CHAPTER 2
OVERVIEW OF FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP ON CASTE AND GENDER

This chapter deals with feminist discourses on the domain of caste and gender in which the focus is on Maharashtra as well as India. However, no specific study on socio-cultural, economic and political aspects of Mahar Buddhist and Mang Hindu women is available till now. In general, a few studies have been done on the life of Dalit women. The chapter will carry out a review of the available literature relevant to our research.

Section I: Social, Economic and Political Issues of Dalit women

M. Prabhavati in her article, "Dalit Women in Contemporary Indian Situation", argues that the political power of the country is manipulated with the few sections of the society that is based on castes. In fact, the women representative shares the power in the society but they have been completely forgotten the social, economic and political upliftment and causes of the downtrodden women specially Dalit women. Thus, the upper caste women are systematically marginalizing the dalit women in the political spheres. In the social areas such as education, the literary rate of them is minimal because the economic crisis and attitudes towards the dalit girls are gender biased. Violence on Dalit women is higher because of their social location in the society. Citing various examples such as “Nude Worship” and practice of Devdasi system, social boycott and preventing the entry in to the public places makes them more vulnerable.
However, dealing with economic location of Dalit women Prabhavati says that maximum dalit women lives under the below poverty lines compare to non-dalit women. Most of them works in the un-organized works like agriculture, factory, construction, house holds and other marginal works in which they have to face day to day harassment without getting the proper wages. S.P. Punalkars article further clarifies us the economic views on Dalit women. In his article “On Dalitism and Gender”, he argues about the urban and rural economic statues of dalit women with its deep rooted relation of castes. In the urban areas, although the position of the dalit women becomes better but their social acceptance, being a dalit based on caste is never equal. She raised the fundamental questions of class within class and questioned that urban dalit women who is in economic better condition did not think about their deprived section of dalit sisters and relates it with organised and unorganised sectors. The dalit women are not able to get the jobs in both the sectors because dalit women did not have any social networking and most of these jobs specially in private sectors get through networking. By categorizing the jobs in to two sections, self employment: hawking, home based production, scrap collection etc and wage employment: construction labour, domestic labour, candle making etc., she argues that it did not provide them any finical securities rather creates the ample insecurities in the life of dalit women. However, pointing to the rural dalit women which can be easily located with their social location divides their gender location that makes them more hardship which influences economic conditions. For instances, while the distribution of resources, the dalit women did not get any benefit, on the other hand non-dalit women gets major share in that resources.

Nalini Somkuwar in her essay, “Brahmanisation of Dalit Women”, draws sharp lines between urban and rural class Dalit women. She argues that rural Dalit
women follow the path of Buddha, Dhamma and Sanga in the every day life. The marginal class Dalit woman has the potential to fight against poverty and atrocities. On the other hand, the urban/educated Dalit women are reproducing the values of caste Hindu/Brahmanic women. They did not visit the Buddha Vihar. However, they view their sisters through a subordination perspective.

In “The life of a Dalit Woman”, Kumud Pawad argues that the day to day experiences of Dalit women should be analysed to explain the social mobility among them. She employed the ethnographic approach to tease out the pluralistic views of the gendered dimensions of their quotidian life. The representation of Dalit women in the different aspects of socio-cultural and political realm was studied to highlight their marginalised status. The impact of Brahmancial ethos on gender marginalised those Dalit women who chose to remain within the Hindu fold. On the other hand, those who are converted to Christianity and Buddhism acquired better life chances. The Neo-Buddhists and Christian women are more assertive and conscious about their rights. Hindu Dalit women, however, have to suffer a lag in their social mobility because of their adoption of Hindu ethos based on the ideology of Manu.

In the post-independent era India witnessed the formulation of its constitution. In Dalit women: Issues and Redressal Ujwala Jadhav argues that it ensured political justice but failed to implement social and economic justice. Gender inequality is a consequence of the above-mentioned stratification. Dalit women have to confront multiple oppressions unlike their non-Dalit women counterparts because of their social location, which is based on caste, class and gender. Jadhav adopts an Ambedkarite perspective on the oppression of women that delineate the
peripheral position of the Dalit women. Therefore, the exploitation of Dalit women are sanctioned through the male stream œuvre of the Hindu society, and the laws failed to bring about gender equality for the development of society.

In the article “The Dalit women’s dual flight: fight for caste eradication and fight for women’s liberation”, Jaideo Gaikwad argues that Hindu religion is used to subjugate women. Dalit women are marginalized in the debates of non-Dalit women organizations. Educated Dalit women are imbibing the values of conspicuous consumption and maintain a detached position towards the social backwardness of poor uneducated Dalit women. On the other hand, Dalit women’s assertion will challenge the multiple exploitations based upon caste, class and gender in all castes and communities by assimilating the Phuleite and Ambedkarite ideology. Hence, there is a need to build up alliances within the marginalised non-Dalit women.

In Dalit women and the women’s movement in India, Avinash Dolas explains the paradigm shift from the identity of ‘Dalit women’ to that of Buddhist women which represents the ideological competency of Dalit women’s assertions. It can be re-read as an epistemic rupture from the prior forms of Dalit mobilizations. It criticises the insensitive attitude of women’s movement towards Dalit women.

A.S. Jadhav in Dalits among Dalits: Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribe women argues that there is wide gap between the constitutional rights and their implementation. This type of a hiatus related to policy making accelerated the multiple inequalities in the field of literacy, education etc. The absence of Dalit women in those areas of development will in turn accelerate their wretched life chances. They are direct victims of poverty, backwardness, social disabilities etc.
They do not even have access to education. Dalit women and their issues have not been properly addressed by policy makers. Effective educational policies can bring about changes in the lives of Dalit women.

Neelam Gorhe, in her article “Social Devolvement and Dalit Women”, argues that Dalit women are sidelined in the process of development due to the oppression based on caste and gender. Dalit women have to confront day-to-day atrocities because of their lower status and gender within the caste system. On the other hand, non-Dalit women reproduce caste through their superior positioning in the caste hierarchy. Dalit women become a voiceless presence in state-sponsored and non-governmental programmes. Dalit leadership in Maharashtra are caught within political manoeuvres that have directed relationship to the vote banks of Dalit women. Therefore, decision making power of Dalit women is neutralized through the multiple exclusions of them.

Sumitra Bhave in her book Pan on Fire argues that self-reflexivity and role reversal plays a vital role in the life of Dalit women. The book narrates the experiences of illiterate women, highly educated women in the industrialised urban areas and Dalit women in city slums. The pluralistic narrative represents the multidimensional facets of diverse womanhood. Through the life world of Dalit women one can understand the nuances of family, religion, work and society widely.

