



DALIT AND SCHEDULED TRIBE WOMEN IN INDIA

Dr. Sunita Pandro
Social Scientist And Tribal ,
Women Specialisation Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.



ABSTRACT:-

This Dalit and Scheduled Tribe(ST/ADIVASI) women in india have historically faced a unique “triple burden”of oppression bases on caste/tribe gender and class. Despite this, they have been active agents of change, resistance, and social reform.

Here is summary of the historical social and political context of dalit and ST women.

I. Historical context and struggles

- **systemic marginalization:-** Historically, Dalit Women were subjected to extreme forms of Untouchability and social exclusion.

Dalit and Tribe ST women In India face Severe intersectional discrimination based on caste, class, and gender, placing them at the bottom of social hierarchies. They suffer from extreme poverty, high rates of illiteracy (76.24% for Dalit women) and limited access to healthcare, Leading to high maternal mortality. They are disproportionately represented as landless agricultural Labours, often in unorganized sectors without Legal benefits, and frequently subjected to sexual violence, exploitation, and social exclusion.

➤ Key aspects of the situation for Dalit and Scheduled Tribe women includes-

- **Multiple discrimination:-** They experience a unique form of oppression, often described as a "triple burden" as women, as poor, and as members of marginalized communities.
- **Economic Vulnerability:-** A large number of These women are landless wage labours or work in the unorganized sector with low wages.
- **Population a Marginalization:-** There are approximately 9.79 crore Dalit women, facing deep-rooted discrimination and social exclusion. Adivasis or indigenous peoples, often face exclusion from mainstream society.
- **Triple Burden:-** These women face intersecting Vulnerabilities patriarchy within their communities, caste-based oppression from dominant castes, and economic marginalization.
- **Violence and atrocities:-** Reports indicate a rise in atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis, with women often bearing the brunt of sexual violence which is sometimes used as a tool of oppression.
- **Health and Nutrition:-** 56% of Dalit women and 59% of tribal women are anemic, with many suffering from severe hunger and malnutrition, particularly exacerbated during crises like the pandemic.

- **Education and Employment:-** Dalit and Adivasi women have Low representation in higher education due to poverty and Patriarchal barriers. They are often forced into precarious, unsafe, and Low- paid work, with a high Likelihood of job-loss.
- **Legal protections:-** while the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 is meant. A protect them implementation remains a Challenge, with Low conviction rates for crimes against them.

➤ **Legal and Social Status**

- **Constitutional Safeguards:-** Article 17 of the Indian constitution bans "**untouchability**".
- **Forest Rights:-** The Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional (Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA) is critical for Adivasi women's Likelihood.
- **Political Representation:-** Despite systemic discrimination Some Dalit women have held high Palitical office, such as mayawati. The first Dalit women to serve as chif minister of a state.

➤ **Key challenges**

- **Institutional Discrimination:-** Despite legal rights, systemic barriers persist, resulting in limited access to justice and resources.
- **Deeply Entrenched Patriarchy:-** Both within The mainstream society and often within their own communities, Patriarchal norms restrict their mobility, education, and autonomy.
- **Economic Inequality:-** A high precentage of Dalit and Adivasi households live below poverty line, with women having limited access to resources and assets.

➤ **The Dalit Rights**

- Over one- sixth of India's Population some 200 million people - Live a precarions existence, shunned by much of Indian Society because of their ranks as "untouchables" or Dalits. The Indian constitution banned the practice of untouchablity under Article 17 and the Scheduled Caste/ schedule Tribes (Prevention of A rocities Act.) 1989 was introduced to combat persecution and discrimination against Dalits and Adivasi (tribal) people, Despite the existence of these strong Legal provisions, Dalit and Adivasi Populations, have found it virtually I'm possible to Access their rights through the Legal system. In this context, the Dalit and Adivasi Rights Initiative provides Legalaid and rights- awareness to members of Dalit and Adivasi communities and use the Law to ensure that the violation of Adivasi rights are addressed through the Legal System.

➤ **What SLIC Does**

- This initiative works with the effected communities to set up legal aid centers to increase access to justice for Dalit and Adivasi populations. A crucial element of its work is creating awareness a mongst these marginalized communities about their fundamental human rights through training Programmes and publications in vernacules Languages on Dalit/Adivasi rights and the Law. Another significant componet of this initiative is building a network of Dalit/Adivasi Lawyers, while simultaneously sensitizing The judiciary to the needs and issue of Populations marginalized by caste and tribal status. For this purpose, it organizes 10-12 training programmes annually, in different parts of all country, which function as a form for discussion, consultation, and sensitization.

