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## **Condition of Dalit Women in India**

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Dalit is designation for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchable. Dalit are a mixed population, consisting of numerous social group from all our India; they speak a variety of language and practice a multitude of religions. According to the census of 2011, the population Dalit population was 24.4% of India's total population. The Government of India Recognized and protects them as scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes, The term Dalit has been interchangeably used with term SC and ST in India.

Over one-sixth of India's Population some 170 million people, live a precarious existence shunned by much of India society because of their rank as "untouchables" or Dalit - literally meaning "broken" people - at the bottom of India's caste system. Dalit are discriminated against, denied access to land and basic resources, forced to work in degrading conditions, and routinely abused at the hands of police and dominant caste group that enjoy the state's protection.

Vulnerably positioned at the bottom of India's caste, class and gender Hierarchies, Dalit Women experience endemic gender and caste economic and violence as the outcome of severely imbalanced social, economic and political power equations. Their Socio-Economic vulnerability and lack of political voice, when combined with the dominant risk factors of being Dalit and female, Increase their exposure to potentially violent situations while simultaneously reducing their ability to escape. Violence against Dalit women presents clear evidence of widespread exploitation and discrimination against these women subordinated in terms of power relations to men in a patriarchal society, as also against their communities based on cases.

Yet we discussed earlier that Dalit women are placed at the absolute bottom of the social hierarchy in India as they face Systematic and Structural discrimination threefold: as Dalit, as poor, and as women. The population of Dalit women in India as per the 2011

National Census in 9.79 crore which is 48.59% Dalit population in India. As per the 2011 National census the total female population in India is 58.7 crore or which 16.68% is Dalit women's population.

The poor economic, social education and political status of Dalit women is directly linked to violence and subjugation of Dalit women which does not give them to space to fully enjoy their right.

A three year study of 500 Dalit women's experience of violence across Indian states shows that the majority of Dalit women faced flowing violence in their daily life.

- 62.4% Dalit women faced verbal abuse
- 54.8% physical "assault
- 46.8% Dalit women faced sexual harassment and assault
- 43.0% Dalit women faced domestic violence
- 23.2% Dalit women faced rape.

Indian constitution guaranteed many right to women. Moreover, the India state passed number of Laws protecting the rights of Dalit and women like.....s

- Non discrimination on the basis of caste and Gender-Article 15{1}
- The right to life and security of life {Article21}
- Protect Dalits from social injustice and all forms of exploitation {Article46}
- The National Commission for scheduled caste and scheduled Tribes {Article338}
- The Protection of civil Rights Act 1955
- The scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes {Presentation of Atrocities} Act 1989

But in our Present life, we see that there are number of violence cases comes in light against the Dalit women, which are actually shows the weakness of all the constitutional provision or laws for the safe guard of the right of Dalit Women.

**Same Major violence cases that present the real picture of the condition of Dalit women are \_\_\_\_\_**

- ❖ In April 2001 Ashamma, a 40 year old Dalit. Jogini from mahabubnager District, Andhra Pradesh was physically attacked and verbally abused after she entered into the village temple as part of the state government's anti- untouchability drive. The temple was initially washed with milk, and later destroyed due to her allegedly "polluting" the temple. The dominant castes than conducted an 'exam' inside the police station in an attempt to indentify

the writer of the police complaint over this incident, in order to punish him. Ashamma’s case to now pending trial. The perpetrator are out on bail. She received the government compensation and the new temple remains barred to Dalit.

- ❖ Uma Kumari, 24 year old Dalit women from Jammui District, Bihar was raped by a Dominant caste man in 2003, The Police assured her mother that they would arrest the accused that day itself. However, they did not take any action. Instead wearing of the police case the accused and ten men of his caste dragged uma and her mother to nearby ravine that night and then took twins to gang-rape both women for 18 hours, They were left with the threat of death if uma kumara took the matter further.
- ❖ Five month pregnant Suchitra Devi from Ghaziabad district in UP miscarried in 2002 after being shoved, jeered at and humiliated by dominant caste while attempting to stand in the same queue to access the public distribution shop, she had been waiting for hours to receive her ration. The PDS shopkeeper further her humiliation by saying “How many times have I told you that, you don’t’ even have to wait in the queou, Just come to my house at night and I will give you all the ration you want” when she approached the traditional village panchayat for justice they said that they could do nothing unless she knew who had pushed her, At this point Suchitra Devi relized “I will get no justice because I am a Bhangi:

➤ **Number of women facing Violence and frequency of violence.....**

Form of Violence	N° of Women who have faced form of Violence*		Frequency of Violence	
	Number of Women	% of total Dalit Women (500)	Number of Incidents	Many times***
Physical Assault	274	54.8	532	30
Verbal Abuse	312	62.4	331	106
Sexual Harassment/Assault	234	46.8	241	73
Rape	116	23.2	122	9
Sexual Exploitation	44	8.8	15	39
Forced Prostitution	24	4.8		24
Kidnap/Abduction	24	4.8	24	
Forced Incarceration	23	4.6	24	1
Medical Negligence	17	3.4	25	
Female Foeticide/Infanticide	2	0.4	3	

Cont.....

Child Sexual Abuse	23	4.6	8	22
Domestic Violence	215	43.0	76	185
*Most women have faced more than one form of violence **many times denotes instances in which women face the violence so repeatedly or regularly that they cannot remember the exact number of times the violence occurred		Total 1,401	489	

Source- Aloysius Irudayam S.j, Jayshree P. Mangubhi, Joel G.Lee 2006, Dalit Women Speak out, Violence against Dalit women in India, Vol1, New Dehli, NCDHR, P. 108.

The Condition of Dalit women in India is not so good and the rate of violence is higher against them. Studies on violence against Dalit women in India presents clear evidence of widespread exploitation and discrimination against these women subordinated in terms of power relation to men in a patriarchal society, as also against their communities based on caste. If we talk about constitutional Provision we see that there are number of articles in which constitution of India guaranteed freedom, equality, Right against exploitation, special provision for SC/ST and women, but in actually the condition of women in India and specially condition of Dalit women in India is very poor. They are abused, raped harassed by upper caste, dominated people of society and even by their family and even police could not note down their report and provide them Justice. So it is a big shame for all our us that in one side the women of India like Sania Mira, Saina Nehawal, Aishwarya Rai Bachan, Indra Nooyi,, Chanda Kochhar and more get name and fame across the world and in other hand many Dalit women did not able to secure their basic rights and live their life with dignity. So it is the time to wake up and took some collective step on civil and Government level to provide safe environment for women of India without any discrimination based on caste and creed. Then India becomes a true Democracy where everyone is treated equally and enjoys their rights and freedom.

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