

Plight of Dalit Women in Haryana

Dr. SHAUKAT HASEEN*, NEHA GOYAL**

*Associate professor, Department of economics, Women's college, ALIGRAH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, ALIGARH

**Research scholar, Department of Economics, ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY, ALIGARH

neha.jhilmil@gmail.com

Abstract

As per the Census 2011, the total population of Haryana is 2.54 crores and in which around one fifth of total population belongs to schedule caste. Around 24 lakhs schedule caste women (47% of total population of s/c population of Haryana) reside in the state of Haryana. The expressions 'Depressed Class,' 'Exterior Caste' and 'Untouchables' were commonly used for the scheduled castes. They are also called 'Dalit'. Schedule caste women is worst affected by the social division on the basis of caste, class and gender. They have to face violence and remain deprived of their basic rights due to present gender, class and caste intersectionality. Substantial number of crimes against women like rape, sexual harassment, abduction and kidnapping etc happen in Haryana. Most of the Dalits in Haryana reside in rural and have low access to basic amenities. Only 56% of dalits are literates in Haryana as per Census 2011. Among working women of India, SCs and STs are the most vulnerable section of the society. Dalit women face many difficulties to become economically and socially empowered let alone being politically empowered. Despite various constitutional provisions, schemes and policies provided by Indian government, condition of Dalit women is still pathetic. The present study analyzes and evaluates the present status of Dalit women in the state of

Haryana on the basis of census 2011 and National Crime Bureau of India and shows it is high time to work for upliftment of Dalit women.

KEYWORDS: Dalit Women, Crimes, Haryana, Empowered, literate, violence

1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'scheduled caste' was coined by the Simon Commission (1927). The expressions, 'Depressed Class,' 'Exterior Caste' and 'Untouchables' were commonly used for the scheduled castes during the colonial period. Gandhiji called them 'Harijans'. Generally they are referred to as Scheduled Castes. The scheduled castes along with scheduled tribes constitute about 24 percent of the total population in India. Even after 60 years of independence of India, dalits in india still lives like "slaves" due to many social evil practices.

As per details from Census 2011, Haryana has population of 2.54 Crores, an increase from figure of 2.11 Crore in 2001 census. Total schedule caste population is 5,113,615 in Haryana of which male and female are 2,709,656 and 2,403,959 respectively. Around one fifth of Haryana population belongs to schedule caste. Haryana is among those states which comprise most of the schedule caste people. Despite various government policies and legal support, Dalit in Haryana are still at

disadvantageous stage and marginalized due to their caste and class. Especially dalit women, they are worst affected by the triple trauma faced by them because of being women, being dalit and being poor.

2 DALIT WOMEN IN INDIA

Even since the 70 years of independence, dalit women could not be joined to main stream development process in India. Feminist movement in India could not bring about justice to dalit women. Women are worst affected by the discrimination on the basis of varna system. Social structure not only sabotages the dalit women's dignity and self respect but also their rights to the development. Sufferings faced by the women get intensified by the class oppression faced by Dalits in the society. They were considered an object of lust by the upper caste people.

They were denied basic human rights. They work in unhealthy, unhygienic environment and are generally deprived of their labor rights. Majority of them work in the informal sectors where they are under paid and ill behaved by the foremen. They perform strenuous jobs at very less wages. Women have become more practically conscious about their individual rights relating to working hours, wages and labor rights etc. due to the awareness brought by the government schemes and media. For dalit women It is difficult to break glass of bondage because they lie at the intersection of two oppressed groups: dalits and women.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Arora and Prabhakar(1997) examined the statistical data regarding the female contestants in Rohtak, Haryana and observed that educational level of S/C female contestants were far below than non S/C and 70% of female contestants were from non S/C families. It was also observed that women from lower caste often come from lower classes. Most of the non S/C female candidates come from families having business, service or both as their profession while S/C candidates belong to vendor families or labor.

Kumar N(1999) concluded that Education, political representation, development schemes have helped the younger generation of scheduled castes in Haryana to opt for modern occupations and value-orientation. Yet, the landlessness among rural SCs and violation of human rights of rural as well as urban Dalits persists.

Malik (1999) reported that convention against untouchability and Dalit women's oppression organized by AIDWA (All India Democratic Women Association) in 1998 addressed the need to focus on problem of caste oppression intensified by the generalized patriarchal exploitation faced by Dalits. Women participants shared their experience and told that they face discrimination in access to respectful life, to equal wage, to legal aid, to benefits provided by government schemes and policies.

Chakraborty et al. (2006) showed that for a proper implementation of redistributive policies, ending violence

against Dalits is a basic requirement. Atrocities represent a significant hindrance to socio-economic mobility of the community. It was suggested from the evidences that violence is directed at relatively better off Dalits and it is a response of society to Dalit mobility.