Pandaian in his article “On a Dalit Woman’s Testimonio” argues that Dalit literary oeuvre emerged as a part of the centenary celebration of Ambedkar in Tamil Nadu. The ideologues of the dominant/Brahmanical Tamil literature described the act of Dalit writers as a divisive and anarchic discourse. Bama’s
work *Karakku* can be re-read as a Dalit testimonial which challenged the boundaries of history, biography and novel. The overrated presence of the subjectivity of the narrator is negated and communitarian self occupies the central position in the book. She considers the shift from autobiographical “I” to that of collectivity as a shift from the genres of bourgeois individualism to that of collectivity. Bama’s novel provides thick descriptions of the Dalit labour. Thus, Bama’s writing becomes an open-ended account of Dalit existence.

Mangala Kulkarni in her article “Problems of Dalit women” argues that Dalit women have to face exploitation in the social, political and economic sphere. This exploitation comes from the larger society as well as the Dalit community itself. For instance, when a Dalit woman delivers a baby boy, even if the Dalit family do not have money, they borrow it to celebrate their happiness. On the other hand, if a girl-child is born, the Dalit woman has to face tremendous mental harassment within family. Gender bias begins at birth. In the political sphere, the government has introduced reserved constituencies. However, family members themselves do not support them. Therefore, their ability to attain distinguished personality status is constrained right from within the family. Kulkarni points out that the atrocities on them increase as they contest elections.

In ‘Dalit women’s Cry for Liberation: “My rights are rising like the sun, will you denied this sun rise?”’ Pranjali Bandhu argues that the location of Dalit women based on class, caste and gender decided the life of the Dalits and Dalit women. They are the victims of multiple forms of inequality. Especially, the economic changes are responsible for new forms of subjugations. The question of Dalit women is sidelined by the mainstreams women’s movements. Dalit movement
and women's movement has to take up the issues of Dalit women and expand their spectrum of liberation.

Leela Dube in her article "Caste and Women" argues that the notions of purity and pollutions are articulated to govern women in the Indian society. It is also linked to gendered dimensions of caste. The sexuality of women is always controlled to protect the purity of the caste. The violation of the caste-bounded ethos is judged as pollution, and such ontological shifts are oppressed by the repressive and restitutive institutions of castes. The food culture is also conditioned for the control over the sexuality of women.

Kancha Illaiah in "Of Land and Dalit Women" argues that the struggle of Dalit women against the liquor shop and land alienations signifies the struggle for self respect and economic freedom of Dalit women in Andhra Pradesh. Dalit women who retaliated against the feudal forces in the rural areas unveiled the nature of castes and modes of productions. The dominance of the feudal lords in the socially-regulated agricultural occupation also results in the consequent subordination of Dalit women. Dalit men are co-opted by the feudal lords through the occupation in their agricultural fields. The political parties of Andhra Pradesh were silent about the struggle of Dalit women. Marxist–Leninist organizations too co-opted the struggles of dalit women but failed to challenge the caste system. This was evident from the representation of caste Hindus and lower caste as cadres in the party. Thus, the assertion of Dalit women undermined the internal and external caste-based patriarchy and absence of land reforms.
P. Sainath in his article “Unmusical Chairs” argue that Dalit women are not allowed to work as Panchayat members in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu. The native politicians who are the feudal lords from the other backward castes discriminates Dalit male and Dalit females by emphasizing their superior caste identity. He cites an example of how a backward caste male employee resigned his position as a clerk in response to the appointment of a Dalit woman as a Panchayat president. This incident shows us how caste and patriarchy operate within the labyrinth of democracy. The equal rights that are assured in the name of democracy are questioned through the subtle and vivid exclusion of the Dalit female Panchayat president. The plight of dalit and female politicians also marked the Brahmanical dimensions of the Dravidian parties of Tamil Nadu.

Tapan Basu’s edited work *Translating Caste* deals with the experiences of caste in the different regions of India. The narrations of the Dalit women who defy living according to the dictums of caste-based patriarchy represent the struggle of the Dalit women to acquire self dignity.

Shantabai Dhanaji Dani’s narrative titled “Ratrandin Amha” explains the family and how it perceives the growth of a dalit girl child. It also describes Shantabai’s educational aspiration. The dialogue between the narrator and her mother symbolizes the healthy dialogue that exists between Dalit women. She faced caste-based discrimination in modern institutes like Women’s training college. She also explains the practice of caste in subtle forms by the Hindu reformers. She was questioned for entering a temple of a reformer. The insidious presence of caste in day to day life made her fight oppression based on caste. She understood the impact of caste that question the self dignity of dalits.
She was an activist in the Scheduled caste federation. She had met leaders such as Ambedkar and Dadasaheb Gaikwad during her days of persistent activism. She believed that she became the president of Scheduled caste federation at Nasik only because of the democratic and progressive nature of Ambedkar. The emergence of Shantabai as a leader shows the dialogic space that existed between the dalit men and dalit women of the Ambedkarite movement. She was very active in the land reform movement started by Dadasaheb Gaikwad. She also supported the attempts of Dadasaheb Gaikwad’s Society for the promotion of Dalit education and its efforts to construct Ramabai Ambedkar girls school for girls from rural areas. She became the secretary of the Ramabai Ambedkar hostel. She was a candidate in the 1946 elections from Niphad. Shantabai was part of the Maharashtra state legislative assembly from 1968 to 1974. She was committed to the cause of refugee rehabilitation at Nasik. She observed the existence of caste among different sections of women. She commented on the celebration of the international women’s year in 1975 at a gathering of middleclass/elite/backward classes women. She was jailed for her involvement in the struggle for representation of scheduled castes in the assembly. She also participated in the movement related to the conversion to Buddhism. She received the prestigious Savitribai Phule award for her contribution in the realm of education in 1987. She rejected the Dalit Mitra Award given by the government of Maharashtra. She opined that if the government wants to work for the welfare of dalits, the funds should be given to the sanitation and water facilities in the settlements of dalits. The life of Shantabai is the epitome of the relentless struggle of a dalit woman for the liberation of her community from the shackles of caste and patriarchy. Shantabai also proved the importance of ethic in the field of politics which redeem the subaltern masses from the oppression based on the caste. Her life and
her search for education helped her surpass the stereotypes of caste and gender that alienate dalit women from the mainstream society.

Mukta Sarvagod in her autobiography *Closed Doors* delineate her experiences in exploring the nature of the dalit community. She worked at Baba Amte's ashram in Anandvan. She was conscious about the ramification of the inequality on the basis of caste. She believed that social work nurtures aspirations for leadership in the community. Her political struggle was influenced by Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Ambedkar. She was also influenced by the charitable activities of Baba Amte. She narrates the hardships of the Mahar women through the description of her family. Her experiences in the school abound with caste-based discriminations. Students from the dalit community had to bear different forms of cruel punishments. The talent and skill of dalit children were not recognised by the teachers. The inhuman nature of such teachers had a negative impact on the minds of the dalit students.

