6. Katevaram

Located at 2 km from Tenali is famous for Lord Shiva temple built in 10\textsuperscript{th} century and renovated during the Vijayanagara period and recently in 2009. Paddy, Turmeric and Lentils are the main crops harvested each year in this village. In this village total house holds is 1307. Total population of the village is 4991 of which 2501 members are male, 2490 members are female population respectively. The total Scheduled Caste population of the village is 2453 and 27 members are belongs to Scheduled Tribe (2001 Census).

The village is having four primary schools. In this village one library is available to all villages. The Grama Panchayati providing five daily new papers in the panchayati office. In that village had 111 self help groups. This village has two major political parties such as Congress and Telugu Desam have notable presence. The village panchayat of Sangam Jagarlamudi is divided into 14 wards. According to 73\textsuperscript{rd} Constitutional Amendment Act 1993 in this panchayat sarpanch reserved for Other Caste General.
Dalit (‘oppressed’ or ‘broken’) is not a new word. Apparently it was used in the 1930’s as a Hindi and Marathi translation of ‘depressed classes’. The British used this term for what are now called the scheduled caste. Dr. Ambedkar chose the term ‘broken men’, as English translation of ‘Dalit’, to refer to the original ancestors of the untouchables. Dalit Panthers, the youth activists from Dalit community revived the term and in their 1973 manifesto expanded its reference to include the scheduled tribes, neo Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor peasants, women and also those who are being exploited politically, economically in the name of religion (Omvedt cited in Webster, J, 1999).

**Dalit Women**

Dalit women are one of the most marginalized segments in the society. The condition of dalit women is more vulnerable than non-dalit women. Dalit women are suffering from multi- disadvantages:

a) Being Dalit i.e. socio-economically and culturally marginalized section,

b) Being women and sharing the gender based inequalities and subordination (Jogdand, 1995).

To explore these and other crucial issues concerning Dalit women there is a need to discuss some basic facts concerning the vulnerable situation of Dalit women. The Dalit women have to grapple with the discrimination due to the caste hierarchy and untouchability on the one hand and extreme economic deprivation and poverty on the other coupled with political, legal and religion-cultural discrimination. Dalit women continue to be illiterate, malnourished, in poor health, overworked, oppressed and
victimised by a number of factors, including their own family and community. They make up the substance of the body of research, knowledge and information in the country displaying the poorest social indicators, dismal social and economic achievement. They lack access to resources including the natural resources they work with every day, although their labour enriches their masters.

Dalit women in India constitute 80 million or 48 % of the total Dalit population, 16.3 % of the total female population in India. 81.5 % of Dalit women live in rural areas. They, along with their male counterparts, constitute a sizeable social group based on discrimination and untouchability arising out of the caste system. Dalit women are particularly discriminated on the basis of their caste (which is lower than others – outcaste) poverty and gender. There are about 250 million Dalits in India. There is meager improvement in the socio-economic condition of Dalits in the past 50 years, which is not enough when compared to non-Dalits. Of course, much more needs to be done. The urgent need is to have a national sample survey on Dalits. Every fourth Indian is a dalit. There is no proper survey to give the correct number of Dalit women in India.

**Socio-Cultural and Religious factors**

First and foremost Dalit women are victims of social, religious and cultural practices like Devdasis and Jogins. In the name of these practices, village girls are married to God by their helpless parents. These girls are then sexually exploited by the upper caste landlords and rich men and directed into trafficking and prostitution. In his autobiography, Kale (1994) has described a ritual called ‘chira’. The literal meaning of the word ‘chira’ is to cut or break. In this ritual when a girl from the lower caste community reaches the age of puberty, an elderly prestigious man from the higher caste breaks the hymen of the girl child by sexual act. This ritual is performed in a way to
make the girl accept this fact as a routine practice. The 28th report of SC/ST commission reported that in February 1986 there were about ten thousand Jogins belonging to SC in Nizamabad district of Andhra Pradesh. The survey submitted by the district collector to Schedule Caste Finance Corporation revealed prevalence of 15,850 cases. Eighty percent of these Jogins belonged to SC (Pal and Bhargav, 1999). This data is just an example of one district of the country. Practices such as Chira, Jogins and Devdasi which are prevalent even today are harmful and threaten the dignity of dalit women and violate their human rights (P. Sainath, 2003).

Dalit women not only grapple with the discrimination due to caste hierarchy and untouchability but they live in poverty coupled with political, legal and religio-cultural discrimination. Access to resources such as land, water is out of reach to these women. Henceforth, Dalit women end up working as bonded agricultural labourers with low/under paid wages, inspite of their knowledge and skills in farming. The extreme perennial economic deprivation has also resulted in illiteracy, malnourishment, poor health conditions, besides this they are also overworked, oppressed and victimized by a number of factors, including patriarchal attitude within the family and community.

**Dalit Women as Manual Scavengers**

Thousands of women manual scavengers are forced to earn their living through scavenging, cleaning dry latrines, by using metal pans and a short broom to scoop up the night soil. The excreta are carried in baskets on their heads. The dehumanized practice has killed dignity of women at the same time these women believe that without this job they will be nowhere to their livelihoods.
Economic Deprivation of Dalit Women

Dalit Women are the most economically deprived section of Indian society.

