

FEMINISM IN INDIA: A DALIT PERSPECTIVE

*Dissertation submitted to School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru
University in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement for the Award of
the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

KANCHARLA VALENTINA



**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI - 110067
2002.**



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI 110 067

Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "**Feminism in India: A Dalit Perspective**" submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other University and is my original work.

KANCHARLA VALENTINA

We recommend that the Dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


PROF. ESHANUL HAQ
(Chairperson)

Chairperson
CSSS/SSS
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067


DR. VIVEK KUMAR
(Supervisor)

Assistant Professor
Centre for Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067.

Dedicated

to

My Parents

Mother Surya Bai, a compassionate and strong woman who inculcated the values of hard work and confidence in me and father Mohan Rao who introduced me to the trials and tribulations of Babasaheb's life and believed in my ability to think and act independently.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deep gratitude to my previous guide, Prof. Nandu Ram for encouraging me to think and talk critically about any social phenomena. I am indebted to my present guide Dr. Vivek Kumar, a dynamic and hard working person who helped me with his valuable suggestions and able guidance.

I am thankful to the faculty of CSSS especially Prof. Anand Kumar, Prof. T.K. Oommen and Prof. Eshanul Haq who played a pivotal role in enhancing my interest in academics. The staff of CSSS, Talwarji, Sunita Madam, Negiji, Jangianiji, Bhupinder, Kashmir, Bharat and Sumor deserve a special mention for helping me in every aspect.

The staff of JNU Library along with Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and Centre for Women Development Studies need special thanks for helping me to find published material.

My profound thanks to friends back at home, Parvati, Malathi, Lakshmi Akka and Vijji and Sampat Sir who took concern in me. My country cousins in JNU especially Banerjee, Srinu, Koteswar Rao, Samba Garu, Raghu and my little brother Somu deserve a special mention who always lifted my spirits. My heartfelt thanks to my hostel mates and friends in JNU specially to Sudhir, Garima, Sarita, Nanduji, Binita Di, Richa Di, Dheeru, Lyn, Toppo, Juwala and Lewis for their moral support.

My profound thanks to Madhavi Lakshmi who supported me intellectually and morally in the course of this research work. Her work on Dalit patriarchy added conceptual clarity to my study.

My sincere gratitude to Satya, Intezar, Premji and Bir Abhimanyu, who stood by me at the crucial time of completion and submission of my work.

Words cannot express my gratitude for my elder brother Lenin and younger one Stalin, who gave rock like support to me both emotionally and morally all through my life. I am lucky to have such adorable brothers, who believe in women empowerment both in action and words.

I also would like to thank Satish Kumar & Raju, Computer Circle for getting this work typed, printed, bound and in making it presentable script to the JNU

Thank you Vikas, for tolerating my whimsical behaviour at the peak of submission of my dissertation.

Valentina
KANCHARLA VALENTINA

CONTENTS

		Pages
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION	1-22
CHAPTER 2	UNDERSTANDING FEMINISM IN AN INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK	23-46
CHAPTER 3	FEMINIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA	47-73
CHAPTER 4	DALIT MOVEMENTS IN INDIA: A DALIT FEMINIST CRITIQUE	74-102
CHAPTER 4	THE EMERGENCE OF DALIT FEMINISM	103-130
	CONCLUSION	131-133
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	134-145

Chapter 1

Introduction

India lives in several centuries at the same time. Some how, we manage to progress and regress simultaneously. As Indian citizens we subsist on a regular diet of caste massacres and nuclear tests, female infanticide and digital revolution, bride burning on one side and our delectable stockpile of Miss World and Miss Universe another side. The year when Sushmita Sen and Aishwarya Rai won the Miss Universe and Miss World titles, at the same time the first batch of women officers were commissioned into the Indian Air force. These women's remarkable achievement could not find even a corner space in our media, where as Sen and Rai the front pages, leaving us to wonder as to whether beauty or intellect is rated high.

Claude Levistrass (1969) who propounded the concept of the exchange of women speaks of the reification of women, which occurred as its consequence. The point here is, that its not women who are reified and commodified, rather its there sexuality and reproductive capacity which is so treated. This distinction is important to be noted of because women no matter how exploited and abused, retained their power to act, often to very limited extent as men of their group. As Faith (1994:39) points out, resistance cannot simply defeat, overturn or suddenly transform disciplinary power. It however, can resist the problem of power abuse that is, it weakens the process of victimisation and generates personal and political empowerment through the acts of naming violations and refusing to collaborate with oppressors. Dalit women's resistance to the interlocking oppressions of caste, class and gender make them locationally different from other women because they

are located at the lowest strata of the Hindu social order, a theme which will be analysed as the chapter unfolds.

Identity Politics and Women

Identity a sense of who I am is defined by a lifetime of experience, imposed by many outside influences and composed by a person through a unique process of growth that may not be without struggle. In childhood socialization itself a child learns the identity of belonging to a group, community etc, which is distinct from groups. As the child grows his/her individual identifications with particular groups become a part of identity development in later life. This same identity paves the pattern of control over women's sexual and reproductive behaviour exercised on those kin groups whose ideology emphasizes that their identity depends on an identifiable type of descent and the control exercised over women in states and movements where once again, group identity is limited to 'purity' – either of race or behaviour in a concrete sense or of ideology at the more symbolic power. Hanna Papanek (1994:46) opines, that control over women is also closely related to the question of identity. An individual sense of identity may be especially problematic for women because their societies make it so. The reasons for women's difficulties in this respect also explain why societies and movements look at changes in women's behaviour as evidences of social process of control and conformity. Women are quite simply seen as more exposed to alteration by external forces. For example, in many societies, women receive new names when they marry and must often live in new homes and communities. Thus the identity of an individual is a contestable category for women as such. An understanding of gender is required, to know how this identity of women is constructed by the society.

Contextualising Gender

Gender is regarded as the cultural equivalent of sex while sex refers to the biological division into males and females; gender is the parallel and socially unequal division into femininity and masculinity. Goffman (1977:301) places, sex on the premise of genitals, while gender is placed on a social and psychological domain. For Judith Butler (1987:131) Gender is the sculpturing of the original body into a cultural form. However a powerful explanation offered on Gender is the view of Simone De Beauvoir (1953), for whom Gender is not static, one not only becomes a woman, but continuously becomes. Joan W. Scotts (1998:42), definition of Gender contains two parts. According to her Gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes and secondly is also a primary way of signifying the relationship of power. Gender is seen as one of the foundations of every existing social order. It denotes not only sexual difference but also power and sexual hierarchy. Thus, Gender is a socially constructed, internalised category by which the subordination and oppression of women of society is constructed and constantly reconstructed.

A central tenet of feminist theory is that Gender has been and remains a historically variable and internally differentiated relation of domination, Foucault's (1978:144) thesis that power relations are constitutive of the social realm and that they operate principally through the human body, provide a way for feminists to show that the construction of gender inequality from anatomical difference is central to the creation and maintenance of social hierarchies.

Post Structuralism and Gender

Post structuralism represents, the development of mostly French social theory which began in the late 1960's and early 1970's as a reaction to the student uprisings of the 1960's and against the hegemony of Marxism in leftist thought.

Post structuralist thinkers reject the foundational principles in all structuralist thought and emphasise that, the “Truth” of a phenomenon is a historical construction produced through language and the relation between Reader (scientist) and Text (phenomenon). Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari reflect three major contributors to post structuralist thought.

The Emergence of post structuralism paved the way of abandoning the beliefs in grand theories of global oppression. Its recognition and celebration of differences, the importance of encouraging the recovery of previously silenced voices and an acceptance of the nature of the particularised knowledge provided an important breakthrough, for the need of talking of genders rather than gender.

The problem of White Feminism vs. Black Feminism, first World Feminism vs Third World Feminism. Upper caste Feminism vs Dalit Feminism lies in the domination of ‘one’ over the ‘other’. It is not just the oppression of women by men, but the oppression of lower classes by upper classes, oppression of Dalits by upper castes, oppression of the Third World by the First World, even in Third World nations, the zones of ‘Success’ (South East Asia), Failure (Latin America) and Collapse (Sub-Sahara Africa), oppression of blacks by whites etc. is increasingly making difficult to homogenise gender and stressed the need to talk of genders. In this context, Bina Agarwal (1994:240) asks two questions to the First World Feminist

- (i) Have they similarly embraced Third World women’s struggles as a part of their own history?
- (ii) Have the First World middle class feminists confront their privileged positions within the international division of economic and intellectual labour, and the sources of that privilege?

Further taking from, Mary Wollestone Crafts she argues, it is true that among unequal there can be no society. But this should not be restricted to the issue of inequality between women and men and must apply to inequality between women as well.

Long before Betty Friedan, talked about how the 'Feminine mystique' shackled women Rokeya Hosssain (1880-1932), a Bengali Muslim woman talked of this mystique among the elite house wives in her country as, "prisons wear handcuff made of iron, we wear bracelets of gold and silver...they are nothing but advertisements of your husbands wealth. A better way of doing that would be to use the diamond choicer as a dog collar. Bangles and Bracelets could be used as curtain rings in your drawing rooms. That would make a good show" (Quoted in Jahan, 1981: 14). These views of her sum up the pathetic powerless condition of Indian women of that time. Though her ideas on the equality of the sexes, the importance of formal education for women and so on were similar to those of Marywollestonecrafts, the question of how many women in west today have been exposed to her writings or those of Chou Hangman (1696-1777) who wrote about women's education before Marywollestonecraft. Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922) and Raden Kartini (1879-1904) who wrote about the problems of Third world women and played a great role for the emancipation of them through education and Quin Jui (1875-1907), a Chinese poet and political activist. Thus the cleavages are clear. Bina Agarwal and Narain (1991:22-23) opine that the exploitation of the South by North can be understood by the fact that they with only 20 percent of world's population consume 85 percent of the world's non-renewable energy. Hence is not easy to build links with the underprivileged from positions of privilege. In the same context, the feminist movement of India and the state addressed the problems of middle class upper caste women thus giving her the status of 'Mother'. This category of 'Mother' was consistently built up by Orientalists, Imperialists, Social reformers, Nationalists and the state after Independence. Their notion of women was this upper caste woman who with time

passing by was relegated to a invisible position. The most coherent early construction of a 'National Identity' for women was by Bankim Chandra. In all his novels the wife never transgresses the notion of true wifehood. In his last novels his characters of true wife's was to energize the husband for the goal of regenerating the motherland. The actual questions of women's status including the problem of widowhood and the need for reform remained outside the ambit of his concern. It was in 1882 that Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's Anadamath was published whose theme is based in the Sanyasi Revolt of 1770, Hindu against Muslim. The theme poem later set to music was adopted by the Indian Congress party as the national anthem. The second stanza of it goes.

Every image made divine

In our temples is but thine

Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen

With her hands that strike and her swords of sheen,

Thou art Lakshmi lotus throned

And the muse a hundred – toned

Pure and perfect without peer,

Mother Sweet, I bow to thee

Mother Great and Free!

(From Bande mataram)

Thus the Hindu Indian women – her morality and behaviour, her role in history – was no longer just to elevate class-caste status, equated with motherhood and Goddesses, she was now the human face of the nation itself. This image of Aryan upper caste woman is thus the only object of historical concern but the irony is that, the vedic dasi, the Dalit woman is not visible in any of these discourses on women.

The Indian feminist movement carried on this legacy of representing the same upper caste and Middle class woman. This movement could not address the problem of women who live in 80 percent of Indian population of rural areas, and more than 70 percent of female labour force, which falls in the category of landless agricultural labourers. The struggle for these women revolves around procuring food, fuel and water along with fighting caste, class and gender oppression.

Academics is a social location where particular truths are told. As Bourdieu (1990) views, the sociologist may acquire that special insight also with every kind of social displacement only by refusing to accept both the populist representation of the people, which deceives not only those who create it, but also those who are in it ultimately.

Sociology as a discipline developed in a distinct historical, intellectual and social context, at a particular period in the development of European societies, with the emergence of what is referred to as 'Modernity'. These changes took place in European societies during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, subsequently became global, resulting in the social transformation of societies. These specific developments are crucial for this transformation – the scientific revolution which started in the sixteenth century. Enlightenment thought of the eighteenth century culminating in the French Revolution; and the industrial revolution, which started in the late eighteenth century in England. Sociology is

seen as a reaction to each of these developments. Postmodernism, a late twentieth century phenomenon, which rejected positivistic and humanistic approaches to social sciences along with rejecting 'universal ground theories', envisages to look out and recognize the 'differences'. Though women have been central to the making of society and the building of civilizations, they are socially 'invisible' being confined to the hearths and dark cages of seclusion, assigned with the roles of daughters, mothers and wives and mothers (in Indian context). Their identity of being a rational being had been denied for ages, ironically even in countries like U.S.A. and France where Freedom, Equality, Liberty and Fraternity are foundational concepts of their societies.

Sociology still remains a male-dominated discipline, and this has fundamental implication for its theories, methods, research and teaching. For example the issue of objectivity and positivism in sociology excluded the subjectivity and agency of women. The ground theories and theorists of sociology never bothered to include women 'sociologically'. For Durkheim(1938:8) social facts are first and foremost 'things' which are social in nature. He gave four major characteristics of social facts:

- They have distinctive social characteristics and determinants, which are not amenable to explanation on either the biological or psychological level.
- They are external to the individual.
- They endure through time outstanding any set or group of individuals.
- They are, in Durkheim's own words, 'endowed with coercive power, by virtue of which they impose themselves upon him, independent of his.

If we go by his framework, then sociology can be defined as the Science of Institutions, of their genesis and their functions. Social facts, of which institutions

are constitutes, must be treated as 'things', as empirical phenomena, not as concepts. If social facts are then general why is it so the experiences of a white, black, a Dalit or adivasi are different along with the marginalised category of women? Why then within women itself, racial, class, caste, ethnic religious identities cut across each other. The experience of being a woman or being black a upper caste and a Dalit can never be a singular one and will always be dependent on a multiplicity of locations and positions that are constructed socially. For feminist politics and feminist practices have always required a clear sense of position and of politics of location. Feminist want to represent themselves, as they feel that others who are men are not only ignoring them but also producing a distorted view of women. Morgan(1974:76) argues

“...that women are a colonized people. Our history, values and cross-cultural culture have been taken from us – a genocidal attempt manifest most arrestingly in the patriarchy’s seizure of our basic and precious land; that is our own bodies”.

Meaning of Feminism

Feminism is a term commonly used for a doctrine of advocating social and political rights on par with men for women – other essential features of feminism are:

- It is an organised movement for attaining equal rights.
- The assertion of the claims of women as a group and the body of theory, which women have created.
- Belief in the necessity of large scale social change in order to increase the power of women.

Even among feminists though almost everyone agree for the first two positions, but the necessity for basic social change in the system. It is here says Lerner(1986), where we have to make distinction between women's rights and women's emancipation argues that women's rights movement means a movement which is concerned with fighting for women's equality with men in all aspects of society and giving them access to all rights and opportunities enjoyed by men in the institutions of that society. Thus, the women's rights movement is alien to the civil rights movement in wanting equal participation for women, essentially a reformist goal. The nineteenth century women's rights and suffrage movement is an example of this phenomena. On the other hand, women's emancipation means freedom from oppressive restrictions imposed by society and earning one's own status, not being born into it or marrying into it, all of which implies a radical transformation of existing institutions, values and theories. Henceforth, Feminism can include both women's rights and women's emancipation, but Lerner believes for greater accuracy to differentiate between them while women in various societies have won many rights, women's emancipation is a long way to go.

Feminism as a social movement

Feminist movements are very oftenly regarded as a social movement. A social movement is defined as collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist change in the society or group of which it is a part. Women's movement is an important variant of social movement in the sense that it aims to bring changes in the institutional arrangements, values, customs and beliefs in the society that have subjected women over the years. The particular framework of men, who thought that rationality could only be the domain of men, denied this privilege to women. Its ironical at large for the modern capitalistic enlightened nations like U.K., U.S., France and Germany which denied even basic suffrage

rights for women until the latter had organised themselves into a movement and won many rights at par with men.

To comprehend the reality in a proper perspective a detailed discussion on this angle will be undertaken, in the next chapter. The Anti-suffrage lobby targeted these women as shrews, viragos, hysterics and unwomanly women who abandoned their children and lacked feminine ethos. Strong women and women who were leading the women's movement in the west were called as bitches and witches. These are many accounts of how single women were targeted as witches in medieval Europe and how the institutions undertook the task of witch hunting. Marywollstonecrafts monumental work 'A vindication of the rights of women' published in 1792, inspired women to come together to fights for their rights. It was to dominate subsequent feminist thought. Similarly Simon De Beauvoirs 'The second Sex' (1952) is also considered to be a master price for inspiring women to form a revolutionary fervour.

Liberal theorists who attributed 'Reason' as the domain of man presumed that since women can't have this attribute should belong under the aegis of their husband. This is a paradox, which John Locke held, who established at least theoretically, natural rights for all people (Scott: 1988). The most dramatic early attempt to apply the basic natural rights doctrine to women is the declaration of sentiments drafted primarily by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and issued on July 19-20, 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York which was signed by 100 women and men. This document, rooted in natural rights theory, is modelled word for word on the declaration of independence. The Seneca falls statements serve as a useful summary of the central literal doctrines of the nineteenth century women's rights movement in the United states of America. The theoretical way to Seneca falls was however, paved by the theories of several powerful feminist thinkers who are placed in the enlightenment tradition. They are Marywollstonecraft, Frances Wright and Sarah Grimke, The ideas of Sojourna truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton,

Susan Anthony, Harriot Taylor and John Stuart Mill were articulated for the most part after Seneca falls, provided a space for women's movement in America.

Similarly in Britain, from the last phase of seventeenth century small groups of women were formed to be debating about marriage and free love adopting short hair and artistic styles of house decoration and clothing. These women took lead in the suffrage and socialism movement. Emmeline Pankhurst, had formed the women's social and political union (WSPU) in 1903 to lead the suffrage movement. Rebecca West and Stella Browne wanted to struggle for equality, arguing that physical expression and defiant sexual courage were vital aspect of emancipating women. In western countries, the main domain for which women's movement fought for are – suffrage, equal, legal and political rights, health, beauty, control of sexuality, birth control and opposing conservative sexual attitudes. Women's entry into the armed forces was also a hard won battle for them after the two world wars. Lesbian sexuality also entered into the popular public debate. The two world wars also presented women with opportunities to earn high wages and to learn new skills. They became welders, electricians and ship fitters. The absence of the men created opportunities for educated women in higher education, while western women's movement grew out of the emergence of the bourgeoisie nuclear family, where industrialisation allowed women more individual economic freedom has made smaller family sizes socially desirable.

In contrast, African feminism grew out of a political climate of extreme poverty that created competition between men and women for scarce resources. A review article in women's studies international forum views (1999) that the works of Africanist scholars like Betty Harris, Tsehai Berhane – Selassie, Lisa Galazer, Maria Nzomo and Enid Gord inspired African women to organise movement around three themes: Domestic law, farming and wage work and women's networks in times of crisis. Now here is the contrast then between U.S. feminist discourses and those of women's movements in societies that are highly fractured

and conflicted along particularistic lines. It is notable that in many such African contexts women's movements have been among the leading forces calling for peace and unity, thereby seeking to minimize difference. To take one of the most extreme cases in recent history, since the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, there have been initiatives by women's organizations to foster unity between Tutsi and Hutu women, and these struggles have been extraordinarily difficult. Even though women did not participate directly in the genocide, the politicisation of ethnicity and the orchestration of genocide and rape inflicted against the Tutsi, as well as the retributions have left in their wake painful memories and enormous resentments. Yet in Rwanda a coalition of thirty-two women groups called pro-femmes Twese Hamwe of Rwanda won a United Nations educational, scientific and cultural organisation (UNESCO) award for the promotion of tolerance and non-violence presented to them by Archbishop Desmond Tutu for their outstanding work in rehabilitating families and communities devastated by mass violence.

There was nothing automatic about these bridges, which were built through much pain and hard work. In South Africa, post-apartheid rule ushered in a new era for the women's movement. Here the big challenge for the women's movement has been to create not only multiethnic but also multi racial linkages. In 1991, a women's National coalition (WNC) was formed bringing together eighty one organizational affiliates and thirteen regional alliances of women's organisations regional and national conference were held and a women's charter was drafted and endorsed by the national parliament and all nine regional parliaments in 1994. The charter addressed a broad range of concerns, including equality, legal rights, economic issues, education, health, politics and violence against women. The women's movement in Uganda has become one of the strongest mobilised societal forces in Uganda, with roughly 18 percent female representation in parliament since 1989 and a minimum of one-third female representation in local government ensured by the 1995 constitution, Uganda has exceeded most African countries in terms of female political representations.

Latin American women's movements have continually challenged oppressive regimes (ex., Chile) in others they have achieved recognition from their governments (ex-Nicaragua, Brazil). In still other the concurrent battles of women's and people liberation (ex. Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala) give us new definitions of what is to be a 'feminist'. 'Eucentros' (From the Spanish Eucstrar to meet or to find oneself or another, to confront oneself or another) provide critical forums in which grass roots and professional feminist activists alike from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean meet and share theoretical and strategic insights. Asian feminist movements have been active in raising issues of women's subordination, economic exploitation and social oppression, pointing fingers to areas of legal discrimination against women, the lack of women representation in the political process, the unequal pay women receive, the sexist attitude of the media and the text books, violence and exposing the ways that fundamentalism harms women. In fact all the issues feminist raise relate to democratic rights to half the population. A detailed account on the Indian women's movement will be dealt in one of the chapters.

New feminist social movements

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the emergence of a new shift in the theorisation on social movements (NSMs). Five main positions explain these NSMs in their own terms – they are Melucci, Touraine, Habermas, Cohen and Laclau and Mouffe. Melucci locates the novelty of the new social movements in terms of their reflexivity. Movements themselves act as a new media and are a message in themselves. The movements through their existence offer different meaning of reality. They challenge and redefine the dominant logic on the symbolic ground. Touraine locates the NSMs only in a specific type of social life

and society, viz. post-industrial society. He thus calls these social movements as NSMs. Touraine (1985:776) differentiates the old social movements from NSM through the discursive character of NSMs. Post social movements, he views opposed domination through meta-social principles, but he argues that NSMs do not challenge domination through meta-social principles but through a direct call to personal and collective freedom and responsibility. Cohen (1985) too like Touraine characterises the identity of NSMs with self limiting radicalism rather than with a search for an ideal utopia and truth. For her, NSMs struggle in the name of autonomy, plurality and difference without renouncing the egalitarian principles of modern civil society. Habermas (1981:33) essentially a communicative theorist understands new social movements and the new social conflict arising not out of problems of distribution but in concern for grammar of forms of life. For him, the creation of alternative communication groups based on age, kin, religion, sex etc are a search for personal and collective identity to ~~see~~ it up. Habermas understands NSMs as 'meaning' gives to the otherwise impoverished every day life that people live in this capitalist society. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) attribute NSMs to advanced industrial societies where its not possible to fix any meaning to any event independent of any practice of articulation. Though all the theorists discussed above differ on the conditions of the emergence of NSMs they agree on one chief character of NSMs – their discursivity. Feminist theories are increasingly attributed to NSMs because of the increasing decisive practices of feminism. The emergence of black feminism, Third World Feminism and Dalit feminism are mainly looked as NSMs because they are not mediated through notions of equality and justice or truth. They problematize their relationship to truth and instead of surrendering their reflexive power to the truth; they remain alert against the power relations that are effected through the very claims to be true. The recent emphasis on difference in feminism has led to discursive struggles, viz. struggle and contestation over the meaning of the category 'woman'. Chandra Mohanty, a US based scholar of Indian origin, gives Third World Women an imaginary status. She critiques western feminists for

objectifying Third World Women in their quest for seeking to uncover the universality of women's subordination. She states that 'besides being named a white, western (read progressive/modern) non-western (read backward, traditional) hierarchy, these analysis (i.e. by western feminists) freeze Third World Women in time, space and history (Mohanty 1991:6). She also accepts that Third World Women do not constitute any automatic unitary group and argues for an imagined community of Third World oppositional struggles. The idea of imagined community is useful because it leads us away from essentialist notions of Third World Feminist struggles suggesting political rather than biological or cultural bases for alliances. Thus it is not colour or sex which constructs the ground for these struggles. Rather it is the way we think about race, class and gender – the political links we make among and between struggles. Similarly, Karin Kapadia's work (1996) contends that subordinated groups do not internalise the values of their masters but reject them in subtle ways. Looking at the everyday practices of Tamil low castes, she shows how their cultural values repudiates the norms of Brahmanical elites Hence by giving third world women an imaginary status, Mohanty denies the category Third World Women a foundational status through which political struggles are organised. Instead, the category Third World Women is discursively organised through common contexts of oppositional struggles. In Indian context, if we regard Dalit feminism as NSM, then its very difficult to locate Phule's, contribution to the upliftment of Dalit women. Some interesting debates about the concept of third world Feminism and Dalit feminism will be analysed in the coming chapters.

The present study

The primary concern of this study is to critically look at the Indian feminist movement and the construction of the imagined category of Indian women thus ultimately relegating those millions of Indian women who do not belong to the arena of this imagined category of marginalized women. This category of

marginalised women consists predominantly Dalits, who are socially, culturally and at symbolic level occupy the lowest position in Indian society. Dalit women face the combined permutations of caste, class, gender and physical humiliations – collective and public threat of rape, sexual assault and physical violence at the work place and in public. The emergence of Dalit feminism is a consequence of not only the ignorance paid by Indian Feminist movement but also the exclusion of representing Dalit women’s pains and suffering in Dalit movements of India. This is the main theme of this work. Thus this work analyses that identity of being a women, doesn’t necessarily category ‘women’ as such as a homogeneous entity, asserting the fact that are identities are mediated by the world in which we live. Experience is the base of personal political as well as a reliable methodological tool for defining oppression. From such an epistemological position, there was either a complete in visibility of the experience of Dalit women or at least only a token representation of their voices. There was thus a masculinisation (characteristics peculiar to men) of Dalithood and a Savarnalisation (the four varnas, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras are combined as Savarnas) of womanhood. This epistemological position, aims to analyse the issues, strategies and exclusions and omissions of the feminist movement in India along with a critique of Dalit movement, which paved the emergence of Dalit Feminism. •

Objectives of the study

- To compare the contestations of feminism in an international context.
- The debate on the construction of the “Imagined category of Indian women.”
- To analyse how the interlocking expressions of Religion, Caste, Class and Gender have merged together to relegate Indian women to subjugation.