She describes the bonded labour of the Dalits in the homes of the feudal lords. Dalits used to work without rest for the dominant castes because the labour is imposed through the caste system. She explains the system of Devdasis and transvestites among the Dalits which is sanctioned in the name of the caste. The Mahar women were forced to take up the occupation of village men. Those who were not willing to do such labour of indignity were excommunicated from the village. The women and men from the pottery community were not paid because of the *Balutedari* system. The women of Mahar and Mang castes were involved in different types of stigmatized labour with no proper payment. Her experience related to the caste-based labour and marginalization of dalits reinforced her belief in the Ambedkarite ideology. Ambedkar advised dalits to leave the
villages and migrate to the urban centres. Mukta Sarvagod also realized that a rural area was a site that breeds caste-based labour. She also narrates the popularity of Ambedkar’s newspaper *Bahishkrut Bharath* among the dalit proletarians. She described the involvement of dalits in caste-based occupations even after their conversion to Christianity. But, it changed the conditions of such dalits in case of food and residence.

Her critique of the independence of India created a sensation in the circles of social workers. She argued that independence is achieved only because of the transitions in the world economy and it could not bring any change in the lives of the poor sections. She also emphasized that the atrocities against women have not stopped even after the attainment of independence. Her critique reveals the marginalization and exploitation of dalit women after the emergence of the nation-state. She also supported Bhaurao Patil’s activities to provide education to the vulnerable sections. She also criticized and transformed the hierarchy of the Mahila mandals that were controlled by dalit males. She also explains how Mahila Mandals of Dalit women were fragmented on the basis of parochialism. Simultaneously, she explains the literacy mission that was part of the Mahila Mandal. Through their classes, they emphasised the need for the education of dalit children, health, small pox vaccination and reading habits. They also created consciousness among learners about Ambedkar’s ideology. She organised training courses for school teachers and young girls, which had modules on physical education, issues of sex workers, problems of working class, agrarian conditions and eradication of untouchability. She considered this training a prelude to the success of the five years plan.
The life of Shantabai Krishnaji Kamble reveals the perseverance of a Dalit woman to acquire social mobility. She was the first dalit woman teacher from Sholapur. She started her career as a teacher at Solapur District Board School in 1942. She published her autobiography Mazhya Jalamachi Chittarkatha (The Kaleidoscopic Story of My life) after her retirement in 1981. The autobiography is dedicated to her father and mother who were labourers. She dedicates her autobiography to them as gratitude for giving her education. Her autobiography talks about her mother who believed that education will bring changes in the wretched lives of the dalits. She also narrates the harmony that existed in the community in the midst of penury. She remembers that girls did not have the choice to select their partners. Every decision related to the marriage of the girl was taken by the elder males in the family. The recognition of the lack of voice in the dalit patriarchal family provides a dalit feminist understanding of the dalit families. She describes about a dalit woman who had pre-marital relations with her husband. She also narrates the way the dalit males tortured dalit woman. The discrimination of dalit students made her to think about caste and education. Her parents were supportive for her education. Her autobiography emphasized the role of education for the sustainable development of her community.

The autobiography of Baby Kondiba Kamble can be seen as a micro history of the Mahar community. She recreated her memories as way to project her humiliation of her community. She compares the contemporary changes with that of the past to re-read the impact of the activism of Ambedkar. She describes the superstitions and rituals that were part of the life of Dalits before the emergence of the Ambedkarite era. She interprets the lack of health supporting systems for Dalits with this culture of false beliefs. Her mother could not assert her rights because of patriarchy that prevailed at home. But, she talks about her father who
supported the Dalit labourers. The division of labour within the Dalit homes was
gendered in every respect. The labour of the young bride is assessed through the
patriarchal bargaining of the mother-in-law and community. The social
conditions of Dalits are determined by the feudal relations of the village. Dalits
have to be submissive before their feudal lords. The body languages of the dalits
were decided by the feudal lords of the village. For instance, the Dalit women
were forced to bow their heads down in front of the feudal lords. The
discrimination based on caste becomes a part of the day to day life of Dalits.

Dalit girls used to debate on Ambedkar and Gandhi with upper caste girls. Thus,
Gandhi and Ambedkar become the ideological binaries in the lives of the Dalit
girls. She writes that the generation in the 30s and 40s was aware of the three
important values put forward by Ambedkar, i.e., humanitarianism, education
and Buddhism. Baby Kondiba Kamble ends her narrative by criticising that the
assimilation and co-option of the Dalits into the higher castes has made them
forget the memory of Ambedkar. Baby Kondiba Kamble provides a vivid picture
of the vicissitudes of the dalits in Maharashtra. She tries to re-inscribe the
strength of the memory of the dalit assertion to initiate a new form of power to
challenge the existing hierarchies of caste. The autobiography also acts as a
unique text that describes the cultural history of the dalits. The multiple
identities of the dalit communities and caste hindus are explored by Baby
Kamble to deconstruct the wilderness of the society in Maharashtra.

The autobiography Antasphat written by Kumud Pawade transcends the
boundaries between the author and the community. She is a professor of Sanskrit
from Nagpur. She wrote extensively on Vedic, Classical and Phule-Ambedkarite
literature. She is the president of the Progressive Women’s Organisation. It was
formed at Nagpur in 1974. The title of the autobiography _Antasphot_ which means an outburst signifies the experiences of the communities and individuals. She argues that the life worlds of individuals and communities are determined by the institution of caste. At the same time, women are exploited on the basis of caste. She further argues that dalit women are the victims of double oppression. According to Kumud Pawade, _Antasphot_ is not an autobiography but a critical narrative of her experiences. She thinks that dalit life stories are critical narratives not autobiographies. She talks about the intellect of the women related to the Hindu classics. She also explores the patriarchy that existed in the Kunbi families by describing the life of a Kunbi woman Mayabai. Kumud Pawade writes that Mayabai has to live in the house of her husband even after his second marriage. She advised Mayabai to remain away from the Hindu customs such fasting for the husbands etc., which were only meant to legitimise patriarchy within the family. Mayabai leaves her husband and joins the college. Kumud Pawade was happy with the decision of Mayabai because it was the symbol of the change in the life of an oppressed woman. Kumud Pawade also criticizes the constructs of patriarchy that forces women to undergo different rituals for her husband’s long life. For instance, she questions the impact of the constructs such as soubhagyavati. She also criticizes the conspicuous consumption of the elite dalit woman activists who misinterpret the ideals of Ambedkar. She rejects the idea of becoming elite because of the insensitivity of elites to the cause of the poor Dalits. According to Kumud Pawade, leftist groups should also focus on the question of caste and religion. Her husband is from Maratha caste and she faced discriminations from the relatives of her husband.

