Quest for Equity
Urban Dalit Women Employees and Entrepreneurs

Centre for Social Equity & Inclusion
November 2010
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Quest for Equity

Urban Dalit Women Employees and Entrepreneurs
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# Table of Contents

Quest for Equity ................................................................................................................................. 1

**URBAN DALIT WOMEN EMPLOYEES AND ENTREPRENEURS** .............................................. 1

**TABLE OF CONTENTS** .............................................................................................................. 5

**ABBREVIATIONS** ..................................................................................................................... 5

**CHAPTER 1** .............................................................................................................................. 8

Introduction and Context of the Study .............................................................................................. 8

**CHAPTER 2** .............................................................................................................................. 21

Methodology ..................................................................................................................................... 21

**CHAPTER 3** .............................................................................................................................. 26

Caste, Class and Gender based Discrimination in the Labour Market in the Context of Globalization: A Conceptual Framework of Analysis ........................................................................ 26

**CHAPTER 4** .............................................................................................................................. 38

National and State Policies ............................................................................................................. 38

**CHAPTER 5** .............................................................................................................................. 48

DELHI ............................................................................................................................................... 48

Government Sector Employment .................................................................................................... 48

**CHAPTER 6** .............................................................................................................................. 57

DELHI ............................................................................................................................................... 57

Private Sector Employment ............................................................................................................. 57

**CHAPTER 7** .............................................................................................................................. 66

DELHI ............................................................................................................................................... 66

NGO Sector Employment ................................................................................................................ 66

**CHAPTER 8** .............................................................................................................................. 73

DELHI ............................................................................................................................................... 73

Entrepreneurs ................................................................................................................................... 73

**CHAPTER 9** .............................................................................................................................. 80

HYDERABAD ................................................................................................................................... 80

Government Sector Employment .................................................................................................... 80

**CHAPTER 10** ............................................................................................................................. 89
Abbreviations

AIDMAM All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch
AP Andhra Pradesh
BPO Business Process Outsourcing
CEDAW The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CII Confederation of Indian Industries
CSEI Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion
CSO Civil Society Organization
DSFDC Delhi Scheduled Caste Finance Development Corporation
DW Dalit Women
EUDW Educated Urban Dalit Women
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GEM Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
GNP Gross National Product
FICCI Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
ICT Information and Communication Technology
ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO International Labour Organization
ITC Industrial Training Centre
GoI Government of India
MFI Microfinance Institution
NCMP National Common Minimum Program
NCT National Capital Territory of Delhi
NGO Non Government Organization
NSSO National Sample Survey Organization
OBC Other Backward Classes
OHCHR Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
PSU Public Sector Unit
RTI Right to Information Act
SC Scheduled Caste
SCSP Scheduled Castes Sub Plan
SHG Self Help Group
ST Scheduled Tribe
UDHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN The United Nations
UPA United Progressive Alliance
Chapter 1

Introduction and Context of the Study

“Our vision of inclusive growth can be translated into reality only if the socially disadvantaged groups, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other Backward Classes and Minorities, be at the heart of policy initiatives of our government. Productive employment generation with ‘decent work’ conditions is an important concern not only for national employment policy, but also for the national agenda of inclusive growth.”

Annual Report to the People on Employment, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, July 2010

This study is concerned with the opportunities and challenges experienced by Educated Urban Dalit Women (EUDW) in the contemporary labour market in India. It explores the interplay of caste, class and gender in moulding the aspirations, efforts and achievements of Dalit women (DW) under the globalization and liberalization reforms of the 21st century. It analyzes caste and gender based exclusion and discrimination in urban employment and entrepreneurship policies and practices. It underscores the relevance of a social and gender justice framework and a rights-based approach to understanding and promoting Dalit women’s economic empowerment and social upliftment. This study is the outcome of a participatory process, involving Dalit researchers and activists at different levels and drawing deeply on the perspectives and experiences of EUDW. An underlying motivation of the study is to develop appropriate advocacy and programme strategies to address caste, class and gender based barriers in urban employment and enterprises in line with securing and promoting the rights of EUDW in labour market and the wider society.

Objectives of the Study
This study analyzes the prospects and challenges EUDW face in accessing decent and quality employment and in undertaking entrepreneurship in an urban environment that is influenced by globalization and market-oriented economic reforms. It assesses these experiences with reference to the livelihoods and rights of EUDW. It provides an in-depth study of these different aspects in two metropolises in India, Delhi and Hyderabad, both cities having had major exposure and experience with liberalisation reforms since the 1990s.

The objectives of the study are to analyze:

i) Employment and entrepreneurship opportunities accessed by EUDW in the context of globalization

ii) The work experiences of EUDW and Dalit women entrepreneurs in relation to their livelihoods and rights

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*The study looked at Delhi National Capital Territory (NCT) and the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, for the purposes of this report, ‘Delhi’ will mean Delhi National Capital Territory and ‘Hyderabad’ will mean both Hyderabad and Secunderabad.*
iii) National and state level policies for promoting and implementing rights and provisions as related to employment and entrepreneurship development for EUDW in the context of globalization

iv) Caste, class and gender biases in the family, community, state and private sectors that influence the opportunities of EUDW in higher education as well as in employment and entrepreneurship

v) Strategies adopted by the EUDW for dealing with the challenges that have confronted them in work and at home

The study is guided by the following research questions:

i) What are the main opportunities and challenges opened up for EUDW through the globalization and liberalization reforms undertaken in India since 1990s?

ii) What have the national and state governments done to promote employment for EUDW? Have these measures been in line with the commitments made in laws and policies to stimulate equality and remove discrimination?

iii) What has been the experience of EUDW in Delhi and Hyderabad in accessing decent work in the government, private and NGO sectors or in entrepreneurship?

iv) What are the main obstacles faced by the EUDW in accessing quality employment and entrepreneurship?

v) How have caste exclusionary practices at work influenced EUDW’s opportunities and experiences in employment and entrepreneurship?

vi) How have traditional norms and practices, including expectations in marriage, influenced patterns of employment and entrepreneurship for EUDW?

vii) Have the support structures within the family helped EUDW in their employment and entrepreneurship?

viii) What has been the role of education in challenging traditional norms and accessing decent employment and entrepreneurship?

ix) How do these experiences measure in terms of gender and social justice as well as the rights of these women in urban employment and entrepreneurship?

Research Outcomes

On the basis of these analyzes, the study elaborates recommendations in line with; i.) facilitating advocacy to engage with educated urban Dalit women to multiply their opportunities and access to employment and entrepreneurship, ii.) developing strategies to address the issues of caste and gender based barriers in accessing employment and initiating enterprises and iii.) addressing key duty bearers (such as national and local governments) to promote the rights of EUDW.

In addition, the information and insights from the study are:

i) To provide concrete and specific data for civil society organizations and movements to strengthen Dalit women’s livelihood and economic rights

ii) To encourage civil society organizations to evolve systems to monitor policies and institutions related to Dalit women’s employment and entrepreneurship

iii) To support the building of collectives of DW employees and entrepreneurs in these two cities.
Another objective of the study was to enhance the capabilities of Dalit individuals and groups to undertake research and analytical work. To this extent, emphasis was given in the methodology, which included Dalit researchers, field investigators and ensuring that their perspectives and experiences in the research work were discussed and incorporated in the analysis.

**Relevance of the Study**

The study is of significance at analytical, policy and political levels for the following reasons:

i) Globalization and market-oriented reforms, including privatization, have opened up new opportunities for education and employment, while simultaneously reducing the role of the state, which had been the primary provider of education and formal employment for Dalit communities. This study provides important information on the role of education in accessing employment and entrepreneurship as well as the nature of the employment generated. It can contribute to developing appropriate policies and strategies to promote the livelihoods and rights of the EUDW in this emerging context.

ii) Financial independence is an important cornerstone of women's social, economic and political empowerment, and more so for Dalit women, who have had to confront the combined effects of discrimination based on caste, class and gender. Special policies and programmes (such as the reservation for the scheduled castes) have been put in place by the Government of India to promote the status of Dalits. It would be of value to understand how such policies have influenced the employment and entrepreneurship opportunities of educated urban Dalit women in contexts increasingly determined by globalization and market-oriented reforms.

iii) There are very few studies on Dalit women and even less on educated urban Dalit women. The few available are on rural women which often use development indicators from secondary sources and that look mainly at primary education, human rights violations and on participation in local governance.

iv) Urbanization is taking place at a faster rate in India than in the rest of the world. By 2030, 40.76% of India's population will be living in urban areas compared to about 28.4% in 2007. With the growing presence of Dalit communities in urban areas, it is important to understand whether urbanization provides space for Dalits and how Dalit women access the opportunities available in the urban areas.

v) The 21st century has also witnessed large investments in developing urban infrastructure and industry. Various projects related to IT and IT enabled services in big cities have pulled many educated Dalit youth from smaller cities. Simultaneously many educated urban Dalit youth, especially Dalit women, are struggling to find ways to access and participate in urban economies. This period has also seen the conception and development of satellite cities like Noida and Gurgaon in Delhi and Cyber City in Hyderabad. This study provides information on the aspirations and efforts of the EUDW to get rid of traditional caste based occupations and customary rules and participate in modern industry in these growth hubs.

vi) In addition to urban employment, the study is also concerned with how DW have taken up

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* Scheduled Castes (SC) and, Scheduled Tribes (ST) are population groups explicitly recognized by the Constitution of India as experiencing exclusion and exploitation, owing to their out-caste position in the caste hierarchy for the former (SC) and their geographic and cultural exclusion for the latter (ST). This report uses the terms Dalit and SC interchangeably.

entrepreneurial activities. As such the study sheds light on the caste-gender dynamics, entrepreneurship choices and options, human capital, labour market dynamics, family dynamics, state policies and their implementation that shape and mould DW’s opportunities in entrepreneurship.

vii) The study concludes with recommendations and possible actions points to different duty bearers in the government, private and NGO sectors to promote and strengthen employment and entrepreneurship among DW in urban areas. The study also identifies further research areas that would enhance the continuous advocacy and engagement with DW to secure their economic rights and entitlements.

Globalization and Urban Employment
The liberalization reforms that have been undertaken in the Indian economy since 1991 were acclaimed by the Government of India (GoI) to herald in a new era of market efficiency, leading to increased employment and economic growth. Policies were stimulated in line with encouraging foreign direct investment in the capital and consumer goods sectors, as well as in the generation and provision of international and national services. The reforms also closely linked to the overall globalization process; the opening up of the Indian economy resulted in an increase in the proportion of aggregate imports and exports to the gross national product (GNP) in the last two decades. A stark increase in the overall growth rate (gross domestic product is reported in the Xth FYP (2002-06) at 7.74% per annum, with a 9.2% industrial and 9.3% service sector growth rates. The average growth of per capita income in the 10th FYP was 6.2% as compared to 3.5% growth during the 9th plan period.

The urban sector, in particular, witnessed major economic and social changes as employment opportunities, particularly in global sectors such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT). At the same time, the international media and the associated messages of modernization have also made headways into the more traditional Indian society. Employment expanded over this period, particularly in the urban sector, with jobs created in the fast growing technology and export-oriented companies. In addition, private entrepreneurs emerged to engage with the opportunities that were brought about through market-reforms.

A recent report by the Ministry of Labour and Employment showed a change in the distribution of workers across different employment status (as per the UPSS) in both rural and urban areas with substantial increase in self-employed, a decrease in wage workers, a decrease in casual labour and a stagnation in regular workers. The organized sector was less than 6% of the total employment in 2004-05 with two-thirds of the organized sector being in the public sector. The same report showed that the self-employed accounted for 57% of the workforce with the figure being 45% of the urban labour force and that the proportion of self-employed steadily increased during the 2000s.

Chandrasekar and Ghosh have argued that relatively good performance with regard to growth has not been reflected in sufficient numbers of opportunities for ‘decent work, with the bulk of the

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6 *ibid*:12; 18-19
increase in employment being in low productive activity with ‘uncertain and oppressive’ conditions. They use the results of the 61st Round of the NSSO, covering 2004-05 to show that while there had been slight improvements in employment since 1999-2000, real wages in 2004 were less than in 1999-2000. At the same time, they note that an important has been the increase in self-employment accounting for 45% of the status of urban women workers. While accepting that it can be a positive outcome when people move from paid to self-employment as a more remunerative option, they suggest that this is not the case if this is a matter of force due to the lack of paid jobs, as the case of uneducated workers without adequate access to credit or capital. In these cases the self-employed tend to be forced to undertake petty activities with low and uncertain incomes. According to them the NSS report confirms that a large part of the increase in self-employment – and therefore in employment as a whole – is a distress-driven phenomenon, led by the inability to find adequately gainful paid employment. So the apparent increase in aggregate employment growth may be more an outcome of the search for survival strategies than a demand-led expansion of productive income opportunities.

The fact that growth has not been sufficiently inclusive, especially for scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and minority communities, is of serious concern. While the percentage of the population below the poverty line is reported to have come down from 36% in 1993-94 to 28% in 2004-05, the incidence among marginalized groups have hardly declined. About 36.8% of rural SCs are estimated to live below poverty line (2004-05) compared to 16.1% rural non-SC/ST and 39.9% of urban SCs live below poverty line compared to 16.0% urban non-SC/ST population. The mean per capita expenditure (MPCE) in 2004-05 is reported at Rs. 712 ranging from Rs. 1,023 for general Hindu community, to Rs. 520 for Dalits and Tribals; and in the urban areas it is Rs. 1,469 and Rs. 800 respectively. 302 million people (about one third of the population) continued to be poor in 2004-05 at a poverty line based on the per capita income of 1973-74. A more severe form of deprivation is shown by the 46% of children in the 0-3 years age group that were suffering from malnutrition in 2005-06. These aspects also reflect insecurity in regards to livelihoods and rights for the vast majority of the working population in India.

Globalisation and Employment Among Dalits
Caste has long been used to regulate economic life in India including caste based occupational and labour market discrimination. Inter-group income inequalities closely match the economic scheme of the caste system that privileges higher castes against Dalits, as reflected in various indicators; lower Human Development Indicator (HDI) and higher Human Poverty Indicators (HPI) among


Dalits compared to non-SC/ST communities. In 2004-05, about 48% of Dalit workers were engaged as casual labourers; 12% Dalits were regularly employed workers as against 24% in other non-SC/ST/OBC castes. In addition, urban Dalit men earned an average daily wage of Rs. 147.95 compared to Rs. 240.04 by non-SC/ST men. Urban Dalit women earned Rs. 93.56 compared to Rs. 197.36 earned by non-SC/ST women in 2004-05.

To overcome some of the historical disadvantages experienced by Dalits, the Indian Constitution, which was ratified in 1950, included anti-discriminatory protective provisions (against untouchability and protection against atrocities), development provisions (for education, economics and employment) and representational provisions in governance. Art. 16 of the Constitution paved way for the Reservation Policy, which opened up an important source of employment for Dalits, particularly educated Dalits in the government sector. Through the reservation policy, the government mandated that Dalits and Tribals need to be recruited in proportion to their percent of the population in state departments and public sector companies. It also provides for similar reservation in all state services. Over the years, there has been a steady increase in the representation of Dalits in government employment, though it never reached the mandated 15% in the upper layers of classes of I and II employment which include senior administrative, managerial and supervisory positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>Class II</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Class IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>00.35%</td>
<td>01.29%</td>
<td>04.52%</td>
<td>20.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>03.43%</td>
<td>04.98%</td>
<td>10.27%</td>
<td>18.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>10.13%</td>
<td>13.13%</td>
<td>15.46%</td>
<td>20.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>13.70%</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>16.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The liberalization process has put a cap on government expenditure, which has caused a shrinking in government employment. During the coalition government of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from 1998-2003, the public sector lost as many as 45

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12 Thorat, SK. *Human Poverty and Socially Disadvantaged Groups in India*. New Delhi, Human Development Resource Centre, UNDP India, 2007. The HDI for SCs is estimated to be 0.303 when compared to 0.393 for nonSC/STs in 2000 and the HPI 41.47 per cent compared to 31.34 percent for nonSC/STs. The HDI is a composite index of three indicators-Infant mortality rate, literacy rate and monthly per capita consumption expenditure and the HPI includes additional indicators of health and nutritional indicators.


14 Ibid: 19.

lakh* jobs and Government recruitment was frozen both at centre and in the states. The continuing gap between mandated employment and actual employment has negatively affected the social, economic and cultural life of Dalit communities in terms of employment and income to the community as well as representation and opportunities to influence the government and society. The Working Group on Empowering of the Scheduled Castes estimated that 113,450 job opportunities were lost to Dalits during 1992-97 alone.

Dalits are affected by these cuts in state expenditure and by the freezing of recruitment of Dalits who traditionally viewed government jobs as a secure and important source of employment. At the same time, private sector employment has been encouraged and has expanded in certain sectors. An important concern under these circumstances is whether private sector employment is associated with the fundamental labour and human rights as suggested by the International Labour Office (ILO), the Indian Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and whether these employment opportunities have been accessible to educated Dalit youth, and in particular Dalit women.

Such a concern is of particular relevance as existing studies suggest that caste-based discrimination continues to play a role in private employment. Such discrimination appears to begin from the very process of recruitment. In The Legacy of Social Exclusion, 4,808 applications for employment were sent out to multinational and Indian companies who had advertised vacancies for jobs requiring university degrees. Three sets of identical applications were submitted for each vacancy; one in the name of a dominant caste male Hindu, the second in the name of a male Dalit and the third in the name of a male Muslim. The study found that the Dalit applicant stood a two-third chance of being invited for an interview compared to the dominant caste applicant. The Muslim applicant stood a one-third a chance compared to the dominant caste Hindu applicant. This study helped to expose the existence of discriminatory processes in recruitment for high-end employment opportunities.

Discrimination was also present in terms of human resource practices as the level of companies. In a study titled, In the Name of Globalization, detailed interviews were held with human resource managers from 25 companies that had a direct and indirect employee potential of approximately 300,000 people. The study analyzed the attitudes of the hiring managers towards the caste and community attributes of their potential employees. It found managers at large referred to how private sector recruitment was caste and community driven earlier and how merit is the basis for all recruitments now. However, the study found that the concept of merit is still translated in ‘ascriptive qualities’ and there is antagonism towards reservation of SCs to employment. The human resource managers were more in favour of improving the education system from the schooling level rather than undertaking any reparatory measures at the employment level, which undermines the

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*1 Lakh is equal to 100,000


The fact that a large number of Dalit youth have currently completed their higher education and are looking for employment. They do not wish to wait for a linear process of change beginning now and coming to effect when they are no longer employable.

Caste discrimination also continued to negatively affect the incomes of lower castes. Madheswaran S and Paul Attewell analyzed the wage differentials across caste in urban labour market and found that SC/ST members earn 15% lower wages as compared to equally qualified members of other castes; that these workers were discriminated against both in the public and private sector; and that in the regular salaried urban labour market, discrimination accounts for a large part of the gross earnings differences between SC/ST and others. The study also found that the endowment difference is larger than the discrimination component.