To analyse feminist and Dalit movements in India which ignored the marginalised category of Dalit women which paved the way of the emergence of Dalit feminism in India.

Study

The first chapter looks at the various conceptual problems arising with the concept of social invisibility of women, which led to the emergence of Feminism. Along with analysing the politics of identity and Gender this chapter sees the various debates on the theoretical orientation in locating feminism as Social Movements.

The second chapter is a further extension of the first one. It mainly analyses the cleavages of Feminist theorising in a cross cultural framework along with the bias of theory and theorising in sociology. Contextualising the debate of Equality vs Difference in feminism, analysing patriarchy and various epistemological positions are other contents of this chapter.

The third chapter critically evaluates the feminist movements in India which mainly addressed the issues and concerns of the upper castes and middle class women thus marginalising the majority-Dalit, Tribal, and minority women.

The fourth chapter looks at the conditions and concerns of Dalit Movements in India which like other social movements were mainly reformatory rather than the agents of radical social change. The masculinisation of these movements is being critically analysed.

The fifth chapter locates the detailed conditions which led to the emergence of Dalit feminism in India along with a discussion of the attitude of patriarchal Indian legal system which denied equal justice to women at par with men.

The last part, which is conclusion sums up the study along with socio-historically analysing the way religion, caste, class and gender hegemonised Indian women.

Methodology

The study is a socio-historical one consisting of secondary sources with the analysis and review of available literatures. Besides published materials like Books, Journals, and Articles we have used documents, records, magazines and pamphlets of social organisations. The present study provides a preparatory ground for launching Doctoral Research.

References

- Agarwal, Bina and Narain, 1991. *Global Warming in an Unequal World: A case of Environmental Colonialism*, New Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment.
- Agarwal, Bina, 1994. Positioning the Western Feminist Agenda: A Comment, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 1(2), July- December.
- Bourdieu, 1990. *Bourdieu on Bourdieu' in Harker et al. (ed.) An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu: The Practice of Theory*, London: Macmillan.
- Butler, Judith 1987 *Variations on Sex and gender: De Beauvoir, Witting, Foucault in Benhabib et al (ed.) feminism as Critique*, Minnesota: University Press.
- Cohen, J., 1985. 'Strategy of Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements', *Social Research*, Vol. 52 No. 4.
- De Beauvoir, Simone, 1952. *The Second Sex (Translated by Parshley, H.M)*. New York :Bantan.
- Durkheim, Emile, 1966. *The Rules of Sociological Method*, New York: Free Press.
- Faith, Karlene, 1994. *Resistance-lessons from Foucault and Feminism in Radtke et.al. (ed.) Power, Gender, Social relationship in Theory and Practice*, London: Sage publication
- Foucault, Michael, 1978. *The History of Sexuality, trans. R. Hurley*, Harmonds Worth: Penguin.

Goffman, Erving, 1977. 'The arrangement between the Sexes', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 4 (Fall).

Habermas, 1981. 'New Social Movements', *Telos*. No. 49.

Jahan, Roshan, 1981. *Inside Seclusion: The Avarodhbasini of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain*, Dhaka: Women for Women.

Kapadia, Karin, 1996. *Shiva and her sisters: Gender, Caste and Class in Rural South India*, New Delhi: Westview Press

Kelly, John, 1984. *Women, History and Theory*, Chicago: University of Chicago.

Laclau and Mouffe, 1985. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso.

Lerner, Gerda, 1986. *The Creation of Patriarchy*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Melucci, A., 1985, 'The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements', *Social Research*, Vol. 52, No. 4.

Mohanty, Chandra, 1991. 'Introduction: Cartographies of Struggle' in *Mohanty, C et. al. (ed.) Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*: Indiana University Press.

Morgan, K. (ed.), 1974. *Sisterhood is Powerful – An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*, New York: Random.

Papanek, Hanna, 1994. *Ideal Women and Ideal Society*. in *Valentine M. Moghadam (ed.) Identity Politics and Women – Cultural Reassertion and Feminisms in International Perspective*, Boulder: West View.

Dis
Y, 15: (W) 511). 44 N9 21
p2

TH9873

DISS
305.43969420954
V2346 Fe

TH9873



Review Article, 1992. 'Feminism in Latin America From Bogota to San benardo',
Signs, Winter,

Review Article, 1999. New Perspectives on African Feminism and the History of
African Women, *Womens Studies Intenational Forum*, Vol. 22.

Scott, J W., 1988. *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York: Columbia
University Press

Strauss, Levi, 1970. *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Rev. (ed.), London:
Blackwill Press.

Touraine, A., 1985. 'An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements', *Social
Research*, Vol. 52, No.4.

Chapter 2

Understanding Feminism in An International Framework

Feminist theory is a subject matter in its own right, concerned with addressing the 'invisibility' of women in social theoretical thinking along with theorizing Gender.

This chapter analyses some conceptual problems related with Feminism. The difficulty of analyzing Feminism in theory and theorizing in sociology along with contextualizing patriarchy are some important themes to be dealt in this chapter. Finally the debate of equality and difference along with the development of different streams of thought within Feminism will be discussed in detail. Thus this chapter strives to locate Feminism in theorizing and analyzing the main streams of feminist thought. However, the practice of categorizing theories as a method of inquiry into Feminist projects is more common in the west than in India. In India, crystallizing issues and activism has been perspectives.

From the time of its introduction the term 'feminism' has been controversial. Although the invention of the word 'Feminism' has often erroneously been attributed the Charles Fourier of in the early 1890's and then principally as a synonym for women's emancipation. The first self proclaimed Feminist in France was the women's suffrage advocate Hubertine Auclert, who from 1882 used this term in her periodical 'Hacitoyenne'. The terms Feminist and Feminism gained currency in the French press following the first 'Feminist Congress' in Paris in May 1882. By 1894-5 these terms crossed the channel to Great Britain, and before the turn of the century, they appeared in all European nations. By the late 1890's these words had jumped the Atlantic to Argentina and the United States of America. Feminism now, connoted a far broader socio-

political critique, a critique that was women centered and women celebratory in its onslaught on role privilege.

The International proletarian women's day, authorized by the International socialist women's conference in 1910, became the inspiration for the International Women's day on March 8, celebrated well into our own times. Pacifism drove women to protest war and militarism, from the historic 1915 conference at the Hague, which led to the foundation of the women's International League for peace and Freedom to innumerable resolutions taken at International Women's conference for Disarmament in the 1920's and against Rearmament in the 1930's to International antinuclear movements in the 70's and 80's, to the 90's ethnic strife, war and devastation in III world and African nations. Thus Feminism is not only concerned about women's sights, it envisages for a just and humane society.

Equality and Difference in Feminism

The Feminist movement and Scholarship are frequently seen divided between the advocates of equality on one side and advocating sexual difference on the other. Some Feminists are presented as demanding equality in the sense of the identical treatment of women and men as most of the liberal feminists do, Others like Radical Feminists demand that the distinctive characteristics and activities of women should be given special consideration and it appears that women are forced to choose and been forced to choose, between the two. In this context Joan Scott (1988:172) comments:

“when equality and Difference are paired dichotomously, they structure an impossible choice. If one opts for equality, one is forced to accept the notion that Difference is anti-theoretical to it. If one opts for difference, one admits that equality is unattainable”.

From at least 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft's 'A vindication of the Rights of woman' was published, women have demanded both equal civil and political rights, and they argue that their difference from men should be acknowledged in their citizenship. Gisela Bock and Susan James' (1988:2) make an interesting observation in this context this tension between equality and difference bears not only on the analysis of relation between woman and men, but also on the sameness of differences between women. As one Afro-American woman M. Wright (1968:608) asserts, in Black women's liberation, we don't want to be equal with men, just like in Black Liberation, we are not fighting to be equal with the White man. We are fighting for the right to be different and not be punished for it. Throughout its history, women's liberation has been seen sometimes as the right to be equal. And sometimes as the right to be different.

While French and Italian Feminism's focus exclusively on difference, Anglo-American Feminism's focus on equality precisely because of the particular contexts in which they evolved. While men and women are being regarded equal in the public realm of citizenship. Women's difference is still encapsulated in the domestic sphere, in the roles of wives and mothers.

The phenomena of motherhood is of particular interest as on one hand motherhood is natural and private, a case of all that political society is defined against, on the other hand, women have a political duty to bear children. In this context, Carole Pateman (1988:17) explains how motherhood is incorporated into the patriarchal state which constructs for women distinctive citizenry duties. She further elaborates that women's political standing rests on major paradox, they have been excluded and included on the basis of the very same capacities and attributes. She examines classic contract theories which present sexual difference as the political difference between Freedom (men) and subordination (women). Women were held by nature to lack the characteristics required for participation in political life, and citizenship has been constructed in the male image. Thus

citizenship has gained its meaning through the exclusion of women, that is it say sexual difference. Hence, its the task of Feminists to reconstruct new woman-centered senses of equality and difference. Oakley (1972:4) argues that the subject areas with which sociology is concerned are artificial constructs which distort human experience, one consequence of this is that women's social presence within these areas of life is high, although their sociological visibility is low'. She hits the nail right on the head by viewing. "In sociology, a way of seeing is a way of not seeing." Anthropology, which is said to be the forerunner of Sociology, is also imbedded with the same prejudices against women. While on the one side the focus on Kinship, marriage and the family meant that women were not exactly absent from anthropology, on the other side the methodology of research was faulty and its practitioners carried a strong and Androrocentric bias. Dube, L (1996:7) argues that anthropologists who have worked on matrimony in Africa have shown that the concentration of authority in male hands seen in matrilineal societies is generally not possible in a matrilineal culture. The well-known anthropologist at Oxford E.E. Evans Prichard published an interesting monograph containing texts gathered exclusively from his males informants. The title was 'Male and Female among the Azande'. The assumption was writ large: Azande men could spat for Azande women and Azande women were subsumed under Azande men. Malinowski, the father of fieldwork and the progenitor of the technique of participant observation, failed to observe and take note of women's key activities that carried a tremendous import for the stability and continuity of the social system of Trobriand Jslanders. It was left to another anthropologist – this time a woman Annette Weiner, to research in the same society after a few decades. For Levi-s Strauss, human society was essentially a male order, who saw women, as things to be exchanged to maintain societal order.

The denial that women can be fully rational agents has a long history in philosophical writing too. Aristotle (1260:113) believed that 'the woman has (a

deliberative faculty) but it is without authority. Consequently he continues 'the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the one rules and the other is ruled' (Jaggar,1983: 36). Thinkers of the middle ages agreed with the Greeks that God made woman to be a helper in procreation for man because 'woman's power of reasoning is less than a mans'. Modern philosophers, including many liberals, have held substantially the same view. Hume, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel, all doubted that women were fully rational! (Figes,1970:114) . Hegel for instance believed that women's deficiency in the 'universal faculty' was such as to render women as different from men as plants were different from animals. The very premise on which he is comparing women with plants and animals is shocking for rational human beings.

The first unmistakably Feminist voices were heard in England in the seventeenth century. In the next two hundred years, more voices began to speak together and were heard also in France and the USA. The 'womens liberation movement' is the major version of Feminism in contemporary western society. Now, 'Feminism' is commonly used to refer to all those who seek, no matter on what grounds, to end women's oppression and subordination. Here the word oppression is stressed because of its powerful underlying meaning. The etymological origin of the word 'Oppression' lies in the Latin as 'pressdown' or 'press against'. This meaning suggests that people who are oppressed, suffer some kind of restriction on their freedom. It implies that people are not oppressed by simple natural phenomena, instead. Oppression is the result of human agency, humanly imposed restrictions on peoples freedom. Thus oppression is the imposition of unjust constraints on the freedom of individuals or groups. An important factor to be remembered here is that the word 'Feminism' is also a contested, which will be detail discussed by me as the chapter unfolds. Wilson (1988:89) argues, that despite its heterogeneous character, Feminism does circle around some basic question concerning equality, difference and power between

men and women, connected to vision about independence and liberation for women. Since, Feminism is an upsurge against the very domain of 'patriarchy', we need to understand this concept in our study.

Patriarchy

Etymologically, 'patriarchy' refers to rule by the father. It is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate and oppress women (Walby,1990:20). It is a historic creation formed by men and women in a process which took nearly 25000 years to its completion. In its earliest form patriarchy appeared as the archaic, state. Lerner (1986:10) opines that the basic unit of the organisation of state was the patriarchal family, which expressed and constantly generated its rules and values. The roles and behaviour deemed appropriate to the sexes were expressed in values, customs, laws and social roles. They also and very importantly, were expressed in leading metaphors, which became part of the cultural construct and explanatory system. In a society where men have controlled the knowledge and have interpreted the classical texts, it is not surprising that woman have lost the power of naming, explaining and defining for themselves, the realities of their own experiences. Hartmam H. (1976:138) defines patriarchy as a set of hierarchical relationships which has a material base and in which there are overwhelming responses from various institutions of society to control women. The above statement mainly refers to power relationship which in a discursive way relegate women to subordinated positions, by forcing them to follow the norms of behavior as determined by the males. According to Lerner, G (1986:10) patriarchy is not unicausal, in fact both men and women participated in creating 'patriarchy'. Mitchell, J (1984:18) had located patriarchy in social reproduction and sees the specificity of patriarchy under capitalism in the way relations of reproduction are organised, but she uses the term reproduction imprecisely. An improvement in approach had been observed in Eisensteins (1979) approach who viewed that how capitalism as an economic class system

makes use of patriarchy in pursuing the profit. Walby Sylvia (1990) makes a powerful argument to explain the underlying structures of patriarchy. She identifies six structures as implicated in the construction, maintenance and were construction of patriarchy: mode of production, relations in paid work, the state, male violence, sexuality and cultural institutions. In each case we can identify the relative degree of depth of a particular structure; structures, says Walby, are emergent properties of practices and any specific empirical instance will embody the effects of not only patriarchy in its ideological as well as material aspects but other structure such as capitalism, colonialism and class. Now it appears more appropriate for us in the light of these new understandings to talk of patriarchies in the plural in order to underscore the variations in male dominance systems not only temporarily but across different social groups in the same historical period. Hence patriarchy like Gender is not only inevitable but also socially produced.

In India the system of patriarchy is strongly intertwined with caste system. In fact both gender and patriarchy act as signifier of caste and nation in India. Both of them are important in the maintenance of caste hierarchy and 'womanhood' which knitted the upper and lower segments of society in symbolic and material ways. Uberoi, P. (2000:322) points out that the interpretation of gender relations solely in terms of sexual politics does not do justice to the women's lives. Despite this recognition of plurality, the notion of 'woman-caste' as including all woman exists in popular understanding as for instance in the Marathi phrase Baichi jat, literally meaning the caste of women.

Theory and Theorizing in Sociology

In sociology, theories are used to provide arguments about how society shared the facts and how the 'Facts' should be apprehended and ordered. Theories make sense of the facts, they interpret them for us. Facts alone cannot resolve theoretical disputes, because theories are explanations of the facts. Even when

there is agreement as to what the facts are, they can be used to support different theories, two theories may be incompatible with each other and yet agree on what the available facts are. As Scott, J (1995:12) has pointed out, 'Theory is fundamental to the whole sociological enterprise, it defines its central concepts and itself-it is about making sense of the world in which we live.

While empirical sociology has by a large recognised at least the need to include gender as a variable, theorists tend to remain silent on gender. Giddens(1993) for ex, has a brief section in his theory chapter on feminist criticisms of Mainstream theory, but no reference to feminist theory as such or even to the ways in which feminists have modified male stream theories –for ex, Marxist feminism. Scott, J (1995) while stressing that theory is central to the sociological enterprise has no reference to feminist theory as such, or indeed to any feminist criticism of mainstream theories (with the exception of that raised by Mary Wollstonecraft, a liberal feminist at the turn of the nineteenth century) This deliberate omission not only marginalises and devalues the contribution that female sociologists have made to sociological theory but perpetuates the myth that theory is difficult and something that only men can do resulting in the reinforcing the view that theory is difficult and an account of the ideas of great men rather than the attempt to construct frameworks that enable us to understand and make sense of the world in which we live. It is in this area of theory, then that we can see the greatest resistance within sociology to accept the challenge made by feminist to the phallocentrism of the discipline. What is even more noteworthy, however is the ways in which many of the criticism that feminists have made in sociology, as a discipline have been taken up by males only especially those who take postmodernist positions and those who are developing 'male studies' as if its only males who constitute a society. To have more clarity of this view we can see the works of Hekman (1999) and Smart (1995). Dube, L (1996:5) quite vehemently criticizes sociological theory, which she views is

characterized by three forms of female invisibility _exclusion, pseudo-inclusion and alienation. This is exemplified she says in the works of the three masters, Weber, Durkheim and Marx. While Weber's theories do not take cognizance of the existence of women, Durkheim's figures for suicide rates do not exclude women but they are incorporated without any distinct recognition of gender as a meaningful category in the search of variation, Proof or validity in his theory of suicide. Marx's conceptualizations of labour, value and work insufficiently recognize women contribution to the process of social life, production and social reproduction. She sums up her argument by viewing that its not only sociology which has a gender bias but it applies to the whole faculty of social sciences. This bias against women is purposive as sociology as a discipline developed parallel to what is referred to as 'modernity'. We had seen in the first introductory chapter the development of the historical context of sociology.

Feminist theories try to address the problem of the dichotomy between 'subject' and 'object', 'self' and 'others' to demonstrate have specific practices or institutions viewed women as 'others', maltreated them and hence transformed them into victims who are invisible. Once those processes were identified, feminist activists could seek or to revolutionize the relevant institutions. Hence Feminism is essentially political. Hence the first task confronting the feminist theory was to document both past and present inequalities.

One of the main criticisms against Feminism is that it is subjective and hence unscientific. Scholars like Donna Haraway and Sandra Harding had dealt with this problem of science in feminism. Haraway DJ (1995:288), views that many currents in Feminism attempt to theorize grounds for trusting the vantage points of the subjugated. There is good reason to believe that vision is better from below the brilliant space platforms of the powerful. Hence she emphasizes that 'positioning is therefore, the key practice grounding knowledge organised around the imagery of vision. As so such that western scientific and philosophic

discourse is organised, positioning implies responsibility for our enabling over what may count as rational knowledge. Sandra Harding (1987:8), makes an *interesting* argument that, the supposed neutral and objective knowledge produced by rigorously *scientific* methods had often either ignored women's concerns altogether or has dealt with them *from* a patently male perspective. Further, she observes that it were the movements of social revolution which had most contributed to improvements in science, read it as a claim about the knowledge consequences of new technologies of positioning.

Feminist theory originates from the basic premise of 'Location'. It is initiated from the view that women are oppressed and that for many this oppression is primary. Womens freedom of action is limited by the power of men because men possess more economic, cultural and social resources than women. Henceforth it is necessary to give credence to womens concrete experiences of oppression – ones occurring in personal everyday encounters as well as those at the collective and institutional levels. Harding's (1987: 12) views, that we can't exclude 'Men' from being a feminist just because of their gender. She further continues that the designation feminist can be applied to men who satisfy whatever standards women must satisfy to earn the label. This position is being contended by many feminist scholars who adhere to the position that work done for women on or about women must be done for women amongst women themselves and that when antipatriarchal, profeminist work is done by others. Men force – it is to be acknowledged and appropriately used when useful and named whatever it is for itself. But it is not to be named as Feminism or Feminist research.

Mies, M (1987: 14) sets out these methodological guidelines for feminist research –conscious partiality, a conscious identification with the research projects.

- The view from below
- Active participation in actions movements and struggles for women emancipation
- The goal of changing the status quo
- Conscientization, research carried out by the objects of oppression
- The collectivization of women`s experience

Thus implicit in this definition of Feminist research is the assumption that it directly involves women.

The early feminists did not use the term, Feminism, if they had applied any name to themselves, it would have been something like defenders or advocates of women. But their positions belong to a general vantage point where women won and secured, positions rather than ideas proper.

Types of Feminism

Any attempt to classify feminist theories is fraught with problems. Any system is arbitrary and incomplete, arbitrary because we force women into a category, one with which they may not themselves identify, and describe a given position as if it were totally unified rather than representing a range of ideas that show some crowd agreement. It is also incomplete because our categories do not incorporate all Feminisms. However some main Feminist perspectives are – liberal /reformist, Marxist, Radical Dual – systems, post modernist/poststructuralist, materialist Black Feminism and Aboriginal Feminism (Australian Aboriginal Feminism, Dalit Feminism etc.). The epistemological foundations of different feminist positions are explored after discussing perspectives.

Historically, liberal Feminism has been concerned to argue for equal rights for women for women to have the same citizenship rights as men. It emerged in a background where theories developed during the so called enlightenment or age of reason was being put into practice. The idea for ex, that people have certain inalienable or 'natural rights upon which governments must not intrude was at the philosophical heart of both the American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789). Women hoped that they too should be considered to be entitled to the same natural rights as men. But the male theorists who developed and enforced the natural rights doctrine unfortunately did not accept the feminists' position. "Reason they felt, which was the crux of natural rights was only the domain of man." They thus established one of the most important moral ideas of the modern world that each individual (man, in its own sense) has certain inherent or natural rights. This premise is stated most subsequently in the American declaration of independence.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"(Quoted in Becker, 1942).

The mechanical metaphor, which saw the world essentially as great clock and God as the greater clock winder, was in many ways a deficient paradigm, for it left out basic areas of reality – the subjective world which is the realm of the emotions and the non-rational to which were relegated questions of aesthetic and moral value. In this category fell women, according to the view of male liberal thinkers. Ironically, John Locke who expounded the idea of natural rights for all people was the upholder of this view. It was in this context that on January 3, 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft completed the first major work of feminist theory in history 'A vindication of the rights of woman' which was to dominate subsequent feminist thought. Hence, liberal feminism although borrowing a lot of ideas of liberal theories concepts of individualism, liberty, freedom and rationality wanted

these ideas to be applied to women too. In sociology, liberal feminists have been concerned to demonstrate that the observable difference between the sexes are not innate but a result of socialization and 'sex role conditioning'. They have carried out research to demonstrate that women are discriminated against and treated differently from men and argue that this explains women's subordinate position in society. To liberate women it is necessary to demonstrate that men and women are equal in potential, that women are fully human, that the difference between men and women in various societies are due to the different ways in which boys and girls are socialized and the different social expectations they face, together with discriminatory legislation. However the main problem with this perspective is that the research carried from this reformist position does not explore women's experiences, nor challenge the use of concepts and tools developed to explore society from the standpoint of men. Nor does it adequately challenge males' views of what the major issues are to be researched. It argues for the incorporation of women in research samples and for women to carry out research, but leaves intact the foundations of existing theoretical perspectives. Nevertheless, the liberal feminism perspective has demonstrated the ways in which women are denied equal opportunities and are discriminated against, and has challenged the view that the sexual division of labour is adequately explained by biological sex differences in the society.

Marxist Feminism has developed out of the attempts by women to develop Marxist theory so that it provides an adequate explanation for the subordination and exploitation of women in capitalist societies, though Marx himself was never concerned with the position of women in capitalist society. They went to retain his analysis of capitalist societies integrating into it an explanation for the subordination of women. They drew a lot from the work of Engels, Marx's colleague. In his analysis of the relationship between the origins of the family and the development of capitalism (1884), Engels argues that the bourgeois nuclear

family was formed because of the needs of the capitalist system and specifically because men wanted to pass on their property to their legitimate heirs. Engels argues that this meant that men needed to control women in marriage so that they know who their heirs were. Women's subordinate position is a form of oppression which serves the interests of capitalism. All married Women, whether they marry bourgeois or proletariat men are oppressed. This theory seeks to analyse and explain the relationships between the subordination of women and other aspects of the organisation of the capitalist mode of production one of the most famous and fully developed Marxist feminist accounts is Michelle Barrett's 'women's oppression today' (1980) in which she argues against approaches such as Domestic labour theory, which begin from the premise that women's oppression is an integral part of the capitalist system, by maintaining that it cannot be demonstrated that privatized (family) reproduction using the unpaid domestic labour of women is the cheapest way of reproducing labour power. Also, it does not explain why is that, it is women who work in the domestic sphere and not men. The main problem with Marxists and Marxist feminism is that, its main dimension is class which is quite difficult to be conceptualized in the contexts of Black or Third world women. Even in capitalist western societies, many identities are crossed over each other for ex the experiences of a white woman will be quite different to that of a black woman though both of them may belong to the same class. Here the identity of social segregation has an upper hand.

The development of Radical Feminism originates from the basic premise that women's oppression is the most fundamental form of oppression. They had focussed on a variety of topics to bring out this issue of oppression – art, spirituality, food, ecology, reproduction and mothering, gender and sexuality and so on. They see reproduction as the cause of women's oppression. A staunch profounder of Radical Feminism, Shulamith Firestone (1953), "The Dialectic of Sex" argues that patriarchy is rooted in the biological inequality of the sexes. She

revised the materialist theory of history offered by Marx and Engels. Although Marx and Engels focussed on class struggles, as the driving forces of history, she says they had paid scant attention to what she termed as 'sex-class'. By systematically reflecting on human reproductive biology, this stream of thought brought sexuality, child bearing and child rearing practices into the domain of politics. On the one side where western political theory had virtually ignored reproduction, gender and sexuality, radical feminists discussed them by making them the central theme. Though they can be complemented for exploring women quite boldly, by bringing out controversial issues like body politics, lesbianism legal adoption of infants etc. we should remember that biology is only one of the constituent of a woman's identity but not the only identity. Of course, lesbianism is not the only answer to escape heterosexuality, women can say 'yes' to engage in non-exploitative relationships with men. Also their treatment of men and women on the ontological level shows that men are culprits and women are always innocent. It is not that every woman is a victim and the men the victimizer.

