

"Unveiling the Veil: The Past, Present, and Future of Dalit Women's Struggles within the Caste System – A Disability-Inclusive Perspective on 75 Years of Independent India"

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT:

This Study explores the multifaceted challenges faced by Dalit women within the intricate web of the caste system in India, suffering from three social disabilities such as untouchability, and atrocity which is an act of extreme cruelty committed against them, as bonded labor. Dalits have been supposed to be untouchables since ancient ages and suppressed to follow the Hindu faith. With the backdrop of India's 75 years of independence, it has been scrutinized the historical legacy of oppression and discrimination, the present-day struggles, and the prospects of the Dalit community, particularly focusing on the often-neglected dimension of disability inclusion. This article will help us to feel the condition of the Dalit women from a marginalized group within a marginalized community, and their experiences through a unique lens through which it can examine the enduring social inequalities that persist in contemporary India. The intersectionality of caste and gender compounds the adversity they face, further exacerbated by the additional dimension of disability, which often remains unnoticed or overlooked in mainstream discourse. This study will try to employ a multidisciplinary approach through incorporating historical analysis. This study will also highlight the historical roots of the Dalit women's struggle, tracing the origins of their social exclusion and economic marginalization. This historical perspective will shed light on how the caste system has evolved over the years and how it has continued to affect the lives of Dalit women, especially those with disabilities. It also examines the myriad challenges that Dalit women encounter, such as limited access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and political representation. The paper highlights the importance of a disability-inclusive approach to address the unique needs of Dalit women with disabilities. Finally, it is demanded that policy recommendations and community-based initiatives to ensure these women are not left behind in India's journey toward greater social inclusion, equity, and justice.

Introduction:

The caste system in India is a deeply ingrained social structure with historical roots dating back centuries. Within this complex system, the Dalits, also known as "Scheduled Castes," have long been considered untouchables, enduring severe social and economic discrimination.^[1] Dalit women suffer from multiple layers of oppression due to their gender and caste, and many of them also contend with disabilities. This study explores the challenges faced by Dalit women with disabilities within the context of the caste system, shedding light on their historical legacy of oppression, their present-day struggles, and the prospects for their community's future. Indulging in this kind of topic is only to take the initiative to unveil the veil of the past, present, and future of Dalit Women's struggles within the caste system in the present scenario when India is celebrating its 75th year of Independence. This study delves into the multifaceted challenges faced by Dalit women within the intricate web of the caste system in India. These women suffer from three social disabilities, namely untouchability, atrocity, and bonded labor, and are often suppressed to follow the Hindu faith. As India marks its 75th year of independence, this study scrutinizes the historical legacy of oppression and discrimination, their present-day struggles, and the prospects of the Dalit community. It particularly focuses on the often neglected dimension of disability inclusion. The intersectionality of caste and gender compounds the adversity they face, further exacerbated by the additional dimension of disability, which often remains unnoticed or overlooked in mainstream discourse. This research employs a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating historical analysis to highlight the roots of the Dalit women's struggle and their ongoing social exclusion and economic marginalization. The study also examines the myriad challenges that Dalit women encounter, such as limited access to education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and political representation. The paper underscores the

importance of a disability-inclusive approach to address the unique needs of Dalit women with disabilities. It provides them with recommendations and community-based initiatives to ensure that these women are not left behind in India's journey toward greater social inclusion, equity, and justice.^[2] The caste system in India has long been a source of social and economic inequality, systematically discriminating against individuals based on their birth. Within this complex structure, Dalit women find themselves at the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination, often hidden from the mainstream discourse. This paper aims to shed light on the unique challenges faced by Dalit women with societal disabilities, emphasizing the historical context, present-day struggles, and the imperative for disability-inclusive policies and initiatives to bring about positive change.^[3]

Historical Legacy of Oppression and Discrimination:

