

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND DALITS

Dr. M. Jeyaseelan



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Dalit Women Issues and Challenges

Dr. Mrs. M. Meenakumari

Society is the biggest reason behind many problems faced by women, to move ahead it has to be left behind. Historically, oppression has been and continues to be a serious issue of concern in both developed and underdeveloped countries. Caste has played an instrumental role in raising issues related to the more marginalized among women. In a highly hierarchical society, women belonging to the lower castes have lesser access to public. In India the combined effects of the caste system, class inequality, and patriarchy result in the marginalization of more than half the population. The caste system in India had been formed ages ago and traces of this caste system have been observed in various religious and literary works of ancient Indian society. According to this caste system, people were divided into mainly four castes i.e. Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. But apart from these four castes, there was another class of people known as Dalits which was considered to be lowest caste in all. These people were those who are neglected and outcasted by all the class of people and also they had to do impure works.

Since ancient times, there had been many instance recorded where women were discriminated on the basis of caste, race and gender. The ancient dominant society is still influential in today's caste divided culture in many parts of India. Although many steps have been taken to prevent discrimination against women. Earlier, through history, women have been victims of many offences such as prostitution, murder, rape, human trafficking and till date, many of such offences are repeatedly committed in many parts of India. This region mostly covers rural areas where discrimination on the basis of caste has been highest.

Women, in many societies, are often restricted to the roles inside the household of wife and mother. While major changes have occurred in the