This initiative also files individual case and public interest litigation on Dalit and Adivasi issues into the mainstream. It provides legal expertise in crisis situations by conducting fact-findings, rescues, and crisis-interventions in cases of atrocities, its team has developed alliances with organizations, has engaged inadvocacy and campaigns, and is part of the larger movement working for Dalit/ Adivasi rights in India.

➤ MAIN CONCERNS

The practice of untouchability and discrimination against Dalits/ Adivasis unorganised Labour (migrant Labour, bonded Labour & child labour etc.)

- Manual Scavenging
- Dalit/ Adivasi Women's Rights
- Protecting The Rigts Of Couples Inter-caste/ Intra-gotra Marriages
- Dalit/ Adivasi Land Rights
- Affirmative Actions/ Protective Discrimination
- special developmental Schemes/ Policies related to Dalit/ Adivasi Populations

➤ SLIC IMPACT

SLIC use's The Judicial system to assert the rights of the dalit community the creatication of pro. Dalit Government policie and Schemes are a result of increased pressure due to Landmark legal decisions.

Dalit populations are often forced into manual Labour and scavenging (disposing of human excrement animal carcasses, etc.) A decision passed by the Delhi High Court achieved significant results when the coust directed the Government to improve the safety Conditions of sewer workers in Delhi. This case however, also created a wider impact in the Dalit community. When the courts also directed that the state should aim towards completely phasing out of the employment of persons to clean sewers, on an emergent basis. (See- National compaign for Dignity and Rights of Sewerage and Allied workers Vs MCD & Ors)

The SLIC team places particular emphasis on ensuring that the perpetrators of caste-based atrocities are held accountable for their actions through the legal system. In a historic judgement, the Giridh District court granted life imprisonment with a cost of Rs 25,000/- to seven persons responsible for killing a Dalit man Such judgments set a legal precedent and sent out a hard-hitting message that the judicial System will grant no impunity to perpetrators of crimes against Dalits and Adivasis.

SLIC Lawyers have filed a number of individual cases that have achieved significant Large Scale results. For example, One of the major forms of discrimination against marginalized sections is police refusal to Lodge FIRs against Upper-Caste perpetrators. The initiative has inter vened in many such cases, securing court directions for Lodging FIR, and cases of atrocities against Dalits / Adivasis. SLIC lawyers in Haryana are Fighting over 60 cases of castebased atrocities in the district of Sonipat, Hissar Panipat, Jind, Rohtak, Karnal, Ambala, and Bhiwani. These cases include cases of Sexual violence against Dalit Women.

In collaboration with the maitri Network SLC is working on a 4 year Project providing Legal assistance to Dalit. Adivasi and vulnerable women in need of care and protection in 26 districts in the five states; Maharashta, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu.

SLIC over the last decade has taken steps to ensure greater degree of inclusion its attempt to build a cadre of Lawyers from marginalised communities Such as Dalit, Adivasi, muslims, and Sexual and ethnic minorities in its workforce over the Last decade particularly through its two programs

- I. Student For Human Rights
- II. Young Lawyers Programme

For this, a bursary Scheme exists which helps defray expenses that a student from marginalized community may incar otherwise incur to gain a similar work experience.

CONCLUSSION:-

Dalit and tribal women in india face a unique, multifaceted from of oppression known as the "triple burden" resulting from The intersection of Caste(or Tribe) identi gender and economic deprivation, As "dalits among dalits" or "the most marginalized" they occupy the Lowest rung of the most marginalized.

They occupy the Lowest rung of the social, economic, and caste hierarchy. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, these women suffer from extreme violence, systemic discrimination, and a restricted access to basic resources.

status of Tribal and dalit women India - Livelihood - They often rely on forests and agriculture, making them vulnerable to displacement and environmental changes.

- I. women as Environment stewards.
- II. women at the Fire Front of conservation.
- III. Grassroots women Activist movement.
- IV. Gender sensitive environmental Action.
- V. women are the backbone of environmental & Key to addressing climate change.
- VI. women are more closely associated with Nature.
- VII. women are the first to be affected by "environmental degradation"

REFERENCE

- I. Tribal Literature Kocharethi "The Araya Women Narayan CR.K Narayan"
- II. WIKIPEDIA AND Research and Continued Research Study -Dalit and Tribal women India.
- III. Dalit women in India: - At the crossroads of Gender, class, and Caste" (ResearchGate): Analyzes The Legal and social framework affecting Dalit women.
- IV. "Tribal Law In India" by G. S. Narwani Examines Legal protections For indigenous (Adivasi) communities.