also influences other factors like education, employment, marriage, retirement, occupational composition work force, death rate and certain social and cultural activities of the community. In the context of this study it is important to reflect upon the age of the EDWRs during the year she got elected. Moreover, the marital status play a decisive role in their functioning as a member in PRIs given the gender roles they perform in their own family as a female member of the household. In the marginalized Dalit

community there also remains utmost pressure on the parents of the girl child to get their married at an early age which have been a prevalent observation among the Dalit community in the rural areas. Apart from the above, another indicator which plays a vital role and has a significant impact on the functioning of the EDWRs is the nature of their family. It could be observed that those who belong to the joint family get insurmountable pressure of meeting the demands of the patriarchal institution being a female member whereas there is a difference in case of those who belong to the nuclear family.

Table 1: Association between the position of EDWRs and the age during their election

Year	Age during election	Position				Total	Pearson Chi-square	Sig.
		Ward Member	Sarpanch	Panchayat Samiti Member	Zilla Parishad Member			
1997	up to 30	4	3	2	1	10	3.679	0.72*
		40.0%	30.0%	20.0%	10.0%	100.0%		
	31-40	5	1	1	0	7		
		71.4%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%		
	41 and above	2	0	0	0	2		
2002	up to 30	7	0	2	1	10	9.081	0.169
		70.0%	0.0%	20.0%	10.0%	100.0%		
	31-40	6	3	2	0	11		
		54.5%	27.3%	18.2%	0.0%	100.0%		
	41 and above	0	2	1	0	3		
2007	up to 30	3	1	1	1	6	11.075	0.086
		50.0%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%		
	31-40	4	5	3	0	12		
		33.3%	41.7%	25.0%	0.0%	100.0%		
	41 and above	8	0	1	0	9		
2012	up to 30	3	2	0	0	5	4.607	0.595
		60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%		
	31-40	8	5	5	1	19		
		42.1%	26.3%	26.3%	5.3%	100.0%		
	41 and above	8	1	4	1	14		
Total	up to 30	17	6	5	3	31	6.63	0.356
		54.8%	19.4%	16.1%	9.7%	100.0%		
	31-40	23	14	11	1	49		
		46.9%	28.6%	22.4%	2.0%	100.0%		
	41 and above	18	3	6	1	28		

The Table 1 indicates the age of the elected Dalit women representatives during their election. It can be observed that out of the total elected representatives those who come under the are age group of 30 years, 54.8 per cent are ward members, 19.4 per cent are Sarpanch, 16.1 per cent are Panchayat Samiti members, whereas 9.7 per cent are Zilla Parishad members. The year wise analysis indicates that under the age group of 30 years the proportion of ward members has increased from 40 per cent in 1997 to 70 per cent in 2002. In the subsequent elections of 2007 and 2012 this proportion remain 50 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. Moreover, while analysing the representation of the candidates with respect to the age group of 31 to 40 years it could be found that the ward members constitute 71.4 per cent of the total elected representatives under this age group in 1997. In the year 2012 out of the total the candidates

belonging to the category of 31 years to 40 years, the proportion across the four categories of representatives starting from ward members to the Zilla Parishad members were 42.1 percent, 26.3 percent 26.3 percent and 5.3 percent respectively. These data across the year indicates that there is substantial representation of youth among the elected Dalit women representatives.

They have a vision to be an active part in the process of grass root level democratic process in the three tier PRS. The representatives who are young and enthusiastic have been able to assert their voices of concern through their representation at the levels of GP, PS and ZP. They have been able to connect with the people in their locality by virtue of their youthful vigour and enthusiastic spirit adopting a participatory approach towards rural development at the grass root level PRS. Apart from the above, the data also indicates that there is a wide acceptance of the PR representatives who belong to the age group of less than 30 years which again constitute the highest percentage of young Dalit women elected with the public opinion in favour of them.

The elected Dalit women representatives were of the opinion that the PRIs have been phenomenal to get themselves engaged in their youth while helping them to act as agents of transformation in the rural areas by actively participating in the development programmes. Apart from the above the prospect of being representatives in the institutions of rural local self-government provides them an opportunity to express their opinion on the issues of public importance as in the sectors of health, sanitation and education comprising the core of development issues in the village. The representatives also assert that they have been able to win the trust of the elderly people in the village as the youth PRI members have been successfully meeting their demands in the areas of PDS, old age pension, insurance schemes etc. which further creates an ambience of hope among the elderly members of the village community with respect to the youth leadership. There exists an aspiration among the youth representatives which drives them towards transforming the lives of the poor and especially people belonging to the marginalized communities in the areas through the process of democratic participation.

CONCLUSION

In India, the women from the rural area are in the margins when it comes to political participation and representation. The Dalit women from rural India have hardly any say in the decision making process and the role that they play is gradually subjugated to their male counterparts. In India there is system of reservation which enables Dalits to possess seats in the Local Self-government. It has been witnessed that the Dalit

women attempting for constructive utilisation of power face caste atrocities, forced choices culminating in violent oppression.

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