'Dual -systems' or 'Socialist' feminists argue that what is necessary is a dual analysis that articulates Marxist class theory with the feminist theory of patriarchy, a theory that takes account of what unites all women - oppression by men as well as the class divisions between them. Walby, S (1988) a main adherent to this theory, while emphasizing the need for a dual analysis, argues that patriarchy is never the only mode of production but is always articulated with another mode. She also points out the need to analyse variations in the forms of patriarchy. The Mode of patriarchal relations in a capitalist society she says are to be found in domestic work, paid work, the state and in male violence and sexuality. The public/private distinction not only benefits capital but also men. The exclusion of women from the public sphere benefits men as well as capitalists, while women's unpaid domestic labour also benefits both men and

capitalists. This perspective had provided fresh insights to locate the nexus between patriarchy and capitalism.

Postmodernist/poststructuralist feminism borrows heavily from the postmodernism and poststructuralism or deconstructive agendas. Like these agenda, they believe that there can no longer be any attempt to describe analyse or explain reality in an objective or scientific way. Theory has no superiority over common sense thinking, hence all ground theories should be discarded. Foucault and Derrida's thoughts had been inspiring for these feminists. Foucault work emphasizes the way power and knowledge are inextricably linked in modern societies the extension of truth is also an extension of power. Although, Foucault himself has very little to say about the construction of the gendered body and gendered subjectivity, his approach has been taken up and used by feminists on these questions. Derrida's deconstruction shows that how the form of any possible cognition is never identical, it is only made possible by what surrounds it by the formlessness that makes that particular cognition what it is. His work shows that how no two categories or cognitions are identical because of the way identities depended minutely on the contexts in which they appear. This point is important for feminist because by focussing on the contextual nature of constructions of gender identity is a good way forces to examine in very close and precise detail exactly how gender identities have been constructed, in relation to each other and in relation to other terms with which they appear and also as they are contested and subverted through repetition in a very different contexts from those in which they have hitherto been used and considered appropriate. We may then see opportunities and occasions of subversion in the fine detail of everyday practices. The main problem with this approach in that it makes it possible to ignore the centrality and reality of male power- the ways men oppress and subordinate women by forces, sexual harassment, date rape, domestic violence and soon.

The development of material Feminism in the west is linked historically to the shift to cultural politics in western Marxism after 1968 and some unevenness in its history in particular the growing attention to ideology. Annette Kuhn, Anne Marie Wolpe, Mary Macintosh in Britain and Christine Delphy in France were among the initial promoters of material Feminism. It was the conjuncture of several discourses – historical materialism, Marxist and radical feminism as well as post modernism and psychoanalytic theories of meaning and subjectivity. They believe that biological theories of sex differences are social constructs which they argue, serve the interests of the socially dominant group. Women are a class in themselves because the category, 'women' (as well as the category 'man') is a political and economic one not on eternal biological category. Henceforth what is necessary is to eliminate the sex distinction itself. Material feminists fight, aims to suppress men as a class not through a genocidal but a political struggle. Once the class 'men' disappears, women as a class will disappear as well, for there will be no slaves without masters. Though this theory is quite bold in itself, it has its own limitations. Women came to form a sex-class not a class based on biological sex but one where 'sex' operates as a signifier, acting to identify a group constituted in the context of a social relationship of appropriation. 'Sex', however articulates with other social relations to produce a multiplicity of positions and overlapping categories of women.

Black Feminism emerged as a critique against Dominant mainstream white Feminism. Black feminists have been critical of the lack of centrality given to issues of ethnic difference and racism in feminist theory and research. Black feminists have argued that Black women are constructed as the 'other's', within feminist theories in much the same way as women are 'other' in mainstream theories. Sykes, R. (1975: 313-21) writing in the early 1970's stated that black women would not join white women's groups because there was no shared experience between them. For her, the common ground was that all black women

had been raped literally and metamorphically. The point here is that it is not just that racialised groups are different, but that they have been racialised, they have been constituted as inferior, subordinated groups. As Anthias and Davis put it:

“...racism is a specific form of exclusion. Racist discourse posits an essential biological determination to culture, but its referent may be any group that has been ‘socially’ constructed as having a different ‘origin’, whether biological or historical. It can be ‘Jewish’, ‘black’, ‘foreign’, ‘migrant’... any group that has been located as a basis of exclusion.” (Anthias and Davis 1992: 110.)

Black Feminism had shaken the domain of Feminism as such and created a space for itself. Barbara and Benerly Smith, Audre Lourde whose poetry is often well grounded in a black feminist analysis, Caroll Obliver, Patricia Hill Collins, Bell Hooks and Pearson are some of the most vocal Black feminists. This stream of thought with its revolutionary insight had make Feminism to be reconceptualised with a wider dimension. A major departure of Black Feminism from other Feminism's is that while talking of women as a separate entity, it showed empathy towards ‘community’ and ‘family’ which is quite laudable. Dalit Feminism has been inspired a lot from Black Feminism.

Aboriginal Feminism is a term used to denote native or local Feminisms. Of late we can relate it to third world nations. This stream of thought is different from other feminisms because mainstream feminisms had marginalised and ignored the women who are always present, but ‘socially invisible’. As Hazel Carby puts it:

“anonymity and the tendency to generalise into meaninglessness, the oppression of an amorphous category called ‘Third world women’, are symptomatic of the ways in which the specificity of our experiences and

oppression are subsumed under inapplicable concepts and theories". (Carby, 1982: 220).

Certainly when women have to struggle for even basic amenities, to survive on the fringes of society, voting rights or Beauty pageants are of no concern for them. Food, Shelter, drinking water and a decent living are rather more crucial for them.

Eco-feminism is a stream of thought mainly advocated in third world nations which sees capitalism and science as being anti-women. It sees modern science and development as projects of male western origin both historically and ideologically. They see (Ecofeminists) women as close to nature and men to culture, the former being natural and latter artificial and destructive. Vandana Shiva is a most prominent Ecofeminist in India.

Feminist epistemologies

The claims for the truth or value of research are generally based on justificatory claims- referred to as epistemological stances. There are mainly four feminist epistemological stances which have been adopted to provide the basis for feminist truth claims. They are:

Feminist
empiricism

- Feminist standpoint
- Feminist constructivism
- Post modern feminist epistemology

Feminist empiricists suggests for the development of non-sexist research. The problem with this approach is that this of research account fails to examine

the relationships between experienced, consciousness and theory because it acts as if they are unimportant or do not exist.

The Feminist standpoint is a position mainly taken by academic feminists who want their work to be accepted as scholarship and to make a contribution to sociological knowledge as well as to produce research that will be of benefit to women. Standpoint Feminists argue that their accounts of the social world are less partial and less distorted than mainstream ones. The problem with this approach is that it ignores differences between women and assumes an unproblematic commonality. Nevertheless, this position is appreciated as for the point that knowledge is partial and different standpoints will add to our knowledge and understanding of social reality.

Feminist constructivism challenges the foundationalism of both positivistic and standpoint epistemologies and argues for a social constructions feminist. They reject the claim that there is a 'true' knowledge which certifies some feminist knowledge as better than, superior to, other feminist knowledge's. Also, they argue that research as women can only be done by women because of their shared experiences of oppression. The main problem with this position is its relativism. While the proponents of this view agree that researchers must be reflexive, that women must speak for themselves and that research findings should help the oppressed, they are also sceptical of the view that all women's accounts are equally valid and that there is no way of selecting between them.

Postmodernist epistemology totally rejects foundationalism – the attempt to provide knowledge with a firm foundation. They argue as anti foundationalist that knowledge is rooted in the values and interests of particular social groups. Men's power over women is then justified by knowledge. Knowledge is power to the extent that it is accepted as truth. There is however, no final arbiter of truth. Though we are influenced by this approach's insistence on the specific, the

detailed and the difference between elements, it also appears to abolish politics for, example, if the category 'woman' is meaning less, then to notion of women fighting their oppressors is equally meaningless.

We had seen in this chapter the argument on different perspectives in Feminist theories which are also political as they set out not just to explain oppression of women in society but to transform the main stream theorizing in sociology .This transformation wants to build up a sociology for women with which women can identify themselves as the subject to empower themselves.

REFERENCES

- Anthias and Davis, 1992 (ed.). *Defining Women: Social Institutions and Gender Divisions*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Aristotle, *Politics*, 1260: 113,
- Barrett, Michelle, 1980. *Womens Oppression today*, London: Verso.
- Becker, Carrole 1942, *The Declaration of Independence: A Study of the History of Political Ideas*, New York: Random
- Carby, Hazel 1882, *White women Listen, Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood*, Centre for Contemporary cultural Studies, London: Hutchinson.
- Dube, Leela 1996, Gender Bias and social Sciences, ed. Kiran Pawar, 'women in Indian History', Delhi, Vision and Venture.
- Eisenstein, Zilla 1979, 'Developing, a theory of capitalist Patriarchy' in Eisenstein, Z. (ed). *Capitalism, Patriarchy and the case for Socialist Feminism*, New York, Monthly Review Press.
- Engels, Federick. 1884 Der Ursprung der Famileie, des privateigentum and des Staat. Zurich: Hattingen. Eng edn: *The origin of the Family, private property and the state*, har mondsword: Penguin, 1986.

- Firestone, Shulamith. 1974, *The Dialectic of Sex: the case for Feminist Revolution*, New York: Morrow.
- Giddens, Anthony 1993, *Sociology* (2nd Edn), Oxford: Polity.
- Haraway, DJ, 1995 Situated knowledge: The Science question in Feminism and the privilege of partial Perspective, in Marianne, M and Parpart J.L (ed) *Feminism Postmodernism and Development*, Oxford : Polity
- Harding, S 1987a, *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Hilton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Harding, Sandra 1987b, Is there a Feminist Method'? in Bloomington, Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology*, Indiana: Univ. Press.
- Hartmann, H. 1976, 'Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex', *Signs*, vol. I, no.3.
- Hegel, 1967, *Philosophy of Right*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Hekman S.J. 1990, *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a postmodern Feminism*, Oxford: Polity.
- HouseBock, G and Susan 1988, James (ed) Beyond Equality and Difference Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female subjectivity, New York: Routledge.
- Lerner, Gerda 1986, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, New York: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Mies, Maria. 1987, 'Towards a methodology for feminine Research' in Bowles, G and Klein, RD (ed.) *Theories of Women Studies Vol II*: Berkeley University of California,

- Mitchell, Juliet. 1984, *The Rights and wrongs of women*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Oakley, Ann, 1972, *Sex, Gender and society*, London: Smith.
- Pateman, Carole 1988 *Equality, Difference, Subordination: the politics of Motherhood and Women's citizenship* in Bock et al (ed) *Beyond Equality and Difference -Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity*, New York, Routledge.
- Scott, James 1995, *Sociological Theory: Contemporary debates*, Aidershot: Edward Hgai.
- Scott, Joan 1988, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Smart, C 1995, *Law, Crime and Sexuality*, London: Sage Publications.
- Sykes, Boggi 1975 *Black Women in Australia: a history* in Jan Mercer (ed) '*The Other half*', Harmandsworth: Pelicon.
- Thomas, Aquinas, *Is woman a question?* Summa Theological 1, 9.92, International Quarterly, Dec, 1973.
- Uberoi, Patricia. 2000, 'Feminine Identity and National ethos in Indian Calendar Art' in Alice Thorner and Maithreyi Krisharaj (ed) *Ideals, Images and Real Lives-women in Literature and History* Mumbai, Orient Longman,
- Walby, S. 1988, *Gender, Politics and Social Theory*: Sociology 22.
- Walby, Sylvia 1990; *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Basil :Blackwell.
- Wilson, E 1988 *Hidden Agendas; Theory, Politics and Experience in Womens Movement*, London: Tavistock,
- Wright M. 1972, *I want the right to be Black and me* in G. Lerner (9 ed) *Black women in white America*, New York: Randon House.

Chapter 3

Feminist Movement in India

This chapter analyses the emergence of Feminism in India which has evolved as a part of the social reform movement in the 1800's. At the dawn of women's history as it is now written Schneir (1976: xiv) opines, "No Feminist works emerged from behind the Hindu Purdah or out of Muslim harems, centuries of slavery do not provide a fertile soil for intellectual development or expression." Historically this construction of the veiled and enslaved woman has fired the colonial imagination and allowed it to cloak outright exploitation as 'civilizing mission'. Post-colonial, cold war feminists such as Mary Daly have condemned their own patriarchal systems but saved their most vitriolic attacks for third world men in the form of literally "paki-bashing". Forbes (1996:5) objects to this kind of prejudiced view of the westerners and views that at the first place, not all Indian women were behind veils, although certain idea about modesty and respectability were widely shared. Secondly it is equally false to define women's world as one, which totally suppresses female agency. She concludes that Indian women, secluded and not secluded, had no voice is the third act of silencing

In India our knowledge of the past ultimately ended in the creation of persuasive rhetoric shared by Hindu liberals and conservatives alike, especially in relation to the myth of the golden age of Indian womanhood as located in the Vedic period .As Uma Chakravathy (1989:28) argues that this image foregrounded the Aryan women (the progenitor of the upper caste women) as the only object of historical concern, leaving the Vedic Dasi (women in servitude) to remain captured, subjugated and enslaved by the conquering Aryans. The Vedic Dasi was also a part of Ancient Indian society, however she disappeared, leaving out any trace of herself in the nineteenth century history. No one mourned her disappearance, but then no one had noticed her existence too. Pandita Ramabai, a

champion of women's rights of eighteenth century in 'The high caste woman' (1889:62) draws out an insight account of the actual status of women in high caste Hindu households and combines quotations from the sacred texts with personal reminiscences of instances she had witnessed as a Brahmin widow. The glorious Aryan woman did not exist for her precisely because of her knowledge of Sanskrit. In fact she uses the term 'Golden age' scornfully, associating it with a period in which a man would take a woman from wherever, she may be found and drag her to his house. A major drawback confronting academicians is the ambiguity of applying the concept of Feminism as such Indian context. The negative connotations associated with the word 'Feminism' makes it problematic for some woman in India to label themselves as Feminist. They refer Feminism to be a part of the countries which have a brutal and dubious history of colonization and who share in the power and prestige of being part of the technologically developed and affluent West. As Julie Stephens opines (1990:25), the word western has many negative connotations in India and the label western Feminism is almost always derogatory. A similar argument had been observed by Kumari Jayawardene, a left wing academician from Sri Lanka, who observe that the words 'westernized' and 'bourgeoisie' are emotive words, used loosely to evoke hatred and contempt by associating those under attack with imperialism and capitalism (Jayawardena, 1990:95). It's interesting to know that Sarojini Naidu who was speaking at the fourth session of All India Women's Conference (AIWC) strongly disassociated herself as being labeled as a Feminist. Madhu Kishwar (Kishwar 1992:8), wrote a whole article as to why she doesn't want to call herself as a Feminist.

.The term 'Indian Women's Movement' is generally used in the literature on women organization's activities in India. However some scholars like Geraldine Forbes and Radha Kumar adhere to use the term Feminism rather than Indian Women's Movement. Forbes (1996:8) explains that each of us define a

Feminist in her own way, she prefers an inclusive definition that would allow to see Feminism in the speeches of Saraladevi Chaudhrani, Sarojini Naidu, writings of Dr. Haimavati Sen and Madhu Kishwar. Veena Oldenberg (1994:102) opines that Feminism has a long history and is no longer monolithic, henceforth Feminist in its simplest political sense is a person (and not necessarily a woman) whose analytical perspective is informed by an understanding of the relationship between power and Gender in any historical, social or cultural context. For her, the argument against using the word Feminism is weakened by the fact that terms and theories of equally western provenance –Marxist, Socialist, Freudian or post structuralist do not arouse similar indignation and are in fact (order) used as standard frameworks for analysis of Indian Society by Indian scholars. As Oldenburg argues, when we can use many western terms for rigid sociological phenomena, then what is the logic in avoiding the term Feminism or a Feminist in Indian or Third world countries context in composition. The various discourses which addressed the question of women had disagreements on each side about the sources of women's oppression and ways to end it. One side included Colonial administrators, Missionaries, Orientalists, Ideologists and other western observers in India. Although their interests were different they tended to share a belief in the superiority of the civilization of westernized Christian Nations over others. Liberal cultural heroes in Britain like James Mill, J.S Mill, Mathew Arnold, Thomas Carlybe, Thomas Macaulay, John Ruskin and George Elliot in Britain had very definite views on race and imperialism. On the other side were the Indian social reformers, educationalist, politicians and academicians. Some of them were scholars of Indian Philosophy and literary texts while others had western education and were influenced by liberalism. In 1927, an American journalist Katherine Mayo drew a gory detail of position of women in India in her book "Modern India" which was remarkable for its frank and blatant racism in condemning Indian culture and traditions. James Mill equated the level of civilization of a country with its treatment of women. He attributed the inferior

condition of Indian women was the result of the inferiority of India society as such and imperialism formed one context in which male discourse in India developed part of this discourse concerned the prospect for reforming the situation of Indian women. Essentially there were two sides, although they were homogenous, while some discourses tried to show the barbaric position of women in the contemporary socio, economic and cultural contexts, the other side countered this ideology with the picture of the Golden age of Aryans. Predominantly nationalists like Bankimchandra, R.C Dutt, Dayanand Saraswati and Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who is considered to be the foremost social reformer, adhered to this glorious past of Indian woman hood.

Of Colonial discourse and Masculinity:

India since, Second century B.C witnessed a series of invasions from outsiders, though some went back after looting, arson and carnage, a few settled in India. Most importantly the Mughuls who entered the sub-Continent from the Northwest brought a new religion and new way of organizing power relations. Though some rulers carried out forcible conversions many of them did not alter the social order. Departures from this path were the British. The British while pursuing commercial aims at one side intruded the domain of the private life of Indians. They explained their actions within a view of the world that was “clear, precise, instrumentalist, technical scientific effective, true and above all beneficial to all who came into contact with it”(Kaviraj, 1994:31). Ashish Nandy (1983:1-63) explains that the pre-colonial Indian societies worked with rather fluid and permeable gender identities in which ideas about bisexuality and androgyny featured strongly and in which the ‘softer’ forms of creativity and intuition were not identified with femininity nor values of violence and power with masculinity. It was upon these malleable and multiple identities, he argues, where the Victorian colonial culture imposed its rigid and dichotomous ideologies of gender. These

identities provided a context in which masculine was placed against feminine, thereby establishing an analogy between political and sexual dominance that juxtaposed the manliness, rationality, courage and control of British rulers which was essentially British middle class sexual stereotypes against degenerated, effeminate and superstitious colonial subjects. Similarly Mrinalini Sinha's work (1995) "Colonial Masculinity: The Manly Englishman and Effeminate Bengali man in the late 19th century", stimulates us to intrigue, questions about the significance of masculine identities as a cross cultural means of establishment hierarchies and affirming common identities. She examines the ideological constructs of the manly Englishman and effeminate Bengali in a range of different political contexts. She shows how colonial rulers and Indian elites alike employed them in complex ideological maneuvers, sometimes to institute a hierarchy and sometimes to suggest commonalities. This is a very interesting approach in that it extends into the field of masculine identities and questions the links between gender race and imperialism.

Social Reform Movement in 19th centuries:

Mahatma Jyothiba Phule was the pioneer of struggle to talk about women and the rights of the Dalits in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Veerasha Lingam Pantulu were some of the leading social reformers of the 19th century. One commonality, which ran across all of these reformers, was that they didn't see women as an individual entity who were sensible enough to be aware of human reason and rationality. Instead she was caged in Hindu religion whose position in Vedic Period was high, but eventually either Ramayana or Mahabharata along with Dharma Shastras relegated women to a marginalized position. They too show that religion didn't sanction either Sati and widowhood reinterpreted Vedas and religious scriptures. For all the participants in 19th century debates on social reforms women

represented an embarrassment. Given the discursive construction of women as either object victims or heroines, they represented both shame and promise.

Thus, tradition was not the ground on which the status of women was being contested, rather the reverse was true. Women in fact became the site on which tradition was debated and reformulated. What was at stake was not women, but tradition. Lata Mani (1989: 17) quite eloquently argues that British colonial discourse privileged the Brahmanical scriptures as the tradition of India. This discourse was not only in pally with discontinuous pre-colonial discourses in India, but was produced through interaction with select natives (Elites and Upper Caste People). Drawing out the data of the total Sati cases, she concludes that the politics of Sati are multifaceted .66% of Sati's were carried out between the area surrounding the Calcutta City, Shah bad and Sarun Districts. This indicates that religion was not the factor, which led to the immolation of women. Several socioeconomic and political factors were crucial in making the society to treat woman as sacrificial lamb. Property relations and inheritance laws were the latent factors, which never were debated openly. Gargi, Maithreyee, Sita and Savitri were the role models of the social reformers. Women lampooned those reformers so sought to re-impose the old ideals of Sati, Sita and Savitri on contemporary women and argued that the changes in the status of European Women were a consequence of their economical and political system. So they shouldn't be hated. They critiqued the Indian men to color the Indian social life in western shades, and on the other side wish that their women should continue to be seen as belonging to eastern way of life. She says that a Sita, or a Savitri is conceivable only in the context of a Ram Chandra, a Krishna, a Bharat and a Yudishthir. Forbes (Forbes: 27) describes that the reformers viewed women as their subjects-to be changed as consequence of persuasive arguments, social action, education and legislation. The historian Sumit Sarkar (1994: 106) has argued that the reformers were concerned primarily with modifying relationships

within their own families and sought only limited and controlled emancipation of their women. For e.g. Ranade, who advocated widow remarriage despite being a 31 year old married 11 year old Rama Bai. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who is called as the champion of womens rights had a dubious reputation of handling female relationships within his family. Similarly Keshab Chandra Sen, while it came to his own family married off his minor daughter who was below the age of consent .As to Tilak, his position was clearly conservative. He was not willing to recognize the need for changing the women status until Hindus could govern themselves. He told a friend half-jokingly, that he would arrange the marriage of a thousand widows, the day India became independent. This statement sums up his position on women.

Pandita Rama Bai, was an exceptional social reformer with abundant courage who was pioneer in propagation of womens education and rights. In 1888, she established Sharada Sudan, a school for widows in Bombay. In 1909, Begum Rokeya Shakawat Hossain established an institution for the education of Muslim girls in Bhagalpur Bihar, which confirmed to the rules of women seclusion .The Brahma Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Theosophical Society all supported female education. The Sati was abolished in 1929, the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act passed in 1856, age of consent in 1891,an act which degenerated into a battle for the control of women sexuality. Forbes (ibid; 61) believes that the encouragement for female education by reformers was propagated to present a view that Indian society could no longer be characterized as decadent and backward. On a national level, men envisaged women in charge of social reform while men pursued politics. While men feared education might cause women “Go too far”, female educators promised to graduate as “professionalized housewives”.

Thus, we had seen how the male social reformers tried to change the decadent and oppressed status Indian women, with their notions of female spirituality and chastity.

Nationalist discourse on women:

The nationalist discourse on women went further and created a 'New Woman' in order to reform the status of Indian women. According to Partha Chatterjee (1994: 127) Nationalism separated the domain of culture into two spheres viz the material and the spiritual. The world is the external, the domain of the material, the home represented one's inner spiritual self, one's true identity. The home in essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world – and women as its representatives. Here one gets an identification of social roles differentiated by gender which correspond to the separation of the social space into 'Ghar' and 'Bahar' (Home and Outer world) (Chatterjee 1994: 120). Hence the home was the principal site for expressing the spiritual quality of the national culture and women must bear the main responsibility of protecting and nurturing this quality. Thus the new educated women defined in this way were subject to a new patriarchy. Sure, enough, nationalism adopted several elements from tradition as marks of its native cultural identity, but this was a deliberately created 'classic tradition' - reformed and reconstructed.

The new patriarchy was also sharply different from the immediate social and cultural condition in which majority of the people lived, for the 'new women' was quite the reverse of the common women who were coarse, vulgar, loud, quarrelsome, devoid of moral sense and sexually promiscuous. Along side the parody of westernized women, this other construct is repeatedly emphasized in the life of 19th century, through a host of lower class female characters who make their appearance in the social milieu of the new middle class as – maid servants, pedlars, procureress and prostitutes. It was precisely this degenerated condition of women which nationalism claimed it could reform. Tanika Sarkar

(2000: 160) quite explicitly brings out the image of women in 19th century Bengali Literature while Yashodhara Bagchi brings out (2000: 170) the image of women of Bankimchandra's Anandmath, Sonal Shukla (2000: 192) brings out the women of Govardhan Tripathi, who was a reformer in the 19 and early 20th century, Gujarat, while Geetanjali Pandey (2000) in the same volume brings out the image of women in Premchand's writings. A real consensus develops if we go through the above cited works which show women as martyr's, sacrificial lambs, devoted religious, tolerant mothers and docile daughters. Among all these images the portrayal of tolerant mothers runs very strongly. Motherland, 'Deshmata' was a powerful concept, and all male Indians were considered to be sons of motherland. Bankim AnandMath (published in 1882) portrayed the life of revolutionaries to sacrifice their lives for the motherland. Similarly, Bandemataram ("Hail to the Mother") became famous all throughout India. This called to save the motherland was not a call to the women to join the political movement but rather a linking of idealized womanhood with nationalism. The country was thus sacralized and feminized. For Bengalis who were accustomed to the worship of a variety of female cults, mother figure tended to be particularly powerful. For e.g. during the Salt Movement, the alienation of salt making rights from Indians was expressed through a representation of the salt earth, as the full breast of the mother to which none other than the child may have access.(Sarkar1983:161)

Suddenly Kali and Durga became universalized during the Swadeshi Movement. Interestingly, Kali and Durga were themselves a relatively modern phenomenon in 19th century Bengal. The series of crisis faced by Bengal in the mid to late 18th century led to a shift in its self perception as a land of plenty reigned over by a benevolent mother goddess who represented both functional power, or energy, Adi Shakti, and the principle of nature and action, Prakriti. The Chandi image, a personification of Prakriti, bifurcated with, on the one hand, the

demon slaying mother Durga, and in the other, the punitive and unpredictable mother Kali. Before 19th century, Durga Pujas were virtually unknown among popular social and religious festivals similarly Kali, who was till then the Goddess of marginal groups such as dacoits, thieves, thugs and significantly prostitutes was fore fronted as a Goddess of the Upper Caste people too. Ironically there is a curious mismatch between how Durga looks and what she does. Durga is supposedly a warrior Goddess who has killed a dreaded Asura. Yet the icons depict a smiling, matronly beauty, a maternal woman visiting her natal home with her children at her side, the archetypal mother and daughter, fundamentally at odds with the dying demon at her feet and the weapons in her hands. In the juxtaposition of diverse images the hint of triumphant strength is there, but it is overlaid and the overwhelming and final impression is that of a domesticated gently feminist. (Sarkar, 1994: 164) , Kumar (1995: 45) raises an interesting question as to what extent can the increasing importance of Kali and Durga be seen as also expressing tensions and shifts in the structure of patriarchy. The appearance of Shakti in the world in its most threatening form is and was regarded as directly related to women's failure, whether deliberate or otherwise to regulate and channelize their own shakti in their home. Ashish Nandy (1995) in "The intimate Enemy: loss and recovery of self under colonialism" quite excellently analyzes this failure of women and concludes that moments of crisis or disorder, therefore frequently become occasions for the collective punishment of the women----- Baits of witch hunting are a prime example, Rise in the incidents of sati during the first decades of the 19th century was another example. According to him as Kali became the new symbol of a treacherous cosmic mother; she came to be associated with most of the rituals, which both British and Indian reformers sighted of instances of Hindu decadence. Nurtured by this new psychological environment the folk theory which grew around Sati held it to be a proper form for the punishment or retribution of widow scenes for they were considered to have caused their husbands death by their poor ritual performance

as wives. Thus with this fractured identities, women within the hold of newfound 'patriarchy' joined the swadeshi movement for the first time into the nationalist struggle. The civil disobedience movement saw women entering in large numbers.