She also condemns the non-Dalits’ attitude towards the policy of reservation. Caste Hindus used to despise Dalits as government Brahmins because they were
granted constitutional privileges. She also highlights the increase in the atrocities against dalit women and how Maharashtra as a state has moved away from the ideals of Mahatma Jotirao Phule. She criticizes the politicians for only speaking about the legacy of Mahatma Jotirao Phule rather than practicing his values. Thus, she throws light upon the tensions that exist among Dalits in the name of sub-caste. She links such divisiveness to the sacred texts of Hindu religion. For instance, she criticizes Ramayana as an irrational text which places birds and animals over the human life. She criticizes the hunter who is cursed for killing birds in the Ramayana. On the other hand, Rama is praised for killing the golden deer. She argues that dalit writers like Valmiki do not have the dalit consciousness, and it is evident through his writings. Pawade also narrates her existential dilemmas between belonging and being an outsider. Her autobiography searches the multiple meanings of the dalit subjectivity.

Karan Kapadia’s book, *Siva and her sisters: Gender, Caste and Class in Rural South India*, gives us a rigorous ethnographic account of the experiences of a dalit woman. She tries to map the complexities which are prevalent in the dalit lives of Aryullor, a place in Tamil Nadu. This book also tries to explore the nuances that exist between the three categories such as caste, class and gender. Simultaneously, it delves into the fractured sisterhood which is determined by caste. It also distinguishes the self-sufficiency of the dalit women from that of the non-dalit women. The microscopic depiction of the dalit women re-articulates the difference and momentum of the day to day life of the dalit women. The book itself is separated into three sections. The first section of the autobiography is quite elaborate in nature and provides a detailed description of the kinship in Aruloor. That particular section recounts the matrilineal kin and the status of
mother's brother. The chapters that follow provide thick descriptions on astrological discourses, marriage, puberty rituals and experience related to goddess possession. Karan Kapadia draws distinctions between the Brahmin and non-Brahmin ethos.

The categories like non-Brahmin and Tamil are interchanged as a sign which marks the dynamic assertions related to the regional cultures. Brahmins are described as an agency that emphasised the male patrilineage. On the other hand, matrilineal kin is related to the material and affective realms of the non-brahman castes. The deference related to the biological changes like puberty signifies the different identities of the women. The puberty of a non-Brahmin girl is celebrated within her family and community. On the other hand, it is despised as an impure sign related to the family and community of the Brahmin girl. The delineation of the connotations of puberty by Karan Kapadia shows the rigorous mapping of the semiotics of the culture of the lower castes and caste Hindus. The entry of the untouchability to the Brahmin girl when she undergoes puberty is the consequence of the gendered codes of conduct of the caste system. In other words, the Brahmin girl is secluded by her community because of her transition through the puberty/impurity.

However, the second section deals with the impact of caste on the gender and the sexuality. The surveillance and control over the fertility of the dalit women acquires a central position in the life world of the dalit women. The sexuality of the women and chastity are the major preoccupations of the caste Hindus. The attitude of the caste Hindus related to the sexuality of the females and chastity are imitated by the socially mobile lower castes. The act of emulation among the lower castes emerged through their aspirations to achieve the high culture of the
dominant sections within the Hindu religion. The moving of the lower castes towards the Brahmanical ethos provides them a false consciousness in the caste ridden-Indian society.

The third section of the book discusses the nuances of labour. It problematised the arenas of work and modes of production. The alienation of the landless Pallars and their confrontation with the landed/agrarian classes cum middle castes are determined by their lower caste identity and the absence of land reform. The landlessness of the Pallars accelerates their plight in the repressive/agrarian arena of the middle castes. The advent of the new technology in the field of agriculture has affected the division of labour of women. It also had an impact on the wage rates of the women who indulge in agrarian labour. The introduction of sophisticated machines became a threat to the men from the Pallar community who used to do the ploughing. It also changed the work pattern of the Pallar women. The domestic and external division of labour increased the hardships of the Pallar women.

The wilderness that emerged through the competition and sustenance of the Pallar women is perfectly captured by the ethnographic style of this book. This book can be considered as a feminist ethnography which initiated the plural and unequal dimensions of the gendered caste of India. It also engages with the parochial transitions of the marginalized life of the dalit women of South India. The location of these women in Tamil Nadu also challenged the meta-narratives of South India by focusing on the gendered caste dimensions of the Pallar women. Karan Kapadia contributes a paradigm shift in the feminist ethnography of India by projecting the fractured sisterhood of Tamil Nadu. The re-articulation of the social worlds of the dalit women becomes the historical revisionism that
problematised value/caste neutral dominant traditions of the ethnography. The reading of the social capital of the dalit women itself becomes a symbolic power that emanates a rigorous interpretation of caste and gender. The ethnography traces the latent and manifest planes of the culture of the dalit women. Karan Kapadia also enquires the meanings that emerge through the day to day assertions of the dalit women. The micro politics that is inherent in the symbolic journey of the dalit women is recorded in a meticulous manner. The painstaking ethnography of Karan Kapadia is relevant in the field of social sciences due to its heuristic rigour.

Chaya Datar argues that Sharmila Rege focuses upon the erasure caste within the discourse of gender and she invents dalit feminist standpoint through structuralism. Chaya Datar further points out that neither structuralism nor post-structuralism are part of the mainstream perspective which supports urbanization and centralization. These position challenges the hierarchies of diverse social systems but ignored globalization and its response to the fundamentalization of politics. Dalit movement's struggle against Brahmanism is one-dimensional and it failed to address the issue of livelihood of dalit women. Thus, it can not surpass the emancipatory boundaries of contemporary women's movement. She further emphasised the creation of natural and societal resources by Dalit women. They can claim their standpoint by reaching this stage. It becomes a force of liberation and forms vantage a point for this alternative standpoint. The capitalist accumulation creates a new form of subjugation associated with labour. It demands cheap work forces and reserve army of labourers which result in the lower wages and the demand for redistribution of natural resources. Such transitions support privatization. The decorum within
the community and re-structuring of the local market will provide social mobility for the dalit women.

