

Women rights violation through rituals; A comparative study of *Dalit* and *NonDalit* women in tumkur district, Karnataka

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Abstract: *Women consisting half of our population although since ancient India Women were treated second division people of society. However biological difference of sex can be seen but on the ground of social construct of gender, inequality is prevalent, male dominated society keep on doing atrocities, exploitation mental and physical abuse against women. Even in cultural practice like rituals and festivals the worst sort continued. In certain belief system, such as Hinduism in India, sons play a special role son preference is mentioned in the Vedas, it is supposed to be a son who lights a deceased person's funeral pyre and brings him or her salvation. Hindu kinship norms are adhered to more strictly among all castes. On this backdrop this article studied socio-economic background of the women, ascertained ritual participation of women and explored violation of women rights through ritual practices a comparison study of Dalit and NonDalit in rural areas of Tumkur district. For this study researcher has used Descriptive research design. Samples collected through purposeful sampling with the help of self prepared questionnaire. The study found systematic inequality prevailed in all forms against women.*

Keywords: Women, gender, rituals, cultural, inequality

Introduction

Social practices, rituals and festive events are habitual activities practices may help to mark the passing of the seasons, events in the agricultural calendar or the stages of a person's life. In some cases, access to rituals may be restricted to certain members of the community; initiation rites and burial ceremonies are two such examples. (unesco, 2010). In India there different types of rituals practiced that may be considered as Birth Rituals, Hair Cutting Rituals, Marriage Rituals, Puberty Rites; Purity and Pollution; Ritual as Communication; Scatological Rituals; Witchcraft. Down the ages men have been perceived to be the sole recipients and transmitters of divine messages. Women on the other hand, have been socialized by patriarchal religious structures and practices to passively accept religious teachings as interpreted by men. These andocentric and patriarchal interpretations have defined and shaped the social and cultural contexts of Indian women resulting in their disempowerment and second class status (Montfort Social Institute, 2016). "There is a Cambodian saying that men are a piece of gold, and women are a piece of cloth. The piece of gold, when it is dropped in mud, is still a piece of gold. But a piece of cloth, once it's stained, it's stained forever (Anderlini, 2000). Written by distinguished women scholars,

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Women in Indian Religions contains nine essays, which discuss the status of women across various Indian religions. It addresses issues pertaining to the position of women in all the major Indian religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism and tribal religions.

During 2006, Anti-Slavery International undertook a research project into the practice of ritual sexual slavery or forced religious 'marriage'. The custom of 'marrying' girls to a deity, thereby depriving them of the right to ordinary marriage and assigning them to sexual exploitation by the deity's priests or devotees, existed in many ancient cultures, including in Europe, the Middle East, West Africa and South Asia. In a few settings, this type of ritual slavery or sexual servitude has continued until the present day, including the practice of *Trokosi* in some parts of West Africa; and various forms of *Devadasi* (from the Sanskrit words *deva* meaning god or goddess and *dasi* meaning servant) among Hindu populations in southern India and Nepal (International Anti slavery Report, 2007)

To be socially accepted a man must often behave in masculine ways and a woman in feminine ways, and this is learned through ritual (Titiev, 1971). Religious ritual can also work to problematic traditional beliefs about gender or the relationship between sex and gender. One of the most basic ways in which ritual problematize gender is through inversion: When men perform typically feminine actions or women exhibit masculine traits gender roles are questioned (Titiev, 1971).

Is the richness and diversity of rituals and celebrations in South Asia unique? We can speak of homo rituals when it comes to India or Hinduism. Indians or Hindus more involved in rituals than other people. It was primarily a study of rituals at work in a cultural-specific and religious context considering indigenous terms and theories of ritual, but it also aims at contributing to ritual theory in general. Based on extensive text studies and fieldwork in Nepal and India, it is argued that ritual is a distinct way of acting, which, similar to theater play, can be distinguished from other forms of action. It describes and analyzes various forms of Hindu rituals and festivals, for example, life-cycle rituals, the Vedic sacrifice, vows processions, and the worship of deities (pūjā). It also examines various conceptional components of (Hindu) rituals such as agency, framing, formality modality, and theories of meaning. It asks how a consequent use of indigenous terms and theories modifies ritual theory and how it contributes to culture-specific forms of rituals (Michaels, 2016).