Aswini Deshpande and Katherine Newman traced the differences between Dalit and non-Dalit students with regard to expectations of employment even when they come from comparable elite educational backgrounds. The findings suggested that cultural capital (caste, class, family background and networks) played a critical role in accessing employment in the current professionalized urban employment sector. Hiring practices also appeared to be less transparent than they were thought to be at first sight. On most counts Dalits were placed in disadvantaged situations.

Scholars like TS Papola, who spent many years analyzing the Indian labour market (1957-87), also attested to the fact that modes and mechanisms of employment used by the private sector in India have involved exclusionary practices. The private sector in India accepted that it was caste blind prior to January 2007, when it has agreed to take pro-active steps to promote ‘education, employability, entrepreneurship and employment’ of SC/ST members in response to the Prime Minister’s call in 2006.

Unfortunately none of these studies have a special focus on Dalit women or disaggregated data to understand the specific constraints of Dalit women.

Globalization and Urban Women’s Employment in India

A report in 2010 by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in India indicated that just 25-30% of women in rural areas and 15-18% in urban areas participated in the labour market. It is likely that these low figure reflect the non-recognition of key women-centric services provided in the household such as cooking, house cleaning and other similar tasks. The work participation of women in the urban sector marginally improved in the beginning of the 21st century. The same report (based on the NSSO) records that between 1999-2000 and 2004-2005 female work force participation in urban areas increased by 3.6%, which was higher than that of rural females, rural

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males and urban males.  

Sonia Mitra has argued that there had been significant shifts in urban women’s employment from casual to regular employment to self-employment since the liberalization process. There was an increase in women’s participation in export-oriented industries such as garments, textiles and electronics assembly line work at the beginning of the liberalization process, and this was replaced by a system that resulted in the increase of outsourced flexible home-based work –linked to the export industries in urban areas. However, the self-employed category has gone up from 46% in 1983 to 70% in 2004-2005 often taking up petty trade. Services have also been an important sector for urban female employment, the latter having increased in the late 1990s and declining from 2000 to 2005. However, working conditions had deteriorated in manufacturing and employment options were stagnant in trade and services suggesting that this pattern of growth had not generated adequate employment in the urban areas. The percentage of domestic workers in total female employment in the service sector increased from 11.8% in 1999-2000 to 27.1% in 2004-05, making it the largest source of employment for urban Indian women. 

This relative improvement in some sectors needs to be viewed with some caution when one analyzes not just the quantity but also the quality of the employment. Studies have shown that regular employment has been decreasing as a proportion of total employment, although wage employment increased due to the increase in contract work. At the same time, the 61st round of the National Sample Surveys, referring to the 2004-05 period, shows that even casual employment as a proportion of the total employment has fallen resulting in an increased resort to self-employment. The National Sample Survey Organization 61st round 2004-2005 also showed that half the self-employed surveyed did not find their employment remunerative. This underscores the argument that this growth in self-employment was a survival strategy due to regular paid jobs not being available.

In line with the liberalization programme, employers have increasingly resorted to so-called flexible solutions to counter the range of protective labour legislation that appeared to hinder market efficiency and productivity. These historically gained rights were included in important legislation such as the Industrial Dispute Act of 1947, the Minimum Wages Act of 1948, the Employees State Insurance (ESI) Act of 1948, the Shops and Commercial Establishments Act of 1953, the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) Act of 1952, the Industrial Employment (Standing Order) Act of 1956 and the Contract Labour Regulation and Abolition Act of 1970. In order to undermine the costs of these rights, many employers increasingly resorted to ways of promoting flexibility in employment and wages. Nath has argued that the Trade Unions Act of 1926, which guaranteed workers the protection of labour rights, labour standards, job security and social security was sabotaged by employers through the use of closures, lock-outs, subcontracting and outsourcing.

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24 ibid: 4.


practices. Women have not fared well with regard to quality employment. Anupama’s study on women workers in the unorganized manufacturing sector of India suggests that in spite of women’s increased share in total employment, they remain underrepresented in jobs of high quality and overrepresented in jobs with associated with decent work deficits, such as unpaid workers and part-time work. Vanamala’s study similarly showed that even state-sponsored schemes have worsened informalization of work relations with the new opportunities being “embedded in perpetual job insecurity, de-unionised, low wage, low skilled jobs” with no formal social security benefits. Dipa Mukerjee’s study of women in the new economy in India concludes that the employment of women in most sectors was due to the ability to pay women lower rates than men with similar endowments. While a small group of women working in the so-called ‘sunrise’ sectors of the new economy (computer and technology related activities) enjoyed the benefits of good pay and employment opportunities, experienced a degree of sexual and mental harassment.

Globalisation and Dalit Women’s Employment

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, caste discrimination, while acknowledged as a violation of human rights at international and national levels, continues to influence work and employment patterns and trends in India. Through its hereditary and hierarchical principles, the Hindu caste system forces Dalits to undertake menial and unclean occupations that have a low status in society. These socio-religious practices based on notions of purity and pollution also restrict the access of lower castes to quality education, public places and credit limiting their upward mobility through quality and decent employment and entrepreneurship. These forms of discrimination are widespread in spite of the protective and preventative measures written into the Indian Constitution and the passing of significant laws that penalized such practices.

Dalit women experience these conditions along with Dalit men in the community but are further deprived and disabled both in the family and outside owing to them being women. Despite a high level of economic activities, both within the household and economic engagement outside the household, the invisibility of Dalit women's work and contribution is reflected in the following table categorizing their labour force participation. While only about 1% of the women are unemployed, the large majority is represented only in invisible categories such as extra domestic work (39%) or being inactive (20%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Remuneration</th>
<th>Scheduled Tribe</th>
<th>Scheduled Caste</th>
<th>Other Backward Castes</th>
<th>Other Castes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inactive (narrow ILO)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


On the other hand, it could be argued that the new ethos of liberalization and market efficiency also provided opportunities to move away from caste and gender norms in employment. It could also be argued that the expansion of urban employment in the ICT sector generated opportunities for educated Dalit women equal to others, if they had the appropriate qualifications, thus providing them means of upward economic empowerment. In addition, one could argue that the exposure to the media and the experience of improved forms of employment could lead to the challenging of some of the caste-based and gendered norms that traditionally constrained their social and economic mobility. One of the objectives of this study is to understand if the enhancement of educational capabilities was reflected in improved employment for Dalit women.

### Dalit Women and Entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship has evolved from being defined as the act of transforming innovations into economic goods, to include social and political forms of entrepreneurial activity. Recognizing the role of micro and small enterprises in economic growth, the Government of India promulgated the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development Act in 2006 to promote and strengthen them. The quantum of investment is primarily used to define the three types of enterprises. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) defines private enterprises as those owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers. According to the Expert Group on Labour Statistics (Delhi Group) those who engage in their own farm or non-farm activities and do not hire workers on a regular basis are considered own-account enterprises and those that hire workers are considered establishments. This study will analyze if and how Dalit women have been able to access opportunities to develop entrepreneurship.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) was initiated in 1999, in an attempt to study entrepreneurship globally and to develop common frameworks and standards to analyze it. GEM 2009 identified entrepreneurial attitudes, activities and aspirations as the three critical components that determine the level and nature of entrepreneurial activity in any society. GEM has also evolved nine conditions that support and promote entrepreneurship; i.) availability of financial resources, ii.) government policy that gives priority to entrepreneurship, iii.) government programmes that will

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>25%</th>
<th>24%</th>
<th>14%</th>
<th>8%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Employed</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Domestic work</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Women</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NSSO 55th round, Employment and Unemployment Data, Ages 16-65

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34 Government of India. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Act, 2006, No. 27 of 2006. *Micro enterprise is where the investment in plant and machinery does not exceed twenty-five lakh rupees; a small enterprise is where the investment in plant and machinery exceeds twenty-five lakh rupees but does not exceed five crore rupees; medium enterprise is where the investment in plant and machinery exceeds five crore rupees but does not exceed ten crore rupees. In the case of enterprises rendering services micro enterprise has a maximum of ten lakh rupees, a small enterprise two crore rupees and medium enterprise five crore rupees.*

assist entrepreneurship, iv.) education and training facilities, v.) research and development transfer, vi.) availability of commercial professional infrastructure, vii.) internal market openness, viii.) access to physical infrastructure and ix.) supportive cultural social norms.

GEM 2007, reports varying degrees of the gender gap in entrepreneurial activities between men and women, which shows up in both the early stages of an endeavor as well as in established enterprises. It recognizes that women enterprise is a key contributor to economic growth in low and middle-income countries. The report informs that women and men entrepreneurs find themselves in very different situations, which creates different perceptions in them and the diversity of circumstances and perceptions needs customized or targeted in specific government policies.

Further work on women's entrepreneurship also found that in countries with low levels of economic output, as measured by gross domestic product (GDP), women took up entrepreneurship as a way out of unemployment and poverty. Women also viewed entrepreneurship as a way of achieving better balance between family and work than that provided by wage labour, offering more time flexibility. Women's businesses tend to be mostly in consumer-oriented sectors, which offer less pay than technology and services where men businesses are pre-dominant.

Given the caste structure, Dalit communities have historically been engaged as wage labourers in the rural areas, as low paid casual employees in urban areas, as well as in caste-based obligatory labour, including free and polluting labour. Owing to caste based prohibitions on the ownership of assets and resources along with barriers to accessing common property resources, it is not surprising that the majority of Dalit women and men continue to be casual wage labour in both rural and urban areas. Their presence in self-employment continues to be low. While being female makes one much less likely to be well educated it also reduces the likelihood of being self employed, being a DW makes this chance even more limited. Only about 16% of Dalit women are categorized as self employed as opposed to 31% among STs, 22% among OBCs and 16% among non-SC/ST/OBC communities.

Entrepreneurship itself has received little attention in the Indian context, much less Dalit entrepreneurship. A study of 100 Dalit entrepreneurs in Punjab reported that the large majority had ventured into entrepreneurship around the leather activities that were the hereditary occupation, with additional or modified activities.

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Dalit Studies, 321 Dalit entrepreneurs in Sahranpur in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Panipat in Haryana were interviewed about their work. The data showed that the majority of the enterprises were set up after 1990, 118 during 1990-2000 and 161 after 2000. Only 42 were pre-1990. The nature of enterprises was diverse and included provision shops, workshops, dealer agencies, skills based agencies and production units. 71% of these enterprises were run by the person themselves (own account) and only 7 out of the 321 had more than 10 employees. Only 9% of these enterprises received a loan from a bank or government agency. All except one were first generation entrepreneurs and Dalit women were in charge of only 7 of the 321 enterprises.42

Dalit entrepreneurs are nevertheless emerging and setting up their own forums as shown by the formation of the Dalit India Chamber of Commerce and Industries (DICCI) in Maharashtra. They held a Dalit Entrepreneurs Empowerment Programme (DEEP) Expo in Pune from 4th to 6th June 2010. This expo showed cases of roughly 150 Dalit entrepreneurs who had undertaken a wide variety of enterprises at different scales of operation showcasing construction companies, sugar mills, sports equipment manufacturers, engineering goods, building machinery and many other industries. However, the number of women entrepreneurs was extremely low and were mainly engaged in the production of small consumer items. The few exceptions were operating Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) companies, recruitment agencies and one who managed an industrial house.43

Dalit women’s enterprises continue to be small and cater mainly to local consumption; many of them are located in Dalit majority locations. The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), an NGO study in collaboration with GEM, revealed that 90% of women at the grassroots level need help in training and education to improve their business skills, which is even more necessary in the case of Dalit women. EUDWs’s access to banks and state resources were negligible and they most often depended on family and moneylenders for start-up and running capital. Setting up a successful enterprise requires a social network and role models, something that is seldom available for Dalit women, most of who are found to be first generation entrepreneurs. On the whole, Dalits women’s access to existing forums and federations like the Federation of Indian Women Entrepreneurs (FIWE) or the Consortium of Women Entrepreneurs in India (CWEI) is low. This could partly be due to the fact that these institutions do not recognize caste as a specific area for monitoring and the respondents in the study did not identify these groups for training or other support mechanisms. The expansion of self-help groups and micro finance activities has, to a limited extent, provided opportunities to DW in entrepreneurship.

While GEM identifies two major reasons for entrepreneurial activities, necessity-led and opportunity-led enterprises, a third reason for Dalit entrepreneurship, as reported to a recent IIDS study, is dignity-led enterprise. This study reported one motivation for entrepreneurship was to escape caste-based occupations and engage in occupations that create a different image and provide dignity and respect.44


43 Khape, Ajay. “DeepExpo to provide a platform to Dalit entrepreneurs.” Indian Express. 10 Apr. 2010. Web

Chapter 2

Methodology

The methodology used to study the challenges and prospects for educated urban Dalit women and Dalit women entrepreneurs involved different levels of interaction, using diverse tools and methods, and sourcing both quantitative and qualitative data. The following sections elaborate on its main components and their rationale.

Globalization and Caste-based Practices
The opportunities for the EUDW and the Dalit women entrepreneurs in the labour market were initially situated within the wider changes that were taking in the labour market in the Indian economy subsequent to the liberalization reforms since 1991. The most relevant processes, including employment and entrepreneurship trends were providing, framing the spaces for Dalit women in the urban areas. Attention was given to the gender dimensions of globalization, including the increasing involvement of women in labour-intensive and service sectors. At the same time, the role of caste in continuing to influence the lives of the Dalits, and thus the labour market was underscored. These elements formed the background for the study.

Theoretical Framework
A theoretical framework was developed using the notions of intersectionality and domination and their relevance for the livelihoods and rights of the EUDW. Caste, as an overriding organizing principle in society was recognized as a major contributing factor to the experience of the EUDW. Gender and class were also seen as structural aspects affecting them. Caste, class and gender, and their intersectionality were placed within the trends in globalization and market-oriented reforms, paying attention to the increases in privatization and flexible work. The theoretical discussions resulted in a social and gender justice framework and a right-based approach to interrogate the employment and entrepreneurship opportunities and experiences of the Dalit women.

Definitions
The study assumes the following definitions:

- **Educated** in the study were those who had completed their higher secondary schooling (12th standard)*
- **Urban** in the study refers to: i.) the defined geographical coverage of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT), as defined by the government of India and ii.) the urban areas of twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad in the south Indian state of Andhra Pradesh
- **Dalit woman** refers to all women who belongs to the Scheduled Caste category and had been subjected to practices of ‘Untouchability’. This term also is taken to encompass Dalit Christian while not technically falling within the Scheduled Caste category still faced the practice of untouchability

*Please note that many of the women in the study went on to obtain one or more university degrees and many also had completed vocational or professional training, or other certificate programs.
• **Employed Dalit women** were Dalit women who were employed in government, private or NGO sectors and started working after January 2000.

• **Entrepreneur** refers to Dalit women who were either self-employed, own account workers or who engaged employees in production, sales or service operations. These women may or may not have completed their formal education.

In the case of employment, DW who had accessed employment from 1.1.2000 was included in the sample to study the impact of the LPG process on employment, which would influence the age profile. This was not a criterion for entrepreneurs.

**Locations of the Analysis**
The field research was undertaken in the cities of New Delhi and Hyderabad, which were chosen on the following grounds:

• Both cities have experienced high growth rates associated with globalization, particularly in the high-technology computer sectors

• Geographical coverage of north and south India, in order to understand the commonalities and differences from two different locations

• Both cities had a sizable population of Dalit women i.e. 29.93% and 15.96% respectively in Delhi and Hyderabad

• The authors had strong professional contacts with local groups who could facilitate the data collection in these cities

**Levels of Analysis**
In order to have a comprehensive understanding of the prospects and challenges faced by educated urban Dalit women in accessing and participating in quality and decent employment and entrepreneurship, it was necessary to study the enabling and disabling factors for their access and participation at the following levels:

• The family

• The market

• Dalit community

• Larger civil society

• National and State laws, policies, schemes and funds, including availability of opportunities in employment and entrepreneurship

**Data Collection Tools**

**Primary and Secondary Data**
A range of data from NSSO reports was culled out and studied to capture the statistical growth of employment and enterprises in India and especially among Dalit women and men. Several reports and articles written by academic and research organizations were reviewed as well. This data was complemented by placing considerable emphasis on qualitative data to understand and analyze the challenges and prospects of these women in the context of globalization.

**In the government sector women working in the ‘D category’ were not included in the study as this category is already overrepresented by Dalit.**
Structured Questionnaire
An in-depth, mostly open-ended set of questionnaires was designed for data collection. Two separate questionnaires were prepared: one comprising 99 questions on employment and the other comprising 61 questions on entrepreneurship.

Purposive Sampling
The study used purposive sampling to identify the urban Dalit women (in employment and entrepreneurship) in the Delhi and Hyderabad. Such a technique was particularly relevant for the objectives of the study, which were concerned with understanding the prospects and the challenges facing these women and ways of improving their situation. Purposive sampling allowed the possibility of selecting information-rich cases and undertaking in-depth interviews which could take into account a wide variety of problems and needs of these women, including the role of the family, the employer, the community and the government in enabling or limiting their employment opportunities. Also of importance is the fact that such a sampling technique provided significant insights into the ways in which caste operated in the labour market.

On the bases of these sampling techniques the experiences, with regard to employment and entrepreneurship of a total of 215 EUDW in Delhi and Hyderabad, were studied.

The sectors covered under the study were, employment in the government sector, private sector and NGO sector; and entrepreneurs Dalit women, literate or illiterate, who are currently running an enterprise in the city.

Sample Identification
Identifying samples turned out to be the greatest challenge in the study. Dalit women are invisible as a distinct category in employment data, which primarily analyzes from a class perspective. Very few studies disaggregate data by social categories that could provide information on DW employment. Outside of the government sector there was a noticeable lack of public information about employed Dalit women and interestingly enough, some of the women sampled did not wish to expose their caste identity. The private sector was particularly challenging as the sector insisted that they do not keep such information. In general when Dalit families move upward in their economic and employment status, they tend to move to more heterogeneous habitations in the city and at times some of them lived in government quarters. This made it difficult to identify families unless our researchers or their connections within these communities knew them already. Even when we did identify them, they or their families often were not willing to divulge information to strangers, particularly sensitive issues of caste identity and family issues.

As a strategy, the study engaged Dalit researchers who, being from the community, had an easier time engaging with these DW and their families. The first efforts to identify the sample spread the net wide engaging colleagues, friends and known people in these cities and communities. Simultaneously, government departments and units, private sector companies and NGO contacts were explored to identify for the sample. Realizing that a large number of women would not be identified in this process, the research team scouted the urban periphery areas where Dalit habitations were more identifiable. As the most of the researchers came from the Dalit community, and some of them came from these specific habitations, samples could be more easily identified there. The study by and large captures the opportunities and challenges faced by DW in the urban periphery areas in the two cities. This was more pronounced in Delhi. In Hyderabad, government and NGO samples were also identified from departments and contacts outside the urban periphery areas, providing DW samples at almost two ends of the spectrum in each of the sector – from the mainstream habitations and also the urban periphery habitations. What is evident from the study is that DW continue to remain unnoticed or unrepresented because they are not engaged in these sectors, or when they are they either go unrecognized or do not identify themselves by their caste.
Hence, undertaking a study on DW proved quite difficult. What is also evident is that without researchers that are familiar and have close contact with the Dalit community and have their confidence, it would be next to impossible to get any meaningful information on them.

