Abstract

Caste violence is an area of investigation that is not well developed in academic scholarship. Writings that discuss caste or mention the caste discrimination are not usually to be found on the syllabus of many educational institutions. The politics of silence on caste also becomes a reason for dalits' inability/failure to address the caste discrimination. In this thesis, I have attempted to discuss caste violence in its different manifestations in the context of both atrocities committed on dalits and the everyday presence of caste both in the rural and urban setup.

In Chapter 1, I introduce the history of dalit movement to locate the social position of dalits in contemporary society, and the scholarship on violence in the categories such as racial violence, communal violence and gender violence in order to locate my work on caste violence and its significance.

In Chapter 2, I discuss dalit feminism, to provide an understanding of caste and gender politics. I attempt to discuss and present my understanding of dalit women's position in the caste and patriarchal structures of the society and dalit patriarchy and casteist patriarchy that marginalizes dalit women. I look at caste violence in the succeeding chapters from a dalit feminist perspective.

In Chapter 3, I discuss caste violence in the context of atrocities in contemporary society. I look at dalit women's autobiographies, reports on caste violence, online resources etc which enabled me to present my understanding on caste violence. I have divided caste
violence into three sections in this chapter: caste violence on dalits at collective level, caste violence on individual dalits and intra-caste violence on dalit women.

In Chapter 4, I discuss symbolic caste violence, everyday presence of caste and inferior social position given to dalits in society. Caste discrimination and invisible caste prejudices create a constant violent situation for dalits on their minds. Also, the non-physical forms of caste violence became more present for dalits who enter the upper-caste dominated spaces like schools, colleges and universities. Such unrecognized symbolic caste violence is expressed through dalit and dalit women autobiographies. So I have attempted to discuss symbolic caste violence in this chapter through dalit women’s autobiographies. In this chapter too, I make three major divisions in symbolic caste violence: symbolic caste violence on dalits at collective level, symbolic caste violence on individual dalits and symbolic intra-caste violence and dalit patriarchy.