Asrani and kaushik (2011) concluded that majority of schedule caste women had poor economic status, no land and low level of material possession. The study was done in Hisar district of Haryana during 2009. The study concluded that the schedule caste people in Haryana rarely face socio cultural problems but some of them face untouchability and were not allowed to enter or use public place.

4 SCHEDULE CASTES IN HARYANA

There are major 37 categories of schedule caste in Haryana. Among all the category of schedule caste, around 48% them are Chamar, Jatia Chamar Rehgar,

Raigar, Ramdasi, Ravidasi, Balahi, Batoi, Bhatoi, Bhambi, Chamar-Rohidas, Jatav, Jatava, Mochi, Ramdasia. The traditional occupation of Chamars is the manufacturing of leather and leather products. The second s/c with highest population is Balmiki, chura, Bhangi which is around 19% of sc population in Haryana. The Balmiki are one of the largest socially stigmatized Dalit groups numbering slightly less than 1 million in Uttar Pradesh alone and constitute about 16 % of India's population. They occupy the lowliest position of the caste system. The main occupation of Balmiki is to remove excrement, clean toilet, sweeping sewers, deal with garbage etc. They are generally sweepers and sewer cleaner. Third largest SCs are Dhanak constituting 11.3% of total SC population in Haryana. Other includes Od(3.2%), Mazhabi(2.7%) and Bazigar(2.7%). To judge the plight of Dalit women in Haryana, literacy, employment status, basic amenities and crimes against schedule caste women are taken into consideration.

BASIC AMENITIES IN HARYANA AND DALIT WOMEN

| HOUSEHOLDS | RURAL | URBAN | TOTAL |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| Without bathrooms | 32.6 | 16.1 | 27.5 |
| Without kitchen | 60.7 | 38 | 53.6 |
| Without toilets | 54.6 | 23 | 44.8 |
| Drinking water source away from premise | 16 | 8.7 | 13.8 |
| Use of LPG/CNG | 11.5 | 54.9 | 25 |
| Availing banking services | 58.3 | 54.3 | 57.1 |

Source- CENSUS 2011 (figures are in percentages)

According to the census 2011, 27.5% of total households of Dalits do not have bathrooms and 44.8% are without toilets.

Women have to walk to far off places to fetch drinking water. Dalit women live in unhygienic conditions as they cannot afford

to have bathroom and toilets in their homes. They generally use public latrines and defecate in open places which spread many diseases. These practices are more prevalent in rural areas where proper facilities are not available. Even in urban area, 23% of households do not have toilets. Women face many difficulties in going outside the home

for these basic amenities. Only 11.5% of household use LPG/CNG for cooking in rural areas of Haryana and the corresponding figure for urban is 54.3%. These facilities incorporate very basic standard of living and everyone irrespective of their caste, sex, class etc. has the right to adequate standard of living.

LITERACY RATE OF DALIT WOMEN

| | TOTAL | RURAL | URBAN |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| TOTAL POPULATION of SC | 51,13,615 (100%) | 37,20,109 (72.7%) | 13,93,506 (27.2%) |
| MALE | 27,09,656 (52.9%) | 19,73,294 (38.5%) | 7,36,362 (14.4%) |
| FEMALE | 24,03,959 (47%) | 17,46,815 (34.1%) | 6,57,144 (12.8%) |
| LITERATE Population | 29,10,295 (56.9%) | 20,77,355 (40.6%) | 8,32,940 (16.2%) |
| MALE | 17,49,722 (34.2%) | 12,57,727 (24.5%) | 4,91,995 (9.6%) |
| FEMALE | 11,60,573 (22.6%) | 8,19,628 (16.0%) | 3,40,945 (6.6%) |

Source:-Census 2011

Among total population of SC of Haryana, around 53% are male and only 47% are females. Overall literacy level of S/C is very low in Haryana. Only 56.9% of total population of schedule caste population is literate. In which male literate population is only 34.2% and only 22.6% of sc population is literate female. There is low level of literacy among schedule caste female population. Most of the schedule caste people reside in rural (72.7%) as compared to urban which is only 27.2%. Literacy rate is low in rural area as among 72.7% of rural population only 40.6%

people are literate. More than half of the female population of SC is illiterate. More than 3 lakhs schedule caste people from urban are illiterate. This low rate is due to the fact that the S/C people have to face social exclusion and untouchability practiced by upper class groups marginalizes the S/C people. One of the major reasons for low literacy rate is also the low facilities of schools and other institutions in rural area of Haryana.

According to census 2011, only 14.2% of the schedule caste children are enrolled to higher education and this ratio is

quite low among girls i.e. only 11%. It is lower than the ratio at India level (12.3%). This is due to the poor financial position, low resource acquisition, social stigma of being lowest in the society etc. Education is

considered as a great weapon to fight against various evils like poverty, unemployment etc. Arming Dalit women with this weapon is very necessary as it will directly provide them empowerment.