The historical roots of the Dalit women's struggle can be traced back to the inception of the caste system in India. They have been subjected to untouchability and inhuman atrocities for centuries, which has led to their marginalization and subjugation. This section of the paper explores the evolution of the caste system and its impact on the lives of Dalit women, highlighting the systemic nature of discrimination. While turning the pages of history to collect more information about Dalit societal orders, the fact came to notice that Dalit women are double marginalized, historically deprived, and excluded from the four varnas of society. It has been seen that Dalit women have been suppressed not only by society but also by the male members of their families. As explained by Sharma, and Bhushan (2022). "Dalit Women: Narratives of Vulnerability, Violence, and a Culture of Impunity."^[4]

To learn more about the historical legacy of oppression and discrimination of Dalit women, Sarvesh, Tarushikha; Shanker Singh, Rama; and Alam, Tehzeeb's article (2021). "Dalit Women in History: Struggles, Voices, and Counter publics" enlightens with information on how the limitations and hurdles became the reason for the expression of Dalit women's voices in modern democratic India which was suppressed long back. It also helped to reveal the tradition of silence and marginalization.^[5] This continuum of experiences in Dalit women's lives makes it imperative to trace the long-term historical structures and concerns that surround the issues of Dalit women and their assertions through participation in historical movements, political mobilization, and literary writings. Without including historically and structurally marginalized lives, democracy can neither be practiced nor experienced in its true sense and form.

This article has tried to find the historical legacy of the plight faced by Dalit women in Indian society, tracing it back to the origins of the caste system. Dalit women have endured centuries of untouchability, inhumane treatment, and marginalization, showcasing the systemic discrimination ingrained in society. It cannot be lied that Dalit women have been doubly marginalized, excluded from the societal varnas, and oppressed in every situation. References to works by Sharma, Bhushan, Sarvesh, Tarushikha, Shanker Singh, Rama, and Alam, Tehzeeb highlight the historical oppression and discrimination faced by Dalit women, shedding light on their struggles, voices, and the suppression they faced in Indian history. These experiences underscore the ongoing challenges faced by Dalit women and their efforts to assert themselves through participation in movements, political mobilization, and literary expressions. The article emphasizes the importance of understanding 'histories from below' to uncover past events, people, and mindsets. This research has tried to draw the attention of the readers and to make them feel the importance of the Dalit women's presence suggesting parallels in Indian society. It highlights that true democracy must include historically marginalized lives; otherwise, it cannot be practiced or experienced in its genuine form. The article portrays the deep-rooted historical discrimination against Dalit women within the context of the caste system's evolution, their ongoing struggles for visibility, and the necessity for a more inclusive democracy in India.

Contemporary Struggles

The struggles faced by Dalit women in India have been well-established in historical discrimination and persist into the modern era, manifesting in various forms of societal disability. Throughout

history and into contemporary times, Dalit women have faced numerous challenges that have hindered their social, economic, and political empowerment.^[6]

Caste-based Discrimination

Dalit women have been subjected to systemic discrimination and oppression based on their caste, often facing social exclusion, segregation, and violence due to their lower social status within the hierarchical caste system. Which is also been mentioned by Prashant Chaudhry in his work pointing out that, the Indian caste system is considered a closed system of stratification, which means the social status of the individual is ascribed by the caste he/she was born into.^[7] His work "Caste as an Institutionalized System of Social Exclusion and Discrimination: Some Evidence" talks about the different points in history where the so-called polluted castes have been designated as chandals, untouchables, harijans, depressed class, scheduled caste, or Dalits sound very pathetic. Among them, the most deprived are the Dalit women in India face multifaceted challenges due to the intersectionality of gender and caste-based discrimination within the hierarchical social structure showing the societal disability faced in every aspect of their lives. They endure systemic marginalization, social exclusion, and violence that stem from their lower caste status and keep on haunting the minds of the oppressed. This study aims to highlight the pervasive problems faced by Dalit women in the context of caste-based discrimination and the urgency for addressing these issues. Dalit women are at the intersection of two marginalized identities: being a woman and belonging to the Dalit community. This intersectionality compounds their challenges, resulting in deep-rooted discrimination and inequality occupying the lowest rung.