To understand Indian perception about festivals and social ceremonies we must understand Anthropological base of Indian. India is caste driven country relics of hierarchy among caste even today practicing in different farms. On the ground of caste socializing perceptions have been developed among Indians. Louis Dumont (1970), his *Homo Hierarchic us*, a seminal work in Indian anthropology, argued Hindu Indians are fundamentally different from western people in this context people see themselves in the caste system as part of ritual hierarchy. Their sense of individuality is submissive to their identification with their family, caste and village. Whereas western people born and brought up with individualistic context, hence family and other institution will not influence more on individuals (Dumont, 1980).

Marriot and Inden (1977) were modified this to say that an Indian is not an individual, as much as '*dividual*'. A *devidual's* identity is made up of different transferable "substances" that they give and receive in their interactions with others. These substances then come together in a dynamic, negotiated, interactive manner to achieve a sense of self. Thus, personhood is defined entirely in terms of one's relationships to other. *Dividual* refers to separate or distinct, because

Indians are different from western individual, they are driven by family, caste and other social institutions (Marriot & Inden, 1977).

In recent study by Mines (1994) he argues that Indians are has individuality. But this individuality is quite different from western model of individuality. Indian individuality is more exterior or civic than personal and significant conditioned by how others evaluate the person. What kind of person he is? How influential is he? Henceforth “civic individuality” determined within the context of where individual belongs: their caste, Religion, community (Mines, 1994).

Constitutional Provisions for Women

The Constitution of India provided equality to men and women and also gave priority on special protection to women to realize their interests effectively. Special laws were enacted to prevent indecent representation of women in the media and sexual harassment in workplaces. The law also gives women equal rights in the matter of adoption, maternity benefits, equal pay, good working conditions etc. At the international level, the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).ought to guarantee better legal status to women. The law also provides women with the right to police assistance, legal aid, shelter, and medical care. The Crimes Identified under the Indian Penal Code (Indian Penal Code).

Rationale of the Study

From ancient Indian women's are being exploited in the name of culture which was propounded by masculine *Sanatana Dharma* which found some rituals against the women these were Sati system, child marriage, restriction on widow remarriage, polygamy and so on.. Gender bias was legitimized according to Manu code of law. After attained 21st century, enacted constitution to India still exploitation, bias, disparity happening against women in and around of our society, Indian constitution, Human Rights conviction, Indian Penal Code enshrined women rights and punishment to offenders although, people of India are ruled by cultural influence through the socialization process of an individual. Rituals that may be birth, naming, puberty, marriage, funeral in all the way masculine domination can be seen. Hence, the contradiction happens between formal rules and informal cultural rules. Therefore the study conducted how women are suffering through these rituals and comparison of intensity of ritual practices between *Dalit* and *NonDalit* women.

Objectives of the study

- To explore opinion regarding women rights violation in ritual practices.
- To compare opinion regarding rituals practices among *Dalit* and *NonDalit* women

Method and Materials

The study was descriptive in nature; therefore researcher has adopted Descriptive Research design. For this study 100 samples were drawn 50 from *Dalit* community women and 50 from *NonDalit* women. Sample were collected in rural areas especially from Tumkur district, those who were in the age group between 18 to 48 with the help of Self prepared questionnaire and purposive sampling technique were used for this study.

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Results

Table 1: Socio-Economic Condition of *Dalit* and *NonDalit* Women

		<i>Dalit</i> women		<i>NonDalit</i> women	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age					
1	18 to 28	26	52.00	20	40.00
2	28 to 38	09	18.00	20	40.00
3	38 to 48	15	30.00	10	20.00
Category					
1	SC	40	80.00	00	00.00
2	ST	10	20.00	00	00.00
3	OBC	00	00.00	36	72.00
4	Others	00	00.00	14	28.00
Education					
1	Illiterate	05	10.00	04	08.00
2	Primary	24	48.00	20	40.00
3	Secondary	09	18.00	08	16.00
4	Intermediate	06	12.00	08	16.00
5	Graduate	06	12.00	10	20.00
Occupation					
1	Agriculture	28	56.00	11	22.00
2	Working	10	20.00	01	02.00
3	Student	08	16.00	20	40.00
4	Home maker	04	08.00	18	36.00
Family					
1	Joint	32	64.00	22	44.00
2	Nuclear	18	36.00	28	56.00
Marital status					
1	Married	39	78.00	30	60.00
2	Unmarried	05	10.00	18	36.00
3	Widow/Widower	06	12.00	02	04.00
Income					
1	Below 12000	28	46.00	21	42.00
2	12,000 to 25,000	18	36.00	21	42.00
3	25,000 to 50,000	04	08.00	00	00.00
4	50,000 and above	00	00.00	08	16.00
Total		50	100	50	100