EMPLOYMENT

| SCHEDULE CASTE FEMALE WORKERS IN HARYANA | | |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| Female population | 2,403,959 | 100% |
| Total workers | 446,588 | 18.5% |
| • Main workers | 213,682 | 8.8% |
| • Marginal workers | 2,32,906 | 9.6% |
| 1. Marginal worker (0-3 months) | 59,361 | 2.4% |
| 2. Marginal worker (3-6 months) | 173,545 | 7.2% |
| Non worker | 1,957,371 | 81.4% |

Source:-Census 2011

A Micro level study (2005) of three villages across Haryana, Orissa and Gujarat by Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, observed significant inter-social group differences in female employment. Higher caste females managed to get much higher employment in non-farm sector compared to female from SC groups. The study found that, although all females suffered from lower level of participation in non-farm employment, females from different groups do not suffer in same degree; low caste female suffered more from lack of employment in non-farm sector.

About 81% schedule caste population in Haryana is non worker. Only 18% of total female population comprises of workers and among them only half of the population gets regular work i.e. they are main workers. About sixty thousand women from schedule

caste do not get work in most of the months in a year. Dalit women are mostly doing their traditional caste based jobs and social stigma attach with their work create trouble and act as hindrance to get out of the vicious trap of class and caste. Atrocities against Dalits especially Dalit women prevent their socio-economic mobility. Trend of migration from rural to urban for better jobs are more prevalent among Dalit men but for women it is still a big task to go out to far off places for work. Unemployment rate is high among Dalit women as they remain marginal worker most of the year. Very few Dalit women in Haryana are self employed as they are mostly illiterate and unaware. Dalit women's economic empowerment level is very low as they don't have permanent and respectful jobs, and resources. Women are involved in Rag-

picking and manual scavenging which are ignominious jobs. Occupational mobility

among Dalit women is negligible.

CRIMES AGAINST S/C IN HARYANA

Source- NCRB (National Crime Records Bureau)

| CRIME HEAD | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| Murder | 14 | 19 | 22 |
| Rape | 56 | 67 | 131 |
| Kidnapping and abduction | 18 | 27 | 37 |
| Dacoity | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Robbery | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Arson | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| Hurt | 28 | 15 | 9 |
| Total of ST/SC act (prevention of atrocities) | 150 | 15 | 14 |
| Other crimes | 135 | 102 | 275 |
| Total crimes against SCs. | 408 | 252 | 493 |

NCRB statistics for the last few years show crimes against S/C rose almost steadily to 493 in 2013 from 252 in 2013 and 408 in 2012. Cases of kidnapping and abduction rose significantly from 18 in 2011 and 37 in 2013. These are just the reported cases, many cases go unreported due to social pressure and social stigma attached of been raped and kidnapped. Others atrocities include arson, hurt, dacoity, and robbery occur against Dalits in Haryana in significant number. These atrocities create mental suppression in the minds of Dalit women. In Haryana, Jaats and Guzars are the dominated classes who rule the state by their economic, social and political power.

5 CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that plight of Dalit women in Haryana especially in rural areas is pathetic and still significant number of crimes happen against Dalit women. They do not have access to basic facilities like kitchen, toilet, bathroom, safe drinking water and LPG/CNG. They remain non-workers or marginal workers. Dalit women in rural areas are more vulnerable as compared to urban areas. There can be seen a trend of development of Dalit class by migration from rural to urban and education in male only. Among female population, this trend is rarely visible due to the unfavorable social structure. If some women migrate from rural to urban, they perform jobs of household servants, maids and other petty jobs. Among the laboring women, SCs and STs form the most vulnerable section. Women still perform their traditional



occupation which does not give them respect in society. Dalit Women are not economically, socially and politically empowered in Haryana because of the state being so tradition bound and practice of discrimination on the basis of class, caste and gender.

6 REFERENCES

- [1] Asrani, S., & Kaushik, S. (2011). Problems Perceived by Schedule Caste Women in Haryana. *Studies of Tribes and Tribals* , 29-36.
- [2] Chowdhry, P. (2009). 'First Our Job Then Our Girls': The Dominant Caste Perceptions on the 'Rising' Dalits. *Modern Asian Studies* , 437-479.
- [3] Debashis Chakraborty, D. B. (2006). Atrocities on Dalits What the District Level Data Say on Society-State Complicity. *Economic and Political Weekly* , 2478-2481.
- [4] Kumar, N. (1999). Schedule Castes in Transition. *Economic and Political Weekly* , 2548-2549.
- [5] Malik, B. (1999). Untouchability and Dalit Women's Oppression. *Economic and Political Weekly* , 323-324.
- [6] Rao, S. (2002). Dalits in Education and Workforce. *Economic and Political Weekly* , 2998-3000.