A kind of cultural revival is also essential to develop an alternative paradigm for the empowerment of dalit women. She also figures out the weakness of the dalit feminist standpoint which nurtures the intra-caste patriarchy by the dalit men. Internal patriarchy creates further stratifications and sanskritization which result in domestic violence. The dowry-related death of the dalit women is a disastrous consequence of the intra-caste patriarchy. She also shows the attempts of Dalit woman writers like Baby Kamble that challenged sanskritization among dalit women. She also demonstrates the schism that exists between the dalit women on the basis of class and social mobility. The urban educated dalit women leaders are ignorant of the rural development and cultural oppression of the marginalized women.

The internal hierarchy that exist between these women creates closures within these women. The sub-caste also operates between socially-mobile Mahar women and impoverished non-Mahar women. Dalit women are also fragmented on the basis of the neo-Buddhist identity and non-neo-Buddhist identity. She further argues that Dalit women have to evade the bias towards Gandhian ethos to strengthen the new perspectives on devolpment. The eco-feminist standpoint is alternative in every respect. It places reproduction within the discourse of human activity. It has three dimensions: quotidian reproductive activities related to labour of human beings; production which comes under physical reproductions; and social relations which contain production. The socialization of children also is important in the shaping of cultural identity. Thus, she further explains that cultural revolt is pivotal and part of everyday life. For instance, the
axis to natural resources and water bodies is a part of the above mentioned cultural change. Caste acts as a barrier for the dalit women and their access to the resources. She advises Dalit women to claim such resources rather than leaving them to the Brahmins. She believes that this position will regenerate the ecosystem and development of Dalits.

Subhadra Mitra Channa in her article “The Right to Selfhood: The Paradox being a Dalit woman” argues that concept of human rights can be deployed to the plight of dalits. It can be applied on the life of dalit women. The rights of the dalits should be accepted as human rights. Dalit women are the most marginalized in the Indian society. The issue of dalits should be studied under the sociological theory that analysed oppression in different social systems. Caste regained its exercise of power even after the advent of Buddhism and Bhakti movement. The construction of the selfhood operates within the caste and the oppression is allowed by the oppressed in a much nuanced manner. Subhadra Mitra Channa explores the relationship that exists between rights and cognitive perception of the self. The domination and subordination related to gender is also explained in a detailed manner. The inherent divisions based on age, sex, economic status, and personal qualities result in multiple identities within the particular category. She argues her position by locating the perspective of Bruce M. Knauft which considers that in situations of fragmented and displaced identity, the fight against some inequalities is bound to reproduce others. She takes gender as one mode of divisiveness of identity in dominant castes and Dalits. It is employed to examine the person and rights. The dalit woman and caste Hindu women are located differently within the matrix of their group. Dalit women are stereotyped by her non-dalit counterparts and it is a form of the symbolic violence by the non-Dalits.
Society has demoralized the identity of the dalit women through the hegemony related to the caste. The womanhood which is imagined by the patriarchal ethos of the upper caste shows a docile, mute woman who obeys the dictates of the males from their community. The women from the upper castes were co-opted into a moral order that hinges upon the dependence on the husbands. The same moral order created the anti-modernist practices like the immolation of widows. Life without the husband was judged as futile by the moral order of the cast Hindus. On the other hand, dalit women were treated in a different manner. Dalit women were able to remarry after the death of husbands. She is portrayed as a deviant woman according to the ideals of the Brahmanical womanhood. She further argues that dalit women created a territory of her own through her experiential interventions. She explores the inner view of the construction of gender by analyzing the life of the women from the Dhobi caste. Those women are accepted within their families. The men from their community are not as patriarchal as in other Hindu castes. The shared labour which is essential for their survival erased the boundaries of their gendered identities such as dalit man and dalit woman. The time related to their labour too doesn’t allow them to ruminate over the schism based on gender. The men and women share the labour and the children are also very independent because of their harsh circumstances. The democratic atmosphere that exists between the dalit male and dalit woman is a peculiarity of the life world of dhobi caste.

The dalit women are sexually exploited because they challenge the code of conduct of the dominant Hindu patriarchal society. Such women are easily exploited by the upper caste males because they consider these women as an aberration from their ideal womanhood. The dalit men can not protect the dalit women. On the other hand, the caste Hindu women are suppressed and
protected from the males from respective castes. The educated dalit men want their wives to discard their traditional jobs. Thus, she becomes a housewife and dependent on him. This dependency becomes an obstacle to her prior autonomy and forces her to conform to the upper caste cultures of domesticity. The highly-educated dalit women do not get proper partners from her community. Some of them also marry outside their community to overcome the subordinate stereotyping associated with dalit women. Some of them remain within the family because they do not get recognition outside their community. Thus, they are denied the rights in the traditional and modern order of life. She argues that the society of caste Hindus have to re-modify its model of gender accommodation and respect the dynamic femininity of the dalit women.

Susie Tharu and Tejaswini Niranjana in their pioneering article “Problems for a contemporary theory of gender” enquire into the meaning of the visibility of the category of the women in different spheres. They link it with the impact of that form of visibility in the field of gender theory and feminist practice. The women in this discourse stand as the subject for feminism. They argue that the subject also signifies the agency, addressee and field of enquiry of feminism. The visibility thus becomes a sign of the success of the women’s movement in India. They also contend that such success is problematic in nature. The alliances with the subaltern agencies such as dalits are not formed within the discourses of feminism. It is trapped in the perturbing issues of the dominant culture.

The feminist discourses of the 1970s and 1980s debunked the unheard voices in the impeachable universalism. For instance, the campaign against eve-teasing has created antagonism with the patriarchal interests of the society. The feminist assertions of the 1980s and 1990s had to undergo the pressures of
communalization of the public sphere and depoliticisation of the funding. The
demolition of the Babri Masjid, the construction of Ram Mandir and penetration
of global funding created different forms of resistances across India. The
liberalization economy also created different forms of inequalities in India. The
feminists became aware of the Hindutva forces' interests in addressing the Shah
Bano case. Simultaneously, they became critical of their own stance on the
uniform civil code. Similarly, the dalit men were harassed by the upper caste
men by being accused as the perpetrators of sexual harassment in Chunduru.
The introduction of new medicines into the national family planning
programmes undermined the freedom, right to choose and self determination.
These contradictions related to gender analysis are also observed in the nuances
of the class analysis. These contradictions are also located within the broader
framework of the crisis of the democracy and secularism. The contradictions
change the categories of gender, caste and class. It also restructures community
composition of the 'subject' that exists in the dominant system. The humanism
neutralized by naturalizing the citizen-subject. The right is predicated on the
human subject. Thus it is shown as citizen-subject and political subject. Such
imaginations foregrounded gender, caste and community as a part of the social
terrain. It also showed these categories as the incidental attributes of the human
self. It also obfuscated the historical and social/culture organizing the subject of
politics. The emergence of normative Indian subject resulted in the binaries of
othering. It finished in the dialectical rendering of inequality and opposition with
the classical subject of western liberalism. Simultaneously, it restructures power
through the reiteration of upper-caste, middle-class, Hindu, and male. This
transition also located upper-caste/upper-class female respectability as a counter
element to the lower caste licentiousness. The issues related to Mandal agitation,
and atrocities against dalits at Chunduru are taken as the metonyms of gender by
Susie Tharu and Tejaswini Niranjana to explore the shifts in the cultural meanings. The Mandal discourse witnessed the polarity between the upper caste women and dalit women on the arguments related to meritocracy. The atrocities against the Dalits in Chunduru by the upper castes by stereotyping dalits as the agents of sexual abuse shows the changes in the meanings of sexuality and caste. For instance, the sexual abuse of the dalit women by the upper caste men is sanctioned as custom. The eve-teasing by upper caste men on the dalit women result is another atrocity meted out to the Dalits. Muslim and Dalit women are becoming the target of the medicines that are imported to regulate their fertility. These debates on the metonyms are incorporated by these authors to rethink new possibilities of alliances between the Dalits’ movements and feminist movements. Thus, this article becomes an attempt to raise the question of counter hegemonic politics.