Social Exclusion and Segregation

Dalit women are often segregated, facing exclusion from various societal spheres, including education, employment opportunities, and public spaces. Discriminatory practices restrict their access to resources, perpetuating their economic vulnerability. They are often confined to menial, low-paying jobs and subjected to exploitative labor conditions due to systemic discrimination.^[8] The pervasive social exclusion and segregation faced by Dalit women within various societal spheres are emblematic of the deeply entrenched caste-based discrimination prevalent in India. The systematic denial of access to education, employment opportunities, and public spaces reinforces their marginalized status, perpetuating a cycle of economic vulnerability. The relegation of Dalit women to menial, low-paying jobs and exploitative labor conditions further underscores the systemic discrimination they endure. According to Baby Kamble's *The Prisons We Broke* and Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*. Exploration suggests an outline method to attain a standpoint and represents the more significant issues of marginalization of Dalit women, their subjectivity, and their lack of voice as reflected in the Dalit Movement, Dalit Literature, Indian feminism, and their everyday lives. This exploitation not only hampers their economic prospects but also deprives them of agency and perpetuates their subjugation within society.^[9]

An alternative reason to study education is for its ability to empower the individual to strive for an improved quality of life. Addressing these issues requires multifaceted interventions aimed at dismantling the institutional biases embedded in social, economic, and educational systems. Initiatives fostering inclusive education, affirmative action in employment, and comprehensive social policies are imperative to break the cycle of exclusion and uplift the socio-economic status of Dalit women.^[10] Furthermore, efforts to challenge discriminatory practices and attitudes within society are crucial. Creating awareness, promoting social cohesion, and empowering Dalit women to advocate for their rights can be instrumental in challenging the prevailing structures of discrimination. Ultimately, the plight of Dalit women due to social exclusion and segregation demands urgent and sustained attention from policymakers, civil society, and communities at large. Only through concerted efforts to address systemic biases and promote inclusivity can meaningful progress be made toward a more equitable and just society for all individuals, irrespective of caste or gender.^[11]

Violence and Exploitation

One of the most distressing issues faced by Dalit women is the prevalence of violence. They are disproportionately targeted for physical and sexual violence, both within their communities and outside. The intersection of caste and gender makes them more vulnerable to sexual abuse, harassment, and trafficking. Even A.Ramaiah placed these facts in his work that everyone has the right to think for their health, including food, clothing, housing, medical care, and necessary services.^[12] But not in exchange for his or her dignity. It has been seen that the threat of disgrace is always a matter of concern for Dalit women. The intertwining of caste and gender exacerbates their susceptibility to exploitation. Grey, M. (2016) in his work "A Cry for Dignity: religion, violence and the Struggle of Dalit Women in India" exclaims the importance. Dalit women are often subjected to systemic discrimination, which not only heightens their risk of violence but also complicates their ability to seek justice. Regrettably, the justice system frequently fails to protect them adequately. Perpetrators often act with impunity, evading accountability for their actions, and victims are left without adequate redressal. While searching the problems of Dalits and possessing many books with the term Dalit history, theology, and the Dalit struggles- it is quite unfortunate that nothing has been mentioned, especially about Dalit women, but treated as "Dalit of the Dalit, thrice Dalit" as the part of great suffering, never been pointed out. So, it is expected from the Dalit women to come forward and plug the gap by revealing their own stories of struggle in front of society,

To address this pressing issue and put an end to the violence and exploitation faced by Dalit women, several actions can be taken:

- i. **Strengthening Legal Frameworks:** Enforce existing laws and create stringent measures specifically addressing violence against Dalit women. Sensitize law enforcement agencies and judicial bodies to effectively manage cases involving caste-based violence and discrimination.^[14]
- ii. **Empowerment and Awareness Programs:** Implement awareness campaigns that educate communities about the rights of Dalit women. These programs can empower them to report instances of violence, seek support, and access available resources.^[15]
- iii. **Support Services and Safe Spaces:** Establish support centers and safe spaces dedicated to aiding and counseling Dalit women who are victims of violence. These centers should offer legal aid, healthcare, and rehabilitation services.^[16]
- iv. **Training and Sensitization:** Provide comprehensive training to law enforcement officials, judiciary personnel, healthcare professionals, and social workers to sensitively address the unique challenges faced by Dalit women and ensure they receive fair treatment and support.^[17]
- v. **Community Engagement and Advocacy:** Foster community engagement through grassroots initiatives and advocacy groups that work towards challenging discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. Encourage dialogue within communities to eliminate prejudices and promote inclusivity.^[18]
- vi. **Economic Empowerment:** Create opportunities for economic empowerment through skill development programs, access to entrepreneurship, and employment initiatives aimed at improving the socio-economic status of Dalit women.^[19]
- vii. **Collaboration and Monitoring:** Collaborate with NGOs, civil society organizations, and human rights bodies to monitor and address instances of violence against Dalit women. Regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms can hold perpetrators accountable and ensure justice for victims.^[20]

Stopping the violence and exploitation faced by Dalit women demands a concerted effort involving legal reforms, social awareness, community engagement, and initiative-taking measures to empower and protect these marginalized individuals. It is crucial to recognize their rights, provide avenues for support, and strive towards creating a society that upholds equality, dignity, and justice for all, regardless of caste or gender. The justice system often fails to protect them, leading to impunity for

perpetrators and a lack of redressal for victims. This can only be prohibited by following the rules and regulations properly without giving a chance to any kind of loopholes.

Lack of Access to Justice and Resources

The challenges faced by Dalit women while encountering barriers when seeking legal recourse due to systemic biases and the prevalence of caste-based prejudices within law enforcement and judicial systems are multifaceted and deeply entrenched. Additionally, the lack of awareness about their rights and the absence of adequate support services further exacerbates their vulnerability. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort across various levels of society, including legal, social, and policy interventions like:

Tackling Systemic Biases

The Indian Constitution contains several provisions aimed at safeguarding the rights of Dalit women and addressing systemic biases that contribute to societal disabilities. Some key constitutional provisions and legal mechanisms include:

Constitutional Guarantees

Equality before Law (Article 14):

This provision ensures equality before the law and equal protection of laws for all individuals, including Dalit women. It prohibits discrimination based on caste, gender, or any other grounds.

Prohibition of Untouchability (Article 17):

Article 17 explicitly abolishes untouchability in any form. It prohibits the practice and enforces penalties for its contravention, thereby aiming to protect Dalits, including Dalit women, from societal prejudices.

Protection from Discrimination (Article 15):

Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. It promotes equal opportunities and prohibits any form of discrimination against Dalit women.

Special Provisions for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) (Article 46):

Article 46 directs the state to promote the educational and economic interests of SCs and STs and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. This provision aims to uplift Dalit women by providing them with educational and economic support.^[21]

Legal Framework

The Legal Framework of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 is a crucial legislation aimed at preventing atrocities against SCs and STs. This act not only recognizes the specific forms of violence and discrimination faced by Dalit women but also provides them with legal recourse and stringent punishment for offenses committed against them. Complementing this act is the Protection of Civil Rights Act, of 1955, which prohibits various forms of discrimination against SCs and STs, offering penalties for imposing any disability upon them concerning access to public places, worship, and water resources. Moreover, the Indian government has instituted affirmative action through reservation policies in education, employment, and political representation, ensuring greater participation and representation of Dalit women in these spheres. To monitor and address grievances, institutions like the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and National Commission for Women (NCW) play a pivotal role, in overseeing the implementation of constitutional safeguards and policies for Dalit women. However, despite these legislative and institutional efforts, implementation gaps persist. To effectively combat systemic biases and ensure the practical realization of constitutional guarantees, concerted efforts are needed, encompassing robust enforcement of existing laws, heightened awareness, inclusive policies, and the creation of an environment where Dalit women can access justice and resources free from discrimination or prejudice. Continued efforts are imperative to address the specific challenges faced by Dalit women in India.^[22]

