

SIMMERING SILENCES AND BENEATH

An Anthology of
Gender Issues in India



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Chapter 3

Intersectionality of Caste and Gender: Victims, Violence and the Matrix of Power

Dr. Kauser Tasneem

Abstract: The dominant narrative of violence at the intersection of gender and caste presents a diabolic picture. The layered and overlapping nature of oppression is revealed by chronicling the incidents of violence at the intersectionality of caste and gender. In Indian context, gender is the defining component that determines and describes the responsibilities that women should play. Gender, in reality, establishes social hierarchy and privileges. In Indian civilisation, the combination of gender and caste has therefore proven fatal. The intersectionality of gender and caste has long been a part of society, and it still continues to be a major impediment.

Intersectionality is a feminist theory which can be utilised as a tool to analyse the present status of women in society. In the context of women, multiple identities push women to extremes and make them more vulnerable. Dalits are completely ostracised even today in the society, particularly in the context of India. As a result, gender has a significant impact on how a society functions. In a society based upon patriarchal ideologies, women find it difficult to breathe and make an identity of their own. Though caste system of stratification has been abolished, prejudices still exist and has a wider impact on the lives of Dalits, SCs and STs. In a traditional society like one existing in India, right to control women, in other words subjugating her, is considered as the birth-right of men. Subsequently, both the caste system and patriarchal structure of the society, works to the advantages of the privileged sections and they facilitate to strengthen its production and perpetuity. Globalisation has also increased the gap between the rich and the poor. With the advent of new technologies in the wake of globalisation, inequalities and discrimination has also increased as a result.

The chapter is an attempt to revert the mainstream narrative of violence to the extremely marginalised and oppressed women at the convergence of caste and gender.

Keywords: *gender, caste, intersectionality, culture, patriarchy, prejudice, oppression and society*

In the 21st century, violence against women has been a focal point in the International Women's Movement. The mainstream narrative of violence at the intersection of gender and caste presents a diabolic picture. Chronicling the stories of violence at the intersectionality of caste and gender brings forth the layered and overlapping nature of oppression. In Indian society, gender is the defining factor that determines and defines the roles that women should play. On the contrary, patriarchy defines/establishes hierarchy and privileges in the society. Hence, in Indian civilisation, the combination of gender and caste has proven fatal. Intersectionality of gender and caste has long been a part of Indian society, and it continues