Section II: Patriarchy

Jyoti Lanjewar puts forth her views in her article entitled ‘Social problems of Dalit women’. In this essay, she argues that society treats Dalit women in a form of double subordination because they are women in general and born of Dalit caste in particular which has linked to patriarchy. They are victims of sexual exploitation be it in offices, work places or in politics. These experiences end up making them insecure. Commenting on internal patriarchy she says that women are harassed physically and mentally both in the domestic realm as well as out of it. On the one hand women are facing the burden of household chores; on the other hand they also have to struggle outside the home for livelihood. Dalit men are suspicious of women when they work out of home, often accusing them of extra-marital affairs. Making matters worse, women are sexually harassed at
their work places by their co-workers. Women are thus caught in between. She also criticises the double standards of Dalit male writers. The problem of Dalit male writers is the problem of dissonance between theory and practice. Dalit males rightly express the exclusion and oppression of Dalit women in their writings. But, in every day life, they continue to view Dalit women from the same patriarchal mindset.

Surendra Jhondale in his article “Theoretical underpinning of the emancipation of the Dalit women”, argues about the internal patriarchy of dalit community which is regulated through the social norms of larger society. However, the external patriarchy also operates the power on dalit rural and urban women through forms of atrocities and exploitations. Therefore, dalit women are victims of dual patriarchy and failure to question patriarchal notions like a common middle class /caste women. Thus, failed to adopt the new values and also not leaving the old Hindu values and norms. Jhondale mainly distinguishes the dalit and not dalit women’s difference from the view point of Phule and Ambedkar.

In the article “Dalit women: Issues and perspectives: some critical Reflections” Vidyut Bhagwat argues that social stratification of Dalit women are determined by the system of graded inequality. Dalit women as agency possess revolutionary potential to challenge the relationship between caste and gender. However, patriarchies that exist within Dalit and non-Dalit community re-structure the oppressed status of Dalit women.

Gopal Guru in his article “Dalit women Talk differently” argues that Dalit feminism in Maharashtra is a phenomenon propagated by the urban middle-class educated Dalit women in the 1990s. The fundamental argument put forward by
Dalit feminists is that Dalit women are a different category from women in other castes and communities. However, the women's movement in India is not concerned with the problems of Dalit women. It has been concerned primarily with the difference between class and patriarchy but not caste and women. Dalit feminists argue that Dalit women are triply oppressed based on caste, class and gender. Further, they have consciously highlighted two issues: 'external' and 'internal'. On the external side, they argued that when the non-Dalit women talk about the shared position of Dalit women's representation, then it reduced the applicability and actuality of their problems at theoretical and political level.

Dalit women questioned the multifaceted character of their exploitation including their own community and attacked the patriarchy within Dalits in the public and private spheres. As Dalit leaders' systematic obfuscation of the Dalit women's questions in post-Ambedkerian period is directly the result of the Dalit patriarchy.

However, Sharmila Rege in her article "Dalit Women Talk Differently: A Critique of 'Difference' and towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position" points out that, in response to mainstream feminist movement after independence, Dalit women began to re-write their history using the ideological premises of Phule and Ambedkar. They challenged them (mainstream feminist) by raising the issue of the relationship between caste and gender. They began to question the claims of the Brahmin women by narrating their experiences in literary writings. Populist social movements like Shethkari Sangathana of Maharashtra and Rayat Sanga of Karnataka attracted the Dalit women. But, Dalit women criticised such movement's insensitivity towards the question of Dalit agricultural labourers. Dalit women have to resist the day to day exploitation based on caste, gender
and labour. Dalit women challenged the intellectual subordination of non-Dalit women through their writings.

The post-Ambedkarite ideologues of Dalit politics too sidelined the representation of Dalit women. Dalit men were dominant in the sphere of culture and marginalised Dalit women from that particular field. Dalit women’s assertions problematised new forms of caste, gender and economic policies. The internal hierarchy that exist within the Dalit women organizations should be avoided to strengthen the collectivity among Dalit women. Therefore, a kind of paradigm took place in the field of social theory, like the shift from Eurocentric/white feminist narratives to that of differences. The absence of race in the dominant white feminist is challenged in the context of this epistemological rupture. The post-modernist scholarship merely focused on the colonial domination but sidelined the pre-colonial elements of caste and gender. The emergence of Dalit women’s assertions is highlighted through such a theoretical turn. The Dalit women’s assertion became a reality in the caste-based consciousness from the 1980s onwards.

The foundational aspects of Indian historiography are demystified by the foregrounding of historical revisionism of Dalit women. For instance Phule’s notion of Baliraja of equality challenged the dominant notion of Ramrajya and provided a critique to the Brahmanical patriarchy. Savitribai Phule’s letters are read as testimonials that explored the relationship between knowledge and power; it emphasised the democratisation of knowledge for Sudras and women. The non-representation of Dalit women in different context is projected as the polarization between gender and caste. The feminist standpoint itself is projected as a different feminist standpoint which is open to liberatory interrogation and
divisions. The inclusion of non-Dalit feminist to the field of Dalit feminism is justified as an epistemic priority to evade the narrow Dalit identity politics.

Uma Chakravarti in her article “Reconceptualising Gender: Phule Brahmanism and Brahmanical Patriarchy” talks about how the non-Brahman movement has taken steps to challenge the Brahmanical patriarchy. She explores the realm of radical assertions against the forms of patriarchy through the practices of Mahatma Jotiba Phule. The ardent moves of Mahatma Phule, Savitribai Phule, Shahu Maharaj, Mukta Salve, Tarabai Shiende challenged the Brahmanical patriarchy, giving rise to a new discourse on gender based equality. The radical action of Phule toppled the surveillance system of the Brahmanical patriarchy on the bodies of untouchable women. They questioned the ideological and day to day forms of regulations by setting forth their counter cultures.

