

RE-CASTING THE SOCIAL IN THE AFTERMATH OF CASTE-BASED SEXUAL
VIOLENCE: A STUDY OF GENDER AND CASTE RELATIONS IN RURAL
MAHARASHTRA

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VIOLENCE: A STUDY OF GENDER AND CASTE RELATIONS IN RURAL
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by

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **Re-Casting the Social in the aftermath of Caste-based Sexual Violence: A Study of Gender and Caste Relations in Rural Maharashtra** being submitted by **Rupali Bansode** to the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, for the award of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a record of the bonafide work carried by her under my supervision. In my opinion, the thesis has reached the standards of fulfilling the requirements for submission relating to the degree.

The contents of the thesis have not been submitted in part or full, to any other university or institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis identifies and builds on the two ways the question of sexual violence against women has been addressed in scholarly literature: firstly individualised understanding of sexual violence as a form of violence against women, and secondly, sexual violence as a weapon of domination on women from specific marginalised groups, like the Dalits in India. Much of the existing literature suggests that sexual violence against Dalit women is often a form of collective punishment against Dalits who fail to ‘mind their place’ by actively engaging in bids of social mobility and self-assertion. Building on the case study of Satyabhama, a Dalit victim of caste-based sexual violence, committed by the upper-caste men and Mang (Dalit) men and women, this thesis recognizes but also challenges the binary of upper-castes men as perpetrators and lower-castes women as victims. This binary is generally drawn in the existing literature that focuses on the question of sexual violence against Dalit women. Considering the lack of ethnographic literature on Dalit lives in the aftermath of a caste atrocity in a rural setting, this thesis attempts to provide a thick ethnography of how caste-based sexual violence transforms and shapes everyday gendered and caste-divided sociality in rural India.

Through this thesis, I attempt to bridge the lacuna that exists in understanding the question of sexual violence against Dalit women. To address this lacuna this thesis builds on three fields- feminist anthropology, anthropology and sociology, and thus, contributes to all these fields by engaging with themes like caste, Dalits, Dalit women, gender, violence, the everyday, politics, social movement, Dalit feminism, which are crucial to all the three fields. In the zeal to build the lacuna that exists in the literature on sexual violence, I have come to focus on themes or have addressed issues that have gotten sidelined in the shifts of fields or the trajectory of social movements. This thesis focuses on violence in the rural setting, which has remained ignored due to the shift of anthropological and sociological inquiry into the urban locales. In the rural setting, too, this study primarily focuses on Dalit lives as Dalit lived realities have remained ignored in anthropological and sociological literature. Under the idea of the Dalit community, the complex intra-community dynamics remain undiscussed; Satyabhama’s case study helped me to bring those nuances between two communities into focus. Further, despite existing feminist literature on sexual violence, the question of sexual violence against Dalit women remained undermined in the feminist and Dalit movements and their literature, and this study

attempts to build that gap by underlining the necessity of a separate framework to understand this violence.

सार

यह थीसिस विद्वानों द्वारा दो तरीकों से चर्चा किये महिलाओं के खिलाफ होने वाली यौन हिंसा की पहचान करती हैं: पहिली व्यक्तिगत समज की यौन हिंसा यह महिलाओं के खिलाफ होने वाली हिंसा हैं और दूसरी बात यह की यौन हिंसा का महिलाओं के प्रति वर्चस्व दिखने के लिए हथियार के तरह उपयोग। विशेषतः महिलाएँ जो हाशियेपर समाज से आती है, जैसे की भारत का दलित समाज। मौजूदा साहित्य दर्शाता है कि दलित महिलाओं के खिलाफ यौन हिंसा अक्सर दलितों के खिलाफ सामूहिक सजा का एक रूप हैं। यह थीसिस सत्यभामा नामक दलित महिला, जो महाराष्ट्र के मातंग समाज से आती है, पर महाराष्ट्र के दो मराठा समाज के पुरुषों और १८ मांग समाज के पुरुषों और महिलाओं द्वारा किये गए यौन हिंसा की केस का अभ्यास करती हैं। यह थीसिस स्थापित दलित महिलाओं पर होने वाली जातीय यौन हिंसा, जिसमें उच्चवर्णन्य पुरुष अपराधी और दलित महिला और दलित समाज शिकार इस द्विचर को मानती है लेकिन साथही इस अपराधी-शिकार के द्विचर की जांच भी करती है। जातीय-हिंसा होने के बाद दलित समाज अपनी रोजमर्रा की ज़िन्दगी कैसे बिताता है, इसका अनुसंधान मौजूदा साहित्य में नहीं हुआ है। इसलिए यह थीसिस नृवंशविज्ञान शोध विधि के द्वारा जातीय-हिंसा के बाद दलित समाज की रोजमर्रा की वास्तविकता पर चर्चा करती हैं।

इस थीसिस के माध्यम से, मैंने मौजूदा साहित्य में दलित महिलाओं के खिलाफ की जाने वाली जातीय यौन हिंसा को लेकर समझ को मजबूत बनाने की कोशिश की हैं। इस समझ को मजबूत करने के लिए यह थीसिस नारीवादी नृविज्ञान, नृविज्ञान और समाजशास्त्र को आधार मानती हैं, और साथ ही इन तीनों क्षेत्रों में योगदान करती हैं। यौन हिंसा की समाज को लेकर स्थापित साहित्य की कमी को भरने हेतु, मैंने उन पहलुओं पर ध्यान दिया है जो अक्सर साहित्यिक क्षेत्रों में हुए बदलवाओं में छूप जाते हैं। यह थीसिस ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में हिंसा पर केंद्रित है, जिसे शहरी स्थानों में मानवविज्ञानी और समाजशास्त्रीय जाँच के स्थानांतरण के कारण अनदेखा किया गया हैं। ग्रामीण सेटिंग में भी, यह अध्ययन मुख्य रूप से दलित जीवन पर केंद्रित है क्योंकि दलितों के जीवन की वास्तविकता को मानवशास्त्रीय और समाजशास्त्रीय साहित्य में नजरअंदाज कर दिया गया हैं। दलित समाज को समरूप देखने के वजह से इस समूह के अंतर्गत गतिकी पर चर्चा नहीं हो पाती। सत्यभामा के केस स्टडी ने मुझे दो समुदायों के बीच उन बारीकियों को ध्यान में लाने में मदद की। इसके अलावा, यौन हिंसा पर मौजूदा नारीवादी साहित्य के बावजूद, दलित महिलाओं के खिलाफ यौन हिंसा का सवाल नारीवादी और दलित आंदोलनों और उनके साहित्य में कमतर रहा। इस अध्ययन के द्वारा जातीय

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