**Delhi:** The sample identification proceeded primarily from the community side. Habitations with high Dalit populations (urban areas with high Dalit population, resettlement colonies, and unauthorized colonies) were scanned and the first list of employed and entrepreneur women were identified. The search was made more extensive by contacting relatives that lived in other parts of the city to generate a sample from the six urban districts of the National Capital Territory. From the generated list a sample was selected to capture the diversity of Dalit women (see Table 2.2).

The study made efforts to reach as wide as possible in covering the different geographical areas of the two cities to identifying the sample. The diversity of sub castes and levels of employment was ensured to the extent possible by purposive selection from the list generated.

**Hyderabad:** The sample identification proceeded from two ends in Hyderabad. Persons and organizations directly linked to the community were requested to identify and list out employed women and entrepreneurs. Simultaneously, contacts and heads of departments in the concerned sector were requested to provide information on employed women and entrepreneurs. Identifying the sample turned out to be long and laborious because friends in the government sector talked about virtual ban on recruitment in the government department, caste identity was not forthcoming in the private sector, and many NGOs in the state capital informed that Dalit women are primarily employed in the field and not at the state headquarters. While the district industrial centre and AP Scheduled Caste Finance Corporation were approached for the list of SC women trained or registered as entrepreneurs, this information was not made available.

As a second step, information about Dalit women employees was requested under the Right to Information Act (RTI) from various government departments for the period from January 2000 to September 2009. The data provided revealed that recruitment was very limited in most government departments and a further problem was locating the candidate as they had moved since their recruitment and the current location was not available.

An additional methodology was used to scan the urban periphery areas where the Dalit communities were located and to identify employed women and entrepreneurs there. A selection was made out of the generated list.

### Table 2.1 - Sample for the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Delhi</th>
<th>Hyderabad</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Data Collection Phases

**Preparatory Phase**

Initial discussions were undertaken at the Loyola Institute of Business Administration in Chennai in
the year 2009. The discussions were lead by a group of specialist consultants who advised on the framework and focus of the study, including providing the guidelines for the fieldwork and analysis.

**Identification of Field Organizations**

Two urban-based Dalit led field organizations working on Dalit women’s and youth rights issues with a strong community presence were selected to do the fieldwork, All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM) in Delhi and Bhavitha in Hyderabad. Field Research coordinators from the Dalit community were appointed to guide and monitor the study in the respective cities.

**Orientation Workshops**

A separate orientation workshop on the study was held prior to data collection in the city of Delhi and Hyderabad. This was arranged for the selected investigators and coordinators to clarify concepts, to make sure there was a uniform understanding of the objectives, purpose and approach of study, as well as training for the sampling and methods of data collection.

**Monitoring**

The data collection was closely monitored by Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion (CSEI) along with the field research coordinators, by accompanying many of the interviews and performing data verifications throughout.

**Concluding Workshop**

The preliminary data analysis was shared with all the investigators and researchers, including the advisory group, for further analysis and insights. This provided an opportunity to explore in depth the trends and critical issues emerging from the data. Substantive qualitative insights and information were gained through this process.
Chapter 3

Caste, Class and Gender based Discrimination in the Labour Market in the Context of Globalization: A Conceptual Framework of Analysis

This chapter develops the theoretical framework of analysis for the study. It discusses the intersectionality of caste, class and gender and the matrices of domination that frame the lives of educated urban Dalit women. It looks at the concepts of social justice and gender justice and how this can inform and complement a human and labour rights perspective to interrogate the experiences of EUDW in employment and entrepreneurship under the current liberalization reforms.

Intersectionality and the Matrices of Domination in the Lives of Dalit Women

The experiences of Dalit women, and their capabilities and opportunities, are shaped by multiple systems of domination, the most important of them being those associated with caste, class and gender. Further differentials of age, language, religion, disability, and geographical locations have also influences on their identities, loyalties and priorities. The concept of intersectionality captures these different structures of dominance, and is elaborated below to understand how the EUDW have (or have not) accessed the opportunities for work and enterprises under liberalization.

Initially developed to analyze the experiences of women of colour in the United States, this concept underscored that “neither race, nor class, nor gender stand alone as organizing principles of society; rather they intersect, overlap, intertwine, simultaneously structure, and weave the fabric of people’s experiences.” It highlighted what Andersen refers to as the “interlocking systems of inequalities, subordination, and domination” which are experienced simultaneously by men and women.

According to Anderson race, class and gender operate at different levels - in social institutions, social identities and social consciousness – resulting in particular forms of power and resource allocation. Closely associated with intersectionality is what Hill Collins has developed as the ‘matrix of domination’ a model that emphasizes the structural linkages between race, class and gender that are integrated into a framework of domination. The concept of intersectionality and the matrix of domination can be usefully applied to understand the range of influences that circumscribe the

45 Andersen, Margaret L. “Race, Gender, and Class Stereotypes: New Perspectives on Ideology and Inequality” NorteAmerica. Year 1, number 1, January-June 2006. Pg. 69-91.

46 ibid: 76-77. Andersen has also suggested that other elements such as such as age, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, region, nationality and ethnicity could also intersect and shape systems of privilege and equality.

47 ibid: pg 77

The concept of social justice is enshrined in the constitution of India which talks of ‘justice – social, economic and political’ and has a Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment that is the nodal ministry for protecting the rights and promoting the development issues of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward caste communities and other vulnerable sections. The Eleventh FYP (2007-2012) identifies social empowerment, economic empowerment and social justice as key strategies for growth and social inclusion.
experiences and choices of Dalit women.

The vast majority of Dalit women in the Indian society are located at the bottom most rung of each of the three axes of caste, class or gender to name the three prominent structures or vectors of domination. These different structures intersect in the lives of these women creating a web of opportunities as well as disabilities and barriers to influencing their participation in the labour market. We elaborate below how DW have to make their choices, and decisions through a complex interplay of these dominating structure which have both ideological as well as material bases in society.

Caste Discrimination and Dalit Women

The most significant structure of domination for these women is associated with the caste system, which is used by those in power to assign occupations in society. Manu’s code of law explains it as such:

“For the protection of this whole creation, that one of dazzling brilliance assigned separate activities for those born from the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet. To Brahmins, he assigned reciting and teaching the veda, offering and officiating at sacrifices, and receiving and giving gifts. To the kshatriya he allotted protecting the subjects, giving gifts, offering sacrifices, reciting the veda and avoiding attachments to sensory objects; and to the Vysya, looking after animals, giving gifts, offering sacrifices, reciting the veda, trade, money lending and agriculture. A single activity did the Lord allot to the sudra, however: the ungrudging service of those very social classes.”

Caste discrimination, including untouchability, is the direct consequence of such Hindu practices of traditional governance of society whereby endogamous groups (castes) were confined to certain tasks and limited in their social mobility and interaction. The guiding rules of this system were developed by members of the Brahman caste to ensure a superior status for themselves in the caste hierarchy. The system locates Dalit community, of which Dalit women are integral at its bottom rung as outcastes, polluted and polluting, to be treated as ‘untouchables’ and enforces it through practices of restrictions, humiliation and coercion. In addition to being associated with religious practices, caste has also functioned as an economic system forcing, through practices of exclusion (economic boycott) and punishment (destruction of assets and resources, physical violence, etc), the scheduled castes to live in extreme deprivation. Seminal work done by Thorat and others identifies the following ways in which the caste system perpetuate poverty and economic dependency among Dalits by; i.) the prohibition and limiting of access to assets and community resources that could provide security and basis for economic development, ii.) exclusion in housing prohibiting and limiting engagement with other communities and full community participation, iii.) unequal terms of trade, iv.) the prohibition of learning and acquiring skill, v.) obligations to perform certain low end polluting occupations and vi.) caste based punishments for non-compliance and non-performance.

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49 Thapar, R. Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations. New Delhi, Orient Longmans, 1979. Pg. 27.
These caste-based disabilities laid the foundation for Dalit deprivation. At the same time, this system provided monopolistic benefits to the dominant castes, privileging them with better jobs and resources as well as better social, economic and political prospects. It also provides dominant caste members the right to demand obligatory services, to exploit, and perpetrate violence on Dalit women, men and children.

**Class Discrimination and Dalit Women**

Class and caste overlap is considerable in India, with the lower castes being disproportionately poor and the importance of the economic structures in perpetuating the caste system. 32% of the Dalit population fall below the poverty line with families having an annual income averaging Rs. 22,800. Among Adivasi families the annual income averages Rs. 20,000. In 2000, only 16% of all Dalit households cultivated land as owner cultivators against 41% among non-SC/ST households. They continue to have limited access to land, other assets and resources which lead to continued economic dependency and poverty. Only about 12% among them are engaged in business that involves access to capital and other resources. In addition to historical economic prohibitions and disabilities forced by the caste, poverty further limits Dalit women's access to available opportunities, knowledge, resources and social capital. These further create a vicious cycle of inter-generational poverty and deprivation.

**Gender Discrimination and Dalit Women**

In addition to these caste and class disadvantages, Dalit women are also subjected to the patriarchal norms that place women in a subordinate position to men at each level of the caste and class hierarchy. Under the caste system, the majority of Dalit women were, and continue to be, engaged in agriculture labour, casual wage labour or other traditional occupations and along with their families had limited or no access to education or assets. Verbal abuse, physical violence, sexual harassment and violence, rape and murder, group and mass violence are ways of direct threat to DW themselves, and also as tool for perpetuating the exploitation and control on Dalit communities. The National Commission for Women reported that “...in the commission of offences against...scheduled caste (Dalit) women the offenders try to establish their authority and humiliate the community by subjecting their women to indecent and inhuman treatment, including sexual assault, parading naked, using filthy language, etc.” In addition to violence from dominant caste communities, Dalit women are also subject to violence at home seen from the National Family and Health Survey data where 58.4% of Dalit women justified husband beating wife for one reason.


*The term Adivasi meaning ‘original inhabitants’ is used to denote tribal communities in India. The official term is Scheduled Tribes*


or the other. Violence and threat of violence further places restrictions on a Dalit woman’s mobility and freedom limiting her opportunities for education, employment or entrepreneurial pursuits.57

Caste-Class-Gender Intersectionality
In addition to recognizing the disabilities arising from each of these structures, one can also identify their impact in combination, which is not in a pristine form but a complex interplay, which has distinct markers from that of even Dalit men or other poor women. The combination of caste and gender based disabilities in occupational opportunities and choices are reflected in the crowding of DW into sweeping and cleaning occupation with no dignity and low pay. Another reflection is the prohibition of DW from engaging in cooking and other labour within the home of dominant caste families in the urban domestic labour market, choices made by DW to locate their enterprises in the Dalit habitations, the low intake of entrepreneur loans from Self Help Groups (SHGs), domestic and caste based violence at the community level, etc. The combination of gender and class can be seen in the partial withdrawal of DW from labour when families move to urban areas, or improve in their socio-economic conditions. The combination of caste, class and gender is reflected in the crowding of Dalit girls into non-market oriented subjects in higher education, the inability of DW to access bank credits, the crowding into domestic call centres with no labour rights, the inability of DW to continue her studies without break, the inability to access quality public services or justice in times of violence.

While DW share caste and gender based exclusions and discrimination with Dalit men and other poor women respectively, their experiences are specific and distinct too. Caste based humiliation, obligatory occupations like manual scavenging, obligatory rituals the Devadasi system, prohibitions to community resources, back lash violence for breaking caste norms are not shared by other poor women. Caste based sexual harassment and violence differs for DW from that of Dalit men in obligatory ritual practices, domestic violence, differences in the nature of occupation and workplace harassment etc. These experiences of DW are distinct markers of the intersectionality of these different vectors of exclusion and powers of domination.

We have seen that after India gained Independence in 1947, Dalit women and communities accessed the facilities of reservation in education and employment to navigate away from the rigid caste economy. Some of them moved up the economic ladder with improved forms of employment in the public sector and were able to escape the more severe forms of deprivation endured by their poorer counterparts who still form the majority of people engaged in temporary, casual, laborious and caste linked jobs. While privatization and liberalization has negatively affected the protective and promotional provisions initiated by the state, others, particularly in the urban sector where the caste background was not always visible, were able to move into the private sectors, a process that was stimulated by the liberalization reforms of the 1990s. The expansion of certain service sector employment, including those associated with computer technology, also opened up opportunities for those women who had the skills to undertake these forms of work. Privatization has also stimulated entrepreneurship activities in the economy, with some EUDW accessing these


* The Devadasi system is a religious system where Dalit girls are dedicated to Gods and live their lives as temple servants with the obligation to also provide sexual services to those who will bid for them, but have no long-term obligations to them or their children. Despite legislations against the system, it continues in many parts of the country.
opportunities.

Thus, the experiences of Dalit women need to be analyzed in the light of the different influences that intersect to create her specific identity and opportunities, as well as the different structures of domination, most prominently associated with caste, class and gender that influence their lives. It is useful to keep in mind that Dalit women do not constitute one homogenous category even if they share the domination stemming from caste-based bias and disadvantage. Even within the caste structure different sub-caste communities are subjected to different occupational obligations placed in further hierarchical order. Thus DW from Valmiki community owing to caste occupations of sweeping and scavenging face different and much greater disabilities compared to those from Chamar or Khatik or Dhobi communities.

From an intersectionality lens, it is also possible to locate differences that stem from class, age, skill, education, and other factors, and the influences these have on the EUDW and even between Dalit groups. Such a framework also allows us to consider the ways in which different Dalit women negotiate for their empowerment and rights in different spaces.

Globalization and Dalit Women’s Urban Employment

Contemporary globalization is associated with the increased movement of goods, capital and people across national borders and the reorganizing of public and private sectors along what is considered market efficiency as well as the opening up of previously protected markets to international competition. Such liberalization reforms were undertaken in India starting in 1991, resulting in what some have referred to as the Indian growth miracle (as apposed to the Hindu rate of growth) promoting opportunities for the private sector to enter virtually all arenas of economic production and service. However, the tightening of government expenditure has limited state services like health care, education, public distribution services, potable water, housing schemes, social security benefits and so on. The poor and marginalized communities depend upon the state for the fulfillment of many of the basic needs of life, any shortage in these services impact them negatively. Poor Dalit women, facing the drawbacks stemming from caste and class disadvantages, were often hard-pressed in making both ends meet.

In addition to the cuts in expenditure, the government promoted labour market flexibility in line with the underlying principle to allow the free market to play a more important role in determining the level and form of wages and to remove institutional barriers (such as gains agreed upon in collective bargaining processes) that might hinder this process. However, an analysis of the some of the significant aspects of labour market flexibility (see box) show that some of them are closely linked to the removal of benefits historically gained by workers and making it easier to fire workers and force them to take up precarious forms of employment. Studies have also shown that while national and per capita incomes have increased, such benefits have not trickled down to the more vulnerable sections of society. With employment not keeping pace with the increases in the labour force people are increasingly resorting to insecure

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Significant Aspects of Labour Market Flexibility

1. Wage flexibility
2. Labour flexibility (part-time and other temporary work arrangements)
3. Flexible costs of production (removal or reduction of welfare policy measures)
4. Flexible conditions of work (dismantling of collective bargaining regimes)

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and vulnerable employment.\textsuperscript{59}

These different processes have resulted in declining state employment, which has resulted in the hiring workers on a contract or temporary basis,\textsuperscript{60} both of which have negatively impacted the employment opportunities of educated Dalit women and men. The quota available under the reservation provision is shrinking. The loss of jobs in the government sector is likely to negatively impact the motivation, confidence and aspirations in the community, which has till now looked to employment in the government sector as its major opportunity for socio-economic mobility, dignity and the ability to escape the caste economy they are trapped in. It is useful therefore to understand how the EUDW, having accessed education under the reservation system, have met these challenges.

Privatization has also, as mentioned earlier, opened up markets for private enterprises. While the state has set up institutions and programmes supporting private entrepreneurship (more details in chapter 4), it is important to recognize that for many DW who have negligible access to assets or credit, with no family experience in enterprises, initiating entrepreneurship can be a major challenge. It is valuable therefore to pay attention to issues such as whether the DW were able to access the relevant vocational training programs, and whether they received support with regard to market access or credit. In addition, it is crucial to understand whether caste-based discrimination prevalent in society, also affects the entrepreneurial activities of the DW.

The promotion of the free market also assumes that it functions in an objective manner to deal with the inefficiencies of production. However, the market is an institution in society and like other institutions (such as firms, households or families) it reflects the social norms in society including norms regarding caste and gender. These norms are in many ways biased against women, and result in different opportunities and constraints for women and men.\textsuperscript{61} Thus, women who participate in paid employment are also subjected to these norms. These norms influence for example the patterns of paid employment in society, whereby women are concentrated in labour-intensive, time-consuming, repetitive tasks often under male authority, similar to the activities they undertake in the households. Other examples of such differential treatment include differential access to credit, the tendency for women to be concentrated in certain low paid jobs, and their exclusion from skilled professional works with higher incomes. Such biases are and will continue to be perpetuated in the implementation of market oriented economic reforms unless there is a conscious effort to deal with them. The particular experience of each woman, will, as we have discussed in the previous section, depend on the different processes that intersect her situation, along with the matrix of domination that structures her existence.

Economic growth, a growing middle class, integration into global market processes and the increased employment of women, along with negligible or low quality state services, has led to the demand for care services; a role traditionally associated with a woman's role in the family. Domestic household work is the biggest employer of unorganized women in urban areas. At the same time, Dalit women face traditional caste barriers of purity and pollution here; they face barriers to engagement in some types of domestic work like cooking, cleaning vessels or washing clothes and


are relegated primarily to general house cleaning activities. At the other end, they are severely constrained in managing their household demands by the shrinking state services and subsidies.

While Dalit communities and families are struggling to improve their educational status, the increasing private education system has increased the unequal education across social groups. Dalit and other marginalized communities primarily depend on government educational institutions where quality and outcomes are neglected. Private education has shown to be high input and places a high demand on performance, leaving those that come out of government schools and colleges at a great disadvantage in the job market. According to the women we interviewed, Dalit families in the urban areas try to compensate for this by providing available and accessible private education, which invariably turns out to be poor quality and drain their meager resources.

The discussion above has focused on the possible ways in which EUDW could be affected with regard to employment and entrepreneurship in the context of the liberalization reforms. It suggested that while caste, class and gender situate these women in different frameworks of domination, using an intersectionality lens can also provide a basis to understand the actual experiences of different Dalit women in these circumstances. The next section deals with features of a social and gender justice and a rights-base perspective that could be used to benchmark the quality of work in relation to labour and human rights.

Social Justice, Gender Justice and Labour Rights in Employment and Entrepreneurship

The analysis on the employment and entrepreneurship experiences and challenges of EUDW can be usefully interrogated from a social and gender justice framework, as well as benchmarking them in relation to - a rights-based perspective. Such an analysis includes identifying the specific forms of social and gender inequalities and human rights violations experienced by the Dalit women. It also involves addressing the relevant duty bearers of these violations. The state apparatus and policies, both at national and local levels, are most significant in relation to upholding these rights. In addition, civil society actors can also help develop appropriate strategies at different levels to pressure the different institutions, political organizations and parties to promote the social and economic empowerment and rights of the Dalit women.