Sensitizing Legal and Judicial Systems

Strengthening the legal frameworks to safeguard Dalit women necessitates a dual approach to enforcing existing laws and instituting stringent measures tailored explicitly to combat violence against them. This imperative involves not only implementing laws that recognize and penalize caste-based violence but also creating additional provisions to address the specific vulnerabilities faced by Dalit women.^[23]Crucially, sensitizing law enforcement agencies and judicial bodies becomes paramount. Specialized training programs should be mandated to sensitize officials, judges, and legal practitioners to the nuances and intricacies of caste-based violence and discrimination cases. Such measures aim to equip these entities with the necessary tools to effectively investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate cases involving Dalit women.^[24]It is also said by Shantanu Kulshreshtha in his article "Dalit Resistances to Indian Political Modernity" that by fostering a better understanding and response to the complexities of these situations, the legal system can play a pivotal role in ensuring justice and protection for Dalit women, ultimately contributing to the dismantling of systemic biases entrenched within society.^[25]

Training and Sensitization

They are implementing mandatory training programs for law enforcement officials, judges, and legal professionals to sensitize Dalit women to caste-based prejudices and biases. This includes education on recognizing and addressing these biases in their decision-making processes.^[26]Training and sensitization programs targeted at law enforcement officials, judges, and legal professionals are integral in addressing the pervasive societal disabilities faced by Dalit women.^[27]According to an article published in Springer Link by S. Mathiyazhagan, articulate that implementing mandatory training initiatives aimed at sensitizing these stakeholders to caste-based prejudices and biases holds immense significance. These programs should encompass comprehensive education on identifying, acknowledging, and effectively addressing these biases within their decision-making processes.^[28]Giving importance to education Paik, S. (2014) in his article "Dalit women's education in modern India: double discrimination" published in Routledge, also exclaimed that by instilling a deeper understanding of the complexities and challenges that Dalit women encounter due to caste-based discrimination, can only be removed through proper education and training which will endeavors seek to bridge the knowledge gap and transform perspectives.^[29]Empowering law enforcement and judicial bodies with this knowledge not only fosters a more empathetic and informed approach but also enhances their ability to recognize and rectify systemic biases. Ultimately, these initiatives aim to create a more equitable and just legal system that actively works to protect the rights and dignity of Dalit women, thereby contributing to the eradication of societal disabilities rooted in caste-based prejudices said by A.SJ in the article "Dalit Women Speak Out: Caste, Class and gender violence in India"^[30]grabbed our attention.

Diversity and Inclusion

Encouraging diversity and representation of Dalit individuals, especially women, within legal and judicial institutions to bring diverse perspectives to the forefront. Promoting diversity and inclusion within legal and judicial institutions holds immense potential in addressing the entrenched societal disabilities faced by Dalit women.^[31] Encouraging representation of Dalit individuals, particularly women, within these influential spheres is pivotal. Diverse perspectives are crucial in dismantling systemic biases, and the inclusion of Dalit voices can provide invaluable insights into the unique challenges faced by this marginalized community.^[32]Creating opportunities for Dalit women to participate in decision-making processes within these institutions not only fosters a more inclusive environment but also ensures that policies and practices reflect a broader spectrum of experiences and needs.^[33]This representation can significantly impact the formulation and implementation of laws and judicial decisions, leading to a more nuanced and empathetic approach to addressing issues related to caste-based prejudices. Embracing diversity within these spheres isn't merely symbolic; it's an essential step toward creating a more just and equitable system that actively acknowledges and combats societal disabilities faced by Dalit women.^[34]

Legal Reforms and Policy Interventions

Legal Reforms enacting and strictly enforcing laws that specifically protect marginalized communities, including Dalit women, against discrimination and violence. This could involve amendments to existing laws and the creation of new legislation to address gaps in protection.^[35] Dalit women grapple with multifaceted social disabilities, and legal reforms and policy interventions play a pivotal role in mitigating these challenges. Enacting and rigorously enforcing laws tailored to shield marginalized communities, specifically Dalit women, against discrimination and violence are crucial steps.^[36] These reforms entail amending existing laws and crafting new legislation to effectively address gaps in protection. By implementing stringent legal frameworks, society can address the systemic biases and entrenched prejudices that perpetuate the vulnerabilities faced by Dalit women.^[37] Such legal reforms aim to provide explicit safeguards, ensuring their rights and dignity are upheld while offering avenues for recourse against discrimination and violence. Strengthening the legal framework not only signifies a commitment to equality and justice but also acts as a deterrent against the societal disabilities Dalit women encounter, ultimately paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable society.^[38]