The participation of women legitimized the Indian National Congress (INC), which led the freedom struggle. The participation of women in this movement also shaped the movement for women's rights. Women Associations called by various titles sprang up all over India in the late 19th century and late 20th centuries. Saraladevi Chaudhrani founded the Bharat Stree Mahamandal (the large circle of Indian Women) in Allahabad in 1910. After World War I, three National Women Organizations were created - 1. Women Indian Association 2. National Council of Women in India and All India Women Conference that emerged between 1917 and 1927.

The Women Indian Association (WIA) had humble beginnings. Margaret Cousins, an Irish Feminist, Theosophist and Musician arrived in India in 1915. She led a group of women to form the Women Indian Association (WIA) with the aim of making women, "conscious of their place" in society.

The All India Women Conference (AIWC) first met in Poona in January 1927, following more than six months of serious work on the path of Margaret Cousins and other women belonging to the WIA. The AIWC did not advocate mass education for all women nor did they envision a world where all middle class and Upper class women would receive the same education as men (AIWC first session; 23). They accepted the Golden Age theory, which both limited their potential for attracting women from other communities and classes and prohibited a radical feminist critique of their society. The National Council Of Women in India was established as a National Branch of the International Council of Women, which was formed in 1888 to fulfill the purpose of advancing women's social, economical, and political rights. The main drawback of NCWI was that it

consisted of many elites like Lady Tata, Maharani Saheb of Baroda and Begum Saheb of Bhopal. This Council was politically and socially conservative because of their connection with the British and the ruling class. The NCWI remained aloof from the freedom struggle and socially they opted for *status quo* (Forbes, 1996: 77). The only exceptional member of NCWI was Maniben, who later on became a member of M.N Roy's group of radical humanists and redirected her energy towards organizing worker. She had no interest in the work of the NCWI and they considered her work as "radical". The concern of Indian Women activists was similar to those of the men: The problems of living in purdah lack of education, Child Marriages, and the prohibition against widow re-marriages. WIA, AIWC and NCWI, led the cause of suffrage for women in India. Led by activist like Rameshwari Nehru, Aruna Asif Ali, Muthulaswami Reddy, Raj Kumari , Amrit Kaur and K.P Ray they argued for the right to vote but were careful to ground their arguments on Indian Culture, Tradition and the special qualities on Indian Culture(Agnew :1979;14-126).Forbes (1982: 525-36) observes that Sarojini Naidu on being elected as President of Indian National Congress in 1925, noted in an accepted speech," in electing me the chief among you, through a period fraught with grave issues and faithful decisions, you have reversed to the old back tradition and restored to the Indian women the epoch of our country's history"

. During the movement for independence women were prohibited to identify gender or patriarchy as the source of oppression, because such sentiment should be construed as anti-nationalist. Instead, women attacked colonialism This nationalist discourse as a new patriarchy as a hegemonic construct culturally distinguished itself not only from the West but also from it own people. It has generalized itself among new middle class which is large enough in absolute numbers (Chatterjee, 1994: 251) to be self reproducing, but is irrelevant to the large mass of subordinate classes. This raises important questions regarding the

issue of women rights today. Surely the forms and demands of women movement in the west are not generally applicable in India. However a renewal of the struggle for the equality and freedom of women must with all democratic issues in countries like India imply a struggle against the false essentialisms of home /world, spiritualism /materialism, femininity/masculinity propagated by nationalist ideology, thus constructing gender in itself. Apart from this problem of representing middle class Upper class Hindu women as a homogeneous category thus excluding the history of lower class and Dalit women along with minority women creates a complicated situation. Finally the Upper caste Hindu women became the symbol of Indian women as such. In this context Sharmila Rege (1995; 224-225) correctly points out that homogenizing women as an analytical category does not hold ground in Indian context. She further continued that a Feminists standpoint of interlocking the oppressions that would recognize the complex mediations between class, caste, ethnicity, gender and will be more connected to the living and the concrete human beings. She stress on the need for feminist, pedagogies to analyze caste from the stand point of Dalit women, class from the standpoint of working class women, Hindutva from the stand point of minorities and heterosexuality from the stand point of lesbians.

Gandhi's Discourse on gender:

Gandhiji's discourse on gender has been a subject of much debate and controversy. Ashish Nandy (1983: 52) opines that Gandhiji has constructed femininity as superior to masculinity and countered the masculine colonialism with Indianess. Madhu Kishwar (1985: 169) analyses the role of Gandhi in drawing women into the mainstream movement. Bikhu Parekh's (1989:194) in depth analysis of Gandhiji's discourse on women shows how the latter wanted to transform sex into energy . Sudhir Kakkar (1989) analyzed Gandhi from a psychoanalytic perspective. Sujata Patel drew out an excellent analysis of

Gandhi's mentality of an urban, middle class, Upper Caste and male oriented view of women.

Gandhi's view regarding the participation of women in the freedom struggle essentially drew out from his patriarchal view that women are inherently non-violent in nature. He felt that women's inherent qualities like suffering and silence make her to play an effective role in the non-violent path than men. In Harijan dated 14-1-1932 he wrote, "who can suffer more purely and nobly than women", when a young man criticized Hinduism in Young India by describing his sister's difficulties with their respective husband's. Gandhiji wrote a reply to him that his condemnation of Hinduism is pardonable, because he is under intense irritation based on the hysterical generalization from an isolated instance. He explains the millions of Hindu wives live in perfect peace are queens in their own homes. They exercise an authority over their husband, which any woman would envy (Young India: 15-9-1929).

An issue about Hindu women that Gandhi seriously addressed was the question of their widowhood. In Young India (4-2-1926), he opines that widowhood is necessary to a certain extent and voluntary widowhood is a priceless boon where as enforced widowhood is a curse (Harijan: 22-6-'35). He describes that Hindu woman is a symbol of human cow and further questions "We cry out for cow protection in the name of religion but refuse protection to the human cow in the shape of girl widow. Why is it so?" (Young India: 18-8-1926). He further continues that a widow has a sacred place in Hinduism, and a real Hindu woman is a treasure and one of the gifts to humanity (Young India: 1926). According to him the ancient Hindu women was never in a wretched condition in which we find the Hindu widows of that period (Young India: 18-8-1927). Thus the image of women for Gandhi was that of a docile, submissive, entrapped and a helpless soul, who as the rate of civilization increased, found her place in the

Hindu society being degraded day by day. Hence his views on women are far from ideal.

Constitution and the issue of Women's equality:

After the independence, the constitution of India accepted the principle of equality of both the sexes. India was by far more superior to many European nations in granting Franchise rights for a simultaneously along with men whereas woman had to struggle a lot for achieving these rights in the former nations. Our preamble spoke of equality of status and opportunity in social, economical and political realm. Article 14 assured equality before the law as an fundamental right. Article 15 and 16 forbid any type of discrimination on the grounds of sex in access to public places and public employment. Article 15 provides that the state may make special provisions for women and children.

The whole debate of the Hindu code bill, which was introduced by Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1951 in the parliament, shows how religion was relegated an upper hand over human rights of women. The patriarchal attitude of the state is clearly evident as to how the debate showed the true colors of our parliamentarians. Many leading Congress leaders opposed the Hindu Code Bill (HCB), which included Rajendra Prasad, Vallabh Bhai Patel, Pattabhi Sita Ramaiah and Purshotam Das Tandon along with Hindu Nationalist and even some women's groups. A majority of Congress parliamentarians opposed the Bill. They who saw in the Bill an attempt to demolish the internal Structure and fabric of Hindu society made emotional speeches the very foundation, not only of one pillar, but of all the pillars on which the Hindu society rest are shaken (Das, 1950:52).

Government did fail to argue the point that monogamy had become part of the law in some states and divorce was practiced by large number of people who were governed by the customary law. Nehru decided to let the issue die during the session in 1951 and it was only in 1955 the long awaited bill was pushed through

after several editing work done by the patriarchal politicians. Thus Hindu women were henceforth to be governed by a flawed Hindu Code Bill which forced Ambedkar to resign in protest. Ambedkar's views on women were quite ahead of his times who believed that social justice should precede economic and political justice. In an answer to the speech delivered by W.C. Banerjee in 1892 at Allahabad as President of the 8th session of the Congress ridiculing social conference, Ambedkar replied ' Are you fit for political power even though you do not allow a large class of your own countrymen like the untouchables to use public schools..... Every Congressman who repeats the dogma of Mill that one country is not fit to rule another country must admit that one class is not fit to rule another class....'(quoted in Moon, 1987: 41).

Significantly once the HCB was passed it were the Hindu communalists who were so far vehemently in opposition to the Bill, suddenly started advocating for an uniform civil code. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee urged the government to behave like a secular state and proclaim that monogamy will be applicable to all the citizens of India. Interestingly, he fought tooth and nail to stop the passing of HCB. Ambedkar found his statement very ridiculous and commented "....some of those who until yesterday were the greatest opponents of Hindu Code Bill and the greatest champions of the archaic Hindu law as it exists today should come forward and say that they are now prepared for all India code, clearly Muslims didn't like any interference in their Shariat and Personal laws" (quoted in Das, 1950:52).

As to the question of granting rights within the purview of the respective religions of minorities and majority and specially discriminate minorities rights, Sadhna Arya (2000: 266) makes a powerful argument that after the holocaust of partition the national leaders were faced with the responsibilities to make minorities particularly Muslims feel secure, the consequence that women belonging to the minority communities had to continue with legal inequalities.

Shah Bano case is a vivid example as to how religion suppressed women rights .The failure to reform Islamic personal laws is one of the Indian states effort to keep nation together and retain political power. Even when the state had performed Hindu law provisions it has on many occasions relied upon the argument that the proposed reform is consistent with religious tenets. Some of the examples where the state has replaced the application of secular law with religious laws is –communalization of the Special Marriage Act and the enactment of the Muslim Women Act. An amendment to the Special Marriage Act in 1976 made a change that in the case of two Hindu's who married under it, for them the Hindu Succession Act is applied rather than the Indian Succession Act. It did not however extend the scope of the other religious laws of inheritance in the same manner. Thus two Muslims, Christians or Parsis who choose to marry under the Special Marriage Act are still governed by the provision of the Indian Succession Act. Ashish Nandy (1985: 70) described this attitude of the Indian State as that of following double standards and that ill of religion find political expression but not the strengths of religion are used for regulating public life.

The Indian State developed a bureaucratic structure designed to meet the special needs of women in independent India. This included the creation of National Social Welfare Board, assigning special duties to block development officer and asking the Department of Health and Welfare to prepare a special plan with women in mind. The National commission of Women was exclusively established to look into the Arena of Women's lives. Coming to the activities of the women's organizations there was a silent phase of inactivity on heir part in 1950's and 60's except few communist voices. In 1954 Vimla Farooqui and her female colleagues in the Communist Party of India organized a National Conference to address women's issues. At this conference they founded the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) to focus attention of women

struggle for equal rights and responsibilities in all spheres of life, along with the improvement of their living conditions.

Women in Communist Movements:

Telangana and Naxalbari movements were mainly peasant movements which upsurged in the period of 1940's-1970's, defied the bourgeoisie, feudal and brutal attitude of the landlords and the state. Women quite actively participated in these movements who also anticipated that a change in the nature of the structure of the society would ultimately change the degraded and exploited peasant women. It was so because though they had access into the public sphere of production they have always remained at the level of marginal and powerless situation. The opportunity to act, the power to fight for the control over their own lives gave these women an identity of enormous strength. Vasantha Kannabiran and K. Lalitha had excellently analyzed peasant women participation in the Telangana Movement which was an upsurge of brutal State repression in Hyderabad State in late 40's and early 50's. Drawing upon the rich data collected by them, they interviewed many women who took part in Telangana freedom struggle. They found that women here too participated only in their traditional roles which were cooking, taking messages, nursing the wound etc. which were considered to be very light and hence compatible with their femininity. Very few women were trained for armed fighting like men. This figure of the traditional backward women who would display endurance and heroism in secondary supportive roles but could not be expected to fight with rifles is central to our whole understanding of the participation of women in Telangana. Its ironical that even communists could not get out of their patriarchal mind sights in judging women according to their private domain of hearth and motherliness. Women who had participated in the struggle according to these researchers recalled how much they felt out the feeling of isolation and vulnerability of being marginalized after the struggle was called off. This feeling was rooted into two factors. The

first is a feudal patriarchal attitude which felt that women were problematic in the movement because of their tendency to attract men, get pregnant, need abortion and child care and ultimately creating conflict within the ranks of men. The Second is the Marxist resistance to accord emotions or subjective experiences of any critical significance, coupled with the assumption that the basis of all these conflicts and struggles can be ultimately traced to the economic sphere. This results in the conviction that areas of personal experiences were neither legitimate area of debate nor of critical values. These factors resulted in relegating women to the private domain, in continuing to see problems of childbearing, family as personal problems of females and in an over emphasis on the code of morality that often resulted in oppressing women further and policing them socially .The failure of the communist leadership to see how trapped they were within the very culture they sought to destroy ,their inability to see that the socialist image of equality was subdued by themselves and they ultimately assimilated women into the patriarchal and moralistic domain of traditional culture.

Feminism in Post 70's:

Feminism in India was not so consistent in the post independent period until the early 70's because the Indian social, economical and political systems make a complex web for women who prohibit them to easily organize for any movement. Moreover the patriarchal structures make it a point to see that women never cross the boundary line of public/private domain. The mass media too hammerises day in and out of the image of dutiful daughters and loving mothers .It was in 1974 that a report on the status of women were published which shattered the sloganeering of government agencies that their programs were uplifting women. A research center for women's studies was established as SNDT's Women's University in Bombay, which began its work in 1970. United Nations declared 1975 as International Year of Women and the Indian Government appointed Guha Commission to look into the problems of women.

These two events coincided with a new spirit among individuals, groups, grass root activists and researchers that made them search for ways to prevent the oppression and exploitation of women along with avoiding sexual harassments and domestic violence. These problems were not homogeneous with the whole India society as such. Problems of agrarian poor, minorities, Dalit and tribal women have to be analyzed on a different front.

The Feminist Movement, which emerged in late 70's and 80's, had a distinct feature of being autonomous and regional replacing the all India Women's Organizations, which joined not through the structure of formal association, but through the connections of their leaders, an emergence of radical press, a section of the media's courage to address women's issues and periodic large scale meetings or conventions. Participation of women began with anti-Price rise like demonstration in Gujarat and Bihar as Nav Nirman Youth Movement. Rural Women revolt in Dhule District of Maharashtra and Chipko Movement in the Himalayan region provided a backdrop for the ensuing struggles on women's issues. Omvedt (1993: 76-77) has traced the origins of the contemporary women's movement to the early 1970's when rural and working women were first trained as leaders. In 1979, a small group of women in New Delhi began to publish "Manushi", a Journal about women and society in Hindi and English, which addressed all issues related to women.

In 1980, the Mathura rape case judgment which left free the Police men who raped a minor tribal girl 'Mathura' and blamed the poor girl as responsible for her this state shocked the educated middle women in India. They came into streets to demonstrate against police brutality and government complacency along with loopholes in our legal system. Several women organizations demanded that the case be reopened in the Supreme Court, which it dismissed on technical grounds. Pressure from women organizations forced the government to appoint the law commission to study the problems and suggest amendments to the

existing law. It was then in 1980 that a Criminal Law Amendment Bill was introduced to check the loopholes of rape as crime against women. This Amendment too was unsatisfactory, as it doubted the testimony of rape victim. Women activist wanted rape to be recognize as violent crime. But this legislation could not prevent women to be protected from rape. A forum against rape was found whose campaign was essentially legalistic in approach after the Mathura rape case. This forum was attended by around 32 groups and epitomized the spirit of networking among the new groups, which opened a public debate on rape, violence and women suppression. Shahada Movement in Maharashtra was a feminist movement against Price-rise. Sewa and Nav Nirman Movements were concentrated in Gujarat for fighting women related issues .In 1972, Shramik Sanghatana was formed in Shahada in Dhule district of Maharashtra .The frequent drought and famine of this region led to the rapid growth of the movement which had taken up struggles against land alienation to occupying and cultivating of waste lands. It also fought against alcohol vending by punishing the liquor contractors. However they didn't punish the drinkers while they beat up and humiliated liquor vendors in public. They, thus, making a public issue out of what is generally regarded as private problem. Prior to the Shahada Movement, women in Uttarakhand attacked alcohol vendors in public. The cleavages were clear that, in Shahada, anti-patriarchal sentiments were evident publicly as women felt that their husbands beat them only after they consumed liquor. Whereas in Uttakhand these sentiments were dormant probably due to the difference in the social structure and attitudes towards women .One being a traditional caste society and the other Tribal, ideological differences were present between the activists of these respective movements. In 1972, Illa Bhatt, who worked in the women' wing of the Textile Labour Association which was founded by Gandhi formed the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). The aims of SEWA were to improve the conditions of work of woman through training, technical aids, and collective bargaining along with subscribing to Gandhian ideas. Interestingly, some sections

of the Feminist Movement which arose in late 70's saw Shahada Movement as a Feminist one, while SEWA was disregarded as being feminist because of its reformism. In 1973, Mrinal Gore of the socialist party and Ahilya Rangekar of the CPI (M), together with many others formed a United women's Anti Price Rise Front, to mobilize the women of the rural poor masses in famine agitations. Soon after the movement spread to Gujarat becoming to be known as the Nav Nirman Movement. The Activists of this Movement were influenced by Jai Prakash Narayan's concept of "Total Revolution", fighting to reform as well as to limit state power arguing that the Rajniti (State Rule of Law) had become corrupt, decayed and the time for Lokniti (Peoples Rule of Law) had come. It took the Police three months to crush the Nav Nirman Movement in 1974, during which 90 to 100 people were killed. In the same year as the Nav Nirman Movement were crushed, the first women's group of the contemporary Feminist Movement was formed in Hyderabad as progressive organization of women (POW) which believed that the two primary structures of women suppression were sexual division of labour and the culture which rationalized it

, Influenced by POW, Maoist Movement in Pune formed the "Stree Mukthi Sanghatana". Jan Vedana (distress of the people), a Dalit Marathi News Paper brought out a separate women's number entitled "In the Third World women hold up half the sky", a statement borrowed from the Chinese to make clear their difference from the First World Feminism. Some months later, a new group was formed by Dalit women, which called itself as Mahila Samata Sainik Dal (A League of Women soldiers for equality). The Dal saw religion and caste system as the major agent in the oppression of women and Dalit's in the late 1970's, the Chipko Movement saw women who came into the forefront to resist the falling of trees in Himalayan Region. The emergence of Eco-feminism brought out the idea that women are close to nature and men are close to culture. Hence it is the duty of women to protect environment and sustain a stable ecosystem. Women lead a

movement as Bhopal Gas Peedith Mahila Udyoga Sanghatana (Organization of Bhopal Women worker victims) to campaign for relief, medical aid and information to Bhopal Gas victims.

Roop Kanwar's Sati mobilized feminists to raise voice against this violence in the name of religion. The government reacted and passed a Sati Prevention Bill, which was a repeat of 1829 legislation which again had several flaws. Veena Oldenburg (1994: 126) observes that this law obfuscate the difference between voluntary and coerced Sati, defines Sati as Women's crime, and makes the other people involved in the Sati guilty only by abetting the women's act.

Coming to the Urban Front, the main issues which feminists addressed were violence against women particularly dowry deaths, rape, health issues, uniform civil code, Anti-Price Rise Agitations and Anti-Beauty Pageants etc. The Government on its part brought out several amendments to the existing laws after every popular agitation by feminist. The 1980 was the year of maximum amendments related to women rights. Commenting on this phenomenon Flavia Agnes (1992: 19) observes "If oppression could be tackled by passing laws then, this decade would be adjudged as 'Golden Period' for Indian women. Almost every single campaign against violence on women resulted in new legislations".

The contemporary feminist movement which began in the late 1970's and is still alive today, has brought women's issues to the attention of all Indians. Feminists, galvanized by endemic violence against women developed new organizations and institutions in the 80's & 90's. However, feminism in India should travel a long way to attain gender justice

References

- Agnes Flavia 1992 Against Violence? Review of Legislation 1980-89. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 27 no. 17
- Agnew, Vijay 1979 *Elite Women in Indian Politics*, New Delhi: Vikas Publications.
- Arya, Sadhana 2000 *Women, Gender Equality and the state*, Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications.
- Bagchi, Jasodhara, 2000 Positivism and Nationalism Womanhood and crisis in Nationalist Fiction-Bankim Chandra's Anandmath, in Alice Thomer and Maithreyi Krishnaraj (ed) *Ideals, Images and Real lives – Women in literature and History*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman.
- Chakravarty, Uma 1989 Whatever happened to the Vedic Dasi – Orientalism Nationalism and a script for the past in Kumuk Sangari and Suresh Vaid (ed) *Recasting Women – Essays in Colonial history*, New Delhi : Kali for Women.
- Chatterji, Partha 1994 *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and post colonial histories*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Das, Durga. 1950, *Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel's correspondence*, Vol.6, New Delhi.
- Forbes, Geraldine 1982 Caged Tigers: First Wave Feminism in India, *Women Studies International Forum*.Vol.5
- Forbes, Geraldine 1996 *The New Cambridge History of India – Women in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Jayawardena, Kumari '1990 Some comments on Feminism and the left in South Asia in Maithreyi Krishnaraj (ed) *Feminism: Indian debates* Bombay, Research Centre for Women Studies.
- Kakkar, Sudhir 1989 *Intimate Relations: Exploring Indian Sexuality*, New Delhi, Penguin Books.
- Kannabiran, Vaid 1989 "That magic time it was- women in Telangana peasant & K. Lalitha struggle" in *Recasting women*.
- Kaviraj, Sudipta 1994 On the construction of colonial power: structure, discourse and hegemony in Engels and Marks, (ed.) *Contesting colonial hegemony*, London: History Institute.
- Kishwar, Madhu 1985 Gandhi on Women, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 20,no.40.
- Kishwar, Madhu 1990 Why I do not call myself a feminist. *Manushi*, No. 61.Nov.-Dec
- Kumar, Radha 1993 *The history of doing: An illustrated account of movement for women's rights and Feminism in India 1800-1990*, Delhi : Kali for Women.
- Mani, Lata 1989 Contentious Traditions: The debate on sati in colonial Indian in *Recasting Women*.
- Mill, James 1816 *The History of India*, London
- Moon, Vasant (compiled) *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writing and speeches*, Vol.3&4, Educational Dept.,Govt. of Maharashtra, 1987.

- Nandy, Ashish 1983 *The intimate enemy - loss and recovery of self under colonialism* New Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- Nandy, Ashish 1985 An Anti secularist manifesto in *Seminar* Vol. 314.
- Oldenburg, Veena Talwar 1994 The Roop Kanwar Case: Feminists responses in John S, Hawley (ed) *Sati, the blessing and the curse*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Omvedt . Gail 1993 *Reinventing Revolution: New Social movements and the socialist tradition in India*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Pandey, Geetanjali 2000 How equal? Women in Premchand's Writings in op.cit. Thomer and Krishnaraj (ed)
- Parekh, Bikhu 1989 *Colonialism, Tradition and reform: An analysis of Gandhian political Discourse*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Patel, Sujatha Construction and Reconstruction of Women in Gandhi; *Occasional papers on history and society*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
- Ramabai, Pandita 1888, *The Hindu High Caste Women*, Bombay :Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture.
- Rege, Sharmila 1995 Feminist Pedagogy and Sociology for Emancipation in India, *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 44 No.2
- Said, Edward 1979 *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Sarkar, Sumit 1983 *Modern India (1885-1947)* Delhi, Macmillan.

Sarkar, Tanika 1994 *The Women's Question in the Nineteenth Century* in Kumkum Sangari and Suresh Vaid (ed) *Women and Culture*, Bombay, Research Centre for Women Studies.

Schneir, Miriam (ed) 1972 *Feminism: The Essential Historical writings* New York, Vintage.

Shukla, Sonal, 2000 Govardhanran's Women in op.cit, Thomer and Krishnaraj (ed).

Sinha, Mrinalini 1995, *Colonial masculinity: The manly Englishman and Effeminate Bengali*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Stephens, Julie 1990 *Feminist Fictions: A critique of the category "Non-Western"* in Kishwar, M. (ed), *Feminism-Indian debates*.