Eleanor Zelliot in her article “Dr. Ambedkar and Empowerment of Women” argues that the empowerment of Dalits was one of the major focus areas of the Ambedkarite movement. Ambedkar debunked the Hindu scriptures to expose the negative representation of women. Thus, he exposed the relation of caste with patriarchy. He advised Dalit women to acquire self dignity by avoiding caste-based ornaments and dress codes that are legitimized through the Brahmanical ideology. He introduced the Hindu Code Bill that became an epoch in the history Dalit women. He further questioned authority of Hindu religion by supporting the subversive assertions of the Dalit women. The political struggles of Dalit women will democratise the hierarchy that exists in the Dalit community.
In the context of the state of Andhra Pradesh, Vasanth Kannabiran and Kalpana Kannabiran in their article “Caste and Gender: Understanding Dynamics of Power and Violence” argue that violence that erupt in rural areas are affected by the caste and power of that region with relation of patriarchy. Dalit women and Dalit man are prone to such violence because of their significantly lower caste status and non-material class conditions. Dalits also could not establish connections in the bureaucracy and other institutions because of the feudal conditions of Andhra Pradesh. Dalit women are targeted in caste-based violence initiated by the dominant sections. The violence against Dalit women is also influenced by the masculinities of the non-dalit/land-owning castes and classes which have a direct co-relation with caste and gender.

Archana Hatekar’s article ‘Status of Dalit women in the family’ argues that within Dalit women two categories can be drawn—uneducated and educated and how patriarchy operates within these two class categories of dalit women. She argues that uneducated dalit women faced the problem of poverty and unemployment. They have to work as agricultural or seasonal labourers. They do not get the minimum wages. Domestic violence is rife. So, these Dalit women turned to Hindu Gods and Goddess to escape the harsh reality of daily life. On the other hand, educated women in the Dalit family were too engrossed with the family. Still, she has no autonomy and decision making powers in everyday life. Even though an educated Dalit woman is able to earn, she still cannot make choices because of shared poverty within the structure of family. Despite being educated, these women are superstitious. Dr. Ambedkar has clearly espoused the concept of equality of women both in the public and private sphere and has empowered them by providing laws such as Hindu Code Bill; yet Dalit patriarchy did not allow them liberation in any sphere. Dalit males in
Maharashtra are quite aware and educated, but their extra-marital affairs have been a major problem for Dalit women. Dalit women are being subjected to tremendous psychological/mental pressures. Thus, she is unable to grow intellectually. Many Dalit families also practice dowry. The Dalit patriarchy has still not recognised the role of women in social spheres such as politics; thus, Dalit women continue to remain confined at home.

According to S. Ananadi in her article “The Women’s Question in the Dravidian Movement c.1925-1948”, the self-respect movement created consciousness among women and empowered them to question the patriarchal ideology of Hindu religion. They conducted self-respect marriages which defied the rituals of the mainstream/dominant Hindu marriages. Leaders like Periyor E.V. Ramasamynaikkar supported and promoted the self-respect marriages. He condemned child marriages as being against the self formation of women. Women from different walks of life were married according to the political activities of self-respect marriages; for instance, the movement avoided terms like husband and wife and introduced the word comrade for the male and female. Periyor deconstructed the power inherent in language by coining new words for such derogatory terms as prostitutes. The nationalist movement incorporated patriarchy to mobilise the women during the freedom struggle. However, the self-respect movement created solidarity among women and organized them against patriarchy. Sadly, the same movement in later years imbibed the values of patriarchy.

Gail Omvedt in her article “The Downtrodden among the Downtrodden: An Interview with Dalit Agricultural Labourer” explores the life of a Dalit woman agricultural labourer Kaminibai to understand the wilderness of caste and
patriarchy that regulated the Dalit women in the realm of agriculture. The sexual and other forms of division of labour are characterised by the harsh lives of these women. Dalit women who are agricultural labourers are conscious of the absence of a leader like Ambedkar in contemporary India. They also challenged those women who oppressed the Dalit women agricultural labourers on the basis of caste. The lack of social security schemes are seen as an extension of the caste-based exclusion. According to these women, the policies of the nation state are irresponsible and invisible in nature, failing to uplift poor women. They pointed out that illiteracy of Dalit women was as an obstacle for the creation of Dalit women leaders from the Dalit community.

In another article "Head-loads and Heart-breaks" P. Sainath argues that the social location of Dalit women manual scavenger represents the diverse relations that exist between caste, labour and patriarchy. The persistence of the derogatory caste-based occupation in post-colonial India indicates the impositions of the caste-based labour on the Dalit women. Those Dalit women who perform stigmatised occupations have to face day to day caste-based discriminations. The labour of such women itself is degraded and it intensifies the backwardness of her social worlds. Dalit women manual scavengers are forced to involve in such labour of disgrace by the males from their own communities and the non-Dalit man/women. The struggle of Dalit women who refused to continue such occupations is repressed by the caste Hindus in a ruthless manner. The delay on the part of politicians to abolish such occupations is made worse by the caste-based ideology of that particular region. This labour is not accepted by the non-Dalits and Dalit women are imposed to remain under the cycle of caste-based occupations that maintains the patriarchy.
Pratima Pardeshi in her article “Hindu Code Bill and Liberation of Women” argues that the introduction of Hindu Code Bill by Ambedkar created a major impact by unveiling the relation between the caste and patriarchy. Therefore, the critique of the Hindu scripture liberated women from the institutions of caste and patriarchy. Further she tries to situate the discourse of Hindu Code Bill as an extension of political practices of Jotirao Phule. In her understanding, the role of Dalit women in the Ambedkarite movement itself is a history of the identity of Dalit women.

Bela Malik in her article “Untouchability and Dalit women’s Oppression” argues that Dalit women are the most vulnerable among Dalits and non-Dalits. Division of labour within the household determines the gendering of their labour. It is associated with the patriarchy within Dalit families.

Uma Chakravarty in her work Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens explores the relationship between caste and gender and patriarchy. She describes the cultures of violence that give rise to an unequal society. The Brahmanical patriarchy regulates the sexuality of women through the caste system. It also influences the labour of women and the transfer of gendered resources within the society. The marriage that is conducted within the same caste also reproduces multiple forms of discrimination against the women.