The concept of social justice in economic and political policy is generally associated with first, a fairer distribution of goods and resources in the economy and the second with the right of the disadvantaged to claim these from the rest of society. It is useful to reflect on some of the philosophical origins and thinking that went into shaping some of these notions, in order to understand the terms and conditions of how justice can be inculcated in society. One of the foremost thinkers on this subject in the nineteenth century was John Rawls who developed the notion of justice as fairness. According to him all persons in a just society would have equal rights to an adequate scheme of basic rights and liberties “fair equality” of opportunities with regard to access to offices and positions, while policies should ensure that they provide the greatest benefit to the least advantaged in society. Amartya Sen, while acknowledging the influence of John Rawls to his ideas of justice, focused on the capability approach as a means of improving social justice. Contesting the more growth oriented development policies of the period, Sen viewed development in terms of the expansion of capabilities - the different combinations of beings and doings that a person can actually achieve. The notion of freedom was central to both Rawls and Sen, and included also the freedom to choose from the different capabilities. Sen’s notion of justice emphasized both the equity of the processes and the equity

of the essential opportunities, which the persons could enjoy. Sen was also concerned with the capabilities of women and viewed gender equality as a major factor to be considered in development.

Taking these ideas further, Nussbaum linked the notion of gender and social justice more firmly to the human rights paradigm. According to her, “We can only have an adequate theory of gender justice, and of social justice more generally, if we are willing to make claims about fundamental entitlements that are to some extent independent of the preferences that people happen to have, preferences shaped, often, by unjust background conditions.” She however argues that rights as entitlements in themselves are not sufficient but that people should be equipped with the necessary capabilities to access these rights. She uses the case of women who may have the formal right to political participation but are not in a position to exercise these rights in the face of threats of violence if they should leave home. In the case of Dalit women, one could also argue that it is not sufficient to have rights against discrimination enshrined in the Constitution but that they should have the educational, economic and political capabilities to access these rights in the face of misconduct. Furthermore, Nussbaum argues that the capabilities are necessary to achieve rights as, “…to secure a right to citizens in these areas is to put them in a position of capability to function in that area. To the extent that rights are used in defining social justice, we should not grant that the society is just unless the capabilities have been effectively achieved.” It could therefore be argued that rights in themselves need to be complemented by capabilities to access and exercise these rights.

Creating a society that would overturn the hierarchical norms of the caste system providing privileges to those at the top and eroding the human rights of those at the bottom was urgent for the marginalized in independent India. Under the influence of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, iconic leader of the Dalit community, the government of India shaped the concept of ‘social justice’ to address caste and ethnicity induced disabilities faced by the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the constitution. In a very progressive manner, the constitution identified exclusion and exploitation on the above premises as the prime reasons for their current social, economic and political deprivation and dependence and evolved legal and policy frames to overcome historical deprivation and promote inclusion and equality in the present. In addition mechanisms were evolved to protect them from current forms of exploitation. Social justice in the context of Dalits include the protective provisions against untouchability and atrocities, prohibition to engage Dalits in bonded or forced labour, freedom of Dalits to access public spaces, elimination of certain caste based occupations and practices like manual scavenging and Devadasi system, the special provisions in education, employment, economic development and political representation. At the same time, as argued earlier, people must be provided the capabilities to access and exercise these rights. Education and employment form amongst the basic capabilities (together with health) enabling persons to have good standards of learning and livelihoods.

The concept of gender justice as developed is directly concerned with the removal of inequalities between women and men that ultimately result in women’s subordination to men. Gender justice also involves proactively promoting policies in line with removing gender inequality. It is closely linked with upholding women’s rights in different fields (such as legal rights, reproductive rights, challenging cultural practices harming women, economic rights, right to peace and security) and

65 ibid: 34
66 ibid: 37-38
these issues have been taken up by women’s movements over the last decades. From a human rights perspective it is also clear that these different rights are indivisible. As we have argued earlier in this chapter, Dalit women are likely to experience the disadvantages of caste and caste disadvantages, in addition to certain cultural constraints that could undermine equality between their male counterparts and them. These different elements needs to be identified and challenged from a gender justice and rights based perspective.

The relevant international standards on work and employment are articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and different International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions. Important articles in the UDHR are; i.) right to dignity and non discrimination, ii.) the right to work with free choice, iii.) the right to favourable conditions of work including safe and healthy working conditions and fair remuneration, and iv.) the right to form associations and unions.

These rights are complemented in the different labour conventions of the ILO which adopted a Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work committing governments, employers’ and workers’ organization to uphold what it viewed as ‘basic human values – values that are vital to our social and economic lives.” These included; i.) the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining ii.) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour iii.) effective abolition of child labour and iv.) elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. In addition, the ILO emphasized the importance of people being employed in “decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.” For the purposes of EUDW, the elements of decent work that are most relevant include the need for them to be able to work in line with the fundamental principles and rights at work and in accordance with international labour standards; to be provided social protection and social security; and to be able to participate in social dialogue and tripartism.

Particularly relevant to EUDW is the right to freedom from discrimination as elaborated by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and eliminating caste based or racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races, and, to this end: (a) Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation. Of significance also are the rights embodied in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Convention adopted on 18 December 1979 by the UN General Assembly – sometimes referred to as an international bill of rights for women defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition,

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68 Barton, Carol. Integrating Feminist Agendas: Gender justice and economic justice. Development: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, 48(4), 75-84. 2005


71 UDHR, Art 23, 23(3).

72 ICESCR. Art 7, 7(a).

73 UDHR, Art 23(4).

74 ICESCR. Art 8.

enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. India ratified this Convention in 1993 accepting thereby the following:

• To incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
• To establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination
• To ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

An important element in such a rights-based framework, which is also a condition under international law, is the responsibility placed on the state and other relevant actors – the accountability of policymakers, business owners and law enforcement - to protect and promote these rights. “Rights imply duties, and duties demand accountability.” Such a commitment also involves actively struggling for these rights in the context of opposition.

Rights and Justice in the Different Employment Sectors – a Frame for Analysis

Based on the above discussion the following table summarizes the bases of a gender and social justice framework and a rights-based approach that is used in the subsequent chapters to interrogate the experiences of the EUDW

DW caught within these various institutions that exclude and discriminate them have to negotiate their way into education, employment, and empowerment. Post independence, state led measures had taken a prime role in promoting equality and economic development among Dalit women which has undergone a radical change in thinking under the liberalization process. This study captures the experiences of EUDW in this process.

Table 3.1 - Benchmarking Rights and Justice for Dalit Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Rights</th>
<th>Labour Rights</th>
<th>Social Justice</th>
<th>Gender Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-discrimination and Dignity (UDHR/GoI/CERD)</td>
<td>Decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity (ILO)</td>
<td>Right to reservation in educational institutions (Art 15 (5) IC) These provisions also include right to scholarship, age relaxation, residential schools etc in education (GoI)</td>
<td>Proactively support gender equality (CEDAW), ratified by India in 1993 Right to an adequate means of livelihood for men and women (Art 39 (a), IC) Right to equal pay for equal work for men and women (Art 39 (d), IC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favourable conditions of work including safe and healthy working conditions and fair remuneration (UDHR)</th>
<th>Right to Reservation in public employment (Art 16 (4), IC)</th>
<th>Protection against violence at work and family – (CEDAW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right to living wage and decent standard of living (Art 43, IC, GoI)</td>
<td>Right to reservation in promotion in public employment (Art 16 (4), (A), IC)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right to access accumulated reservation in public employment (Art 16 (4), (B), IC)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Claims of Scheduled caste to public services and posts (Art 335, IC)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These provisions also include age relaxation, travel allowance to attend interviews, fee relaxation in cost of application etc</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Right to financial Subsidies and skill training to initiate self employment (National Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation, 1989, (GoI)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Right to work, and free choice of work (UDHR)</td>
<td>Protection against sexual harassment at work place Bill 2010, (Bill defines sexual harassment, mandates the formation of a committee to receive and enquire into complaints, protects the complainant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social dialogue and tripartism (ILO)</td>
<td>Prohibition of bonded labour (Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, GoI)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right of workers to participate in management (Art 43(A), IC)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to work, and free choice of work (UDHR)</td>
<td>Prohibition of bonded labour (Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, GoI)</td>
<td>Protection against sexual harassment at work place Bill 2010, (Bill defines sexual harassment, mandates the formation of a committee to receive and enquire into complaints, protects the complainant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay (UDHR)</td>
<td>Prohibition of untouchability and all caste based disabilities –including caste based occupation obligations (Art 17-IC)</td>
<td>Right to safety and protection against domestic violence (Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence) Act, 2005 (GoI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of technical and vocational skills and guidance (UDHR)</td>
<td>Right to Non discrimination on the basis of caste in access to shops, restaurants, public roads, public places (Art 15 (2) IC)</td>
<td>Right to maternity benefit and special care pre-post periods-public sector (Art 42, IC) (Maternity Benefits Act, 1961, GoI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights to from associations – National SC/ST employees welfare associations in different government departments is a recognized employees association</td>
<td>Right to subsidized finances through Women's development corporations (GoI)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to special provisions in promoting educational and economic interests of scheduled castes (Art 46, IC) Setting up of National Commission for Scheduled Castes to ensure their protection and development, (Art 338, IC)</td>
<td>National commission for Women to ensure rights of women's, ensure remedial measures and advise the government on women's empowerment (National Commission for Women Act, 1990, GoI)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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Chapter 4

National and State Policies

“The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.”

Indian Constitution, Art. 46

There are many steps undertaken by the government of India in line with promoting social justice and the rights of disadvantaged groups in society. In recognition of the historical deprivations, discrimination and disadvantages experienced by scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in India, the Indian Constitution of 1950 enacted: i) anti-discriminatory and protective measures against untouchability, discrimination and violence and ii) development and empowerment measures to overcome inequality, ensure basic services and promote participation in all spheres. In line with this, a range of protective measures and rights with respect to education, skills development, untouchability abolition, non-discrimination, creating favourable conditions of work and ensuring various labour welfare schemes were promulgated through various laws and policies. The provisions for Dalits are spread through the different parts of the Constitution-part III (Fundamental Rights), part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy), parts VI, VIII, IX (Governance at various levels), part XIV (services under the union and the states) part XVI (special provisions relating to certain classes) and part XIX (miscellaneous provisions). The most relevant of these for the EUDW are elaborated reflecting the range of rights and programmes mandated to promote their economic, social and political empowerment.

The Fundamental Rights cover equality before law and equal protection before law within the territory (Art 14), non-discrimination on ground of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth (Art 15 [1]), right of the state to make any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Art 15 (4), right of the state in making any special provision, by law, in admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions, whether aided or unaided by the State, other than the minority educational institutions referred to in clause (1) of Article 30 (Art 15 [5]), various provisions for nondiscrimination and special provisions for employment or appointment for any office under the state (Art 16 expanded later sections), Abolition of untouchability in any form and enforcement of disability arising from it (Art 17), prohibition of human traffic, begar or forced labour of any sort (Art 23), nondiscrimination in admission to any educational institute funded partially or fully by the state (Art 29 [2]).

The Directive Principles of state policy enjoins the above to create the framework for economic justice, welfare and development of the country and in particular rights of Dalits within them. It covers important provisions related to right to work, earn gainful living, decent standard of living, and support in times of unemployment, and workers participation.

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78 Constitution of India, Art 15, 16, 17, 19, 29, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43.

*Begar is the caste-based practice of demanding free labour from Dalits.
**Article 46** is often quoted as a pivotal provision for the educational and economic empowerment of Dalits and Adivasis as quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

In addition to the above, Dalit women also enjoy other labour related rights as i.) prohibition of employment in mines below under the Mines Act, 1952, ii.) Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, iii.) provisions under the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, iv.) Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, v.) crèche facilities in work places along with time for feeding infants and vi.) appointment of women in advisory position in various committees. More recent is the bill on the protection of women against sexual harassment at workplace\(^79\) and protection of women from domestic violence.\(^80\)

**Employment Policies in the Public Sector**

**Reservation Policy**

In terms of employment, the policies of reservation, which are reflected in a quota of seats in both government education establishments and government jobs, in proportion to the Dalit population, were considered important in improving the opportunities and standards in work and employment for Dalits. Under this policy, Dalits are entitled to employments in proportion to their population in the services (IAS, IPS, etc), all government departments, public sector units, educational institutions, nationalized banks etc. The reservation policy also provides reservation in the promotion process facilitating Dalits to reach higher levels of responsibility and decision-making.

Initiated in 1943, reservation was brought in services under the state, through the influence of Babasaheb Ambedkar as member of the Viceroy’s Executive Council and was continued after independence, further bringing STs in to the fold from 1950. Reservation was expanded to employment in Educational institutions and further to Public Sector Units (PSUs) as public sector began to grow under the industrial policy, then extended to public sector banks after nationalization of banks. Reservation was extended in promotions by the efforts of Babu Jagjivan Ram as member of a High Power Committee, recognizing the slow pace of increase of SC/ST representation in higher employment positions. Art 16 (4A) was introduced through 77th Amendment Act, 1995 and 85th Amendment Act of 2001, to get over the pronouncement of the Supreme Court that reservation in promotion was unconstitutional in its judgment in 1992. Art 16 (4B) was included with the 81st Amendment Act 2000.\(^81\)

**Article 16** in particular paved way for reservation for Dalits in employment or office under the state. It reinforced the need for employment and promotion posts in favour of any backward classes of citizens if they are not adequately represented in the services of the state. Art 16, 4(B) also provided for treating any unfilled vacancies in any particular year as a separate class of vacancies and which should now be carried forward in succeeding years as backlog vacancies.

There have been ongoing efforts to legislate reservation and also political promises on the same from 1996.\(^82\) Despite the efforts, reservation benefits have however reached only a small section of

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the SC/ST population –about 2% among SCs and 1% among STs. Another demand has also been for reservation in the private sector as a continuation of the constitutional mandate and values. All these factors meant that government employment became an important option for the Dalits, and these jobs were viewed as highly attractive in terms of job security and conditions of work.

**Economic Policy for Dalit Development**

Yet another important provision for the economic empowerment under the state policy was the Scheduled Caste Plan (SCP) initiated in 1978 when after nearly two decades of planned economic development and special provisions for Dalits, it was recognized that economic development and participation of Dalits was not in keeping with the growth and development in the country. Another momentous step was the establishment of the National SC and ST Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) and State Scheduled Caste Development Corporations in several states, at a time when Dalits and Tribals could hardly access credit from banks and financial institutions. The centre extended assistance to the states to invest in these financial institutions. Further, the National Safai Karmachari Corporation was set up to facilitate the flow of bank finances to these communities.

These policies were supported with the implementation of special vocational training, trainings in skill development for employment and better information on available work possibilities. This policy had the potential to promote entrepreneurship among Dalits.

**Liberalization and Thereafter**

There was a shift in the earlier emphasis on reservations and protection of the scheduled castes with the liberalization policies, which have been in place in India since 1991. The labour market's flexibility to compete with global competition was the main watchword and new legislations and amendments to the old ones are on the anvil, particularly on the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTTP) Act, which earlier limited private sector investments and geographical spread. The Industrial Disputes Act and The Contract Labour (Abolition and Regulation) Act. The budget speech by Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha in 2001 stated that the prior approval of the state needed for layoffs, retrenchment or closure of establishments was raised from 100 workers to 1000 workers. Amendments to The Contract Labour Act were made to open up outsourcing. The Factories Act (Amendment) Bill allowed women workers to be employed at night with adequate safeguards for their safety, dignity, honour and transportation. Amendments have been made in the reporting procedures with regard to furnishing returns and maintaining registers, thus simplifying it along with self-certifications by establishments that do not have more than 500 employees. These changes are in favour of labour market flexibility, increasing informalization and a withdrawal of employment opportunities in the government sector and a withdrawal of some of the important protective measures in favour of labour including the opportunities for Dalit women who looked to secure employment opportunities in the government sector.

The second National Labour Commission, established in 2002, has submitted its recommendations broadly covering the following areas: i.) introduction of umbrella legislation to cover workers in

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*These included the Employment Information Act (1953 [Revised 1975]), the employment exchange and employment news, coaching cum guidance centres for scheduled castes/scheduled tribes (started in 1969-70) on various market skills, personality development, interview preparedness, special coaching schemes for 11 months to enable SC/ST job seekers to appear for reserved vacancies in the central government ministries/departments, special coaching for Group A&B, post matric scholarships, scholarships for vocational and technical education, provision of hostel facilities.*
unorganized sectors and agriculture, ii.) emphasis on upgrading the skill of the workforce by training and re-training, iii.) encouragement of small scale industries, agribusiness and the rural sector for higher employment generation, iv.) bringing attitudinal change and change in the mindset and work culture where employer and worker work as partners with emphasis on participative management, v.) consolidation of social security benefits and the establishment of a social security system, and vi.) the abolition of child labour. These amendments while moving along the privatization agenda are meant to provide some protective cover to the growing unprotected labour and unorganized sector labour including Dalit women workers.

While many of the reservation policies were pursued the public sector came under pressure to cut down on expenditures and costs of employment as well as to promote greater flexibility in line with promoting efficiency. In many cases, this has meant that vacancies were not filled on time and recruitment became irregular. For Dalits in particular, the additional problem was that of increased backlogs, where the government did not fill the seats reserved for the Dalits; the reasons provided were that there were no suitable candidates. These vacancies were then filled on a temporary basis often by non-Dalits. According to the Working Group on the Empowering of Scheduled Castes, over 113,450 job opportunities were lost by the scheduled castes in the Central Government in the years 1992-97. The special backlog drives to fill the reserved posts have helped to reduce the backlog but not in quickening the pace of the representation or entirely removing the backlog.

The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) in 2004 promised to make amends for the decreasing public sector employment through extending affirmative action to the private sector to ensure that the protective and promotional mechanisms available to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes were not affected. The NCMP noted “The [United Progressive Alliance] UPA government is very sensitive to affirmative action, including reservations in the private sector. It will immediately initiate a national dialogue with all political parties, industry and other organizations to see how best the private sector can fulfill the aspirations of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe youth.” These commitments have not been fulfilled.

Rather, it is quite the reverse, the state brought out a bill before the parliament, The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation in Posts & Services) Bill, 2008, which limited the existing employment reservation for these communities in centres of excellence, and excluded promotion posts from the ambit of reservation, leading to protest and a withholding of the bill.

Gaps in the allocation of the proportionate budget in the Scheduled Caste Plans is also observed across all Five Year Plans as seen below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Period</th>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount (crore)</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount (crore)</td>
<td>Percent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 - Allocation Under SCP During Various Plan Periods

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The state of Andhra Pradesh took a more pro-active stance with regard to women's education and employment in the public sector providing 33% reservation for women within the specific quota for each community. Thus Dalit women were also entitled to 33% reservation in the education and employment that was made available to the Dalit community.

### Policies in the Private Sector (National and State)

Until early 2007, the private sector in Indian industry was considered to be caste blind, unlike the public sector which had job reservation for SCs and STs. Recruitment and employment norms are thus very much left to the private industry and institutions like CII or the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). However, there have been some positive changes in the recent period opening up spaces and opportunities for Dalits.