Tahmarkar, D.V. 1956. *Lokmanya Tilak*, London John Murray.

Chapter 4

Dalit Movements in India – A Dalit Feminist Critique

The main aim of this chapter, is to analyse the reasons and context for the emergence of Dalit Feminism. For this exercise a critical analysis of Dalit movements in Indian society is essential for an indepth understanding of interlocking complexities of gender, caste and class. This chapter looks at the omissions and exclusions of the agency of Dalit women in Dalit movements as Dalit women were the most exploited within the Dalits. This chapter is intended to look into the issue of identity raised by the Dalits during the struggle in the beginning of the chapter. The later chapter includes the emergence, development and intensity of the Dalit movement in different parts of the country.

Identity of a Dalit

There is an intense debate as to trace the original meaning of the term 'Dalit' among academic circles. Very frequently it is referred to the oppressed and exploited sections of society. Scholars like Kancha Illaiah (1995: ix) add the concept of Bahujan to the term making it Dalit-Bajujans which includes the other majority suppressed people. Oommen opines that (1990), Dalits are a sub stratum of the Indian population who are subjected to cumulative domination by the rest of the population in the country. Though Gandhiji used the term 'Harijan' (children of God) to refer to untouchables the term, 'Dalit' attained wide acceptability after the emergence of the Dalit Panther's Movement. Shah (2001: 98) views that same urban, educated middle class Dalits criticise the category of Dalit as socially regressive derogatory and undesirable. These sections believe that this term heaps on them the historical load of the much of the by past (Pawar: 1978). They suggest an individualist basis on which they would like to ground their alternative category of being called as Buddhists. This ultimately posits the Dalit category as

the opposite to Buddhist category. However, majority of the untouchable castes prefer to call themselves as Dalits rather than Harijans.

Locating Dalit Women

Vast differences distinguish the lives of women in different parts of India and within different castes, classes, religious and ethnic groups. Nearly 70 per cent of Indian population lives in rural areas and more than seventy per cent of female labour force falls in the category of landless agricultural labourers. The struggle for them, who are predominantly Dalit women revolves around procuring food, fuel and water for their families. Rape and sexual abuse are constant companions of her. This pathetic situation of hers is being vividly portrayed by Tersamma a Dalit activist as;

We go to work for we are poor,
but the same silken beds mock us,
While we are ravished in broad daylight,
Ill starred our horoscopes are,
Even our tottering husbands hiss and shout for revenge, If we cannot stand
their touch.

(Quoted in Dietrich: 1990)

Thus a Dalit women is at the receiving end of upper caste brutality on one end and Dalit patriarchy at another end. In this sense, the position of a Dalit women is quite different from her upper caste counterpart and Dalit men. Viramma, a female Dalit agricultural labourer who accounts her self told story (2000: 266) laments,

‘When upper castes sweat, it’s water, when we sweat, it’s blood. At another instance (Racine and Racine, 2000: 261) she observes:

‘We are just not poor, but on top of that, we’ve suffered the great wrong of being born as pariah’s.

Viramma is not a Dalit text in this sense, but her story is nevertheless, the text of a Dalit if we give to this word its basic meaning of one who is oppressed and crushed without political or ideological implications. It is not, in a primary sense, a text which attacks oppression, but a narrative which tells how an oppressed woman lives and thinks. Though she is critical of the discrimination perpetuated by upper castes, she never rebukes making is to believe Kumkum Sangari’s (1993: 868) assertion that patriarchies function with threat and practice of violence on one side and through obtaining consent from women too. Women’s agential capacity within so called ‘traditional’ societies and accompanying discursivities may actually be one of the ways by which consensual elements in patriarchies are often made for unless certain distributions of power are made within patriarchal arrangements, it is difficult to imagine how any degree of consent from women can be obtained.

As Knauft (1996: 164) points out, ‘In situations of fragmented and displaced identity, the fight against some inequalities is found to reinforce others’. Taking gender as one mode of fragmentation of identity in both upper castes and Dalits, we find that these identities are not homogenous drawing out attention to the concept of cultural hegemony introduced by Gramsci. This concept of cultural hegemony shows that culture contains within itself a set of values and beliefs that rationalise and make both domination and discrimination possible without the exercise of any external force.

Thus a Dalit woman stands at an complex juncture where upper caste people deprive her of all virtues of ideal womanhood – who speaks in loud and harsh tones, aggressive, bold therefore shameless, devoid of any feminine qualities of delicacy and charm. On the other hand, the masculinity of a Dalit male is being tested on the purview of their capacity to their women. Indeed, in Indian society,

entry into the decent domain of society, begins and ends with the control of sexuality of women. Women here are considered to be the gateways of caste system. The upper caste violence in late eighties and early nineties in Chundur, Pimpri Deshmukh, Chilakurti, Karamchedu endorse the view how the caste question is intermeshed with the women's question.

The lack of field studies accounting the lives and experiences of Dalit women shows how they have been marginalised by the main stream society. Subhadra Mitra (2001: 340) draws out an interesting observation that most works on Dalit women have concentrated on the physical violence such as rape and sexual molestation, but few have shed any light on how society has systematically eroded their image and their dignity by a hegemonical imposition of a constructed image specifically designed to violate their inner being.

Contextualising Dalit Movements

There has not been a single unified social movement in the country, now or in the past. The same is true for the Dalit movements. Different movements have highlighted different issues related to Dalits, armed different ideologies. Ghanshyam Shah (2001:195) opines that all the Dalit movements, overtly or covertly assert a Dalit identity, though its meaning is not identical and precise for everyone. Identity is concerned with the self-esteem and self-image of a community, for a common quest of equality, self-dignity and eradication of untouchability. Nandu Ram (1995: 31) observes that though the Dalit movements have not explicitly attacked the existing social order in the country nor they have launched any organised crusade against graded inequality of the Hindu social system, they have aimed at bringing the structural change in Indian society. He divides the Dalit movement into three types:

- 1) Movements against socio-economic exploitation and numerous types of atrocities committed on the Dalits.

- 2) Movements for better access to the opportunities for realisation of goals of equality, liberty, fraternity and justice.
- 3) Movements for gaining self-respect and dignified social identity.

In this context, Gail Omvedt opines that the Dalit movement in particular and anti caste movements in general should be seen as anti systemic rather than basically reformist in nature. Further she argues that Dalit movements were at best reformative in their ideological orientations and they operate as interest groups to better their socio-economic conditions within the overall framework of the society. For the convenience of discussion, these movements have been divided into pre-independence period, Ambedkar period and post Ambedkar period.

Pre-Independence Period

The main schools of thought which are associated with Dalit movements in pre independence period are:

- 1) Lokayatas
- 2) Buddhism
- 3) Bhakti
- 4) Satya sodhak samaj of Jyotirao Phule

Lokayatas was the first Dalit-Bahujan knowledge system which consistently faced the threat of the Brahmanical school of thought. Illaiah (2001:111) observes that this Dalit Bahujan epistemology was constructed around materialism and the Brahmanical epistemology was constructed around supernatural forces which does not have any elements progresiveness like the idealism of the West. Edwards (1967:110) opines that Brahmins constructed a degenerated idealist discourse to sustain the parasitic life of Brahmanical forces. This tradition, Illaiah continues, has constructed a moribund idealist thought which produced

only degenerated and self idealist discourses, which at no point of time did it represent the consciousness of people.

The modern Dalit-Bajujan movements, while building up an anti caste ideology, drew upon the dialectical materialistic discourses that started in a proto materialist form from Indus-based Lokayatas or Charvakas and continued to operate all through the history (Illiaiah, 2001:113). The Lokayatas were the earliest Dalit-Bahujans who developed Vitanda Vada Satha (science of dialectic discourses), based on their interaction with nature. The Brahmins as the other side developed Puru Sukta theory of Brahmanism which not only hierarchised shudras and Dalits to a low category but also subordinated the status of women. Thus the Lokayatas with their firm belief in practical life fought with Brahmanism both at ideological and symbolic level.

Buddhism which discarded all the hierarchies of caste, class and religion not only emphasised the Lokayata view but strengthened it by dialecticising it more and more. Contrary to the Brahmanical theory of body, soul, naraka and swarga, Buddha established the fact the human body consists of four elements – earth, air water and hear – and with the death of the human being, the four elements of human body disintegrate and becomes parts of their larger component. Buddhism propounded Dharma (justice), which focussed on the right to life and liberty and its ideal objective was socio-economic equality, thus attacking the dogmatic claims of Brahmanism. Though Buddhism didn't grant entry to women into its sanghas, it had to ultimately bow down. It was from these sanghas that the first Feminist text 'Therigatha' was evolved (Illiaiah,2001:114). The revival of Hinduism along with the ruthless persecution on Buddhists by Brahmana kings left it devastated, until it was revived by Ambedkar in 1956.

Bhakti movement which emerged between tenth and thirteenth centuries spread all over the continent to popularise Hinduism along with granting the Dalit-Bahujans the opportunity to worship god, without any mediator between god and

them. Ramanand and Raidas in the north, Chaitanya and Candidasa in the east, Eknath, Chokhamela, Tukaram and Narsing Metha in the west and Ramajuja, Nimbarka and Basava in the south were some of the important high caste Hindus and Dalit saints who led this movement.

Chokhamela who was a Mahar by caste, rejected the discriminatory caste system, paradoxically accepted his position in social hierarchy by endorsing the doctrine of Karma. His agony of being ostracised by the society was evident from his poetry. One of his poem goes on as:

‘Pure chokhamela always
chanting the name.
I am a Mahar without a caste,
Nila in a previous Birth.
He showed disrespect to Krishna,
so my birth as Mahar,
Chokha says this impurity is the trait of out past’.

(Translated by Zelliot)

Thus he justified the theory of Karma, making us to remember Marx’s famous dictum that ‘religion is the opium of the people’. Bhakti movements, Oommen (1990: 258) opines were charismatic and charismatic movements he viws, also develop internal contradictions in the long run which render them incapable in sustaining this process and not infrequently they become agents of system stability. The Mahar movement, which emerged in the later half of nineteenth century drew inspiration from Chokhamela’s life – his being graded an high status in spite of him being a Mahar. Ironically, the Bhakti movement was basically a reformist movement which ultimately increased the power of the Brahmin’s, by not changing the socio-economnic status of the non-Brahmins.

Another notable feature of Bhakti movement was that it was heavily genderised. *Manushi*, a popular journal on women in 1989, brought out a special edition on women saints of Bhakti tradition. Uma Chakravathy in an excellently researched article 'The World of the Bhaktin in South Indian Tradition' in *Manushi*, draws out an important conclusion after examining four popular women saints, Andal, Arvauja, Karaikalammaiyar and Akka Mahadevi. Her conclusion was that in the Bhakti movement, there was no contradiction in the pursuit of Bhakti and the life of a grihastha. In practice however the collapsing of such a boundary operated only in the case of men. For women, the dichotomy persisted and the tension between marriage and devotion to a personal God was never successfully resolved. All the Bhaktins who ever examined by Chakravathy protest with a mortal man and had to negotiate marriage in some way or the other. Thus the Bhakti movement was basically reformist in nature which couldn't question the roots of 'socio-economic oppression of shudras and Dalits. However, it was an constant inspiration for the later Dalit movements.

Jyothirao Phule who was also called as the Martin Luther of Maharashtra wa the first social reformer in nineteenth century who opposed tooth and nail the Brahminical oppression of the non-Brahmins, Dalits and Women in the Bombay presidency as it was know then. Kuber (1991: 54) opines that Phule, although himself wa not a Dalit worked tirelessly for the welfare of the untouchable and shudra castes along with upliftment of women. He founded the Satyashodak Samaj (Truth Seeker's Society) as a rationalistic and equalitarian socio-religious reformist organisation. The samaj with its greatest strength between 1911 and 1930 represented the aspirations of a wide range of non-Brahman castes from untouchable to a large agricultural caste of Maratha Kunbis. In class terms it drew some support from the non-Brahman intelligentsia and members of the commercial bourgeoisie but was by and large it remained peasant based. The Bahujan Samaj which emerged around 1906 from within the Satyashodak

movement has a kind of class content that 'non-Brahman' lack, referring to lower class peasants and workers. It was populist in its implications. In caste terms, it often substituted for 'non-Brahman's', but it accurately applied to much the same groups as the term shudra did in the nineteenth century. This samaj not only excluded merely Brahmans but also other educationally advanced and merchant castes. Zelliott (1996: 39) commenting on the contribution of Phule for the upliftment of the masses opined, that he and other samaj members not only worked in actual educational enterprises but used every channel available to them to urge the government to take more responsibility for mass education. She quotes an amusing instance when Prince of Wales was greeted on his visit to Pune in 1889 by the Samaj members with a slogan hung from the Din Bandhu Sarajanik Sabha free school for boys:

“Tell Grandma we are a happy nation
but 19 crores are without education.”

(Keer, 1964: 240)

Phule was quite visionary with the thought that how can the upper caste people demand freedom from colonial rule while they oppress their own people on the basis of caste and occupation. In this context, Uma Chakravarty (1998: 342) opines, that it was not that Phule or Pandita Ramabi, another social reformer who betrayed the nation – rather they were the ones who were betrayed – as were their concerns, by the narrow basis of nationalism which itself was merely a construct of upper caste men. The activities of Satyashodak samaj saw the participation of Dalit-Bahujan women in large numbers. Savitribai, Phule's wife headed the women's section of the Satyashodak samaj which included ninety females. She worked enthusiastically as a schoolteacher for untouchable girls. Although she like Phule, belonged to a shudra caste, her work continued to be honoured by both backward caste and Dalit women alike. Another notable social reformer of the period Pandita Ramabai, did a pioneering job for the upliftment of high caste

widows and education for girls across strata. Her conversion into Christianity created furore in the Hindu society dominated by orthodoxy.

The Phule period saw the resurgence of dynamic Dalit and non-Brahmin movements. The changing social, economic and political realm of that time, gave a foundation for the articulation of grievances against centuries of slavery and oppression by the Dalits and non-Brahmins. Zelliott (1996: 111) opines that these protests were found at all levels in the non-Brahmin newspapers of the nineteenth century, in petitions to British administration against the power of Brahmin clerks, in poems and polemics. This exactly, was the period when two large and effective protest movements in Maharashtra the non-Brahman movement and the Mahar movement emerged. The Mahar movement drew the inspiration from a modern western view of democracy and equality of men. It enabled the Mahars to create a political party, hostels, schools and colleges and an effective Buddhist conversion movement before the death of leader, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in 1956. Simultaneously in the south, Dalit movements began to emerge with the revolutionary term 'Adi' (original or native) being applied to all Dalit castes who were the original inhabitants of the soil. Who were being hierarchised to the lowest position of caste system with the advent of the Aryans. In Maharashtra Gopal Baba Walangkar, a popular Mahar leader supported his claim. Another leader Shivram Janba Kamble based his petitions to the British for a simple human rights issue. Later Ambedkar did not use the pre-Aryan 'Lords of the Land' claim by the Dalits which he felt might result in the permanent separation of the untouchable and caste Hindus. The Prarthna Samaj though didn't address the subordination of Dalits directly provided intellectual justification for both Mahars and non-Brahmins to seek new forms of power. Among some of the early leaders other than mentioned above who lead Dalit movement in Maharashtra were Kisan Faugi Bansode, Ravji Moonpandit, Kalicharan Nonda Gawali and G.A. Gawai. The

Mahar movement rejuvenated the erstwhile subdued Dalit masses and prepared them for the future struggle to be led by Ambedkar.

Simultaneously, in south India the concept of Dravida nationalist Brahman discourse developed. This nationalism was strongly rooted in Tamil linguistic, Dravida, non-Aryan cultural history. E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker built a notion of Ravana Rajya as against the notion of Rama Rajya of Gandhi. Illaiah (2001: 125) observes that he publicly denounced the Hindu gods, and many Hindu deities statues were removed from the temple. The biggest drawback of this movement was that it built its discourses more as an anti Brahman rather than anti-caste discourse. Illaiah in the same context observes that this is one of the reasons why in spite of DMK/AIDMK rule in Tamil Nadu the fusion of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs) has not taken place. However, the role that the Dravida nationalist movement played in establishing caste-based reservation was its most significant contribution.

Vivek Kumar (1994) who studied the nature and crisis of Dalit leadership in India opined, that the first independent Dalit political movement in India was launched in 1910, when the All India Depressed Classes Federation was established under the encouragement of the Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association, whose initial purpose was to pressurise the Indian National Congress to include the removal of untouchability as one of its main demand. The concept of 'Adi-Andhra' (original sons of the soil) emerged among the Dalits of Andhra. This movement swept across coastal rural Andhra, whereas in Hyderabad during 1920s, Bhagyareddy Verma and Arigay Ramaswamy led the movements of Malas which eventually became highly factionalised. In Kerala, Pulayas the untouchables, organised movement for gaining entry into educational institutions and other popular places. Ayyankali and Vellikkara Choti were two important leaders who led this movement, whereas Gopala Das fought against the custom of wearing bead necklaces by Pulaya women.

Similarly, in north India too three popular Dalit movements emerged which were the Adi Hindu and jatava movement in Uttar Pradesh and Adi-Dharm movement in Punjab (Jurgensmyer: 1982). The Adi-Hindu movement fought for the attainment for separate status, rights and representation of dalits were led by Swami Achutanand (Gooptu: 1993). The Adi Hindu Movement also addressed the theory that Dalits were the original inhabitants of India and Aryans have come from outside India and subjugated them. The Jatavs of Agra (UP) abandoned the process of social reform throughout sanskritization process among themselves and opted for political power for the amelioration of wretched condition of the Dalits (Lynch: 1974). The Adi-Dharm movement was an offshoot of the Arya Samaj of Punjab unit, which broke off its relation with the latter by accusing it that instead of attacking the caste system, it is rejuvenating it. Sant Ram and Mangoo Ram, two of its important leaders came out with the notion of 'Achutistan' – a geographical distinct 'land of the untouchables' as they felt that the untouchables were a separate 'Quam' – a distinct religious community which existed from time immemorial.

In the East, no popular Dalit movement arose which is quite an interesting phenomena for social scientists as Bengal is also known as the 'Land of Indian Renaissance' Vivek Kumar (1994) opines that the reason behind it was that Dalits in Bengal were fragmented and divided in the past. Except the Namshudra Movement which demanded political and social rights for Dalits, no popular Dalit movement rose in Bengal. Hence, we see that by 1920s a number of Dalit movements have emerged in different parts of the country signifying the Dalit assertion.

However, if compare the Dalit movements region wise, we find that the movements of western and south India had much wide awakening and base rather than that of east and north. However, all these movements followed a policy of persecution and petition, till Ambedkar took on the centrestate. Patnkar and

Omvedt (1979: 471) opine that no direct struggles for land to Dalits were taken up before independence but as far as Ambedkar was concerned the issue of land was always present.

The entry of Bheem Rao Ambedkar, who is popularly known as Babasaheb and Messiah of Dalits, into the arena of Dalit Self hood Movement can be regarded as the turning point in the history of subjugation of Dalits in India. Until his death in 1956 he fought relentlessly against the unequal hierarchised Hindu caste system which failed to recognise the Dalits as 'Human Beings'. He regarded three great men as his preceptors, Buddha, Kabir and Phule for Buddha gave him the mental and metaphysical satisfaction, Kabir took him to the Bhakti cult and Phule inspired him to strive for anti-Brahmanism, amelioration of the education of the masses and for their entry into the sacred domain of the caste Hindus. He dedicated his book *Who Were the Sudhras?* To Jhyotiba Phule. Drawing inspiration from the ideas of fraternity, liberty and equality from the French revolution, along with Marxism, he gave a call to Dalits to educate, organise and agitate.

Ambedkar initially, believed that the agitation of Dalits for attaining the entry into the caste society along with the breaking of all taboos associated with untouchables, is much more essential for the emancipation of Dalits. At a later stage disillusioned with the Indian National Congress attitude with the Dalits, along with the orthodox Hindu society he changed his stance. Then he took a stand that until and unless Dalits get political representation, they can't pertrude into the caste structure. That was the reason why initially he supported the temple entry movement of the Dalits but at a later stage he discarded this movement. Mahad Satyagraha was the first act of public protest by him, where he asserted the right of Dalits to drink water from open public tank. It was here that he publicly burnt 'Manusmriti', the sacred law book of the Hindu which legitimised the abusive treatment of Dalits. His confrontation with Gandhi and the Indian

National Congress as such was held in the belief that they were striving for freedom from colonisers, while they themselves were adhering to the norms of untouchability and subjugation of their own masses in the name of caste system. His apprehensions of congress intentions can be proved by the fact the congress passed after 32 years of its existence in 1917, a resolution for the amelioration of the conditions of the Dalits. This was, Ambedkar viewed, to exhort concessions announced by Montague-Chelmsford reforms. Similarly there was a cold war between Gandhi and him as the latter behind that the former attacked untouchability as a social evil, not caste system as such. The historical Poona Pact signed on September 25, 1932, ended the issue of granting separate electorates for Dalits, for an adamant Gandhi who viewed that Dalits were an integral part of the Hindu society. After Ambedkar signed the Poona Pact, he firmly believed that instead of Expecting a change of hearts of caste Hindus, only by fighting for their rights would Dalits win anything at all. Omvedt and Patankar (1979: 419) drew the moral of this story that the first fast over the issue of 'untouchability' was not a fast against the British for nationalist causes or against the oppressive caste system, but was a fast against Dalits themselves to force them to give up their demands of separate electorates. In the previous chapter we had discussed how the congress equally in foot with the Hindu nationalist forces created a furore in opposition to the Hindu code bill, which was introduced by him as Law Minister. Ambedkar resigned in protest against this casteist and patriarchal attitude of the members of the house.

Along with demanding equal rights for Dalits at par with upper caste people in every arena. Ambedkar formed many organisations among which Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (1924) and Scheduled Caste Federation (1942) were important. Quite a visionary of Humanism, he was also a staunch supporter of women rights. He encouraged the participation of Dalit women in every struggle he undertook. His concept of referring endogamy as the main reason for the subordination of

women and Dalits, appealed to most of the masses. One of the main reasons for his conversion into Buddhism was that Buddhism believed in the man-woman equality. His conversion, was also a resentment to detach Dalits from the institutionalised inequality of Hindu society which was based on the birth in a caste an extremely ridiculous logic. His death, in 1956, left a vacuum in the history of Dalit movement in India. At the end of his life he was disillusioned with the divisive tendencies within the movement. Kadam (1993: 24) quotes one such instance when Ambedkar expressed his anguish as:

‘With great difficulty I have brought the caravan where it is seen today. Let the caravan march on and further on, despite the hurdles, pitfalls and difficulties that may come its way. They must rise to occasion, if they want to line an honourable and respected life. If my people, my lieutenants are not able to take the caravan ahead, they should leave it where it is seen today, but must not, under any circumstances allow the caravan to go back’.

These lines explain the pain he was undergoing by the divisive tendencies of the Dalit movement.

Significance of Ambedkar

Ambedkar had been the constant source of inspiration as a father, mother and brother, deeply entrenched into the subconscious of Dalits. He was an icon to the rejuvenated Dalit poetry, folklore and oral tradition. Along with Phule, he was the only Dalit leader who gave a vision for Dalit feminists who came out openly against upper caste discrimination and Dalit patriarchy. His vision of social justice, freedom, liberty, fraternity and humanism was a constant source of inspiration for the erstwhile shattered Dalits of India.

Vasant Moon (2001: 116) in his vividly described autobiography quotes Manohar Nagarales (a folk singer), tribute to Babasaheb after his death as:

His teachings are finished, his speaking finished commands finished

But don't let your mind be deceived that we are adrift and destroyed

Ambedkar has lifted us up, liberated us

Don't lose your strength in sorrow, keep the wisdom that is life

There is no benefit in futile sobbing remember who you are

Don't give scope to treachery, backbiting in fighting

These are such insignificant things, but be wary of them.

This powerful revolutionary poetry was a constant source of inspiration to the post Ambedkar Dalit Movments.

Post Ambedkar Dalit Movements

In the last years of his life, Ambedkar gave a beginning to two institutions he saw as necessary for the liberation of his people and the welfare of the country Buddhism and the Republican Party, a spiritual force and a political platform. The Republican Party was formed by N. Shivaraj who was its leader till his demise in 1964. It projected itself as a party of all the oppressed sections. Omvedt (2001: 150) opines, the RPI had genuine radical moments under the leadership Dadasheb Gaikwad, when it joined socialists and communists in land satyagrahas in 1956 and 1965, aimed at achieving access to forest land and 'common lands for cultivation by Dalits and other landless people. However, after 1960's it became factionalised and stagnated mainly confining itself to Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. A popular resentment against it was that it was controlled by Mahars in Maharashtra and Chamars in Uttar Pradesh.

The emergence of Dalit Panther Movement in Maharashtra was preceded by the powerful outburst of Dalit literature. The repression and terror under which the oppressed Dalits live along with the failure of the RPI, Gandhism and state

socialism were some of the main reasons behind the emergence of Dalit Panther Movement.

The resurgence of Naxalism in 1960's also added revolutionary fervour to this movement. The Dalit Panther manifesto, which was published a year after its formation in 1971, listed eighteen demands of the Dalits, ranging from the abolition of feudalism, Dalit ownership of the means of production, strict implementation of land reforms, banning of religious and casteist literature and nationalisation of the foreign capital. The name 'Panther' was inspired by the Black Panther Movement of America. Namdev Dhasal and Raja Dhale were two popular Dalit Panther leaders who were also associated with revolutionary Dalit literature. Namdev Dhasal quite explicitly, depicts the new found determinism of Dalits to bow down before anyone. A popular poem of him goes by:

Turning their backs to the sun, they journeyed through centuries,
Now, now we must refuse to become pilgrims of darkness,
That one, our father carrying the darkness is bent,
Now, now we must lift that burden from his back,
Our blood was spilled for this glorious city,
And what we got was the right to eat stones,
Now, now we must explode that building which kisses the sky,
After a thousand years we are blessed with a sunflower – giving Fakir,
Now, now we must, like sunflowers turn over faces to the sun.