Kishore Kale’s autobiography Kolhatyacha Por describes the patriarchal norms that dominated the life of a Dalit woman, Shantabai Kale. She was exploited by the male members of her family. Her labours were a means to their livelihood; she was forced to do the work of a dancer. Her occupation as a dancer made her a vulnerable target of sexual exploitation from the caste Hindus. She leaves her
son due to the vicious nature of her labour. This narrative explores the nuances of the caste-based performance of a dance known as Tamasha; it commodifies the sexuality of women. The Dalit women dancers become victims of continuous marginalisation. These women are judged in the name of virginity.

The consensus of the community on the labour of the women from the community shows the patriarchy that exists within the community. The aged among the Dalit women dancers are abandoned by their caste Hindu partners and community. They are not able to work and earn their livelihood. Most of the women face patriarchy and internalise it. The daughters who are born out of those women are also forced to carry the stigma. The marriages of these women exist as an aberrant similar to endogamy that exist between different castes. Thus, the tradition of endogamy is broken through marriage but it also results in a new tradition of caste-based patriarchy. The derogatory remarks of the Dalit males and non-Dalits on the dalit women dancers mark these dancers as the unmediated other. It reveals the endless stereotyping that is attached to caste-based labour of the dalit women dancer. These women are trapped in the popular culture that regulates their subjectivity and sexuality.

Daya Pawar in his autobiography Baluta searches the meaning of the existence of the Dalit women. They are subjected to the sexual exploitation by the Dalit men. Dalit men involve in licentious activities with Dalit women. Thus, the institution of family is challenged through the extra-marital affairs of the Dalit men. He also talks about Dalit men who are exploited by the women from the Maratha castes. But, caste is maintained in such relationships. Dalit men, who suspect their wives and abandon them, stand for the diabolic activities of Dalit male chauvinists.
Urmila Pawar is one of the pioneering Dalit woman writers of Maharashtra. Her autobiography *Aaaidan* is about the life of the Dalits in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. She argues that caste has acquired new forms in contemporary society. Urmila Pawar describes the caste that existed in the schools by delineating the punishment of dalit students by the non-dalit teachers. She also criticizes the Brahmanical impact on the native Buddhist community by showing the highly sanskritised jargons on their cards. Her autobiography is significant because she wrote about her marital rape in a critical manner which has direct link of patriarchy.

Pawar also sketches the patriarchal attitude of her husband towards her career as a writer. She also shows how the Dalit male writers ignored the question of Dalit women’s writing. For instance, a dalit male writer left the stage while dalit women writers started their session. She wrote about Ambedkar as a great person who introduced the Hindu code bill for the welfare of the Indian women. She argues that non-dalit feminists are not aware of the struggles of Ambedkar related to the Hindu code bill. Urmila Pawar also challenges the rituals and customs which are imposed on women. She is conscious of the ideology of patriarchy which is inherent in such rituals and customs. She refused to wipe off her vermillion mark after the demise of her husband. This act of refusal can be explained as the protest of a dalit woman against the Brahmanical patriarchy that exists within dalits and the dominant Hindu society. Her autobiography remains a discursive text which unveiled the transitions of dalit patriarchy and caste.

Padma Velaskar in her article “At the Intersection of Class, Caste and Patriarchy: Exploring Dalit women’s oppression” argues that the marginalized location of dalit women is complicated by her position within the categories of caste, class
and patriarchy. She interprets the multiple and unequal status of the dalit women. She argues that Dalit women identify a member of her community with the Dalit men. She further describes that Dalit women identifies with non-Dalit women as women. She also identifies her as downtrodden and shares her identity with the working class. This complicated account of the dalit women challenges the empirical master narratives on the life of the dalit women. The dynamics of caste, class and patriarchy creates a new form of oppression. The dalit men and dalit women are polluted by their lower caste status. The shared labour between the dalit men and dalit women complicate the labour of the dalit women. The labour of the dalit women is controlled by the vested interests of the feudal society. The sexuality of lower caste women is viewed as something that can be transgressed by the caste Hindus. The Brahmanical patriarchy accelerates the subordination of dalit women. Capitalism and its new forms have affected the labour of the dalit women. Padma Velaskar shows the dearth of dalit critical theories to understand the multiple meanings of such oppression. She also argues that such theories should excavate the inter-subjectivity across the oppressed sections. Such a step is very essential to re-create environment for social justice.

Gabriel Dietrich in her article “Dalit movements and Women’s movements” explores the tension that exists between women’s movement and dalit movement in India in the discourse of caste and patriarchy. She argues that the violence against Dalit women should be addressed in a positive manner. The caste factor is reduced in the movements of women and it results in the solidarity on the basis of the women as victims of violence. But, the absence of the description of violence that is deployed to control Dalit women, exist within the field of women’s and Dalit movement. This particular stand point overrides that if
patriarchy is solved than caste will wither as a natural order. This position provides primacy to Brahmanism and result in the romanticization of Dalit and tribal cultures. Thus, the actual space of the dalit women is ignored as a theoretical and empirical consequence. Simultaneously, dalit movement also associate the Dalit women with caste and therefore neglects the gendered dimensions of patriarchy. The resistance of Dalit women against the oppression within their family distinguishes them from the non-dalit women. These are crises which has relation to communication between the women's movement and Dalit women. The urban-centred women's movements are not aware of the oppression of the dalit women in rural areas. Dalit leaders also show their patriarchal interests in not addressing the assault on the women. Dalit women are thus doubly alienated from their own community as well as women's movement. Hence, the complication of caste and gender within the framework of patriarchy is explained by the Bodi riots and Allalapari issue. Bodi-Nayakanur, a place, in Tamil Nadu witnessed caste violence between Thevars and Pallars in October 1989. A Dalit woman named Muthupillia was killed and culprits were acquitted as innocent by the concerned legal and bureaucratic authorities. The caste violence is portrayed as an outburst against the provocative speech of Dalit leaders John Pandian. The posters that appeared against Pandian abounded with misogynistic caricatures about Dalit women. Women's movement did not take any position on the murder of this woman. And the question of control over the Dalit women is synonymous with the exercising of the caste-based superiority. Dalit community too recreated the fantasies about the rape. This particular incident symbolized the multiple dimensions of caste and gender with external patrichy. In the second incident, Dalit women were raped by caste Hindu males. The rape of Dalit women is a part of ongoing anti-caste struggle of Dalit movement, but it has to develop a nuanced understanding of caste-based
patriarchy. The liberation movement of rural women also shares the patriarchal temperament of the society. The majority of the members were rural landless labourers.

We thus conclude this chapter which examined the feminist discourse on caste and gender. In the next chapter, we will map out the politics of Dalit feminism, which began in the 1960s, as well as outline Dalit feminist assertions.