The CII set up the National Council on Affirmative Action to further affirmative action on voluntary basis in response to the call by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in April 2006 to adopt an affirmative for the private sector to pro-actively adopt an affirmative agenda. Companies have been drawing up plans on the four areas of employability, education, entrepreneurship and employment from 2007 onward. CII has also come up with a code of conduct for affirmative action. The code relates to non-discrimination, assistance and transparency with respect to employees, applicants and vendors from SC and ST communities.

The state of Andhra Pradesh pursued liberalization and privatization process with firm determination since 1996-97. Privatization was aggressively followed in various sectors including ICT, biotechnology, ports, power, tourism, roads, education, health care and forestry. The state identified infrastructure development as critical to economic growth and much of the private sector engagement is in infrastructure development. The Andhra Pradesh Infrastructure Development Enabling Act, 2001 was promulgated and the Infrastructure Corporation of Andhra Pradesh (INCAP) was set up accordingly in 2005 under the supervision of the Chief Minister Dr. Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy “to expressly increase the pace of infrastructure development by assisting the setting up and development of private-public participation projects in the state.”

### Table: Plan Expenditure on State (1974-12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Period</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>751.33</th>
<th>4.25%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Plan (1980-85)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3614.66</td>
<td>7.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Plan (1985-90)</td>
<td>1070.17*</td>
<td>1.08%*</td>
<td>7368.05</td>
<td>8.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth Plan (1992-97)</td>
<td>1269.57</td>
<td>3.36%</td>
<td>22420.33</td>
<td>11.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth Plan (1997-02)</td>
<td>1646.00</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
<td>45038.08</td>
<td>11.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Plan (first two years 2002-04)</td>
<td>5478.89</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
<td>1817.39</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes both SCSP and TSP

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Andhra Pradesh has relaxed its legal framework on labour welfare measures to allow self-certification by the private sector on various labour welfare measures under following Acts: Payment of Wages Act, 1936; Factories Act, 1948; Minimum wages Act, 1948; Maternity Benefit Act, 1961; Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act 1970; and the Shops and Establishments Act, 1988. No self-certification is needed under the Workmen Compensation Act of 1923. The state holds the authority to inspect companies at any time following any complaint and take action against erring managements.

At the same time, the state of Andhra Pradesh runs or supports 540 industrial training institutes and centers (92 are run by the state and 448 are run by private institutions supported by state) for enhancing the technical and vocational skills of the students and to promote their employment prospects. 21 of the units are specially meant for girl students. Some also cater specially to SC students, here again, the expanding role of the private sector is evident.

Globalization and outsourcing processes have resulted in Delhi becoming a favourite location for IT and ITeS. The current industrial policy for 2010-2021 has been developed after about 18 years since the first one in 1982. The policy effort is to shift the industrial profile from the low skilled to high tech and high skilled with a six-pronged strategy. The role of the government is “provide good infrastructure, investor friendly environment with a responsive feedback and consultative mechanism” clearly in keeping with the liberalization and privatization agendas; i) infrastructure development, ii) simplification and enabling measures for facilitating business, iii) promote skill development and knowledge based industries, iv) decongest industrial areas, v) develop high technology and skilled industrial clusters through private-public partnerships and vi) discourage polluting industries.

Post 2000, the share of tertiary sector in Delhi has grown to almost 80% overshadowing the hitherto strong manufacturing sector. The state government of Delhi also placed considerable importance on ICT industry in governance and development and adopted the following ‘6Es’ policy (E-Governance, Equality, Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Economy) in 2005 to pursue both social and economic goals. The state GDP showed high growth rate of roughly 15% (Compound Annual Growth Rate [CAGR] at current prices 2002-03), with the service or tertiary sector contributing more than 76% towards the economy of the state. Manufacturing and repair services (41%) and retail trade (15%) constituted major chunks of employment. The state also reports a high per capita income of Rs. 47,477 (current prices, 2002-03).

National and State Policy on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
The government of India recognizes the role of NGOs in various service delivery programmes. Different departments and ministries, particularly Ministries of Culture, Health and Family Welfare, Social Justice and Empowerment, Tribal Affairs, Women and Child Development, Education, Health and Rural Development have specific partnership with NGOs. ‘The eleventh plan is focusing on rapid and inclusive development, for which the voluntary sector has an important role to play.’ The Planning Commission has initiated a registration process for NGO partnerships. The


GoI has released a draft National Policy for NGOs. The state of AP has similarly formed a state level coordination committee of the government officials and NGOs (GO-NGO collaboration) headed by the Chief Minister. On same lines district level coordination committees are formed headed by the minister in charge of each district. It is estimated that the GoI funds NGOs to the tune of Rs. 10,000 crores annually.\(^9^5\)

The growth of the voluntary sector has to be seen in the context of “the relative inability of both the official planning system and the market economy to create a significant dent in India's poverty and inequality indices that has given rise over the years to deep skepticism about the ability of institutional structures of democracy – legislatures, parties, unions, panchayats – to politically process the needs and problems of the poor into a structure of effective policies.”\(^9^6\)

The voluntary sector needs to be recognized for its employment potential too. About 2.7 million paid employees work in approximately 1.2 million Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across the country. The share of employment in this sector is equal to about 82% of the Central Government and 31% of that of the organized private sector.\(^9^7\)

CSOs in Andhra Pradesh came to the forefront in the wake of the devastating floods in 1978. Until early 1990s, the bulk of the leadership and decision making authority in the majority of these organizations came from the dominant caste communities, with young persons from the marginalized communities working as field level workers and sometimes midlevel staff. By the early 1990s a few of them had registered organizations with focused work among the Dalit community itself. These were not very active though, as they did not have the wherewithal or connections and access to human and financial resources. Their work highlighted the human rights violations of the Dalit community and started a process of building common platforms to address them. Thus began a phase of Dalit rights work and greater visibility of the NGOs led by members of the Dalit community. The combination of recognizing caste and gender disabilities created the opening for Dalit women to be engaged in the work as issues of abuse, violence, and development deprivations among Dalit women came to light. In addition to creating spaces within Dalit organizations, civil society organizations working with women also opened up spaces for Dalit women employees and Dalit women issues. However the limitations of caste, class and gender continues to hold fort as can be recognized by the negligible number of Dalit women led organizations in comparison to those led by Dalit men or non-Dalit women.

Being the national capital and without hinterland rural areas, in some ways define the nature of civil society organizations in Delhi. A large number of International NGOs and national NGOs have their headquarters in Delhi with primary engagements in coordination, networking, policy advocacy, training, research etc. Much of the work is also related to urban development compared to Andhra Pradesh where much of the work is spread is in rural development. For various reasons, the emergence of Dalit led NGOs and their networks is of more recent origin in the state, and can be dated to late 1990s and early 2000s. The World Conference Against Racism in Durban in 2000 created an impetus for Dalit civil society organizations to take their work to the national capital for

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dialogue with government and media advocacy. These national networks’ have facilitated inclusion of Dalit agenda at the national media and governance levels and also facilitated greater engagement on Dalit issues in the northern states of India.

“The [voluntary] sector has contributed significantly to finding innovative solutions to poverty, deprivation, discrimination and exclusion through means such as awareness raising, social mobilization, service delivery, training, research and advocacy.” The planning commission has developed and operationalized a web-based portal for NGO partnership where about 26,000 (Feb 2010) VOs and NGOs have signed up. The effort is to create a transparent process of information sharing, programme partnership and transparency. In the context of the work engaged in by the voluntary sector, Dalit women have a critical role both as agents and beneficiaries of change. This study touches the surface of such a need and provides insights into some critical areas regarding Dalit women’s access and experience in the sector so that it can be further expanded and deepened. All these factors have meant that NGO employment has also become an important source of work for Dalit women.

**National and State Policies to Entrepreneurship**

Since 1989 The National Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation (NSCFDC) function to provide soft loans to SCs below poverty line (with per capita income below Rs. 44,500) to take up income generating and self employment ventures. Similarly state SC Development corporations functioning in 27 states and union territories are expected to identity SC families and motivate them to take up enterprises. The rate of recovery of SCDC is just 45% during 2004-05 to 2007-08.

The UPA government in its Common Minimum Programme of 2004 promised to:

- Establish a national commission for the unorganized informal sector*
- Set up a fund for the same
- Revamp the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and initiate new programmes in it

In 2008, The Unorganized Sector Workers Social Security Act (Act 33, 2008) was passed in the Parliament. This act’s intention was stated in its introduction as being, “to provide for the social security and welfare of the unorganized workers and for other matters connected therewith, or incidental thereto.” The unorganized sector was recognized as enterprises employing less than 10 workers and includes; home based workers, self-employed workers or wageworkers in the unorganized sector. The Act provides for setting up national and state social security boards, which were to make recommendations on the formulation of social security benefits for unorganized

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* The National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) and the National Confederation of Dalit Organizations (NACDOR) are Dalit led networks that have created visibility to the Dalit agenda at the national levels.


100 ibid: 175.

* CMP proposed to establish a National Commission to examine the problems facing enterprises in the unorganized informal sector. This commission is expected to advise the government on issues of technology, market and credit support for the unorganized sector.
workers. There were many areas that are under debate regarding the neglect of the law in areas such as the regulation of employment and wages in the unorganized sector as well as the role of the trade unions.

The promotion of microfinance was particularly meant to pave the way for entrepreneurship among the poorer groups. Microfinance programmes were piloted by NGOs following the success of the Grameen Bank model in Bangladesh. The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) launched its pilot scheme in 1994. SIDBI set up the National Microfinance Support Project (NMSP) in 1999 to 'to develop a more formal, extensive and effective micro finance sector on a national scale, serving the poor, especially women.'

The main findings showed that MFIs are more operative in the southern states, while they reach the poor, the 'very poor' clients were not included, majority of the clients are from socially disadvantaged scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and backward castes. The use of microfinance for risk coverage is highest among the more poor. There has been consistent demand for skill training by members to improve their enterprises. The lesson on role of microfinance in supporting enterprises was mixed: there was an increase in non-agricultural enterprises while a decline was seen in promoting new enterprises; clients used micro credit for stabilizing and developing existing enterprises.

The AP government has announced a new industrial policy for the next five years (2010-2015), offering a series of incentives for micro, small and medium enterprises. It hopes to attract Rs. 15,000 crore investment annually and create 500,000 jobs every year. The subsidy for small and micro enterprises has been raised from Rs. 15 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs. DW enterprises, which are most often very small, do not get covered under them. The micro-finance programme and the self-help group programmes promoted by the state are two interventions that have included Dalit women, though only to a limited extent.

The Delhi Scheduled Caste Finance Development Corporation (DSFDC) runs several schemes for all-round development of scheduled caste entrepreneurship. It supports the formulation of economic development schemes, mobilizing institutional credit and functions as promoter and catalyst for new enterprises, facilitating the pursuit of higher or technical professional education through interest free loans for the deprived sections of society. Implementation gaps are observed as seen below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Development</th>
<th>NFYP Target</th>
<th>NFYP Achieved</th>
<th>TFYP Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance to SC/ST for self employment through DSFDC (share capital)</td>
<td>16,255</td>
<td>8,908</td>
<td>54,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance to SC/ST for self employment (for purchase of TSR) through DSFDC</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance to SC/ST for self employment (for purchase of buses) through DSFDC</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


102 ibid: 15.
“It is often noted that the Government programmes pertaining to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are not taken seriously and there are no effective monitoring system to pinpoint the failure of the plan objectives. Diversion of resources meant for these communities and irrelevant programmes are common.”

Overall, the globalization picture has resulted in mixed results for employment – and particularly for Dalit women's employment. While government sector employment has undergone structural changes with less security and benefits in contract jobs, the private and the NGO sector have opened up some opportunities for new work. The reservation policies on employment have also come under pressure in the context of liberalization. Dalit women were caught up in these different contradictions, and had to negotiate for their economic empowerment in different contexts.

| Financial Assistance for Scavengers | 8,000 | 5,229 | 5,000 |
| Training for scavengers            | 1,000 | 671   | 1,000 |
| Persons trained in computerized foot wear design centre at Karol Bagh | 300   | 972   | 750   |
| Financial help to OBC for their economic through DSFDC | 750   |       | 750   |

NFYP: Ninth Five Year Plan, TFYP: Tenth Five Year Plan

Chapter 5

DELHI
Government Sector Employment

“The social dimensions of employment in terms of special needs and treatment of women and disadvantaged groups has to be an underlying consideration in all aspects of employment policy”

Government of India, National Employment Policy (Draft) 2008

This chapter analyzes Dalit Women’s (DW’s) access and experience with regards to their right to education and livelihood in the government sector of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. The chapter describes the background of DW who found employment in the government sector. It analyzes the complex dynamics of caste and gender and their influence in their efforts at educating themselves and finding government employment in the context of the state provisions for Dalits. It looks at how DW were or were not able to access information and affirmative action policies of the state with regard to education and employment. It also explores the role played by the families in DW’s access and ability to continue in their work and the impact of the employment on themselves, their families and Dalit community. These different experiences of the DW are interrogated with regard to their access to relevant human and labour rights and the implications for the practices of social and gender justice.

Table 5.1 – Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profile of Dalit Women

Table 5.3 - Sub-Caste

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Caste</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jatav</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valmiki</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of Dalit women in the study (80%) were in the age group of 20-30 years with the remaining 20% of the sample in the age bracket of 31 and above. 75% were not married in the age group of 20-30 and in the older group three were married and one was widowed. By and large, they were born and brought up in the NCT, with their families having been living here or having migrated to the city from neighboring states a few generations before.

### Table 5.2 – Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75% of the respondents came from the Chamar (Jathav/Raigar) community and were employed in diverse government departments. This composition reflects the macro state population where Chamar community represents 38.1% of the total Dalit population in the state. They were also the highest educated Dalit sub caste in the NCT. 15% of the study sample came from Valmiki community, the second largest Dalit sub caste in the city. The study also had 5% representation from Dhobi and Khatik sub castes. While Delhi has 36 sub castes among Dalits, the above are the major sub-castes living in the city.

### Role of Education in Accessing Employment

Over 90% of Dalit women employed in the government sector were found to have completed their bachelor's degree. Nearly half the graduates (45%) had additional qualifications to their bachelor's degree, such as vocational training, diplomas and certificates. In addition, 30% had undergone professional education, with 15% attaining their post-graduation in Teacher Training, Computer Applications, or Social Work. It was clear that these women recognized the value of education in providing them with relatively better jobs. While 55% of EUDW had to take a break in their education largely due to a crisis in the family, most of them pursued their education getting over the family crisis.

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* Jathav and Raigar communities are subgroups within Chamar community. In their efforts at occupational mobility, the Chamar community had been giving up the traditional work in leather and symbolically identifying themselves differently as Jathav and Raigar, making a distinction from the Chamar identity. It should be noted that the GoI population data continues to club them under ‘Chamar’ caste identity.

** The Valmiki community are traditionally engaged in cleaning and sweeping activities and have also been engaged in manual scavenging (manual disposal of human excreta) which, though eliminated by law, continues to be practiced in several places across the country.

* Traditionally Dhobi’s are washers of clothes and Khatik are butchers.
By and large, the women had chosen the course of their study themselves even if they had been given advice in some instances. The choice of the subject was influenced by the possibilities to get admission through the reservation policy, and what they perceived as the ‘easiness’ of the specialization, measuring it by their perception of their ability to complete the course demands. The extra courses they completed were in line with attaining skills that were demanded in the labour market, notably those associated with computer literacy, latter having increased significantly with globalization.

35% of EUDW stated that they faced discrimination during their education period due to their caste identity. Despite facing untouchability from their fellow students and teachers, EUDW were able to create their own space and enter the labour market acquiring regular salaried jobs in government sector. It needs mention that ‘Convention against Discrimination in Education’ is one of the first UN conventions (UNESCO 1960) which addresses discrimination in access to education of any type or at any level, providing education of inferior standard, inflicting conditions that are incompatible with human dignity. State is expected to ensure equality of opportunity and of treatment. Being signatory to this Convention, the continued practice of caste and gender based discrimination in schools and colleges is a serious violation of this fundamental right as education is not only an end in itself as a right, but also a means to acquire many other rights. Discrimination on the basis of caste in education is also a violation of the ‘Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education’ (GoI, 2009), which recognized Dalit children as children belonging to disadvantaged sections and prohibits any kind of discrimination against them.

The fact that these women had to discontinue education owing to family crisis reflects the gender bias against girls who are the first casualty when the family has a crisis, be it illnesses, child birth, new born babies or financial. By and large families ensure the continuity of education for boys and require girls to accommodate the family crises. This is a violation of the fundamental rights of girls to right to equality in education and the right to freedom of choice and opportunities for development. They are thus denied level playing fields in the ensuing competition for employment. This undermines the oft-raised concern of gender justice to provide girls and women the necessary and additional support to promote gender equality at various spheres.

The discontinuation of these women’s education in a crisis also reflected the failure of the state to implement the professed measures for social justice, which acknowledges the need to promote education and equal opportunities to Dalits to overcome historical disabilities of caste. It reflects on the negligence of the state to ensure the many provisions like free education to Dalits, scholarships, residential facilities, free books and materials, additional support to meet incidentals which have been instituted to ensure that Dalit girls and boys are assured of education without any break. It also reflects on the need for regular review and revision of these schemes in keeping with the need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th grade</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th grade with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduation with professional course (M.Ed, MSW, MCA)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 – Education Level
Employment Analysis
Nature of Employment
25% of the respondents were teachers in government primary and middle schools. Another 25% are employed as computer teachers or operators in similar schools. About 15% of them were employed as personal assistants (peon) to government offices and 10% of them were serving as government clerks. Another 10% of the women worked as paid volunteers in government schools or on health related projects. Only 5% taught in a government college.

The Dalit women in this study reported being employed in a limited number of government departments (education dept here). Unlike the general perception about government employment as secure, permanent employment, the study found that 55% of the respondents were employed on contract basis, a very visible impact of the downsizing of the public sector as part of the liberalization reforms. This fixed contract employment was associated with the informal processes of recruitment (discussed in the next section), as well as the lack of labour rights or social security for these workers.

It is useful to reflect on the nature of the jobs that were taken up by the Dalit women. In the first place they were generally within the more socially acceptable type of work for women, who were viewed as ‘suited’ to undertake labour-intensive activities in the services sector. Secondly, the main formal qualifications of the women appear to be relatively high to the nature of the work that needed to be done. Third, all the jobs were in relatively subordinate positions. The pattern of employment attained by the women suggests that they were not, in the main, challenging the gender division of work on the labour market. It also means that policies promoting gender equality and gender justice were not sufficiently implemented in the sector.

It should be noted that Art 16 of the Indian Constitution promotes reservation for Dalits to all types and levels of government employment as a means to promote greater participation and benefit sharing of the community to overcome historical disabilities and continuing discrimination. The study reports how DW were getting limited to certain types and levels of work which goes against the principle of equity and equal participation. This also reflects that state is negligent to
equity and equal opportunities policies that are instrumental in promoting social justice agenda of the state.