The study found that, majority 80 percent from *Dalit* women and *NonDalit* women were fall between the age group of 18 to 38. 80 percent of respondents belongs to scheduled castes and 20 percent belongs to scheduled tribes in this study researcher has considered both SC and ST as *Dalit* women. Whereas, among *NonDalit* women, 72 percent of women consisted Other Backward Communities and 28 percent general category women. 48 percent of *Dalit* women were having primary education whereas 40 percent of *NonDalit* women were having primary education. However *NonDalit* women were having more education level than *Dalit* women. 56 percent of *Dalit* women were agricultural occupant but 40 percent of *NonDalit* women were students. 64 percent of *Dalit* women were belongs to joint family whereas 54 percent of

NonDalit women were belongs to nuclear family. It denotes high number of nuclear families among *NonDalit* families. 78 percent of *Dalit* women were married where 60 percent of *NonDalit* women were married. 46 percent of *Dalit* women lives with the below 12,000 INR income for annum but 42 percent *NonDalit* women lives with the income of below 12,000 INR and within the income of 12,000 to 25,000 INR per annum. It clearly indicates *Dalit* women's were more economically poor than *NonDalit* women.

Table 2: Opinion Regarding Gender Status in Rituals

S.No	Opinion	Dalit Women			Non Dalit Women		
		Yes	No	Cant say	Yes	No	Cant say
01	Permitted to perform <i>pooja</i> at rituals	80.00	18.00	02.00	60.00	36.00	04.00
02	during menstrual periods entering to prominent places of house restricted	52.00	38.00	06.00	72.00	18.00	10.00
03	Rituals are way for violating women rights	90.00	10.00	00.00	82.00	14.00	04.00
04	You are allowed to eat ritual food in first <i>panthi</i>	70.00	26.00	04.00	60.00	20.00	20.00
05	you are allowed to take decision about ritual practice at home	64.00	24.00	12.00	40.00	50.00	10.00
06	female menstrual cycle as sinful and purify women after completion of this cycle	30.00	64.00	06.00	58.00	34.00	08.00
07	your family consider your opinion before going to choose bridegroom for your marriage	80.00	16.00	04.00	60.00	32.00	08.00
08	Women are more moral and spiritual than men	64.00	12.00	24.00	74.00	22.00	04.00
09	Women are more sensitive to the Holy Spirit than men	20.00	48.00	32.00	48.00	26.00	26.00
10	It is a woman's duty to produce offspring, thus having an abortion is a violation of that duty	40.00	56.00	04.00	64.00	32.00	04.00

ANOVA Test

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	4108.8	9	456.5333	2.260066	0.110047	3.020383
Within Groups	2020	10	202			
Total	6128.8	19				

The above table depicts, 80 percent of *Dalit* women preferred to perform *pooja* activity at first during rituals, at the same time only 60 percent of *NonDalits* were preferred to perform *pooja* at first. It clearly indicates that *NonDalit* women were not enjoying ritual practice performance at first. 72 percent of *NonDalit* women agreed during menstrual periods entering to

Women rights violation through rituals; A comparative study of *Dalit* and *NonDalit* women in prominent places of house restricted but 52 percent of *Dalit* women agreed to the same opinion. It denotes more *Dalit* women were not restricted in menstrual rituals as pollute but *NonDalit* women restricted during menstrual on the ground of pollute. 90 percent of the *Dalit* women opined rituals are way of violation of women rights whereas 70 percent of *NonDalit* women opined the same. However rituals were common for all but it was clear *NonDalit* women were having more faith on ritual practice than *Dalit* women. Majority 70 percent of *Dalit* women opined they are allowed to have food in first *panthi*, whereas 60 percent of *NonDalit* women opined the same. It clearly indicates *Dalit* women were more inclusive in rituals than *NonDalit* women. 64 percent of *Dalit* women were allowed to take decision about ritual practice at home but 50 percent of the *NonDalit* women were not allowed to take decision about ritual practice at home. It depicts majority *Dalit* women were allowed to take decision, whereas it is not applicable for *NonDalit* women. 64 percent of *Dalit* women disagreed for menstrual period is sinful after completion of it purification must happen but whereas *NonDalit* women 54 percent of them agreed for the statement. It clearly denotes menstrual related rituals like purity and pollute concepts were prevailing among *NonDalit* women in more. 80 percent of *Dalit* women opined their family will consider women opinion before going to choose bridegroom, where 60 percent of *NonDalit* opined their family will consider women opinion before going to choose bridegroom. It clears *Dalit* families were more liberal in terms of getting opinion of bridegroom than *NonDalit* family. 74 percent of *NonDalit* women opined Women are more moral and spiritual than men, where 64 percent of *Dalit* women agreed the same. It indicates more *NonDalit* believes morality and spirituality must be required than men counterpart. 48 percent of *NonDalit* women agreed for Women are more sensitive to the Holy Spirit than men but 48 percent of *Dalit* women disagree for the same opinion. It clearly delineate difference of opinion among different groups *Dalit* women opined women are equal sensitive and holy spirit with male counterpart but *NonDalit* women thought women are more sensitive and holy spirit than men. 64 percent *NonDalit* women agreed for woman's duty is to produce offspring, thus having an abortion is a violation of that duty but 56 percent of *Dalit* women opined procreation is not a duty of the women it should not be considered violation of duty if got abortion. From above opinions clearly indicates *Dalit* women were more sensitized about their rights comparatively *NonDalit* women in spite of that *Dalit* women had more awareness regarding exploitation happen against them in the name of rituals. Above data reveals more *Dalit* family women indulge in rituals than *Dalit* family women.