(Translated by Zelliott and Jayant Karve)

Dalit poetry frequently used the sun as the imagery for the movement led by Ambedkar, often calling him as the sun and the bringer of a total new world. The revolutionary fervour of Dalit Panther Movement saw two riots 18th January and 30th January in 1974. This movement publicly supported the anti Brahmanical

pronouncements of the Dravida Kazhagam leader, the late G.V. Ramaswamy Naicker. However, this movement soon succumbed to dissensions and splits with two major factors are led by Raja Dhale, who believed in the Buddhist future of the Dalits and the other led by Namdev Dhasal who believed in Marxism along with Ambedkarism. Consequently the Dalit Panther Movement failed to move in a clear direction with regard to concrete situation ambivalent and very frequent wavering positions along with a strong pro-Maharashtra emphasis. Sridhar Balan (1976) who studied Dalit Panther Movement, opines that Raja Dhale wanted to confine the movement to the Mahars and that too for neo-Buddhists. As a result, this sectarian attitude alienated the Dalit panthers from other Dalits of the state such as Mangs, Chambaras, Bhangis and Vaddars who received it with deep suspicion and distrust.

Following the panthers, the Dalit movement throughout the country took on a multifaceted expression. In Karnataka a state wide Dalit Sangarsh Samithi was formed in 1974, in Bihar and Andhra the rural Dalit upsurge was organised by Naxalites. The Namantar Campaign, which wanted to remove university of Aurangabad to Babasaheb-Marathwada University witnessed a hard struggle, along with a long march led by Jogendra Kawade of Nagpur.

In Andhra Pradesh, a separate Andhra Dalit Mahasabha was formed in 1984, after a series of village atrocities and by the late 80's, a number of leading Dalit cadre had left the People's War Group (PWG) a naxalite group, accusing it of upper caste domination.

Though, through the policy of protective discrimination, which gave chance to Dalits for mobility in all aspects of society, the condition of majority of the Dalits are still pitiable especially in rural area where majority of the Dalits live. The recent Mala-Madiga controversy in Andhra Pradesh raised several questions, regarding the upward mobility of only same sub-castes example Mahars in

Maharashtra, Chamars in UP and Malas in Andhra vis-a-vis other sub-castes among the Dalits.

The formation of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1984 gave a welcome sign for all the Dalits. However BSP didn't aim at a revolutionary transformation of the existing system – social or economic. The founder of BSP, Kanshi Ram borrowed heavily from Phule's thesis of Bahujan Samaj and lifted the great man's analogy of cultural war between Aryas (Dwijas) and Demons (Backward and Dalits). Though he followed the powerful legacy of Ambedkar's concept of political power, the compulsion of democratic politics made the Dalit to erode belief in BSP as a Dalit emancipatory force. Sudha Pai (2001: 259) who studied the BSP, concludes that BSP's attempt to be both a political party and a movement to represent the entire Bahujan Samaj (Dalits, OBC's and minorities) while providing leadership to the Dalit movement has introduced contradictions and ultimately weakening it. Since 1995, it has entered into a regressive phase of alliance with upper caste parties earlier identified as 'enemies' which seems to signal the end of a social revolution. Compared to the Dalit movement in Maharashtra, Pai views (260), BSP is conservative, elitist and election oriented. However, the BSP leaders were particularly keen to implement their programme of Dalit upliftment. In both 1995 and 1995, when in power (now she is in power again in UP) Mayawati, second only to Kanshi Ram, had pursued Dalit oriented policies in the field of education, social welfare, employment generation and health. Though by fashioning the larger social identity of 'Bahujan', the party has tried to bring Dalits, OBC's and minorities on a single platform, stressing their common characteristics, by frequently changing its stand and even keeping mum over controversial human rights issues. BSP is distancing itself from the Dalits. A very recent example of this issue is the BSP's abstain from the controversial POTO bill. BSP as a political party, Kanshi Ram and Mayawati as leaders can definitely have their own compulsion in electoral politics but Dalit movement

needs a bold and unwavering commitment to the basic problems of Dalits. In this context Dalits can not make icons out of Mayawati or Kanshi Ram, though they are widely appreciated by them.

The contemporary period is witnessing an increase of atrocities and violence against Dalits. In this context, Gopal Guru (1991: 2926) opines that in view of the scale and cruelty of upper caste violence and the callousness of the state on the other hand along with the ineffective politics of the established Dalits groups, Dalits are taking recourse to different strategies to protect their identity and ensure their survival in more honourable and equitable terms. This assertion of Dalits to refuse to be cowed down by the centuries of exploitation and suppression of historical inequalities, is making the upper castes to perpetuate violence on them. In this era of Karamchedus, Chundurur and Shankarbigas, where Dalits were massacred as they questioned the domain of upper caste hegemony, Dalit movements have a greater role to play, carry crusade against these divisive forces. T.K. Oommen (1990: 261) opines that Dalit movement – old and new were at best reformative in nature, instead of breaking the shackles of caste system, they involved the caste status to wrest benefits from the state. They operated as an interest groups to better their socio-economic conditions within the over all framework of the society. Webster (1996: 190) views that the main strength of Dalit movements, is that they did have grassroots organisations, a recognised leadership, pre eminent among whom was Dr. Ambedkar, a common demand for their own political representation as well as for dignity, equality and justice. These demands found expression in the 1950 constitution of India of which Babasaheb was the main architect. However, Dalit movements have a long way to go to attain the dignity of humanism which he had dreamt off. Like a Messiah he is the source of inspiration for the Dalit movements.

The Bhopal Declaration, which chartered a new cause for Dalits in 21st century, included the need for recognising the problems of Dalit women. Out of the 21 point Action Agenda some of them which addressed this problem are:

- 1) Recognising SC/ST women as a distinct category among women.
- 2) Implement effectively in letter and spirit the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and Rules 1995 especially with regard to atrocities against Dalit woman.
- 3) Provide arms licences to the SC&ST's as stipulated in the Atrocities Act for self defence purposes, make the setting up of Dalit self defence groups from village on words mandatory, and specially train Dalit women to handle weapons in self defence against the perpetrators of crimes and atrocities.

The main critique against Dalit movements by Dalit feminists is that, they had ignored the agency of Dalit Women. Rege (2000: 494) initiates an interesting debate that the assertion of intracaste patriarchy by Dalit men and the issue of separate quotas within quotas for Dalit and OBC (Other Backward Castes) women comes to be analysed here.

This debate should be read as patriarchal cunning of a Dalit movements, limited as it is by its electoral and reservation politics to restrict Dalit women's entry into politics and the public sector. Salve (1992) opines, that there is an urgent need for Dalit politics to view Dalit women not as numbers but as revolutionary agents. Sen (1992) views that the script of accusation, that only highlights the patriarchal character of the Dalit movement also fails to note the significant spaces within the anti caste struggle made by the Dalit and Bahajan women. The globalising force with increased technological aid further alienated Dalit women from the arena of production. In fact, when we use phrases like, marginalisation of women in the developmental process, or feminisation of

poverty or women in unorganised sector, we are referring to Dalit women without even being conscious about their specifically.

Though Dalit and bahujan women participated almost in all movements, it was in Ambedkar led movements where their greatest participation was recorded. Ambedkar firmly believed that it was the 'Rule of endogamy', which subjugated both Dalits and women, appealed to them. Their participation didn't limit to rallies and demonstrations, he saw to it that every conference organised for untouchables had a women's conference held concurrently which addressed the specific issues faced by Dalit women. Moon (2001) records the huge presence of Dalit women in Ambedkar's movements in his autobiography. Dalit women who were relegated background in various cultural, literary and musical traditions of Dalits, came out openly into these fields only after Ambedkar led movement in Maharashtra, except in a few Tamasha tradition which commodified Dalit women's sexuality. Phule's contribution for the women's cause is commendable. Kancha Illaiah (2001: 125) views that Phule's conviction that women were not a part of Brahmanism made him to include, their release from Brahmanic shackles was a main agenda of social reform undertaken by him. He believed that by providing education to Dalit-Bahujans and women, unity of all the oppressed will be established – for him, Dalitisation of Brahmanical marriage, divorce and widowhood systems were essential for the Indian cultural revolution. Gopal Guru (2001:24) observes that we don't find Dalit women finding space in the cultural activities of Ambedkari Jalsas or later on in the Kalapathak tradition in the pre-Ambedkar period. Interestingly, in the post-Ambedkar period they broke their cultural silence and stormed into the cultural and literary arena, where they established a separate identity for themselves. They chose the symbols and metaphors that were very close to their life situations and which formed a part of their cultural traditions. This cultural assertion of them is a struggle against the caste system, the unconcerned state and Dalit patriarchy Dalit women's main stand

against Dalit political movements was that they deprived them in granting leadership cudgels while their presence as members of RPI was incredible. Drawing as the legacy of Phule and Ambedkar by taking their framework to understand indignities meted as them, they view that they Ambedkar failed to develop a comprehensive theory for women's liberation.

Another major drawback of the leaders of Dalit movements was that they didn't recognise the concept of Dalit patriarchy itself. Dalit leaders accused that this is the view of the Brahmanical forces which are trying to bring divisions between Dalit men and women. So that their movement becomes redundant. As Kancha Illaiah (1996) argues that Dalit Bahujan women are more economically and socially independent than their upper caste counterparts, things in Dalit households are not so rosy as he depicts. Dalit women are being equally abused and beaten by their male kin especially husbands. They too are victims of domestic violence and very oftenly have to bear the brunt of drunkard husbands. What makes them distinct here from upper caste women is that they retaliate, don't keep mum for fear of society, caste or community as her upper caste counterpart does. Thus, their resistance is string against such violence, but here the question is that violence is taking place at the first instance. My Dalit ethnographies be it 'Viramma'(Racine and Racine,2000), 'Shiva and her sisters'(Kapadia,1995), or 'The Silken Swings(Franco et al, 2000), show the evidence how these woman explain, their agony to deal with both public and private spheres. The situation of this working of Dalit patriarchy is increasing in urban Dalits who are getting upward mobile by access to education and jobs through affirmative action. The first thing done by them in this situation is that they are relegating their women to the same moral codes as an upper caste man doe's. This is also evident from the increasing menace of dowry, among the well to do families of Dalits. Dalits traditionally had the custom of 'Bride-price' as Dalit women were considered to be economically productive, hence the groom had

to pay price for the brides non availability of economic power to her family. This custom is now being replaced by dowry where the bride's family pays the groom an amount for the upkeep of the bride, which is increasing the commodification of Dalit women.

Viramma (Racine and Racine,2000) in her account narrates the author several times that her mother never used to come out openly before her husband (sun-in-law), she too does so as it is socially undesirable. This account explains that how even Dalit women internalise the patriarchal norms.

The Namantar March which was joined by Dalit women in large numbers, who were poor, angry at her drunken husband and ansxious at getting their children educated. Jyoti Lanjewar a Dalit poet captures this agony of this Dalit women:

I have seen you, at the front of the long march,
The end of your sari tucked tightly at the waist
Shouting 'change the name'
Taking the blow of the police stick as your upraised hands
Going to jail with head high.

(Translated by Zelliott (2001))

Similarly, the anti-liquor movement late nineties in rural Andhra Pradesh, was a movement of Dalit-Bahujan women who rose against the patriarchal state and their men.

For Dalit women, the basic priorities and problems are different from both upper caste women and Dalit men. They share the brunt of Dalithood equally along with their men in sharing the pain and agony perpetuated by the Brahmanical society, their problems are multifaceted. Unequal wages, food, living, shelter, basic dignity of life, sexual abuse by upper caste men,

powerlessness in unorganised sector along with meeting the basic conditions of life are some specific problems faced by her. However, a Dalit woman is marching ahead to write her own destiny. Dalit feminism's emergence in the nineties accounts the culmination of the trails and tribulations of these women. It's a premise where they are telling their own stories of their real lives, until then their world was constructed by some one else.

An overview of this chapter shows how the Dalit movement itself was fragmented both ideologically and organisationally, that it could not provide a separate platform for addressing the issues of Dalit women. Except Phule and Ambedkar, no Dalit-Bahujan leader addressed the problem of women among them. Dalit feminism, with all these omissions and exclusions, doesn't discard the Dalit movement itself, instead it wants to create a space for its voice to be heard. As an unknown author opines, 'Dalit women suffer as two counts, being a Dalit and being an woman'.

A detailed account of the conditions which facilitated the emergence of Dalit feminism will be discussed in the next chapter.

References

- Balan, Sridhar, 1976. *Dalit Panther Movement in Maharashtra: Problems and Prospects*, M.Phil. Dissertation submitted to Centre for Study of Social Systems, JNU, New Delhi.
- Chakravarthy, Uma, 1989. 'The World of the Bhaktin in South Indian Traditions – The Body and Beyond', *Manushi*, No. 50-52.
- _____, 1998. *Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai*, New Delhi: Kali for women.
- Channa, S.N., 'The Right of Selfhood: The Paradox of Being a Dalit Women', *Social Action*, October-December 2001, Vol. 151.
- Dietrich, G., 1990. *The Relationship Between Dalit Movements and Women's Movements – Cases and Conceptual Analysis*, Paper Submitted for the IAWS, Calcutta.
- Edwards, Paul (ed.), 1967. *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, Vol 3&4*, London: Collier and MacMillan.
- Franco, Fernando, Macwan and Ramanathan (ed) 2000. *The silken swing – The cultural universe of Dalit women*, Calcutta: Stree.
- Gooptu, Nandini, 1993, 'Caste deprivation and politics : the untouchables in U.P. towns in the early 20th century' in Peter Robb (ed). *Dalits Movements and meaning of labour in India*, Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press
- Guru, Gopal, 'Dalit Killings in Marathwada', *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 1991.
- _____, 2001. 'Ambedkar and the Dalit Cultural Revolt in Maharashtra' in Ghanshyam Shah (ed.) *Dalit Identity and Politics: Cultural Subordination and the Dalit Challenge, Vol. 2*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

- _____, 'Dalit Women Talk Differently', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 41-42, October 1995.
- Illaiah, Kancha, 1995. *Why I am not a Hindu?*, Calcutta: Samya.
- _____, 2001. 'Dalitism Vs. Brahmanism' in Ghanshyam Shah (ed.) *Dalit Identity and Politics: Cultural Subordination and the Dalit Challenge*, Vol. 2, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark, 1982. *Religion as Social Vision: The Movement Against Untouchability in Twentieth Century Punjab*, Berkely: University of California.
- Kadam, K.N. (ed.), 1993. *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: The Emancipator of the Oppressed*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Kapadia, Karin, 1995. *Shiva and her sisters: Gender, Caste and Class in rural south India*, New Delhi: West view Press
- Keer, Dhananjay, 1964. *Mahatma Jyotirao Phooley*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Knaft, B.N., 1996. 'Genealogies for the Present' in Leacock et.al. (ed.), *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives*, Praeger: Bergin Publications.
- Kuber, 1991. *Ambedkar – A Critical Study*, New Delhi: People Publishing House.
- Kumar, Vivek, 1994. *Nature and Crisis of Dalit Leadership in India: A Macro Sociological Analysis*, M.Phil. Dissertation Submitted to the Centre for Study of Social Systems, JNU, New Delhi.
- Lynch, O. ,M., 1974, *The politics of untouchability : social mobility and social change in a city of India*, New Delhi: National Publishing House.
- Channa, Shubhadra Mitra, 2001, The right to selfhood: the paradox of being a Dalit woman, *Social action* , Vol . 51, no.4

- Moon, Vasant, 2001. *Growing Up Untouchable in India – A Dalit Autobiography*, (Translated from Marathi by Gail Omvedt), New York: Rowman and Little Field Publications.
- Omvedt, Gail and Bharat Patnakar, 'The Dalit Liberation Movement in Colonial Period' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual No. February 1979.
- Omvedt, Gail, 1994. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution – Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- _____, 2001. 'Ambedkar and After: The Dalit Movement in India' in Ghanshyam Shah (ed.) *Dalit Identity and Politics: Cultural Subordination and the Dalit Challenge, Vol. 2*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Oommen, T.K., 1990. *Protest and Change – Studies in Social Movements in India*, New Delhi: Sage.
- Pai, Sudha, 2001. 'From Harijan to Dalits: Identity Formation, Political Consciousness and Electoral Mobilisation of Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh' in Ghanshyam Shah (ed.) *Dalit Identity and Politics: Cultural Subordination and the Dalit Challenge, Vol. 2*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Pawar, 1978. *J.V.Baluta*, Bombay: Granthali Press.
- Racine Josiane and Jean-Luc Racine, 2000. *Viramma – Life of a Dalit* (Translated by Will Hobson), New Delhi: Social Science Press.
- Rege, Sharmila, 'Real Feminism and Dalit Women – Scripts of Denial and Accusation', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.35, no.6 February 5, 2000.
- Salve, Dinkar, 1997. *Chakaravyuhat Dalit Chalval (Dalit Movements in a Maze)*, Pune: Kranti Singh Nana Patil Academy.

Sangari, Kumkum, 'Consent, Agency and Rhetorics of Incitement', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.28, May 1, 1993.

Sen, Jllina, 1992. *Spaces Within the Struggle*, New Delhi: Kali for Women.

Shah, Ghanshyam (ed.), 2001. *Dalit Identity and Politics: Cultural Subordination and the Dalit Challenge*, Vol. 2, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Webster, 'Understanding the Modern Dalit Movements', *Sociological Bulletin*, 45 (2), September 1996.

Zelliot, 1996. *From Untouchables to Dalits Essays in Ambedkar Movement*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications.

CHAPTER - 5

The Emergence of Dalit Feminism

This chapter analyses the factors responsible for the most crucial role played by the feminist movement in India along with the characteristic of Patriarchal Indian state which led the way for the emergence of Dalit feminism. For convenience of discussion, the chapter is divided into two sections. While the first section deals with the flaws of the Indian Feminist Movement, the second section deal with the emergence of Dalit Feminism.

SECTION 1

CONTEXTUALISING INDIAN WOMAN

Indian women bring the Feminist theoretical debates on the insight which is derived from their own experiences .For them, the pattern of oppression and struggle, stem from multiple sources of issues related to environment, food, prices, health, violence, employment, property rights and unequal laws.

Contextualising the category of 'Indian woman' has been a point of struggle and contestation. The question who is representing this woman, is a controversial debate, as the mainstream history established contexts for only a particular criteria of Indian womanhood,who is generally a upper caste and middle class woman.As Uma Chakravathy opines(1989:46),Indian Woman became a combination of spiritual Maithreyi, the learned Gargi, the suffering Sita, the faithful Savitri and the Heroic Laxmi Bai. Between the polarities of self-effacing wife and all powerful mother lies an invisible and marginalized lower caste woman.Chakravathy ,further continues that, this focus on the upper section of society to the total exclusion of all others is evident from Swami Dayanand Saraswathi's injunction that Aryan mothers should not nurse their babies, but

should employ wet nurse so that they will recover soon from the pain of child birth and again be ready to produce strong 'sons' oncemore. Along with the question of producing only sons but not daughters this injunction itself is quite problematic. What about the wet nurse? Who was she? What about her place in the system of procreation? Isn't she required to produce strong children ,if not son's? Right from the discourse of Vedic Age, the mainstream history which included the orientation list, social reformers, nationalist, legal experts, and new feminists have addressed only the identity of the upper-caste woman only.

FLAWS OF INDIAN FEMINIST MOVEMENT

As Shamili Rege (1998:44) opines, the savarnalisation of Indian women's movement and the Dalitisation of Dalit movement were the main reasons for the emergence of Dalit Feminism in India.If we look at the whole Feminist activism here, it not only excluded the category of only Dalits but even minorities. This movement was only reformist in nature, which couldn't shake the deep roots of patriarchy .It had been preoccupied with the issues of dowry, rape ,violence, and harassment of women in streets move recently with marriage and property laws .As the movement consisted of feminists background of their being urban, middle class and elite composition. However, these were not the issues that greatly affected the status quo. Even as these issues , the movement didn't take a unified and strong stand except confining themselves to few protests and demonstrations.

THE ROLE OF PATRIARCHAL STATE

The role played by the Indian State right from the debate on the introduction of Hindu Code Bill was that of a patriarchal agency, which never bothered to ensure the constitutional tenet of equality of sexes. Except appointing eye wash judiciary committees and passing flawed and piecemeal legislations whenever Feminists raised any issue, its attitude was essentially biased towards Indian male hegemony.

THE APATHETIC LEGAL SYSTEM OF INDIA

The callousness of Indian legal system led to the continuous denial of justice to women in general the marginalized section of women i.e. minorities, Dalits, and tribals in particular. In a democratic system, law must generally respond to the irresistible tide of social habit and opinion as people are influenced more by habits rather than by thoughts. In this context, Krishna Gupta(2000:25) makes an interesting argument here by taking the example of American women who joined the labour force, was legal rights, yet the traditional belief that women were primarily home makers remained largely unchanged in American society. Structural barriers to gender equality remained and woman remained as primarily home makers ,clustered in all the lowest paying jobs. Gradually as the new pattern of gender role activity became accomplished ,it eventually affected some attitudes and behavior .Hence legal system should supercede the opposition of social customs .However the Indian legal system endorsed the popular notions of construction of womanhood and sexuality. Through the examples of Mathura rape case, Rameeza rape case, society and our legal system moves these notions as the former was a Tribal, Rameeza Bee a Muslim and Banwari Devi a lower caste woman. These women couldn't fit into the definition of Indian woman who possessed cardinal virtues-piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Rape has been defined by law as a forcible ravishment of a woman by a man which on one hand is the expression of male chauvinism and on another side is the manifestation of women's oppression. Treating Rape as a sexual offence and not as an offence of violence has been a major drawback of Indian legal system. If there are no visible marks of resistance as a raped women's body, the judges are privileged to doubt that the victim had given consent.

MATHURA RAPE CASE

In 1979, Mathura a 14 year old tribal girl was raped by two policeman at a police station in Madhya Pradesh. These policeman were acquitted by the sessions court later to be convicted in at the High Court and again reacquitted by the Supreme Court of India on the ground that she didn't raise alarm while being raped, hence she was loose moral woman. The Civil Society and feminists were shocked at this judgement and they protested it by organizing this judgment and they protested it by organizing several demonstrations, exhibitions, street plays etc, asked the Government for a retrial. To lead this movement Forum Against Oppression was formed. (Now called as Forum Against Oppression and Violence against Women) in Mumbai, which was the combination of various feminists and like minded groups. As Supriya Akerkar (1995:13), for these feminists groups, the question of violence against woman was articulated more in terms of a social issue .i.e. as crime and violation of woman's honour. While the National Federation of Indian woman looked at Rape in 'Class Terms', the socialist woman talked in terms of the 'Glass vessel cracking'. Pramila Dandavate in parliament spoke- "Like the glass vessel breaking into pieces when it falls, a women's life is irretrievably shattered after she is raped (Gandhi *et al* 1991:46)", the All India Women Conference provided psychological explanations of the autonomous women's groups highlighting the use of the autonomous women's groups highlighting the use of patriarchal power. For Communists rape was primarily demanding for the changing in rape law, the Feminists pressurized the government to pass a bill on rape, with the only change it had was that it placed the consent burden of victim only in cases of custodial rape.

RAMEEZA BEE RAPE CASE:

That of Rameeza Bee, a poor Muslim woman from Hyderabad, followed the Mathura rape case, when she was returning after watching a late night show along with the husband. Two policemen who were on night duty forcibly took her to the police station and raped her. Her husband too was subsequently brought to the station and beat up to death. The death of her husband and her rape created a public uproar following which the Andhra Pradesh government appointed a one man judicial commission to look into this matter, which concluded that Rameeza was gang raped. The police men involved in this rape appealed to the Supreme Court following which the case was transferred to the District Judge of Raichur, Karnataka, which acquitted them. At this point a women's group Vimochana of Bangalore filed a review petition and compelled the State Government to prefer an appeal, which was ultimately, dismissed. In an excellently analyzed article, Kalpana Kannabiran(1998), argues the way a community's identity is constructed on the body of women. She views that previewing their lack of community and family status legitimizes aggression as women. She names the legal system and state in India as patriarchal, which attempts to displace and even legitimize the violence that was done to Rameeza by communalizing and sexualizing her. To prove her innocence Rameeza had to prove that she was good muslim and not a prostitute who possessed bad character. This reconstruction of her identity which is more in keeping with hegemonic patriarchal and nationalist notion that the women's place is within her family and community. Any woman who refused to be abiding by this norm warrants to punishment such as rape.

BHANWARI BAI'S RAPE:

On 22nd September 1992, 40 year old Bhanwari Bai was gang raped in Bhatari village of Jaipur, as she as a Saathin (who worked for Government run women's Development Programme) tried to stop a child marriage. Though she

was selected and trained by the State machinery to act as an agent of change, the other agents of the same machinery the Deputy superintendent of police, Government Doctor, Member of legislative assembly, and Magistrate colluded to waste forty eight hours to disrupt the legal formalities required for the verification of rape. Taisha Abraham (2000) who studied this rape, quite eloquently brings out the patriarchal nexus of State and Upper Castes. She quotes an incident when Bhanwari Devi went with a block level worker to lodge a FIR in the nearest police station. The Deputy Superintendent of Police there asked the block level officer who accompanied Bhanwari Bai, "Madam, do you know the meaning of Rape?" Implicit in this question is the critique of female bodily experience and the male appropriation along with the definition of it. It points to the ease with which men occupy and speak from the position of women because that space is deliberately kept vacant by male supremacy and thus cannot be naturally claimed by woman. Abraham opines (1998:28-29) that the term Man includes women but the opposite is not true, because the term woman is always gendered.