Affirmative Action

Implementing affirmative action policies to ensure equal access to justice and resources for Dalit women, including reserved positions within legal and judicial bodies.^[39] Implementing affirmative action policies holds paramount importance in addressing the enduring societal disabilities faced by Dalit women, a struggle that dates to ancient times. These affirmative measures aim to rectify historical injustices by ensuring equitable access to justice and resources. Reserved positions within legal and judicial bodies serve as a crucial step toward diversifying these institutions and amplifying the voices of Dalit women within decision-making processes.^[40] Such initiatives are instrumental in combating the systemic biases ingrained in society for centuries, offering a pathway for representation and empowerment. By creating opportunities for Dalit women within these influential spheres, affirmative action policies not only acknowledge their plight but also work to rectify the deeply entrenched disparities.^[41] These reserved positions foster a more inclusive environment and strive to dismantle the systemic hurdles that have long hindered the progress and rights of Dalit women, aiming to pave the way for a fairer and more just society.^[42]

Concluding Unveiling the Interwoven Challenges Faced by Dalit Women within Societal Disability Frameworks

The exploration of the multifaceted challenges encountered by Dalit women within the intricate web of the Indian caste system reveals a distressing reality marked by three significant societal disabilities: untouchability, atrocities, and bonded labor. Through the lens of India's 75 years of independence, this study critically examines the historical oppression, present-day struggles, and the potential future of the Dalit community, with a particular emphasis on disability inclusion often overlooked in discussions. By delving into the marginalized community within a marginalized group, this study underscores the persistent social inequalities embedded in contemporary India. The intersectionality of caste and gender compounds the adversity faced by Dalit women, further exacerbated by the often neglected dimension of disability. Utilizing a multidisciplinary approach, historical analyses unveil the roots of their ongoing marginalization within the caste system. Moreover, this research spotlights the myriad challenges faced by Dalit women, including limited access to education, healthcare, employment, and political representation. Emphasizing a disability-inclusive approach becomes imperative to address the distinct needs of Dalit women grappling with disabilities, demanding not only policy recommendations but also community-based initiatives to ensure their equitable participation in India's pursuit of social inclusion, equity, and justice.

The historical legacy of oppression and discrimination deeply ingrained within the caste system elucidates the origins of Dalit women's struggle, tracing their exclusion and economic marginalization

throughout history. The insidious system of untouchability, caste-based atrocities, and the forced labor imposed upon Dalits, particularly women, underscore the perpetuation of systemic biases and social disabilities. Various scholarly works, such as those by Sharma, Bhushan, Sarvesh, Tarushikha, Shanker Singh, Rama, and Alam, Tehzeeb, illuminate the historical oppression faced by Dalit women, unveiling their suppressed voices and marginalization in the annals of Indian history. These historical continuities emphasize the need to unearth and acknowledge the struggles of Dalit women, echoing the significance of their inclusion in narratives to comprehend the depths of Indian democracy. For a genuine experience of democracy, it becomes imperative to incorporate historically marginalized lives within its framework, underscoring the essentiality of their participation.

Contemporary struggles persist as Dalit women confront multifaceted challenges rooted in historical discrimination, notably prevalent in contemporary society. These struggles encompass caste-based discrimination, social exclusion, and violence, perpetuating societal disabilities faced by Dalit women. The intersecting identities of gender and caste compound their adversities, as highlighted by Prashant Chaudhry and A. Ramaiah in their respective works. The closed caste system stratifies society, conferring social status based on birth, leaving Dalit women vulnerable to manifold challenges. The discriminatory practices prevalent in education, employment, and public spaces perpetuate their marginalization, relegating them to exploitative labor conditions, as articulated by Baby Kamble and Urmila Pawar in their writings. Addressing these issues necessitates multifaceted interventions aiming to dismantle institutional biases, foster inclusive education, and challenge discriminatory practices within society. Such efforts demand the empowerment of Dalit women through economic initiatives and advocacy, ultimately requiring sustained attention from policymakers, civil society, and communities at large to foster a more equitable and just society.