**Informal Processes of Recruitment**

We have seen earlier that the government sector, under the pressures of globalization, economic reform and labour restructuring was also downsizing and cutting on its employment costs. This process was, most directly, expressed in increased number of contract jobs replacing those of a more permanent status. These changes also resulted in more ‘informal’ processes of recruitment. The recruitment notification is rarely advertised in public and candidates were often recruited through informal interviews giving space to nepotism and bribery. This also resulted in employment being localized as most of the DW had found employment near to their homes.

As mentioned previously, contract employment in the government sector was linked to the use of more informal processes of recruitment. Only 40% of job opportunities were announced in formal newspaper or Internet advertisements. A large volume (60%) of information on availability of jobs was gathered through informal contacts. This seriously undermines access to information to large groups of candidates who are seeking information and are qualified to compete for these positions equally. It is interesting to note that family members constituted 40% of informal sources of information on employment, reflecting their access to such information in the local context and their support for the employment of DW. It also reflected family concerns that girls be employed in nearby places, with minimum travel. 75% of EUDW knew about the existence of employment exchanges as a source of employment information but none of them had availed of its services, as it had become inactive after LPG. Shrinking the role of the employment exchanges rather than expanding and making them more vibrant organizations to provide information on jobs, career guidance and counseling in the wake of privatization also reflects state apathy to the employment needs of the growing numbers of educated youth from poor and underprivileged sections like DW. Not putting out information in the public space and the process of informal recruitment undermines the principles of transparency and accountability.

Despite the changing nature of employment in the government sector, it continued to be the first option for EUDW and their families. These families viewed a government job, with its potential for security and benefits, as an important accomplishment for these women. In this light, getting the government jobs meant the possibility to have economic independence and to support their families, while improving their social status and the hope that these will be made permanent as was reported often during the interviews.

35% of the EUDW had been engaged in some kind of regular salaried jobs prior to this current job but preferred to opt for the government position. For 65% it was their first job, with almost 55% of these EUDW indicating that the primary concern had been to contribute to the regular income of their families. 45% of them had also stated that they wanted to gain greater social status within the family and society. All these reasons reflected the strategy of EUDW to gain the confidence of their parents who had invested in their education, while at the same time revealed multiple reasons for becoming economically independent, including the majority (65%) being keen to develop their own careers. Interestingly, a mere 5% of the EUDW gave due credit to the reservation policy for accessing government employment as the positions were by and large contractual. Such a situation implies the lack of adequate implementation of the social justice policies as far as Dalit women are concerned.

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*Employment exchanges are government institutions to collect and disseminate information on employment opportunities and facilitate the recruitment process for those who register with these exchanges.*
Benefits of Employment

As far as provisions and benefits in the jobs were concerned, 55% of these EUD were in contract jobs, and were not entitled to welfare or social security provisions as per government standards. They also did not have tenured jobs and were in constant fear of losing these jobs when the period of the contract was over. Employment accessed by the DW also shows that a fourth of the women were employed based on their additional vocational or technical qualification rather than their higher education qualification. The salaries earned by the DW reflected the nature of their contract, the designation they were employed in and were not commensurate with their educational qualification.

70% of EUDW earned a monthly salary between Rs. 2,500-8,500. Around 15% of them earned less than Rs. 2,500 per month. Only 30% earned Rs. 10,000 or above.

It was found that despite 90% of the DW being graduates and above, 45% of them earned less than Rs. 5,500 per month including 15% that earned below Rs. 2,500 per month. It needs to be underscored that higher educational achievements did not necessarily result in higher earnings or better employment security. Some of these wages do not comply to these women’s right to fair wages exemplified in UDHR and ILO provisions. States’ decisions to make contractual recruitments allow low remuneration, which is not payable even at the lowest levels of state employees who are recruited on permanent basis. The disparity in wages between those recruited on contract basis and others on regular basis also lead to dissatisfaction and perpetuate the inequalities. The absence of regulations about wage levels commensurate with qualifications and job requirements undermines the confidence and commitment to education particularly for the poor and marginalized to whom the opportunity cost and the present context of poverty are important.

Role of Caste in Employment

“It is better to disclose caste identity at work place because lot of groupings takes place on caste and class identity in government offices and we need to be aware who belongs to which caste. It will help us to know the behaviour of other caste towards us and simultaneously we feel secure and safe while being in same kind of caste group.”

K.M., Delhi
Most of the women (85%) were in favour of disclosing their caste identity to their colleagues, not in order for others to know what caste they belonged to, but so that they knew what other people’s castes were, so they could better predict the behavior of their colleagues towards them. This reflects state failure and neglect to promote Constitutional values like fraternity and equality in the place of traditional caste norms even after 63 years of independence. It was evident that Dalits became self-exclusionary and formed their own groupings in response to the exclusion they experienced.

Though there was no record of visible caste discrimination by non-Dalits at the work place, there were regular comments made about the women being recruited under the reservation category, questioning their ability to undertake the job and affecting their chances of promotion and growth in government sector. Thus, according to the women ‘castiesm’ existed in government departments and was most visible in the promotion patterns as well as in the interaction with superiors and groupings based on caste and class identity. Given the greater contractual nature of employment, these employees have very little claim to their jobs and there is greater chances of bias in the recruitment and retention of employees.

“There is a separate group of Dalit employees in our school. Generally we interact and remain in our group only. And we (Dalit employees) also eat lunch with our group only. There is a very less interaction with other caste group.”

S.T., Delhi

Caste continues to influence behaviour patterns in workspaces, with particular reference to Dalit women. Identity issues became highly visible and talked about when there are discussions on larger social and political issues related to Dalits, be it festivals, social functions or marriages or, when there is an incident of violence or a change in political trends or leadership shown in the media.

Table 5.6 – Knowledge of Caste in the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How is your caste identity known?</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From your recruitment process</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues direct enquiry about your caste identity</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From colleagues indirect enquiries and deductions</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No office colleagues did not knew my caste identity</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is very evident from the experiences of DW in the study that while caste discrimination is prohibited and government employment has been a recognized means of facilitating Dalit participation in society and social mobility, caste identity and dynamics are visible even in the government sector. Though caste discrimination has been prohibited legally, efforts to change the social and individual thinking and mindset have not been sufficiently undertaken, leading to DW in the government sector continuing to experience exclusion based on caste.

Being recruited on contract basis, the women did not have access to social security or other labour rights. Located in local schools they were not part of teachers associations or other trade unions in the sector, limiting their opportunity to raise their issues and ensure their rights. Contract employment in the government sector becomes a tool for excluding DW of their labour rights and rights to decent employment.
Role of Family
90% of fathers of the DW provided regular family income and 50% of them held government employment. However, there was reported both supportive and restrictive roles by the family regarding the access to education and later employment. On one hand these families influenced the employment patterns of DW by encouraging and supporting them in accessing government employment in the hope that they would one day become secure and tenured as has been their own experience. On the other hand, they limited the DW's independent decision making on the choice of which fields of employment were acceptable. They also would prevent daughters from working in faraway places. Thus patriarchal norms controlling women's opportunities and independence were also exerted in the private lives of these women.

The comparative financial security of the family provided 90% of the DW access to higher education. Only 20% reported a break in their education owing to financial reasons. The fact that 55% of fathers were educated below higher secondary and their employment was limited to the lower cadre in the government also reflected the limits of the family in supporting costly higher education. However that DW had to break their education owing to family crisis reflected the gender biased expectation from the families, that girls and women accommodate and adjust to family conditions and needs more than men and boys without the consideration of their negative impact of these on their career or future opportunities.

There was also greater control and demand on the DW to comply with certain family and gender norms regarding education, the nature of employment and fulfilling traditions like marriage. 35% of the DW in this study said that they had to discontinue their education in between because of family pressure.

Perceptions of Dalit Women
At a personal level, being able to earn regular income had increased self-confidence among the DW. They also reported that the family had greater confidence in them and recognized their contribution to the family. This provided opportunities to meet their own needs and make their own choices even within the larger gender and family norms. A considerable number reported that they were able to enhance their educational qualifications through their own income.

55% of the DW reported that their employment contributed to the family income, which showed that their income was a substantive part of the family income. It helped the family to have better financial planning for the economic growth of the family. Almost all women reported the enhanced status of the family in the wider society owing to the fact that they were employed.

Conclusion
The government sector continued to be the first choice for EUDW. This was more prevalent when the parents were also employed in the government sector and laid down said and unsaid norms about the nature of education and employment for DW. Affirmative action in government employment has resulted in the Dalit community having a strong belief that government employment provides security and socio-economic mobility. In addition, the provision of reservation created confidence in being able to access government employment.

The post liberalization reality resulted in many of the women accessing only temporary, low paid, contractual jobs, without the welfare and security provisions, which were contrary to the expectations and beliefs of the community. Thus employment provisions by the state under the social justice frame of the Constitution are slowly being dismantled. Pro-active mechanisms like the employment exchanges were hardly functional and the community was unable to find information or opportunities from this source. The situation seemed contradictory in the sense that the Dalit
community increasingly put in efforts to access the promised provisions and entitlements, and were also more competent to avail them. However, now when the provisions and entitlements are no longer available, owing to changed economic frame and policies of the government. This is a betrayal of the government was they did not provide sufficient time, space and resources to the community that had been deprived for centuries.
Chapter 6
DELHI
Private Sector Employment

“If industry has to make a difference, it is essential to pin down caste, and then track and measure corporate performance along caste based lines.”

Farhad Forbes

The private sector is viewed as a major player in the generation of employment in the post-liberalization period. The data presented in this section locates Educated Urban Dalit Women’s access and experience in the sector under current labour market context in the National Capital Territory (NCT), Delhi. It analyzed how the caste, class, education and gender dynamics impacted Dalit women’s efforts and choices in accessing private sector employment. The chapter looked at DW’s experiences in the private sector using a social and gender justice framework and from a rights-based perspective. It describes the personal background of DW who accessed private sector employment in terms of their age, caste groups, marital status and education level and how their socio-economic background affected their choices. It further analyzed the work experience of EUDW in the context of decent work and special provisions and entitlements of the state for promoting employment among Dalits and it attempted to link the micro level context of the Dalit women to macro level labour market processes in the wake of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG).

Table 6.1 – Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profile of Dalit Women in Private Sector

Table 6.2 – Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Majority (45%) of educated Dalit women in the study sample belonged to 20-25 age group, followed by 27.5% in the age bracket of 26-30, another 22.5% in the 31-35 age group, and only 5% who are 36 and above. This means, a large proportion (72.5%) of the study sample were within the age group of 20-30 years, representing a young population among Dalit women who are employed as regular salaried wage worker in private sector.

A large section of Dalit Women (80%) in sample are single and 67.5% belong to the age group between 20-30 years. It indicated a phenomenon where Educated Urban Employed Dalit women were keen to have a job, excel in their career and to secure their financial and economic independence and development. This had increased their age of marriage and it is interesting to note that families had accepted this proposition. 17.5% reported that they took up employment to contribute to family income or as response to acute financial crisis in the family. Single women in the sample took up employment on husband’s death, as family had no other source of income.

The DW in the study belonged 72.5% from Chamar (Jatav and Raigar), 15% from Valmiki, followed by Dhobi (2.5%) and Khatik (10%). Later in this chapter, the study illustrates the changing patterns in traditional caste based occupation, reflecting occupational shift among different sub-castes and how EUDW had moved beyond their traditional system to another level through their education making choices of getting into regular salaried job employment.

Education

The opportunities opened up by the government through reservation policies and special programmes in education had been useful in improving the skills of the EUDW. Most of the women in private sector employment in Delhi had completed their Bachelor’s Degree (72.5%) and many of them (62.5%) had also acquired at least one professional, vocational, certificate or diploma course along with regular course. All the EUDW did their regular course of either completing 12th grade, Graduation (bachelor’s degree) or Post Graduation (master’s degree) from government schools and 60% had completed their vocational, certificate or diploma course from private institutions. 40% have completed their vocational, certificate or diploma from government institutes. The educational qualifications of the Chamar (Jatav and Raigar) community were the highest among the Dalit sub castes, being 75.8% of those in the sample who were educated to graduation and above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Caste</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jatav</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valmiki</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatik</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raigar</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhobi</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3 – Sub-Caste
It was important to note that DW made these educational achievements despite undergoing caste based discrimination during their education, aspects that were to affect their employment experiences in the subsequent period. 27.5% EUDW had experienced at least one type of caste discrimination during their education period. The different type of caste discrimination during education had been included the following:

- Caste discrimination by fellow students who referred to Dalit students as ‘SCs’ and made fun of them saying that they paid less fees and received scholarships
- Some teachers taunted them by indicating that the reserved category students were weak and even ignored their questions in the classroom.
- Fellow non Dalit students look down on Dalit students
- The principal would not ask Dalit students for the school picnic

The experiences of discrimination and isolation among Dalit boys and girls generally developed an attitude of alienating self from other non-Dalit friends and circle. They tended to form their own social circle, which basically comprised their own caste friends. Sometimes it is restricted to specific sub-caste groups. This kind of grouping has both positive and negative aspects. Often these were formed as a means of overcoming exclusion and alienation, and led to building strong identity based groups which negotiated their identity and spaces in larger society.

While caste discrimination and untouchability were prohibited legally, their practice continued to be widespread in society and was reflected in the education experience of DW in the study. These experiences of discrimination during education stayed with them and impacted their career choices as seen from their reflections on the same and they did not feel confident to address them in the education period. The education system did not take sufficient cognizance of the issues to put in the necessary administrative mechanisms or sensitizing efforts to ensure that discrimination is eliminated in the schooling process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th grade</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th grade with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTech or MBBS</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate and above</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Role of Education in Accessing Employment

“I have got this job and respect in society because of my regular graduation along with a professional course.”

J.K., Delhi

The Dalit women were strongly motivated to procure good employment and, in spite of the fact that many of them came from background where the parents had received low education, persisted in taking extra courses to ensure that they were able to improve their career and future prospects. This is particularly commendable for women, who were often under pressure to take up more traditional roles in the family, and give less attention to work outside the household. It was clear that education linked to employment was important for the parents who did their best to support their girl children, often bearing extra costs.

Clearly, the reservation possibilities, the availability of seats and the affordability of costs in the courses were important factors in making the final choices of the courses. 62.5% of the responses were ‘Availability of employment opportunity in that particular course’ accompanied by 60% responses ‘Reservation availability/Seat availability’ in that course. Almost 52.5% DW had followed their parent’s suggestion in choosing their subject of study. 35% responses also indicated that affordability was an important reason to opt for a particular course.

### Table 6.5 – Reasons for Courses Studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for last course attended</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reservation available</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seat available</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested by the previous school or teacher</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested by the selection officer or committee of the new institution</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility for travel and hostel or lodging</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost affordability</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considerably easy to study</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like the subject</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment opportunity</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family suggestion</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family members have taken the same subject</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient to fulfil my household responsibilities</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No one guided me/I did not know which subject to take up</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language choice</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is quite evident from the data that most of the Dalit women (67.5%) had got job due to their
additional professional, vocational or diploma course besides their regular degree study course. And it is interesting to see that DW in urban spaces were well aware about this and they prepared themselves according to the requirement of the jobs. This choice was made even though it was financially very difficult for them and their families.

Promoting education among Dalits and other marginalized communities through special measures are Constitutional provisions. While the respondents accessed school level education from the government run institutions, a considerable number depended on private institutions for additional vocational or skill training, putting themselves to considerable financial burden. Many of them attended the additional course in private institutions, as there are few ITIs and vocational training centre run by state government. The lack of information dissemination about the courses, lack of jobs prospects for courses run by the government, unsuitable timings for girls and the distance from one part of the city to another were stumbling blocks for DW to avail government training.

Employment Analysis
35% of EUDW were ‘Tele-Callers’, 32.5% were employed as ‘Computer Operator/Computer Teacher or Computer Assistant’. Except Teacher (3%) in private schools, rest all of them were engaged in work, which was based on their professional or technical qualifications, which were largely related to computer knowledge; such as web designer, receptionist, assistant in hospitals etc. There was one civil engineer and one airhostess who had completed their degrees with technical professional course and fell under highest income group in the sample (see the table below). In many ways, this shows that the EUDW were intersecting positively with the opportunities opened up in the post-liberalization period.

Table 6.6 – Nature of Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of job</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tele-callers</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer operator, teacher or assistant</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private school teacher</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales girls</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web designer</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil engineer</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office assistant, receptionist, supervisor</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air hostess</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While it was the first job for 42.5% of the women, the majority (57.5%) had previously held one or more regular salaried jobs. These jobs were attained on the basis of their on-going or completed school or college education. While exploring the break in their career path after 12th, 32.5% DW had discontinued their education or training and again restarted towards completion of graduation and post graduation. The major reason for discontinuation in education had been financial need in the family where they stop their studies and took up a regular salaried job.

Some of the reasons provided for choosing the particular type of employment include:
- 80% were I was interested to work and have career,
• 57.5% worked to provide regular income for their family
• 62.5% wanted to gain greater social status and contribute positively to the community and to society

The responses substantiate the DW efforts towards building their career through decent and quality employment where they have negotiated their spaces within the family and accessed employment which provides them a ‘self earned position’ within the family and society resulting in to socio-economic independency to some extent.

Table 6.7 – Reasons for Choosing First Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for choosing first employment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was interested to work and have career</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To contribute positively to community and society</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For regular income to family</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For gaining greater social status</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial independent because of harassment by husband</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from family members</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members are already employed same or similar jobs</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working friends motivated me</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access to Employment Information and the Recruitment Process

72.5% of employment information was received through informal sources like family members, friends or teachers in college, Dalit student’s group and some influential persons from non-Dalit community. Just 27.5% employment information had been accessed through formal sources i.e. through national or regional newspaper, employment news and Internet or TV. The prevalence of social networks to access good jobs in the private sector has had disadvantages for these women who do not always move in more privileged social circles. 57.5% of EUDW did not have any information about availability of any government source that provides information about employment in private sector. 42.5% of EUDW knew only weekly employment news and employment exchange as source of information about jobs availability.

This informal availability of information was also linked to informal recruitment (without proper interview or written examination). Almost all of EUDW had accessed employment through some contacts and did not have to go through a formal interview process indicating fewer obstacles in getting these jobs.
A closer look into the employment pattern of the women shows that a significant proportion were linked to the needs of the growing services sector, particularly those associated with banking, sales and marketing. 32.5% of EUDW were engaged in the job of Tele-calling in call centers, the latter being smaller units of larger banks like HDFC, ICICI, and various types of sales and marketing company. They were comparatively smaller units and hired very few tele-callers, mostly women. They worked day shifts in a less ‘western look and environment’. These call centers – did not have very stringent recruitment process and Dalit families within the locality were familiar to the senior management as they also hailed from their own locality. In fact, these units could be categorized as ‘sub-contractors’ who took assignments from bigger private companies and operated very locally adjusting themselves to nature and availability of work force. The other sorts of employment such as computer operator, teacher, receptionists or assistant were also very much locally available in private schools, travel and export houses and hospitals. Delhi municipal schools have been also recruiting computer teacher on contracts.

Availability of jobs within the vicinity of EUDW was another motivating factor for family to allow the women to go for regular employment. Such jobs provided the space and time for EUDW to fulfill their household responsibility and move ahead in their career. Balancing between household responsibilities and their career growth was another reality in the lives of EUDW where they are negotiating every space within the family and society.