Bhanwari's medical report said, "There are injuries on Bhanwari Devi's hands and legs caused by blunt and simple instrument ". It seems particularly relevant to mention here that in India, both legally and socially only one form of rape is criminalized, which is the vaginal penetration by the penis. Other forms of penetration injured such as those caused by bottles, sticks and fingers are not legalized as Rape. Its so, Feminists claim, as only this form will make woman pregnant. Thus polluting the line of patriarchal descent. The court dismissed the case against her tormentors as it was totally against Indian culture .The defense counsel had argued that since one of the accused was a Brahmin, he could not have raped a low caste women. The judge agreed and added in the verdict that an "innocent rustic man" brought up in Indian culture couldn't stoop so low as to indulge in civil conduct (Quoted by Abraham). This form of blatant injustice on

her brings a question in mind that is there a code of behavior even in Indian Legal System, which shows how, an upper caste man or a Brahmin thinks and behaves and how a low-caste woman is supposed to behave. Another pertinent question here is that when our constitution had granted equal rights to both men and women, why is that, the sacrificial lambs are women only? In Mathura Rape case the Supreme Court acquitted the two policemen involved, by stating that the girl did not raise an alarm when she was being raped. It's an irony indeed as to what was the criteria for ascertaining the consent of the raped woman? Women can be raped by force, threatening, power of Khaki shirt of Police creates a staggering silence on people against whom they commit violence.

By these three examples, we can conclude that the legal discourse on them continued with identity as a member of particular communities rather than as women on whom violence was perpetuated. Although rape law does not come under purview of personal laws, the ruling in rape cases should alert the feminists to the ways, in which culture and ideology determine the interpretation of law and nature of what is regarded as Justice. Drawing on their patriarchal assumptions of India, judiciary, Lotika Sarkar (1988:72) opines, that the patriarchal values of the judiciary are reflected in the manner in which its members interpret laws relating to violence against women. She quotes the apathetic behavior of both the state and the judiciary by quoting two incidents. In 1989, Justice System of Bihar High Court acquitted 8 policemen and 6 chowkidars in a case of gang rape of village women, adding "It cannot be ruled out that these ladies might speak falsehood to get a sum of 1000/- which was a big sum for them." The Executive nevertheless didn't lag behind. The chief minister of Kerala; E.K Nayanar in 1990 said most callously "what is rape after all? In America there is rape for every minute. It is common as drinking tea (Quoted in Times of India, 26 Feb 1990)". It's really

shocking for us that how can an elected representative speak so callously on one of the most heinous crimes committed on women.

A report published by the Stree Sangarshana in 1980 highlighted the number of rapes in the Santhal Paraganas by the police and the CRPF as retaliation against the tribal movement to reclaim land. These woman were raped for avenging, the humiliation of their community. Sarkar(1988:73) views that women are also objects with a difference – things which can be dishonored by Rape for no fault of theirs.

With the discussion from all the three case studies of these rapes, are on a tribal, another Muslim and third a Dalit, it is evident that the legal system could recognize as a bearer of rights only when are is defined as a chaste and virtuous upper caste-class women. Any other kind of woman ran the risk of being designated as a woman of loose character or prostitute .

Flavia Agnes (1992) a leading activists in the campaign against rape propagates the need for anew definition of rape. She argues that in all criminal offences the punishment for injuries caused by instruments is greater only in the case of rape, injuries caused by penetrative objects are not viewed as an criminal offence, even though the damage done by these objects could be more serious than that of the actual rape. This discussion also leads to the conclusion that the more marginalized women are in terms of ethnicity, class and status the less access, they have to justice and redress of such punishment. In the “Disorder of women”, Carole Pateman (1989:218) points at that the most serious failure of contemporary democratic theory and its language of Freedom, equality and consent of the individual is that women are so easily and inconspicuously excluded from the references of the individual. Thus the question never arises whether the exclusion reflects the social and political realities or not.

The freedom movement had ignored the cases of atrocities and rape of Dalit women who protested against discriminatory agricultural wages. This protest by them invited the wrath of upper caste violence in Kilavenmari in Tamil Nadu where 42 Dalits (mostly women were raped and killed) along with elders and children .Similarly Belchi in Bihar where 11 Dalits were raped and men were killed ,Namki-Nagana again in Bihar where 19 Dalits were killed due to the same type of violence, the brutal rape of these women and murder of their children couldn't figure in the same agenda of Feminist Movement. The ignorance of this movement, to the peculiarity of gender, caste and class oppression left many in this movement, which led to the resentment of Dalit men and women. The fissures of Feminist movement widened with the debate of uniform civil code, after the Shah Bano controversy.

DEBATE ON UNIFORM CIVIL CODE: THE SHAH BANO CASE (UCC)

In April 1985 ,India's highest judicial body, the Supreme Court ,made the momentous judgment that maintenance should be granted to Shah Bano ,a divorced Muslim woman. The case became notorious as it involved a 73 year old Muslim woman who had sued her ex-husband for maintenance under the Criminal procedure code and has been awarded very modest maintenance by the High Court of Madhya Pradesh. Her ex-husband challenged that the verdict in the Supreme Court ,arguing that he had abided by the provisions of Muslim Personal Law in repaying her dowry and in maintaining her for the period of Iddat (approximately three months following the divorce) and hence, he no longer liable to pay her maintenance. The Supreme Court, in upholding the Lower Court verdict , addressed and reflected as the conflict between the Muslim Personal Law and the criminal a code that applies to all religious communities. The Supreme Court ruled that a Muslim woman unable to maintain herself was entitled to take recourse in Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure code, which requires husbands

having sufficient means of pay maintenance to wives or ex-wives who are unable to support themselves. This judgment based on the understanding that Muslim Personal Law, which limits the husbands liability to provide maintenance to the period of Iddat, does not deal with a situation of destitution, the prime concern of the provisions of the criminal procedure code. This judgment evoked widespread controversy from conservative elements of Muslim community who asserted that the Supreme Court cant intervene in any of the tenets of Muslim Personal Law. As the latter is divine, hence not susceptible to modification by any human agency. Zoya Hassan (1993:4) analyses this conservative sections of Muslims insecurity of being a minority .She says that they stirred emotions thorough an obfuscation of the central issue of women's rights and deflected it into minority rights. This consequent displacement and transfiguration relocated women exclusively within the community. Thus the issue of the women rights was turned into a major confrontation between the majority and minority communities. Rajiv Gandhi's Government bowed down before the Retrograde Muslim Women's (protection of rights to Divorce) Bill, and it was passed by Parliament in 1988. This Bill relegated Muslim women to the status of second class citizens by denying them the option of redress under Section 125 of the criminal procedure code, and incorporated the arguments of the All India Personal Law Board that a woman's natal family rather than her husband should maintain her after divorce since she would have ceased to be her wife. A remarkable feature associated with this controversy was that for the first time since Independence Muslim women quit vehemently came into streets to protest against this Bill. Even Feminist groups like All India Democratic Women's Association, the National Federation of Indian Women and Mahila Dakshata Samiti led the protests against this grave injustice.Zoya Hassan opines(1993: 12) that ideology organization and mobilization by the religious leadership had to turn to state support for community action. She further continues that by focusing on Shah Bano's identity as a

Muslim, all but Women's organization and Shah Bano her self neglected her rights as a woman. Thus the Muslim Personal Law became a symbol that used by Muslim political elites to bargain with the state, in the some way that Hindu political elites bargained with the state in the some way that Hindu political elites bargained with it regarding some of their religion interests. The cow was used to symbolize Hindu identity in a manner similar to the use of the Shariat by the Muslims. This leads us to the conclusion that secularism in Hindu is quite on ambiguous concept for it creates in equal citizens and follows the colonial legacy of separate religions laws for each community. Moreover in India, the transition from feudalism to modernity necessitated a restructuring of the institutions into a dissoluble contract, but the institutions did not lose their spiritual binding thus ultimately relegating women's interests to men interests and Dalit/Minority interests to upper caste Hindu interests. In this con text Kumkum Sangari (1995:3304) opines, that there are two domains in our society, one where laws and functioning of the state present and second is the realm of non-state customary arbitration. Both have helped to sustain regional and religious diversity but they are entwined with class, caste and gender inequality one the one hand they had helped to maintain social plurality on the other hand they have given similar assistance to diverse patriarchies. To fight unitedly against these patriarchies, feminists should not ignore to resist the patriarchies enforced in non-state jural sites as much as the state or law patriarchies. Given this equivocative character of legal pluralism whether statutory or extra-statutory, a feminist legal project would need to keep in mind the difficulties of squaring legal reform with the ground realities of extra-judicial legal pluralism given the small number of women who take recourse to the legal systems compared to those governed by the extra judicial domain.

FEMINIST GROUPS AND THE UNIFORM CIVIL CODE DEBATE

Rather than concern for genuine women rights, more of emotional reasons rather than of rationality dominated the whole debate on UCC by both rightists and leftists among feminists. A Madhu Kishwar (1994) points out, the demand for the UCC was not a pro woman, but an anti-Muslim one. This can be destroyed by looking at the various debates carried on by Feminists groups on this issue.

The All India Democratic Women's Associations (AIDWA) though initially supported the UCC retracted on the position after the famous 1995 Sarla Mudgal case (where her husband converted into a Muslim to avail polygamy), stating their opposition to UCC. The Delhi based Working Group of Women's Rights (WGWR), though initially had urged for a new set of national, secular and civil laws, had at the same time argued for an Reverse optionality, which would allow women to switch from secular law to personal law if they felt it more advantageous to do so. Majlis, a legal aid network for women, opposed the UCC, while Vimochana /Bangalore, Sanchetana (Ahmedabad), Asmita (Hyd) and Anveshi (Hyd) expressed concern over the haste with which some of the Feminist groups have chosen this moment to press for UCC whereas there are many lacunae in the existing marriage, divorce and inheritance acts. We had discussed in the third chapter how, Ambedkar criticized the double standards of the Hindu Nationalist in the Hindu code Bill debate, who were quite vehemently blocking the Hindu code Bill on one side but wanted a uniform civil code on other side their Anti-Muslim rhetoric's were clearly evident, while they could not find flaws in the Hindu social order.

A careful analysis of various legislations pertaining to curb discriminatory practices against women, reveal that these legislations are piece-meal, vague and in fact more anti-women than the discrimination itself. Some examples of these legislations are discussed as follows.

DOWRY AMENDMENT ACT 1986

In the Dowry Prohibition Amendment Act 1984, again re-amended in 1986, it was presumed that stringent punishment and women's control over Dowry items would be sufficient deterrent for dowry takers and eventually will solve the Dowry menace. However the act failed to view Dowry as a reflection of unequal status of men and women in the family. The result was that the approach to the Dowry issue remained piece-meal and of finding solutions only in terms of Dowry. The complex link of providing dowry and the event of marriage remained unresolved. The phrase in connection with marriage also remained open to misinterpretation, as it didn't cover the various gifts demanded on festivals, childbirths and as many occasions based on custom. Ved Kumari (1988) points at such lapse on part of its act in the Famous case of Shashi Bala, where the judge acquitted husband by viewing that the demand for scooter as the occasion of child birth did not constitute a demand for Dowry.

Domestic violence

Though a law was brought to deal with Domestic violence i.e. cruelty and harassment of wife's (with a special reference to section 498 and 304 of Indian Penal Code) which recognizes the situation of violence inflicted on woman within home, it couldn't cover the violence inflicted on women with reasons other than Dowry. Somewhere this act strengthens the strange logic that all violence perpetuated on women limited to first seven years of marriage.

Rape Law

The amended law on Rape shifted the onus of proving consent on to the accused only in the case of custodial rapes. This implies that in all other cases of rapes, the victims have to prove their non-consent. This is perhaps the only law,

where the victim of violence has to prove her non-consent of the violence committed to her.

Thus the Feminist movement of India couldn't address these multifaceted problems of the discriminatory and anti-women laws and the attitude of partisan role played by the state in this process. Its main activities were essentially reformist. It couldn't look at the deep structures of nexus of patriarchy with social structure, which justified the subjugation of women in every realm, be it social, economic or political. When this movement couldn't take a unified stand against women as such. The question of it representing the interests of Dalit or minority women is highly debatable.

HINDU FEMINISTS GROUP

The emergence of feminist groups within the Hindu Right is a recent phenomenon which is mainly attributed to post Ram Janam Bhumi stage, though the women's wing of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak(RSS), was established way back in 1936 ,as Rashtriya Sevika by the effort of Lakshmi Bai Kelkar. Durga Vahini is the women wing of Vishwa Hindu Parishad ,which is segregated from its men wing-the Bajrang Dal .These Feminist Groups show an interesting relationship with violence ,religion ,politics and contemporary urban middle class culture .For Golwarkar ,a supreme ideologue of RSS,women were predominantly mothers who could help the Sangh, by rearing their children within the RSS framework of Samskaras –a combination of family, rituals and unquestioning deference towards family elders and RSS leaders. The post Babri Masjid Demolition saw these groups of propagating hate for other communities, especially the Muslims along with the bifurcation of identities with caste and class. The Late Vijayraje Scindia, Sadhvi Ritambara and Uma Bharati are their icons. While the former appeals to

the declining feudal classes, the latter two appeal to the upwardly mobile classes. In this context, Amrita Basu (1993:19) makes an interesting observation that although struggle to assert community identities and interests have called upon women as symbols and participants, they have not contributed to women emancipation. Certainly, one can not empower their group by victimizing other groups. Its pertinent here, to mention the view of Claudia Koonz's (1993:52), who worked on the Sevikas of RSS concludes that the sense of rootlessness combined with an obsessive search for roots is particularly acute among many of them. These women have been extremely active not only in rallies and campaigns but even in actual episodes of violent attacks against muslims, gangrapes and tearing open pregnant wombs in Bhopal and Surat communal riots in December 1992 and January 1993. More recently their participation in Gujarat carnage, indeed sends distressing signals to the already fragmented Indian Feminist movement. Instead of focusing on hate campaign of other groups it will be more pertinent for them to work to rectify the evil practices of the Hindu social order.

SECTION II

THE EMERGENCE OF DALIT FEMINISM

The lacunae left by both the Feminist Movement and Dalit movement in ignoring the histories, lives and struggles of Dalit women, culminated with the emergence of Dalit Feminism in Nineteen Nineties. Dalit Feminism is an offspring of both the Feminist and Dalit Movements, yet having an autonomy and agency of its own.

BLACK AND DALIT FEMINISM: SISTERLY CONCERNS

Dalit Feminism draws heavily from Black Feminism. The sexual exploitation, landlessness, vulnerability to violence are nearly same for both Black

and Dalit women, except that Dalit women are being socially more segregated from the “Hearths” race as basis of exploitation of Black women is being replaced by caste of Dalit women. The cult of womanhood that rests on four cardinal virtues –piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity can’t be applied to both Dalit and Black women.

The term Black Feminism is used in a range of different ways. In America it is frequently referred to Black women. In Britain it has been used as an explicit political category to forge alliances between all women who were subject to Racism. This term has at times included women of Africa, Caribbean and South Asian descent. Most frequently it is used to refer to work and politics of women of African descent, portraying the image of these women as stereotypical mummies, matriarchs, welfare recipients and sexually volatile has been essential to the political economy of domination fostering Black Women’s oppression. Black Feminist thought challenges these notions of Race, class and Gender oppression.

The marginalisation and invisibility from mainstream society is same for Dalit and Black women. The boundary line of transgression is clearly made evident to them. Leela Gulathi (1985:A-27), who worked on the profiles of female poverty, inquires into an individual profile of a female Dalit laborer Kalyani, observes that though, Kalyani does the transplantation of paddy, she is not allowed to threshing or winnowing job, as these tasks are said to be polluting.

The contexts of oppression of Dalit and Black women make a feeling of solidarity between them. The powerful Black Feminist literature has strongly influenced Dalit Feminists as literature on them in the emerging stage, as they set out to write their histories and pain with their own agency.

CONTEXTUALISING DALIT WOMEN

Every eight women of India are a Dalit. According to 1991 census, the percentage of Dalit women to total population is 16.43%, whereas for men it is 16.53%. Out of this population 81.46% , nearly 54 million of Dalit women reside in rural areas whereas 18.54% of them in urban areas.

The segregation of general and Dalit population urban and rural in percentage, can be seen in the following Table-1

RURAL/URBAN	GENERAL			DALITS		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
URBAN	44.69	57.87	30.62	32.28	54.95	19.46
RURAL	73.08	81.09	64.05	55.00	66.60	42.29
TOTAL	52.21	64.31	39.29	37.41	64.91	23.73

Source-National Commission for Women, 1998

The table shows that Dalit women lag behind their male population, even in the context of discrimination social, educational, economical or political, they face the triple discrimination of caste, class and gender.

As far as the Educational realm is concerned, the problem of illiteracy of Dalit women is more acute in rural areas. Here again there are wide disparities region wise. For example in Kerala, they have a literacy rate of 74% whereas in Bihar it is as low as 7% .The 2001 census showed that in 48 districts of India, the literacy of them is lower than 1%, with Rajasthan's Badma district attaining the dubious distinction of having a mere 0.48% literacy .Every school enrolled child from the Dalits, who are against mostly girls drop out before completing primary education

till fifth standard and is forced to sell his/her labour. Ghanshyam Shah (2002:19) draws out the main reasons of these dropout tendency of Dalits, being attributed to poverty, inadequate schooling facility and Social discrimination. Though the state provides scholarships, hostel facilities and other incentives their quantum is small covering a small fraction of Dalits, along with the siphoning of the funds by indifferent Government machinery.

Nearly 86% of Dalits live in rural India, who is predominantly landless and agricultural labourers. Among those who own land, nearly 86% are small and marginal farmers. Among bonded laborers, estimated to be about 20 lakhs, Dalit labors constitute a sizable number if not a majority. Mostly, they are bonded against the debt that they either incurred for marriage purposes or for day-to-day expenses. Though bonded laborers has been legally abolished under the Bonded Labour System Act, 1976, in practice it still prevails. Lack of infrastructural or institutionalized support is making them as parasites of this exploitative practice specially in rural areas.

Given the structural composition, Dalits in general and dalit Women in particular face acute violence. The violence against Dalit women in the form of rape, sexual harassment and the threat of public violence, illiteracy, poverty, landlessness, wage differentials and the practice of untouchability. The poverty stricken Dalits are forced to sell their labour to earn livelihood on day to day basis. The unavailability of job in rural areas forces them to migrate to different places, which has negative effect on the unit of family a leads to division within the family. The brunt of the division of family is again borne by the Dalit women as she is forced to take care of a children on her on Leela Gulathi(1977), who studied women labourers in Trivandrum observes that in case of the Dalit women, although their work and life-style is less dominated by the ideology of patriarchy, their investments in education and occupational mobility remain relegated to a

back space. Are some of the peculiar problems faced by Dalit women. Rajula devi (2000:474) who studied female landless agricultural labour households in wet and dry villages of Tamil Nadu, concludes in her study that caste appears to be a major influence on landless women participation in Rice Agriculture. Among her respondents 70% were Dalits in dry villages and 80% of them in wet villages. She finds that it's the Dalit females who are predominantly destitutes while their men fell into the income category of very poor.

The Following table illustrates the correlation between Gender and Poverty, of her respondents from four villages (2 wet and 2 dry in Kottur and Kamudi blocks)

Table-2 Gender and Annual Income of Landless Labour women and Husbands in Landless Households(%)

Income (Rs)	Female	Male	Total
<2265 destitute	71 18.7	19 5.0	90 23.7
2,266- 3500 (very very poor)	108 28.4	147 38.7	255 67.1
3501-4800 (very poor)	19 5.0	14 3.7	33 8.7
4,801-6400	2 0.5	0 0.0	2 0.5
Total	200 52.6	180 47.4	380 100.0
Chi-square Pearson	Value	Significance	
	37.23558	0:0000	

Source – Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 35, No. 6, Feb 5, 2000.

According to her, there is a legal sex based wage differential in Tamil Nadu. This observation of her reminds of Elson and Pearsons(1981:93) observation that women enter the labour market as inferior bearers of labour, rather than bearers of inferior Labour. In this regard, Kalpana Bardhan(1985:2207)too opines that women are paid the worst wages because they are the most disadvantaged to access of education and other resources on one hand and the culture of hierarchy supporting the system of differential advantage on other hand.However poverty and gender discrimination didn't deter the saving spirit of Rajuladevi's(2000) respondents. She found that while these women lined at the edge of poverty, saved part of their meagre income without the knowledge of their husbands. This optimism of them for a brighter tomorrow, shadows the pains of their present.

Sexuality, Caste and Gender

One of the most common allegation mounted on both Dalit and Black women is that they are sexually volatile. Gender was and is crucial in maintaining Caste and Race inequalities. Rege (1998:19) opines, the violent practices against women reveal definite variations by caste. While upper castes are subjected to controls and violence within the family, it is the absence of such controls that make lower caste women vulnerable to rape, sexual harassment and the threat of public violence. This sexuality is directly attached through rape and sexual harassment on one side, on the other by the public display of their bodies like Lavanis of Maharashtra, which is kind of rural erotic song or Folk genre. Yet another form of this sexual appropriation of Dalit women is by providing religious justification of subtle prostitution in the form of Basavis (Karnataka), Joginis (Telangana area of Andhra), Matangis (Rayalseema area of Andhra) or Devadasis South East and South Western, along with whole South, part of India. While Devadasi Women were mostly form the upper caste of shudras, others were predominantly Dalits.

Religious Prostitution

While the Devadasi system was more predominantly in Urban and Temple cities with castes like sengundars and Isaivellalars and dedicated to the Temple God for their whole life time, the Basavis, Joginis and Mathangis were dedicated to the village deity, who essentially belonged to lower castes. The segregation between these upper caste and lower caste religious prostitutes was that while the Devadasis sexuality belonged to only select high caste landlords and Temple priests, their low caste contemporaries Sexuality was invariably available to every man of the village. Another notable distinction between them was that while Devadasis danced only in temples and participated in various religious ceremonies concerned with festivals and festivities, the latter Dalit contemporaries were indispensable to funeral processions who were supposed to drink toddy and dance before the body while the Devadasis enjoyed rich patronage and income from the temple lands, they had to suffer a life of poverty, disease and helplessness.

A System called "Dola" is still prevalent where a newly wed Dalit man had to send his bride to his landlord on the first night of their marriage. After that only can he consummate his marriage.

A case of Patriarchal Upper Caste Gaze –Lavanis of Maharashtra:

Lavani is popularly understood to be a kind of rural erotic song in the Shahirs or Folk genre of Maharashtra which had its origin in Later Peshwa period (1796-1818). It was an act performed by Kolhatis, an lower caste women. Sharmila Rege(1993: 23-36), in an excellent study on them shows how lavanis become one of the modes of Construction the bodies of lower caste women as constantly arousing or satiating male desire, which was locked in the dichotomy of a Batech (whore) verses the soubhagvati (wife), while the Lavanis overtly expressed the insatiable desires of women in voice of the lower caste where, the wife expressed the 'virah' (pain or separation). Rege concludes that women's

sexual insatiably was seen as the root of all problems and the lower caste failure to control their women's sexuality was deemed to be partly the cause of their impurity. Thus in such a context, Gender division reinforced caste divisions and **this ideology** legitimated both the structures of patriarchy and the organization of caste. By appropriating the sexual and erotic labour of these lower castes and constructing these women as Kaburkarun's or pigeons (the name given to Kolhati women in Maharashtra), these women are located in the space of the erotic and are denied material and familial spaces. *

If we pertrude into deeper questions of why Dalit women are being relegated to their kind of discriminatory practices, it leads us to understand the interlocking oppression of Gender, caste and class. Right from constructing an image of feminine mother in the concept of Nation hood, women in India are being visualized as upper caste and middle class. The Orientalists Social reformers, Nationalists, State and Feminists addressed the issues related with this image but not with any Dalit or minority women. It's a very popular notion that women are the Gateways of Caste System and are, the crucial pivots on whose purity, sanctity axis, the caste hierarchy is constructed. Kalpana Bardhan a specialist in the research area of Women in agricultural views that as the prosperity of peasants improves the first thing which they do is to withdraw their women from agricultural work and relegate them to the private domain of Home. Right from the Namantar campaign, rapes of Dalit women and killing of their men in Tsundur, Chilakurti and Gokarajupalli including state repressive violence, show that the only way to punish men of a community is to outrage the modesty of their women. Propelling an interesting debate of these dimensions of power on Caste Kalpana and Vasantha kannabiran (1991:2130), draw out some interesting conclusions that this type of increasing violence is shows the frustration of upper castes who felt that their maintenance of order is being weakened by the

increasing awareness and attainment of higher education of Dalits. Dalits now can question their subjugation and are in no way dependent upon the upper castes for their survival. In Tsundur where 21 Dalits were massacred in 1991, they were punished because they had transgressed their territory by questioning the upper caste man along with gazing their women. This brings the need of our attention to a crucial characteristic of caste- the mediation of inter caste relations through a redefinition of ordered spaces which underlines the impossibility of a practical understanding of caste that is ungendered.

Another important feature to be noticed is that in all these massacres carried on both Dalit men and women. Upper Caste women equally supported the actions their men. An example can be illustrated by the fact that after the Tsundur massacre 300 women of upper castes marched in a procession in the streets of Tenali declaring that their modesty had been outraged by Dalit men which served to justify the prior massacre of Dalits. This action, is symbolic according to Vasantha and Kalpana(1991:2130) because streets are typical gendered spaces. Only men, hawkers, prostitutes and low caste women who work can be seen in streets. Respectable women can never be seen in streets. A lower caste woman has to work otherwise she is bound to die. This phenomenon of coming out into streets makes the life of a Dalit woman as vulnerable. These values and ideology which is derived from the caste situation, are deeply internalized by both upper caste men and women. Be it Tsundur, Marathwada or Shankarbiga, the Dalits were massacred because they refused to accept the cultural and material appropriation given to them by the upper caste people. Karin Kapadia (1998) in 'Shiva and her Sisters', shows how the Dalits rejected the Hegemony of Upper Castes and how these oppressed groups create for themselves a normative world in which they have dignity, self respect and power. Similarly Viramma in Racine and Racine (2000), explains how she struggles to attain

dignity for herself. Even then exploitation of Dalit women continues. For example, In rural Bihar, a system called "Dola" is still prevalent where a newly wed Dalit man has to send his bride ^{to the landlord} on the first night of their marriage. After that only he can consummate his marriage.