One of the most distressing challenges encountered by Dalit women is the prevalence of violence and exploitation, a critical issue requiring immediate attention. They face disproportionate targeting for physical and sexual violence, a consequence of their intersectional vulnerability owing to caste and gender. A. Ramaiah emphasizes that while health rights are fundamental, they should not come at the cost of an individual's dignity. The constant threat of disgrace looms over Dalit women, complicating their struggle for justice and protection. Grey's work highlights the interconnectedness of religion, violence, and the struggles of Dalit women, accentuating the need for a more profound understanding and response to their plight. Sadly, the justice system often fails to protect Dalit women adequately, perpetuating impunity for perpetrators and leaving victims without recourse. The imperative is for Dalit women to step forward and share their stories to bridge societal gaps and raise their voices against suppression.

Addressing these profound issues demands a comprehensive approach integrating legal reforms, social awareness, and community engagement. The legal framework, including constitutional guarantees and specific legislations like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, aims to protect Dalit women from discrimination and violence. However, despite these legal safeguards, implementation gaps persist, necessitating robust enforcement, heightened awareness, and an inclusive environment free from discrimination. Sensitizing legal and judicial systems remains pivotal in combating systemic biases ingrained in society. Specialized training programs are essential for law enforcement officials, judges, and legal practitioners to effectively handle cases involving caste-based violence and discrimination. Empowering these entities with deeper insights into the challenges faced by Dalit women fosters a more equitable and just legal system that actively safeguards their rights.

Moreover, affirmative action policies are indispensable to ensure equal access to justice and resources for Dalit women. These policies advocate reserved positions within legal and judicial bodies, aiming to diversify these institutions and amplify Dalit women's voices in decision-making processes. Encouraging representation of Dalit individuals, particularly women, within influential spheres like

legal and judicial institutions, fosters a more inclusive environment, enriching policies with diverse perspectives and paving the way for a fairer society.

In conclusion, the multifaceted challenges faced by Dalit women within the caste system underscore the pressing need for immediate and sustained action. A holistic approach encompassing legal reforms, policy interventions, affirmative action, and community engagement is pivotal in dismantling the systemic biases ingrained in society. Upholding equality, dignity, and justice for all individuals, irrespective of caste or gender, necessitates a concerted effort from all levels of society. Empowering Dalit women isn't merely a matter of social justice; it's a fundamental step toward building a more inclusive and egalitarian society for all. This research paper underscores the urgent need to address the intersectionality of caste, gender, and disability, urging India to progress towards a more equitable and just society that leaves no one behind. The plight of Dalit women due to caste-based discrimination is a deeply ingrained social issue that demands urgent attention. Efforts must be made to dismantle the systemic biases ingrained in society, ensure access to justice, education, and healthcare, and create avenues for economic empowerment. Policy interventions, awareness campaigns, and stringent enforcement of laws are crucial to address the intersecting challenges faced by Dalit women and pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable society. Empowering Dalit women is not only a matter of social justice but also a crucial step toward building a more just and egalitarian society for all. This research paper concludes by summarizing the multifaceted challenges faced by Dalit women with disabilities in India. It highlights the importance of acknowledging their unique struggles and the urgency of implementing disability-inclusive policies and initiatives. The paper emphasizes that by addressing the intersection of caste, gender, and disability, India can move closer to achieving social inclusion, equity, and justice for all its citizens, irrespective of their background. This research paper highlights the enduring social inequalities faced by Dalit women with disabilities within the context of the caste system in India. It employs a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating historical analysis, to trace the origins of their social exclusion and economic marginalization. The study underscores the importance of a disability-inclusive approach and calls for policy recommendations and community-based initiatives to ensure that Dalit women with disabilities are not left behind in India's journey toward greater social inclusion, equity, and justice.

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