There were no formal or transparent mechanisms available for collecting and disseminating information on employment opportunities in the private sector as seen from the study. The various layers of subcontracting within the private sector also allows them to resort to local recruitments based on social contacts. It is not clear what mandate hitherto state mechanisms like the employment exchanges hold in collecting and disseminating these information from the private sector, which on the ground is almost nonexistent. In the growing privatization process, state facilitation and regulatory roles in favor of Dalits and other marginalized sections need to be revisited and made more robust.

**Participation and Benefits of Employment**

33% of total EUDW were earning between Rs. 4,500-6,500 per month followed by 30% between Rs. 3,000-4,500 per month. 22% of the EUDW (22%) earned less than Rs. 3,000 per month. Only 10% had incomes over Rs. 9,000 per month.

When cross-tabulated with education and income level of EUDW, it was seen that 64% of graduates and above with vocational, diploma, or certificate courses were earning between Rs. 3,000 to 6,500 per month. 10% within this education bracket are earning less than Rs. 3,000 per month.

The mismatch between education level and income level showed a lack of satisfaction in expected salaries for the EUDW. Almost all of the women showed their dissatisfaction towards salary but were satisfied with the fact that they are economically independent to some extent. They also believed that once they will move from this job, they would get high remuneration. 57.5% of the women who has left their previous jobs did so because of ‘low salary’ or got the offer of ‘better salary’.

Like many small units operating...
within the private sector, these women were also not entitled to the fundamental rights at work, including those associated with associated with collective bargaining and security at work. As far as labour rights were concerned, apart from different forms of leave available, the DW did not access other rights or welfare measures from the companies in the study.

**Role of Caste in Employment**

By and large, the EUDW were not keen to disclose their caste identity at work. 80% of EUDW feared that that the behavior of their colleagues would be affected if they knew their caste backgrounds, although 52% suspected (and feared) that this information was known in the office, either through the recruitment process, or from their habitation. Hence, though the general opinion about private sector is that caste is not known and does not matter, the reports of these women, show that there is greater information on caste identity than what is disclosed. Only 20% were willing to reveal their caste at work and these happened in conditions where the offices were very small, or had only women or their workplace was different from the main office and did not have regular interaction with other colleagues.

**Role of Family**

82% of EUDW in the research sample were single and majority (84%) fell in the age group of 20-30, where the role of the family was important with regard to creating and accessing opportunities and providing support systems for the EUDW. As it was mentioned above, accessing education and employment was largely affected by socialization process in the family. Being first generation learners, whose parents (father) had largely (47.5%) just completed higher secondary education and around 33% and 40 % mothers were non literate and were just able to read and write respectively, career guidance and choices in education employment were rarely available for them.

As far as financial and related support from family were concerned, 67% of parents were in regular salaried jobs among which 30% were in government jobs and around 28% were in private employment. The parents had supported and contributed to EUDW’s education with the hope and expectation of getting returns on their investment in their daughters’ education.

**Perceptions**

DW in the private sector were confident about their marketable skills and opportunities to access private sector employment, and their experiences at work had also improved their self-confidence. This is reflected in their confidence about finding jobs with better pay once they gain experience. This also facilitated their negotiations within the family, allowing them greater scope for making choices. Such a situation was also helped by the positive perception of the family regarding their skills, qualification and jobs. Even though labour welfare measures were not implemented, apart from the salary earned, DW expressed a general sense of satisfaction about their work.

The additional income brought to the family was critical to the income of the family. They gained considerable support from family in managing their work and family life. They were also recognized in the community and served as role models, inspiring other girls and women in education and employment.

**In Conclusion**

The private sector, and more specifically the ICT enterprises have opened up small units at local levels providing employment to fairly young, unmarried group of DW who had improved their skills to access these jobs. Their recruitments valued their additional technical qualifications than
their higher education qualification. Salaries earned by the women were not commensurate with their education qualification and in majority of cases, were just around minimum wages. Many of the women took up these employments to meet financial needs of the family and to gain experience to help them move on. Most of these jobs were within family and community frames of women’s employment outside home in terms of location, work hours and work environment. Thus it is seen that despite the phenomenal growth of the private sector and Delhi emerging as a major hub of ICT related private sector enterprises, DW are limited to small, sub-contracted local units, the majority working for near about minimum wages.

One concern is the continued worry that these women have with regard to caste even if this factor is not discussed with their colleagues as the majority of them fear ostracism if their caste status was openly known. These women however showed initiative and courage in obtaining employment in these enterprises, and attained a degree of economic and social empowerment by do so, while providing financial support to their families. Their families have encouraged them with their education and employment, which was encouraging considering that these women’s parents did not have these skills or opportunities. Overall, in spite of a series of disadvantages emerging from caste, class and patriarchal practices, these women have negotiated and improved their choices and opportunities at work and within their families.
This chapter studied educated urban Dalit women’s access to employment in NGOs, institutions that have spread widely in the last decades employing increasing numbers of persons. It describes the family background of the women and their educational qualifications that facilitated their employment in the sector. It also considers Dalit women’s reasons for choosing NGO employment, their experiences in the workplace and opportunities for growth in the sector. It also analyzes how caste, class and gender issues were recognized and addressed in this sector. Finally it assesses DW’s experiences from the gender and social justice frame and a rights-based approach.

### Table 7.1 – Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Profile of Women in NGO Sector Employment

Most of the Dalit women employed in the NGO sector were relatively young and unmarried with 70% of them in being in the age group of 20-30 years, Like in the private sector, the majority of women (75%) were unmarried and single.

### Table 7.2 – Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DW employed in the NGO sector, like in private and government sector also comprised Chamar

---

Sankaran Krishna

(Jatav + Raigar) as the majority sub caste group representing the highest population in the city of Delhi. Valmiki and Khatik were 30% and 5% respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Caste</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jatav</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valmiki</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatik</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raigar</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7.3 – Sub-Caste

**Educational Status**

Roughly half of the EUDW in this study had completed or were still continuing their professional education, in either social work or in law. 70% out of these were doing their professional degree courses through correspondence.* This emphasis on attaining education and skills reflects their perception of the importance of professional courses such as a bachelor’s or master's degrees in fields such as social work or law when trying to access the NGO job market. The women were all doing these courses simultaneously with their employment and were convinced that the additional qualifications would help them in their career prospects in this sector. Overall, 85% of EUDW completed their bachelor's degree and out of them 75% had an additional vocational diploma or certificate. 95% of these women had studied at government colleges. 50% had degrees in social work or law that were directly connected to their field of work. Clearly these women recognized the demands for the changing labour market and were doing their best to equip themselves with the necessary skills to earn their livelihoods. Government colleges had implemented the reservation policy, thus opening up further possibilities for Dalit women to gain education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th grade with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study showed that, unlike the private and government sectors, where DW had gained employment based on the additional technical or vocational qualifications rather than the subject of their higher education, qualifications in social work gave the edge to gain employment in the NGO sector. Being costlier than other graduate and postgraduate courses the majority of the DW had acquired this qualification from the government institutions, reflecting the necessity and relevance

* Correspondence is distance education, which allows students to study at home during the week and meet during the weekends for formal instruction. This is a popular option for many as they can work and continue their education at the same time.
of state provisions for access to higher education to these women. Even here, DW equipped themselves with additional technical and vocational skills, which enhanced ones market access in the NGO sector as in others.

**Role of Education in Accessing Employment**

The prospects of getting a job with good remuneration guided the vast majority of the EUDWs in the choice of education. Almost 90% EUDW said that they had taken the particular course because of employment opportunity and the chosen employment related to their study course, followed by 75% who said that the cost affordability was another reason to opt for that particular course, reflecting also their choices could be financially feasible in terms of the budgets of their families. 70% of them even said that they liked the subject and it was not difficult for them to understand the subject matter. 60% of DW followed suggestions from family members, teachers and friends in choosing these subjects as providing better career opportunities.

For 70% EUDW, the current NGO job was not their first employment, with 65% of them having been engaged in private sector or on contract in government sector prior to this job. During or just after leaving their previous employment, many had started on correspondence course to enhance their employment opportunities. This was the first job for only 10% of the EUDW. This reflected an interesting trend of the NGO sector employment being a preferred employment, given the number of persons that moved from the private sector to the NGO sector employment.

The educational and employment histories of the EUDW in this sector show an interesting trend that can be divided into two parts. One, when they first took up employment soon after their first level of education, which was completion or the 12th grade with couple with a vocational, diploma or certificate course. Two, when they took up correspondence education in professional social work, as they realized the growing job opportunities or career growth opportunities in the sector. This also reflected the reality where DW took up any opportunity for employment that came their way and then slowly explored other avenues and moved on to more interesting or suitable ones. A kind of career enhancement plan adopted by the EUDW in response to the demand of the labour market and employment opportunities was evident. This also reflected the lack of such information or orientation to career opportunities or planning at the levels of higher secondary schools or colleges to familiarize them while making their choices. The pursuit of continuously improving education for employment was rarely found in private and government sector jobs. And most importantly, doing courses through correspondence could be viewed as a strategy adopted by EUDW to sustain their ‘career enhancement plan’ on their own while continuing their employment and making it less of a burden for parents and thus gaining their support as well.

**Employment Analysis**

There were three major categories of employment found in NGO sector: teachers or field workers (45%), coordinators, researchers or supervisor (35%) and project managers, officers, and trainers (20%). These three groups corresponded to different layers of employment and income in the sector.

Generally, it was assumed that person joining the social sector was, to some extent, motivated by a social concerns and look for this kind of opportunity to further their commitment. But this study reflected that becoming socially and economically independent was the primary driving force behind EUDW towards joining this sector. 90% of the women said that they wanted to have a regular income for themselves and their family, followed by 80% who said that they were interested in building and shaping their career. 75% of them also indicated that gaining social status in the society was attached to their choice for employment. 35% of EUDW also stated that they wanted to contribute positively to society. It is quite clear that the primary motivation for DW to access
jobs which helped their income earning and provided space for socio-economic upward mobility. With the expansion of the social sector and a growing NGO employment this was an important opportunity for these women.

70% of EUDW had gained information about the above-mentioned employment through their family members, friends or another influential person from either the Dalit or non-Dalit community. Only 15% got the information through some national or regional newspaper and another 15% accessed Internet to acquire information. The pattern of non-formal recruitment was very high also in this sector where most of the vacancies were filled through referral and social contacts. 80% of EUDW were recruited through an interview process. There were no written tests or other mechanisms to test the ability and aptitude of the candidate for the position. Informal recruitments depended heavily on social capital, which restricted entry of EUDW in many ways. 50% of EUDW who held previous job in private sector had left their job because they were not satisfied with the salary or the work profile, which they were supposed to carry out and preferred to get employed in the NGO sector, which also offered them opportunities to work with the community in addition.

With years of development work by the state and the NGO sector, there are considerable debates about agency and leadership from the marginalized community to ensure participation and empowerment. Dalit voice and leadership had become more visible over the past decade at the national capital and currently NGOs have recognized the need for engaging with members of the community in their staff and community-based leadership. In this process, spaces for employment have opened up for DW. It is also true that many of these are community level positions where local contact and rapport with the local community play an important role and DW are able to access some of these positions through the informal networks. Formal processes seem to be undertaken only by larger NGOs or for more senior positions.

Employment Benefits and Provisions

The levels of employment and income earned lined up closely with education levels in the NGO sector. Three distinct levels of employment and income were reported in the study. 15% EUDW who earned Rs. 3,500 or less represented the lowest designated profile - field workers or teachers. Half of the EUDW in the study received a monthly income between Rs. 4,000 to 8,000 indicating the second level of work profile in the capacity of coordinator, supervisor or researcher. 30% of the EUDW’s monthly income fell in the category of Rs. 10,000 and above were graduates and above with the majority having a professional degree. The salary earned by the majority of DW (85%) in the study is comparable to salaries in other sectors. However the fact that a small percentage continued to earn low wages that compares with the wages paid for unorganized wage under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA - Rs. 100 per day) suggests the need for declaring minimum levels of remuneration in urban areas that would cut across different sectors based on educational qualification, nature of work and the working hours.
The women worked in NGOs that were engaged in field development activities and tended not to employ larger numbers of people. By and large these institutions did not have policies covering organization or financial management, unlike their larger counterparts ones or funding agencies. Similarly there were no state regulatory mechanisms monitoring the policies and practice of these organizations. There was an absence of discussion on labour rights in the NGO sector that also goes by the ethos of voluntarism and development work and not so much about the rights of workers therein. It is expected that members accommodate the conditions of work for the larger good. Salary becomes the yardstick for measurement. DW sought to improve their knowledge and skills in the sector with the confidence that they could access better positions and salaries being better equipped in the sector.

The direct link between education, employment, and income in the NGO sector was motivating for DW to improve their qualification in the sector.

For example, if a DW was joining as a tele-caller in the private sector, her education or experiences were not the main criteria for job and income levels. Rather everyone in that position was paid a flat rate. In NGO sector, the job profile and provisions were very much associated with the education level and experiences of the EUDW giving a humane face to this sector where EUDW felt motivated to do better educationally and shape their career path towards socio-economic independence. This provided the women opportunities for upward social and economic mobility and given the history of the DW on a continuous path of improving their education and skill levels, one can expect them to utilize these opportunities to their benefit.

Role of Caste
80% of the EUDW reported that their caste identity was known at work place although 65% among them were not in favour of disclosing their caste identity. 55% have stated that their caste was known to office colleagues through direct or indirect enquiries and deductions at different instances while carrying out tasks or during informal interactions. 20% of EUDW had not disclosed their identity, two of them belonging to Valmiki community and feeling that disclosure of caste identity will affect other colleagues’ behaviors at work place. According to two of them “we need to disclose our identity only when we avail reservation, and because there is no reservation policy in NGO sector, there is no need to expose caste identity”. 25% EUDW’s caste was known through recruitment process as there was preference given to Dalit for that particular post or it was directly asked during the interview. This ambiguous situation reflects the dilemma that DW face regarding their identity. As the caste identity has negative connotations, there is persistent anxiety, threat about revealing ones identity, which does not create a positive environment for them to work and relate to others. Its impact on their performance and self-confidence and engagement with others are also concerns for them. It thus makes sense to create an environment in the work place where all identities can be recognized and respected and an inclusive professional environment can be built up.

40% of EUDW have found some form of discrimination at work place, though this discrimination was not always with the DW herself, rather it was being reported with other beneficiaries of NGOs work in the field. There were a forms of discrimination were common at work place, sometimes occurring daily. These included the following:

- Non-Dalit workers generally discriminated against Dalit children in NFE centres run by NGOs and made caste-based derogatory remarks on them
- Non-Dalit did not share lunch with Dalit workers in the field
- DW were referred to as ‘from reservation category’ and thus EUDW’s efforts and her own ability to excel in that job were ignored
Role of Family
A majority of the fathers (90%) were illiterate or just literate up to higher secondary and largely engaged in private jobs on daily wage or on contract basis. The data shows that only 5% were in government jobs, 50% of them worked in the private sector, had their own provision store or worked as daily wage labourer; 15% were even unemployed. As far as their mother's education and employment, 90% were homemakers and also illiterate with some of them having functional literacy up to 8th grade.

The above data shows a picture that was distinct from the cases of EUDW in private and government sector. For the EUDW in the NGO sector, most of their families were living in extreme insecurity where most of the parents were earning just enough to support their living cost. The parents were not aware about the career plan of the EUDW, their aspirations and growth. In most of the cases, it was the sole efforts of EUDW to chalk out her career growth plan and that was why majority of them (50%) had to hold jobs as soon as they complete their higher secondary or during their higher study. Initially the family was not aware of what to expect from EUDW, which is rarely spelt out by the parents, as they did not see the way out of their vicious cycle of poverty and crisis. As the EUDW took up employment, there was the expectation to support the family, which was also fulfilled by the DW. The family in turn supported the DW in fulfilling her work responsibilities with very limited demands on her with regard to work timings, travel etc.

While the family had played a supportive and positive role in the education and employment of the DW, these were not well thought out or planned strategies by the family, rather the family allowed DW to pursue their interests as long as it did not place additional burdens on the family itself. The women having become educated and having accessed employment, had become a support to the family, which was recognized and the family accorded them greater freedom to make their choices regarding work, place of work and even postponing marriage. The family also respected the nature of the work, given similar conditions faced by the family itself. However all these are still framed within the larger patriarchal and community norms about what girls and women can or should do.

Perceptions
The NGO sector has opened up to be an opportunity for career improvement for DW. They reported increased self-confidence and independence. Economic benefits to the individual and family were seen as the most important benefit of employment. Recognition and status within the family and in society also emerged as important outcomes of their work. However the women also reported the challenges in the NGO work where they had to engage with non-Dalit communities and other stakeholders in the course of their work including Dalit communities.

The study found that there is considerable satisfaction of their income earned which had provided support for further education and also meets family income needs.
Conclusion
NGO sector employment seems to stand second in preference after the government employment as seen from many DW moving out of private sector to join NGO sector. This sector provided community based, easily accessible jobs with considerable flexibility. It gave opportunities for awareness and new information, opportunities for improving educational qualification and their career. Most of all it provides a direct benefit to their education investment. NGO sector was also emerging as a major employment sector especially for women including Dalit women where there was growing recognition of the role of Dalit women to work with the marginalized communities, women and children. There was a greater acceptance by the family to take up NGO work with communities.

As an important and expanding sector of the economy, NGOs have provided an important source of employment for the EUDW. The jobs were, on the whole, attractive with regard to wages and the women were also satisfied that their education qualifications were recognised and rewarded. In the case of community level work and in small NGOs there are not very systematic policy and procedures on human resource management covering labour rights. Most often, organisations and staff accept this situation under commitment or voluntarism norms. However, in the context of the growing employment in the sector, there is need to have more systematic attention to ensuring labour rights and putting in policies for social and gender justice which would promote greater participation and leadership of DW.
Chapter 8
DELHI
Entrepreneurs

Table 8.1 – Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.2 – Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married but living separately</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are many similarities and yet important differences between the Dalit women who took up entrepreneurship. On the one hand, the majority of (64%) and the more successful women were those who are somewhat relatively older (over 36 years). They were generally also married and received financial backing from their families for their work, reflecting the significance of experience, resources, and relatively stability with regard to the household status. At the other extreme, there were relatively young women (20-25 years of ages) generally unmarried and attempting to initiate enterprises and who were earning relatively less than the first group. This group (12%) were also usually involved in improving their enterprises through extra training or distance education courses. In between these two groups was a mixture of women who were committed to having their own businesses, but were still struggling with making ends meet. Overall, the majority of married Dalit women entrepreneurs also indicate a strong desire to support or contribute to their family income along with their husbands and family income.

Table 8.3 – Sub-Caste

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub Caste</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jatav</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valmiki</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
40% of the entrepreneurs were from the Jatav sub caste, the largest Dalit community in the city of Delhi. They were followed by the Raigar, who constituted 32% of the enterprises followed by 12% each from Valmiki and Khatik community and 4% of Koli. This representation is consistent with the Dalit castes in Delhi.

The Dalit women were first generation entrepreneurs whose parents were not very educated (78% of respondent's father were educated up to 12th and 76% of respondent's mother are illiterate). They were permanent residents of Delhi and the particular locality. Thus, most of the enterprises had permanent locations.