Dalit Feminist Consciousness

Against this institutional exploitation and violence Dalit Feminism has emerged. As Rege (1998:52) points out that a Dalit Feminist stand point emerged from the practices and struggles of Dalit women in this unequal social order. In India, the first attempts of Dalit feminists ever heard was in Bihar where a socialist youth group, Chatta Yuva Sangarsh Vahini, distributed land to landless Dalit. The Dalit women stringly protested that since their man will become more arrogant and beat them more, land should not be given on their name. This kind of protest by these women Omvedt (1997:42) leads us to the realization, that for the first time the common practices of giving land to the heads of landless families means in the absence of gender consciousness giving land to the heads of landless families i.e to men. The activists of the Sangharsh Vahani then decided to distribute the first thousand acres in the name of landless women. Shetkari Mahila Aghadi, the women's wing of a powerful farmers organization in Maharashtra similarly to cup took up the land rights issue by passing a resolution on property rights in its very founding convention. This Aghadi also provided all women members to panchayats, predominately who were Dalits to empower them at grass root level.

Dalit Feminists Activism

The Nineties saw an upsurge in Dalit Women Activism, which tried to address the pains and exploitation of Dalit women. Not only has there been a significant increase in published works addressing the plight of Dalit women, but also there has been a plethora of conferences and seminars organized specifically

for Dalit women. This emerging consciousness of Dalit women rejected the idea of victimness of Dalit women. In 1994, two comparable seminars were organized by a social activist Usha wagh, first in Delhi and then in Pune, culminating in the establishment of the all India Dalit women's forum(AIDWF) at a national Level and the Dalit Mahila Sangathana (Dait Women's Oraganization) at Maharashtra Level. Since 1994, three organizations representing Dalit Women have been registered at New Delhi All India Dalit women Organization(AIDWO) in 1994, the National Federation of Dalit Women Organization (NFDWO) in 1995 and finally Dalit Solidarity (DSI) around the same time, all these groups had a common goal in demanding Dalit women 's Liberation from the Shackles of caste, class and gender. Though the emergence of Dalit Feminism can be said as the rebellions child of both Feminist and movements,there is a need for being conscious of the dividing tendencies to prevent it from being liquidated or fragmented as those movements.

References

- Abraham, Taisha 2000 *women and the politics of violence.*, New Delhi: Shakti Books
- Abraham, Taisha (ed)1998 *Feminist Theory and Modern Drama*, New Delhi: Pencraft.
- Aggarwal, Bina (ed) 1988 *Structures of patriarchy state ,community and Household in Modernising Asia*, New Delhi: Kali for women .
- Agnes, Flavia 1992 Protecting women against violence, *Economic and political weekly* ,vol 27, No.17,25 April.
- Akerkar, Supriya 1995 Theory and practice of women's movement in India: A Discursive Analysis, *Economic and Political weekly* , Vol.30, No.13, April 29.
- Bacchetta, paola 1993All our Goddesses are Armed: Religion, Resistance, and Revenge in the wife of a militant Hindu Nationalist women ,*Bulletin of Concerned Asian scholars*, vol 25 ,no 4,Oct-Dec.
- Bardhan,Kalpana 1985Womens work, welfare and status :Forces of Tradition and change in India (part 1) *Economic and Political weekly* ,Vol.20,No.50,Dec14.
- Basel, Amrita 1993Feminism Inverted: The real women and gendered Imagery of Hindu nationalism, *Bulletin of concerned Asian scholars*, vol 25, no 4,Oct-Dec.
- Chakravarthy, Uma 1989Whatever happened to the Vedic Dasi? Orientalism, Nationalism and a Script for the Past in kumkum sangariand Suresh vaid (ed) *Recasting women –essays in colonial History*, New Delhi, kali for women.
- Elson and pearson 1981Nimble fingers make cheap workers :An analysis of women's employment in third world Export manufacturing *Feminist Review*,spring.

- Gandhi, Nandita and shah, Nandita 1991 *The Issues at Stake: Theory and Practice in the contemporary women's movement in India*, New delhi, kali for women .
- Gupta, Krishna 2000 *Law and Public Opinion*, Jaipur, Rawat: publications.
- Hassan, zoya 1993 Communalism, state policy and the Question of women's rights in contemporary India *Bulletin of concerned Asian scholars* vol 25, no 4, Oct-Dec
- Kannabiran, Kalpana and vasantha k 1991 Caste and Gender: Understanding Dynamics of power and violence, *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol.26, No.37, September 14.
- Kannabiran, Kalpana, 1998, Rape and the Construction of Communal Identity, Research Papers, *Centre for Women Development Studies*, New Delhi.
- Kapadia, Karin 1998 *Shiva and her Sisters- Caste, Class and Gender in Rural South India*, Boulder: west view.
- Kishwar, Madhu 1994 Codified Hindu Law: Myth and reality, *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol.24 No. 33, August 13.
- Koonz, Claudia 1987 *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the family and Nazi Politics*, New York, St.Martin press.
- Lotika sarkar 1994 Rape: A human rights versus a patriarchal Interpretation, *Indian journal of Gender studies*, No1, January-June.
- Omvedt, Gail 1997 Rural women and the family in an era of liberalization: India in comparative Asian perspective, *Bulletin of concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol,129, no.41, Oct-Dec 1997.
- Pateman, Carole 1989 *The Disorder of women- Democracy, Feminism and political theory*, Cambridge: University press.
- Racine , Josiane and 2000 Jean luc Racine(ed) *Viramma life of a Dalit*,

(Translated by will Hobson) New Delhi: Kali for women.

Rajuladevi 2000 Profiles in poverty- female landless Agricultural Labourer households ,*Economic and Political weekly* , vol.25, No.6, Feb 5.

Rege, sharmila 1995 The Hegemonic appropriation of sexuality: The Case of the Erotic Lavani of Maharashtra, *Contribution to Indian sociology*, vol 29, no 1-2.

_____ 1998 A Dalit Feminist stand point, Seminar 471, November

Sangari, Kumkum 1995 Politics of Diversity :Religious communities and multiple patriarchies , *Economic and political weekly* ,Vol. 30, No.51, 23 Dec.

Shah, Ghanshyam (ed) 2002 *Dalits and the State*, Center for Rural studies
Mussorie, Lal Bahadur shastri National Academy for Administration

Conclusion

↓ An analysis of Feminist Practices in India shows that Indian Feminist movement along with its wide criticism of western Feminism is being distinct in its approach, organization and struggle with its western counterparts.

The construction and reconstruction of women to suit men's compatibility was crucial in all discussions being worked on them. The Orientalists, Colonialists, Social reformers, Nationalists leaders in pre independence period, followed by legal system in post independence period created a image of women who were docile, self sacrificing loving mothers and dutiful daughters. The contemporary literature and mass media played their role of endorsing this image of Indian women. The roots of Feminism in India can be traced back to the initiation of women participation in the freedom struggle. The Indian social structure regularly intervened to show its supremacy over women rights. Though the seventy third and seventy fourth amendments provided one third reservation to women representation in local governance majority of these representatives can not talk decisions by their own. It's again their male kith and kin who are playing a proxy role in place of these women. Another interesting phenomenon to be noted here is that the 73rd and 74th Amendments Acts had a clear consensus across political parties, when it came to the 81st Amendment Act which was to provide the same amount of reservation for state and Union legislatures there was and is a hue and cry thus sealing its fate in the din of parliament.

The literacy rate of women in India is consistently increasing but then the rate of atrocities against them is also increasing with an accelerated pace. There is also an argument among the academicians that education is an important agent of social change. In Indian situation though education increased the standard of living it could not pertrude into the rigid social structure. Its ironical that in

southern states, where the human development index has a good showing, female infanticide and dowry deaths are a regular phenomenon. Violence against women is again mainly committed by the kith and kin of hers which is indeed shocking be it bride burning, female infanticide, rape or domestic violence. Hence, Feminists movements in India should address all these complexities involved with the lives of women.

The main drawback of Indian feminist movement is that it is a fractured movement with no wide base of organization secondly, it is mainly led by elite and middle class women. Thirdly there is a wide gap between the rural and urban feminist groups both of them could not address each others issues thus increasing the chances of patriarchal forces to raise their ugly heads. The rise of ethnic conflict and communal violence in the present period made the position of women even more vulnerable. She became a ground of contest for Indian males to prove their masculinity. The recent communal violence which is taking place in Gujarat again proved that women were brutally raped and molested before being killed or burned alive. Another distributing factor noticed in Gujarat's violence is that it shattered the image of women as being docile or non-violent in nature, with media reporting that many women took part in this mayhem. Unless and until women understand the ugly nexus of patriarchy with all the Institutions of our society, Feminism can't succeed in India.

Religion, Caste, Class and Gender have merged together in such a way that it is impossible to delink one from the other and also to see them as water tight compartments. In other words, for Dalit leaders, the Dalit war is the primary struggle for upper caste and middle class feminists, gender struggle is the primary one and that to women as a homogenised category. If this is the case, how is it that the lower class Dalit woman is going to fight against her suppression? Does it imply that she has to fight against the class oppression and then the caste oppression and then the gender oppression? It is pertinent here to mention the

agony of a Black feminist who faces the combined permutations of race, class and gender '...to be in the margin is to be a part of the whole but outside the main body. As Black Americans living in a small Kentucky town, the rail road tracks were a daily reminder of our marginality. Across those tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, janitors, as prostitutes as long as it was in the service capacity. We could enter that world but we could not live there, we had always to return to the margin, to cross the tracks, to shacks and abandoned houses on the edge of the town....' (quoted in Bell Hooks, *Feminist theory: From margin to centre*, p. ix).

The sexualisation of the bodies of Black and dalit women as ideological and hegemonical basis which justifies the commodification and reification of them. Further in India the exclusion of the agencies of marginalized categories of women- dalits, Adivasis and minorities has arised the need for them to talk about their trials and tribulations. The emergence of Dalit feminism is a example of the way Dalit women felt to contest this centuries of history of subjugation and exploitation. Unless and until women come out from the shackles of patriarchy in every domain, feminist movement in India will not succeed because change imposed from above has dangerous implications. Hence, change should come from below i.e., women themselves should understand that there is an urgent need to question the injustices perpetuated on them in every arena. Empowerment of women can be achieved only when women can take cognizance of their agencies, take decisions on her own and refuse to be subjugated by the institutions of the Indian society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

- Abraham, Taisha (ed.) 1998. *Feminist Theory and Modern Drama*, New Delhi: Pencraft.
- (ed) 2000. *Women and the politics of violence*, New Delhi: Shakti Books
- Agarwal, Bina and Narain, 1991. *Global Warming in an Unequal World: A case of Environmental Colonialism*, New Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment.
- Aggarwal, Bina (ed) 1988. *Structures of patriarchy state ,community and Household in Modernising Asia*, New Delhi:Kali for women .
- Agnew, Vijay, 1979. *Elite Women in Indian Politics*, New Delhi: Vikas Publications.
- Aloyosius, G., 1997. *Nationalism without a Nation in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ambedkar, Bhim Rao, 1987.*The rise and fall of Hindu women*, New Delhi: Blue Moon Books.
- Anthias and Davis, 1992.(ed). *Defining Women: Social Institutions and Gender Divisions*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Arya, Sadhana, 2000. *Women, Gender Equality and the State*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications.
- Balan, Sridhar, 1976. *Dalit Panther Movement in Maharashtra: Problems and Prospects*, M.Phil. Dissertation submitted to Centre for Study of Social Systems, JNU, New Delhi.
- Barrett, Michelle, 1980. *Womens Oppression today*, London: Verso.

- Becker, Carrole, 1942. *The Declaration of Independence: A Study of the History of Political Ideas*, New York: Random
- Bloomington and Harding, Sandra, 1987. (ed). *Feminism and Methodology*, Indiana: Univesity. Press.
- Bowles, G. and Klein, R.D. 1987. (ed) *Theories of Women Studies* Vol. II, Berkeley: University of California.
- Chakravarthy, 1998. *Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai*, New Delhi: Kali for women.
- Chatterjee, Partha, 1994. *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and post colonial histories*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Collins, Patricia Hill, 1978 *Black feminist thought*, Cambridge :Polity Press.
- Das, Durga, 1950. *Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel's correspondence*, Vol.6, New Delhi.
- De Beauvoir, Simone, 1952. *The Second Sex* (Translated by Parshley. H.M). New York: Bantan.
- Dietrich, G., 1990. *The Relationship Between Dalit Movements and Women's Movements – Cases and Conceptual Analysis*. Paper Submitted for the IAWS, Calcutta.
- Durkheim, Emile, 1966. *The Rules of Sociological Method*, New York: Free Press.
- Edwards, Paul (ed.), 1967. *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol 3&4. London: Collier and MacMillan.
- Eisenstein, Z. (ed). *Capitalism, Patriarchy and the case for Socialist Feminism*, New York, Monthly Review Press.
- Engels, Federick. 1884. *Der Ursprung der Familieie, des privateigentum and des Staat*. Zurich: Hattingen. (Eng edn: *The origin of the*

- Family, private property and the state*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986.).
- Firestone, Shulamith, 1974. *The Dialectic of Sex: the case for Feminist Revolution*, New York: Morrow.
- Forbes, Geraldine, 1996. *The New Cambridge History of India – Women in Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, Michael, 1978. *The History of Sexuality*, trans. R. Hurley, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Franco, Fernando, Macwan and Ramanathan (ed) 2000. *The silken swing – The cultural universe of Dalit women*, Calcutta: Stree.
- Gandhi, Nandita Shah and Nandita, 1991. *The Issues at Stake: Theory and Practice in the contemporary women's movement in India*, New Delhi: Kali for women .
- Giddens, Anthony, 1993. *Sociology* (2nd Ed.), Oxford: Polity Press.
- Gunew, Sneja (ed) 1991. *A Reader in feminist knowledge*, London: Routledge.
- Gupta, Krishna, 2000. *Law and Public Opinion*, Jaipur, Rawat: publications.
- Harding, Sandra, 1987. *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Hilton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Hegel, 1967. *Philosophy of Right*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Hekman, S.J. 1990. *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a postmodern Feminism*, Oxford: Polity Press.
- House Bock, G and Susan, James, 1988. (ed.) *Beyond Equality and Difference Citizenship: Feminist Politics and Female subjectivity*, New York: Routledge.
- Illiaiah, Kancha, 1995. *Why I am not a Hindu?*, Calcutta: Samya.

- Jahan, Roshan, 1981. *Inside Seclusion: The Avarodhbasini of Rokeya Sakhwat Hossain*, Dhaka: Women for Women.
- Jan Mercer, 1975. (ed). *The Other half*, Harmandsworth: Pelicon.
- Jogdand, P.G, 1998. *Dalit women : Issues and perspectives*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishers.
- John S, Hawley, 1994 (ed) *Sati, the blessing and the curse*, New York, Oxford University Press.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark, 1982. *Religion as Social Vision: The Movement Against Untouchability in Twentieth Century Punjab*, Berkely: University of California.
- Kadam, K.N. (ed.), 1993. *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: The Emancipator of the Oppressed*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Kakkar, Sudhir, 1989. *Intimate Relations: Exploring Indian Sexuality*, New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Kapadia, Karin, 1995. *Shiva and her sisters: Gender, Caste and Class in rural south India*, New Delhi: West view Press
- Keer, Dhananjay, 1964. *Mahatma Jyotirao Phooley*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Kelly, John, 1984. *Women, History and Theory*, Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Koonz, Claudia, 1987. *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the family and Nazi Politics*, New York, St.Martin Press.
- Krishnaraj, Maithreyi, 1990. (ed). *Feminism: Indian debates* Bombay: Research Centre for Women Studies.
- Kuber, 1991. *Ambedkar – A Critical Study*, New Delhi: People Publishing House.

- Kumar, Radha, 1993. *The history of doing: An illustrated account of movement for women's rights and Feminism in India 1800-1990*, New Delhi : Kali for Women.
- Kumar, Vivek, 1994. *Nature and Crisis of Dalit Leadership in India: A Macro Sociological Analysis*, M.Phil. Dissertation Submitted to the Centre for Study of Social Systems, JNU, New Delhi.
- Laclau and Mouffe, 1985 *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso.
- Lerner, Gerda, 1986. *The Creation of Patriarchy*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Liddle, Jonathan and Rama Joshi, 1986. *Daughters of Independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India*, New Delhi: Kali for women.
- Lynch, O. M., 1974. *The politics of untouchability : social mobility and social change in a city of India.*, New Delhi: National Publishing House.
- Marianne, M and Parpart J.L, 1995.(ed) *Feminism Postmodernism and Development*, Oxford : Polity Press.
- Mill, James, 1816. *The History of India*, London
- Mitchell, Juliet. 1984. *The Rights and wrongs of women*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Moghadam, Valentine,1994. *Identity politics and women- cultural reassertion and feminisms in International perspective*, Boulder: West view
- Moon, Vasant, 1987.(compiled) *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writing and speeches*, Vol.3&4, Educational Dept.,Govt. of Maharashtra, .
- 2001. *Growing Up Untouchable in India – A Dalit Autobiography*, (Translated from Marathi by Gail Omvedt), New York: Rowman and Little Field Publications.

- Morgan, K. (ed.) 1974. *Sisterhood is Powerful – An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement*, New York: Random.
- Nandy, Ashish, 1983. *The intimate enemy - loss and recovery of self under colonialism*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- Oakley, Ann, 1972. *Sex, Gender and society*, London: Smith .
- Omvedt , Gail, 1993. *Reinventing Revolution: New Social movements and the socialist tradition in India*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Omvedt, Gail, 1994. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution – Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Oommen, T.K., 1990. *Protest and Change – Studies in Social Movements in India*, New Delhi: Sage.
- Parekh, Bikhu, 1989. *Colonialism, Tradition and reform: An analysis of Gandhian political Discourse*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Pateman, Carole, 1989. *The Disorder of women- Democracy, Feminism and political theory*, Cambridge: University press.
- Racine Josiane and Jean-Luc Racine, 2000. *Viramma – Life of a Dalit* (Translated by Will Hobson), New Delhi: Social Science Press.
- Ramabai, Pandita, 1888. *The Hindu High Caste Women*, Bombay: Maharashtra State Board for Literature and Culture.
- Said, Edward, 1979. *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Salve, Dinkar, 1997. *Chakaravyuhat Dalit Chalval (Dalit Movements in a Maze)*, Pune: Kranti Singh Nana Patil Academy.
- Sangari, Kumkum and Suresh Vaid 1989(ed). *Recasting women- Essays in colonial History*, New Delhi: Kali for women.
- Sarkar, Sumit ,1983. *Modern India (1885-1947)*,New Delhi: Macmillan.

- Sarkar, Tanika, 2000. *Hindu wife, Hindu Nation- community, religion and cultural Nationalism*, New Delhi: Orient Longman
- Schneir, Miriam, 1972 (ed). *Feminism: The Essential Historical writings* New York, Vintage.
- Scott, J. W, 1988. *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York: Columbia University Press
- Scott, James, 1995, *Sociological Theory: Contemporary debates*, Aldershot: Edward Hgai.
- Scott, Joan 1988, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sen, Jllina, 1992. *Spaces Within the Struggle*, New Delhi: Kali for Women.
- Shah, Ghanshyam, 2001. (ed.) *Dalit Identity and Politics: Cultural Subordination and the Dalit Challenge, Vol. 2*, New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- (ed) 2002. *Dalits and the State*, Center for Rural studies Mussorie, Lal Bahadur shastri National Academy for Administration
- Sinha, Mrinalini 1995. *Colonial masculinity: The manly Englishman and Effeminate Bengali*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Smart, C., 1995. *Law, Crime and Sexuality*, London: Sage Publications.
- Stree Shakti Sangathana 1989. *We are making history- life stories of women in the Telangana People`s struggle*, New Delhi.
- Tahmarkar, D.V., 1956. *Lokmanya Tilak*, London John Murray.
- Thorner, Alice and Maithreyi, Krisharaj,2000. (ed). *Ideals, Images and Real Lives-women in Literature and History* Mumbai: Orient Longman.

Walby, Sylvia, 1990. *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Basil : Blackwell.

Wilson, E., 1988. *Hidden Agendas; Theory, Politics and Experience in Womens Movement*, London: Tavistock.

Zelliot, 1996. *From Untouchables to Dalits Essays in Ambedkar Movement*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications.

JOURNALS AND ARTICLES

Agarwal, Bina, 1994. Positioning the Western Feminist Agenda: A Comment, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, Vol.1, No. 2. July-December.

Agnes, Flavia, 1992. Protecting women Against Violence- Review of Legislation 1980-89. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 27 No. 17, 25 April.

Agnihotri, Indu and Palriwala, Rajni 'Tradition, Family and the State Politics of the Contemporary Womens Movements', research in progress, papers on History and Society, second series, No.LXXXV, Nehru Memorial Museum and library, New Delhi, 1993.

Akerkar, supriya 1995 Theory and practice of women's movement in India: A discursive analysis. *Economic and political weekly*. Vol.30, No.17.29 April.

Bacchetta, Paola 1993. All our Goddesses are Armed: Religion, Resistance, and Revenge in the wife of a militant Hindu Nationalist women, *Bulletin of Concerned Asian scholars*, Vol. 25, No. 4, Oct-Dec.

Bardhan, Kalpana 1985 Women's work, welfare and status :Forces of Tradition and change in India (part1), *Economic and Political weekly*. Vol.20, No.50, 14Dec.

- Basel, Amrita 1993 Feminism Inverted: The real women and gendered Imagery of Hindu nationalism, *Bulletin of concerned Asian scholars*, Vol 25, No. 4, Oct-Dec.
- Chakravathy, Uma, 1989. The World of the Bhaktin in South Indian Traditions – The Body and Beyond, *Manushi*, No. 50-52.
- Chakravathy, Uma, 1992. Men, Women and Beast: The interface between high tradition and popular tradition in cultural production, *Occasional papers on History and Society*, 2nd Series, No. LXV, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
- 1993. Conceptualising Brahminical patriarchy in early India: Gender, Caste, Class and State, Research in progress, *Occasional papers on History and Society*, 2nd Series, No. LXXY, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
- Channa, Shubhadra Mitra, 2001, The right to selfhood: the paradox of being a Dalit woman, *Social action* , Vol . 51, No.4 October-December
- Cohen J.1985 .Strategy of Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements, *Social Research*, Vol. 52 No. 4.
- Elson and Pearson 1981. Nimble fingers make cheap workers :An analysis of women's employment in Third world Export manufacturing, *Feminist Review*, spring.
- Forbes, Geraldine 1982. Caged Tigers: First Wave Feminism in India, *Women Studies International Forum*.Vol.5
- Goffman, Erving. 1977. The arrangement between the Sexes, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 4 (Fall)
- Guru, Gopal,1991 Dalit Killings in Marathwada, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.26, No. 51. December 1991.

- 1995. Dalit women talk differently, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.30, No.41-42. October 1991.
- Hartmann, H. 1976, Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex, *Signs* Vol. 1, No.3.
- Hassan, Zoya 1993. Communalism, State policy and the Question of women's rights in contemporary India, *Bulletin of concerned Asian scholars*, Vol. 25, No. 4, Oct-Dec
- Kannabiran, Kalpana and Vasantha K. 1991, Caste and Gender: Understanding dynamics of power and violence *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.26, No.37,.14 September 1991.
- Kishwar, Madhu 1985. Gandhi on Women, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 20, No.40.5 Oct..
- 1990. Why I do not call myself a feminist, *Manushi*, No. 61. Nov.-Dec.
- 1994. Codified Hindu Law: Myth and reality, *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol. 24. No.33, 13 August
- Lotika, Sarkar,1994. Rape: A human rights versus a patriarchal Interpretation, *Indian journal of Gender studies*, No1, January-June.
- Melucci, A.,1985. The Symbolic Challenge of Contemporary Movements, *Social Research*, Vol. 52, No.4.
- Nandy, Ashish, 1985. An Anti secularist manifesto, *Seminar*, Vol. 314.
- Omvedt, Gail and Bharat Patnagar,1979. The Dalit Liberation Movement in Colonial Period, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual No. February
- Omvedt, Gail, 1997. Rural women and the family in an era of liberalization:India in comparative Asian perspective, *Bulletin of concerned Asian Scholars*, Vol. 129, No.41, Oct-Dec.

- Patel, Sujatha Construction and Reconstruction of Women in Gandhi,
Occasional papers on History and Society, Nehru Memorial
 Museum and Library, New Delhi.
- Rajuladevi, 2000. Profiles in poverty- female landless Agricultural
 labourer households, *Economic and Political Weekly* , Vol.25,
 No.6, 5 Feb.
- Rege, Sharmila, 1995. Feminist Pedagogy and Sociology for Emancipation
 in India, *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 44, No.2
- 1995. The Hegemonic appropriation of sexuality:The Case
 of the Erotic Lavani of Maharashtra, *Contributions to Indian
 sociology*, Vol. 29, No. 1-2.
- 1998. A Dalit Feminist stand point, *Seminar*, No.471,
 November
- 2000. Real Feminism and Dalit Women – Scripts of Denial
 and Accusation, *Economic and Political Weekly*,Vol.35, No.6, 5
 February.
- Review Article 1992. Feminism in Latin America From Bogota to San
 Benardo, Winter, *Signs*.
- Review Article 1999. New Perspectives on African Feminism and the
 History of African Women, *Women's Studies International Forum*,
 Vol. 22.
- Sainath, P. A Dalit goes to court, *The Hindu*, Sunday, July 11, 1999, pp.viii
- Sangari, Kumkum, 1993. Consent, Agency and Rhetorics of Incitement,
Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.28, 1 May.

- 1995. Politics of Diversity: Religious communities and multiple patriarchies, *Economic and political Weekly*, Vol.30, No.51, 23 Dec.
- Thomas, Aquinas, 1973. Is woman a question ? Summa Theological 1, *International Quarterly*, Dec.
- Touraine. A.1985. An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements, *Social Research*, Vol. 52, No.4.
- Webster,1996. Understanding the Modern Dalit Movements, *Sociological Bulletin*, 45 (2), September.
- Zelliot, Eleanor, 1998. Dr. Ambedkar and the empowerment of women, Seminar paper presented in Ambedkar in Retrospect, JNU, New Delhi, Aug.27-29