- Dalit women labour force constitutes the backbone of Indian agriculture economy.
- 71% of them are agricultural labourers.
- 90% were cultivators (1991).
- 32.40% of the household sector and large number of them employed in unorganized labour in urban areas.
- A large number of them employed in unclean occupation.
- They are denied just and equal wages, fair-share in economic distribution, maternity benefits, the security and protection.
- All most all the Dalit women enter the labour market before the age of 20.
- 31.6 of all girl children from Dalit communities are child labourers in Guntur District – Andhra Pradesh.

Dalit Women as Victims of Caste Hierarchy and Atrocities

Dalit Women’s day-to-day struggle is one of existence, survival and justice. The everyday discrimination is dotted by mental and physical violence. Eternally, the principles of ‘high and low’, ‘purity and pollution’ has not left any scope for changing Dalit women’s status. Thus any move by Dalit women to question the system, or challenge inequality to change the life situation has resulted in retaliation with abuses such as beating, rape, naked parading, labeled as witches and harassed for murder. This further implicates in punishing the whole community by burning of houses, destruction of properties, valuables, crops etc. The crux of the Dalit Women’s struggles for survival is rooted in her being at the lowest rung of the Caste hierarchy.
In this context the study would like to find out or inquiring into the overall development of Dalit women after independence. The study also examines how best the Dalit Women have covered in the inclusive policy of the Government of India. The Review of literature, Objectives and Methodology of the study as follows.

1. **Objectives of the Study**

   1. To study the improvement of Socio-Economic and Political conditions of the Dalit Women in Rural Area.
   2. To study the Educational & Health aspects of the Dalit Women in Rural Area.
   3. To study the impact of Developmental Programmes on the Dalit Women in Rural Area.
   4. To make necessary suggestions for effective Empowerment of Dalit Women in Rural Area.

2. **Hypotheses**

   1. To find out the relationship between the socio-eco and political background and development of Dalit Women.
   2. To find out the relationship between educational background and development of Dalit Women.
   3. To find out Health conditions and Awareness of Dalit Women and its relationship for their development.
   4. To find out relationship between the Govt. programmes and its impact on Dalit Women for their development.
3. Area of the Study:

The researcher wanted to study around 300 Dalit women of Six villages in the Tenali Mandal of Guntur District in Andhra Pradesh. The researcher selected the list on the basis of simple random sample survey. The list of the Scheduled Caste families was picked up from the Grama Panchayat Office. As the most of the Dalit women in the villages are illiterate, the researcher analyzed them about the subject undertaken by him. On the bases of respondents’ answers the questionnaire was filled.

4. Variables:

As Dalit women are most down trodden in societal hierarchy, so researcher wanted to verify certain variables like Poverty, Education, Socio-economic and political aspects, equality of life, Economic dependency, household circumstances and living conditions etc.,

5. Research Design

To explore this study on Status of Dalit Women in Rural Area a tool descriptive research design was used.

6. Sampling

In this study the Research/Investigator would like to select 300 sample respondents in six villages by using a simple random sampling method. The selected villages are having significant proportion of socially disadvantaged group like SCs, STs, BCs and other upper castes.

7. Tools for the Study

In this study the structured interview schedule consisting of 128 questions have prepared to measure the empowerment of Dalit women in Socio-Economic, educational
and Political areas. Successful case studies of the groups of SHGs have also carried out in this study to know how they are more successful than other groups.

8. Data Collection

The material required for the study is primary and secondary source. The primary data was collected from respondents in the field survey. The techniques like questionnaire, interview, discussion and participant observation to avoid ethnocentrism. A secondary source of Data collected among the various official records in the villages and mandal level.

A). Primary sources

Primary data was taken from the 300 respondents of Dalit women by canvassing interview schedule. The Investigator directly interviewed all the respondents to enquiry about their socio-economic-political and educational, health and development programmes of Dalit women.

B). Secondary sources

A secondary source of Data was collected among the various official records. The secondary sources constitutes the studies conducted on Dalit women was taken and the data given by these studies also support this present study. The data collected in previous studies have also made use in this study. The information from the records in Mandal offices on dalit women have been gathered to emphasis this study. The study uses extensively the relevant secondary data available these sources consist of books, journals, Magazines, Reports prepared government agencies, Universities, Research institutions, NGOs and News papers …etc.
9. Field work

For the field work, the scholar made visits according the suitable time of the Dalit women to collect the information. It was a difficult task for the scholar to fix to take interview with each respondent as all of them are going for work for their livelihood. So the investigator used to get the appointments in the early morning and evenings only. The scholar has collected the data for the present study in between the months of June 2010 to Nov- 2010.

10. Pre-Test

The questionnaire was pre-tested on 25 Dalit women and necessary modifications were made in the questionnaire i.e. regarding the personal, social, economic and political and various factors influencing for obstruction of their development. With the contribution of pre-test respondents some modification have made in the final interview schedule.

11. Scheme for the study

The study is presented in ten - chapters. Chapter – I Deals with Introduction. Chapter – II Deals with The Status of Women in India, Chapter – III Deals with Dalit and Dalit Women. In Chapter IV Deals with Reviews of Literature. Profile of the study area presented in Chapter – V. Research Methodology deals with Chapter – VI. Data Interpretations and data analysis of the sample respondents deals with Chapter – VII. In Chapter – VIII deals with Results and Discussion of the sample respondents. Chapter – IX deals with Case Studies and Chapter X deals with Concluding Findings and Suggestions.
12. Data Interpretation and Data Analysis

In this study, univariate and bivariate tables had been prepared. Graphical representation, bar diagrams and pie diagrams have been made. The research/investigator have also used the SPSS package in this study.