Discussion

From above results clearly delineates gender inequality is ruled by cultural influence disparities happening in all spheres. All world religions today maintain male social dominance within societal structures (Young K. , *Women in World Religions*, 1987). On the other hand, women are more inclined to participate in religious life (Renzetti, 1999) . Families maintain gender inequality through a male-dominated power structure. Such basic household tasks such as child-rearing and even cleaning are thought to lie solely under the purveyance of women, which is a form of gender inequality, as either a man or a woman can equally accomplish these tasks. Gender inequality leads towards attitudes of gender stereotyping (master, 2009).

Shahnaj Parveen (2007) has focused on gender awareness among women in rural Bangladesh and the authoress has also highlighted the social status of women in the rural part of Bangladesh which are thought to be the root causes of gender discrimination against women. The research has been conducted taking a sample of 156 women from three villages under an old

district The study suggested that it is a dire need to improve women's gender awareness in terms of their literacy levels, access to information and productive resources, participation in social activities by establishing women's organizations in the locality (Parveen, 2007).

Policy Implications and further studies

However women either *Dalit* or *NonDalit* both are susceptible for violation in all spare, hence, some institutionalized awareness programme shall be initiated by respective government. Government stringently implement Anti superstition act to combat illogical rituals occurring which are against to women rights. Social Worker should be appointed at gram panchayth level, to bring awareness about gender sensitivity, scientific lifestyle and women rights. Efficient and accountable law enforcement machinery at all levels (administration, government, police and judiciary) is needed. Improvement in quality of education and employment opportunities especially for women, Stakeholder sensitizing activities shall be initiated, Community level initiation to reduce cultural wrong influence against women

Rituals have got prominent place in Indian culture; it is very difficult to change masculine perception of society in to feminist perception of society. By sensitizing people how rituals creating gender discrimination and bias against women, in all the way women are ultimate sufferer, especially *NonDalit* women. Hence Social Work intervention is required in multifaceted level like micro, mezzo and macro. Since the issue is pertaining with religion and culture therefore through community organization can bring awareness about women education and gender sensitivity. Even radical and feminist Social Work can be used to emancipate women from gender stereotypic mindset, Women rights violation in the family, community and society in large.

Further studies can be taken up about Women rights violation through rituals among urban women, women rights violation through rituals can be tested between different religious women

Conclusion

Various rituals prescribed by religion, find many discriminative practices against women. These discriminations not only affect women's participation in socio-religious practices, but they also take crucial role in moulding women's status in the society. Constitution safeguard to enforce domination of males over females, the society seems to influence of the religion right from the formative period of a religion to promulgate various restrictions and injunctions on women. This study founds however there were both *Dalit* and *NonDalit* women were driven by ritual practices but more ritual practices influence could be seen among *NonDalit* women than *Dalit* women. through building gender sensitivity in family, redefining gender roles and eradicating gender bias in socialization process by giving parental counseling pertaining to gender awareness these are main things along with this integrated practice of Social Work must be done to sensitize people about women rights.

Limitations of the study

- Urban women were not inclusive in this study
- Above 48 year aged women and below 18 year girls were not included in this study
- Study was restricted to Tumkur rural, hence the inferences drawn from the study will not be generalized to different region women because, rituals and response might be vary to other places

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