The table on marital status shows that majority of Dalit women entrepreneurs (64%) were married and 4% of the research sample were married but living separately and another 4% were widowed. A total of 28% Dalit women entrepreneurs were unmarried.

The Role of Education in Entrepreneurship
The analysis suggests that education had been an important factor in Dalit women having the courage, confidence and commitment to initiate and develop successful enterprises. 7% of the women were 12th grade graduates while 60% who had completed their higher secondary education, reflecting the significance of education in promoting this mode of employment. These figures were particularly significant as most of the women were first generation entrepreneurs whose parents had moved to city in the last decades.

Type and Nature of Enterprises
64% enterprises fell under the service category, 28% were in the sales category and 8% were production units. The nature of business has been shown in the table below. If we look at the nature of enterprises Dalit women were engaged in, 48% were engaged in beauty parlour and related activities. 12% DW ran petty shops. Another 12% own garment, tailoring, or laundry units. 24% managed professional enterprises like schools, tuition centres, physiotherapy unit, dhaba etc. The sample had one cooperative society, which ran a canteen, produced carry-bags, provided lunches and fast foods. All these enterprises catered to the growing services sector in the state. As such the women were involved in creative initiatives to sustain their livelihoods in a changing economic environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of business</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tailoring</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision shops</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetic shop, fancy shop or other sales</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garment shop</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry service</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Efforts by Dalit Women

“I always wanted to start my own business, but without family support and, guidance through someone who knows the business types; it is not possible to initiate any enterprise. What you earn in a government job or private job in a month, you can earn that in just few hours or days from your own business.”

C.W., Delhi

Financial improvement appeared to be a major factor for Dalit women to start their own enterprises. In an economic environment that was characterized by a tight labour market and a government sector that was downsizing, such initiatives could be viewed as enterprising in the new market orientation and to be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered under these circumstances. 56% of the women said that they started their business because of their financial need in the family. The unmarried Dalit women (28%) mostly initiated their enterprise so to meet the family financial need or to fulfill their individual wish to be independent and make their career. 40% DWEs said that market availability was another reason for starting their own enterprise, followed by 24% who responded that their family members wanted to start this business and the women as one of the coordinator for this unit. It implied that the women who already possessed some skills in relevant trades their parental and marital family created space for them to continue to use their skills in a profitable way. The other reason for starting the businesses were, 24% did not get any employment 8% the possibility to work in flexible hours 8% Negative experiences in employment forced to start own enterprise (12% had better prospects in enterprise than employment).

The responses from the women indicated that entrepreneurship is a current and potential avenue that DW are engaging and exploring. Its expansion would much depend on the nature of institutional support systems for information, training, credit, and market linkages that will be available and can be accessed by them. Addressing caste-based discrimination becomes important to facilitate them to move upwards and expand their enterprises and entrepreneurship skills.

Ownership and Operation of the Enterprise

The ownership pattern and operations of the enterprises showed that 88% of the enterprises were self-owned and only 3% were co-owned with family or relatives. Since majority of the enterprises (84%) were unregistered, it was very difficult to comment on the actual ownership of the enterprises, but it was seen that DW were individually running the enterprises and that’s why they claimed that particular enterprise belonged to them. Majority of them ran these enterprises from home (72%) and few of them who had rented (16%) and some in other own premises (12%). As far as the location of these enterprises was concerned, 48% were in the main market area and only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beauty parlor</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional enterprise (Physiotherapist, School, Tuition Centre, NGO, Dhaba)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Society</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20% were in dominant caste habitation,* the rest of them were in the Dalit locality and mostly operated from home.

These DW operated 60% of the enterprises themselves with some support from family. Where as the bigger units of productions and sales where women had hired few workers from Dalit and non-Dalit community. 40% of enterprises recorded Dalit or non-Dalit workers in actual operation of the enterprises. As far as decision making and management of the enterprise was concerned, these 40% women were quite independent in executing day to day managements such as, recruiting staffs, expanding the market, production, distribution of tasks to staffs, salary disbursements and in day to day decision making. The attitudes of the women in how they had been able to initiate and carry forward their enterprises was very encouraging and shows potential for improvement.

> “I am 5th standard pass a woman, my husband is in private job where he earns Rs. 100 per day as daily wage. I am the president of the cooperative society. One day one known doctor from St. Stephen Hospital motivated me and guided me to start a canteen with lunch and fast food services within the premises of hospital's dispensary. I didn't have much knowledge about running such type of canteen; I have not received any training from anywhere. Once, he showed me the place to buy raw materials and few other shops for regular purchase and I have been running this enterprise successfully.”

> C.W., Delhi

The study explored the reasons to find out if they were finding any problem at current location in successfully running the enterprises. 56% of DWEs say that they were facing at least some kind of problem at current location. It was also evident from the responses that most of the women who had responded to the problem, they were running the enterprise from home (see the graph below). The type of problems they were facing indicates interesting trends on Dalit women strong desire to become economically and socially independent. 88% women have said that they want to move out from home and trying to get a place in or near main market but, could not afford the rent and other costs as they were very high in those markets which will also required indirect costs of licensing and registering of the business. One Dalit women also said how the Dalit men in the locality created problem for her by passing comments and derogatory words and that had been a reason for her to trying for another place outside the home. Clearly the women are looking for greater freedom, independence and a positive environment to build up their entrepreneurships.

Support Systems Available

Finance

The growth of the enterprises depended on the availability, accessibility and adequacy of resources required in the operation of it. The mobilization of resources and judicious expenditure of resources actually predicted the sustainability of any enterprise.

In this research sample, highest number of enterprises (60%) had investments below Rs. 50,000. About 16% had investment ranging from Rs. 50,000 to 1 Lac and 24% of enterprises had investments of Rs. 1 Lac to 3 Lac.

Interestingly, if we analyze the sources of initial investment into the enterprise, we found that majority (80%) of the initial investment came from family resources. And 8% DW invested their own savings to initiate the enterprise. Only one woman in the study had accessed commercial bank loan but did not receive the same. Another 8% have approached moneylender for finance, and a

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*Dominant caste habitations are clearly defined in any of the resettlement colony, or in unauthorized colony of Delhi.
large number of DW have availed finance from local caste based finance committee. The investment scenario presents the analysis of financial support system available for the DW to enter into business market. The lack of adequate government financial institutions for small credit, very long and lengthy process of availing loan from commercial banks (96% of DW have said that), demand of bribe, requirement of security etc are some of the reasons stated by DW in accessing credit for their enterprise. This pushed them to depend on family members and family owned resources, which had limitations in becoming economic mobile and independent decision makers. Money lenders were the assured source available at community level for finance, but large number of DW in this study did not access them due to their high interest rate which varied from Rs. 10 to 100 per month, almost double the amount of loan which creates fear among DW about timely repayment.

20% of DW had accessed initial investment for their enterprises through community based micro finance institutions commonly known by the caste-based committee and available among all the sub-caste in Delhi city.

The study showed the lack of institutional support mechanisms of the state for DW to access financial resources for setting up their enterprises. Given the fact that these women came from families, that were themselves struggling and did not have the additional resources to invest, the investment is low. Women reported the time gaps from their desire to set up enterprises from actual setting up while pooling up resources. They also have constraints in raising resources from the community based micro finance, which are run by the male members of the community. The complete lack of access to state owned banks and other private micro finance is stark and is a major constraint for the women. There is urgent need to review the institutional mechanisms given the number of women who are in the unorganized sector and the growing self-employment among DW in the urban areas. As younger educated DW are coming forward to set up entrepreneurship where the family does not easily come forward to support them, institutional credit availability is critical for them.

Training and Knowledge
52% of DWEs did not have any training to set up their enterprise, and 48% who had taken training, majority of them were very informal locally available training. Many of the DWEs have learnt the basic skills working as trainees with some large enterprises, which were easily available. Only 16% of them had taken formal training from some NGOs or private institutions. 68% of DW in the study said that they were not aware about any government or government supported institutions which provided training supports to run enterprises and 52% of DWEs stated that they know only social welfare department which gave training but never availed them as they did not know anything about those trainings programmes of government.

Once again, the gaps in skills training were stark. As the majority of labour force is in the unorganized sector, where workers primarily depend on their skills to pursue their livelihood, the need to have quality and affordable skill training is important and the role of the state to provide them is paramount. This comes out to be a critical gap for DW who would like to take up enterprises.

Caste, Class and Gender Dynamics
96% of these women said that their caste identity was known to everyone in the locality and to the customers as well and 92% out of this have stated that their caste was known through their social relationship and contacts. People have learnt about the caste through family and friends members.

36% of DWEs have said that their caste identity sometimes created obstacles in successfully running their enterprises. The types of discrimination and caste-based obstacles stated by them can be broadly put in to:
• Untouchability practice in taking tuitions in non Dalit houses
• Only Dalit women customers, non Dalit did not come to avail the services which were situated in Dalit locality
• Non Dalit preferred not to buy products from the shops which are situated in Dalit locality
• Every caste group preferred to build business and customer relationships with a person of the same case and the business was affected as customer did not increase at all

4% DWEs in the study also said that their caste was known while accessing government loan and she could not avail the loan as she could not arrange security for the loan amount.

As seen in the employment sector, caste continues to influence the opportunities of DW while they take up entrepreneurship. This may also push many of them to limit themselves to their own habitations, creating problems to move out and expand. Given the fact that more than a third of the women expressed caste based disabilities, public education and adequate institutional mechanisms to address them need to be put in place.

Perceptions on Success
Half of the DWEs earned a monthly income between Rs. 4,500 to Rs. 12,000, but a large section (32%) among them were living below the poverty line with a monthly income of Rs. 3,000 and less. 12% DWEs in the study were earning Rs. 15,000 and above representing comparatively larger units. The perception of success stemmed from the economic independency women had achieved through their entrepreneurial ventures. Traditionally where Dalit women were subjected to remain daily wage laborer or to be doing only ‘unclean occupation’, they had now defied that system and belief by establishing themselves as businesswomen.

A majority of Dalit women entrepreneurs (88%) considered their enterprise as one of the successful enterprises in that particular area. 72% of them considered ‘good customer relations’ to be the strong point of their business followed by 52% considering that ‘maintaining the quality and quantity of commodity’ was the key to success of their enterprise. Though these women had hardly any training, the component of running a business unit was well explained and understood by them. They understand how market functioned and what they needed to sustain their enterprise in this competitive market environment.

Conclusion
The Dalit women who have taken up entrepreneurship were, on the whole, entering into new ventures, defying in many ways their traditional occupations in society. Those who had good educational qualifications were able to make use of their skills and abilities to do well. The others, and these were unfortunately the majority, were largely employed in small units, usually experiencing a high degree of self-exploitation. The women were positive about their enterprises, having made conscious decisions to start these ventures. And while some were more successful than others in
terms of financial returns, most of them were satisfied with the fact that they were able to have some sort of work that gave them a degree of financial independence and the possibility to develop themselves and their families further, in a context where employment and livelihoods were becoming more constrained.

Given the reality that organized sector has limited expansion and the majority of the labour force is employed in the unorganized sector where self-employment is growing, state role in promoting and supporting entrepreneurship is important. None of the DW entrepreneurs fall into the categories recognized by the state under its Micro, Small and Medium industries (MSME) Act and hence these women fell outside the provisions of any protective and social security measures. The study also brought up the constraints and the absence of any provision for skill training or access to credit for these women. Given the fact that they have no access to any protective or promotional mechanisms, these women have initiated their enterprise at their own risk and through their own efforts, making it extremely vulnerable and risky. There is urgent need to develop a frame for entrepreneurship where enterprises of the nature studied here are promoted and protected and state has important role to play here along with the support of the private sector.
Chapter 9

HYDERABAD
Government Sector Employment

“Socially segregated and geographically separated groups like the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are entitled for 23% plan allocation across the sectors through SCP and TSP mechanism. I must confess that our performance has fallen short during the ninth and tenth plans. Now we are not only committed to take it to the expected level, but exceed in future”

Dr. YS Rajasekara Reddy, CM of Andhra Pradesh to the 52nd Meeting of the National Development Council on Approach to 11th FYP, Dec 2006

This chapter analyzes employment opportunities accessed by Dalit women in different government departments in Hyderabad, covering various levels of employment. It analyzes the educational and family backgrounds of the women, what influenced them to seek government employment and their efforts at accessing them. It looks at how state provisions of reservation in education and employment influenced them in accessing these employment opportunities. It analyzes the gender and caste dimensions to women’s work in the government sector from the social and gender justice frames and how it interrogates with their labour and human rights. It also looks into the role played by the family in DW’s access and continued employment context and also in turn analyzes the impact of their work on the family and community.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 9.1 – Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25 years</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35 years</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.2 – Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married but living separate</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.3 – Sub-Caste
80% of the women in this section were between 26 and 35 years with the majority of them being married (65%), and the rest being either unmarried, widowed or divorced (27%). In marriage, caste still dominated the choice of partners with only 10% marrying outside their castes. 41% of respondents belonged to the Mala community and 59% belonged to the Madiga to the community*, which are the two major sub-castes among the Dalit community in the state. 92.5% of the Dalit women in the study were Hindus while 7.5% were Christians. While Dalit Christians are considered Dalits by the larger society, the state does not recognize them so, but puts them under the Backward Caste (BC) category.

A little more than half of the respondents were originally from the Hyderabad locality (52.5%), while the remaining came from outside Hyderabad for higher education or for employment. About 33% of the natal families have fathers currently employed in the government and about 48% percent of families have fathers who are pension holders reflecting that 78% of the families had a regular and secure source of income. About 23% of the families also had mothers who earned regular income. A small proportion of the study group (5%) came from families where parents were working as agriculture and casual workers on unsteady incomes.

**Role of Education in Employment**

Education was viewed as key to getting good employment in the Government sector and most of the Dalit women had pursued so as to avail themselves of the opportunities provided in the reservation policy for this purpose. Nearly 60% of the respondents have stated that they chose the particular course of study due to reservation and hence seat availability was not a problem. 42.5% also said that their education relates to their employment. In addition, nearly half of them (43%) had also taken extra courses to improve their chances of getting good jobs. Such extra courses included computer education, teacher training, library science and polytechnic diplomas. Overall, the respondents were highly qualified across different subjects and levels of education from Intermediate to PhD. 75% of the respondents had completed a University degree, with a quarter of them specializing in engineering and medicine. 17.5% of the respondents had Engineering degrees, a subject that is considered up-market and popular in the Andhra Pradesh.

**Table 9.4 – Education Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th Grade with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th grade</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th grade with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Mala community is traditionally involved in agricultural labour and the Madiga community is traditionally involved with leatherwork.*
Only a quarter of the respondents had stopped their education before graduation from 12th standard suggesting that the rest of these women and their families valued and were committed to their education capabilities.

70% of the respondents continued their education without any break, while the remaining had to break their education. The most prominent reason for a break in education was marriage, which was cited by 15% of our respondents. Getting daughters married continues to be a priority for families sometimes at the cost of their education and career and it was commendable that these women persevered after marriage to continue their studies. It is also important to recognize that they did not have a lot of time between marriage and further studies due to the fact that they had to be within the age limit to be eligible for government employment. With relative economic stability in the family, financial constraints did not emerge as a main reason for a break in studies, further signifying that Dalit families and children are increasingly keen to invest in education.

It is encouraging that 62.5% of our respondents did not report caste discrimination during education, however the fact that 37.5% did report discrimination during school and college is serious. This discrimination took place in ways such as taunting and humiliation at the hands of other students, information on scholarships being withheld by institutions, parents restricting inter-caste socialization between children, and segregated dining. This discrimination was not just enacted by students or parents, there were two respondents who stated teachers discriminated against them as well. That caste discrimination is explicitly prohibited and that there are stringent laws in place to address them, makes one realize the need for the enormous amount of public education required in addition to the modification of current legislative provisions. Discrimination in education is explicitly prohibited under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education, 2009 as well as the UN Convention Against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO 1960) which is ratified by India as already discussed under chapter 5.

Employment Analysis

**Dalit Women’s Efforts to Access Government Jobs**

The fact that more than half the women in the study made many attempts to get employment (52.5%) reflects strong efforts in finding employment for themselves. 87.5% of women in the study put their focus on accessing government employment.

27% of the respondents reported that their parent’s occupation influenced their choice of employment. The impetus for pursuing employment in the government sector could have also been because of the familiarity of the family in the sector considering that 12.5% of mothers and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BTech or MBBS</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTech or MBBS with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate and above</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate with vocational/professional course</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTech</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
32.5% of fathers were government employees. This also reflected that families try to influence and facilitate their children's mobility in keeping with their socio-economic positions. This becomes a limitation for those young people where families are not so endowed.

Nature of Employment

Table 9.2 – Nature of Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Employment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dy Collector</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant engineers</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College lecturers</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school teachers</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical doctors</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project officers</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior assistant or clerk</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anganwadi teachers</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government project staff</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (nurse, lab technician, resident asst)</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents from Hyderabad were employed in a variety of government departments; the Irrigation Dept., Medical Dept., Education Dept., in research labs, in women and child development, in the Revenue Dept and Rural Development Dept. The respondents were well placed in their cadre and the majority was permanent employees, thus eligible for various labour rights and provisions. The policy of the state to provide 33% reservation to women in the government employment created opportunities for these women and is amply reflected in the technical and senior positions these women had achieved. This has been a serious means of promoting gender justice to women in employment towards empowerment. This was also reflected in their levels of satisfaction on various counts.

Table 9.3 – Salary Range

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 30,000 and above</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 20,000 – 29,999</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 15,000 – 19,999</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 10,000 – 14,999</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 5,000 – 9,999</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 5,000 and below</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Dalit women were satisfied with their work in regards to their positions, pay, social security benefits and general possibilities for promotion. 82.5% of these women reported a fairly high level
of satisfaction in the government sector employment in terms of salary. 97.5% were satisfied with the designation and position they held. 95% reported satisfaction about the social security benefits they have in their office. 52.5% express satisfaction about the opportunities for promotion. It is also seen that the majority of the respondents (87.5%) were on permanent employment with the state and only 12.5% were on contract employment. These women enjoyed decent employment and labour rights in keeping with state government provisions of fair remuneration, and social security. Being on regular and permanent tenure, they were confident about their work and had greater confidence to raise any violation and demand their rights.

Table 9.4 - Social Relationships in the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Participation</th>
<th>Recreation Activities</th>
<th>Outings</th>
<th>Office Festivals</th>
<th>Visit Homes of non-Dalits</th>
<th>Partake in Festivals of non-Dalits</th>
<th>Membership in Clubs or Social Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always Participate</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes Participate</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Participate</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable/no answer</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The workplace, like the place of education, provided opportunities to cross caste and community boundaries and engage with others. This becomes an area for breaking some of the stereotypes that are strongly embedded in the culture and society. In a considerable number of workplaces, it was seen that women used these informal spaces to move across social boundaries and build relationships.

Addressing Harassment at Workplace
Respondents did not report going to a committee to register complaints and have them redressed. At the same time, 60% of the respondents reported having the committees in their workplaces.

SC/ST Employee Welfare Associations were also fairly popular and prevalent in Andhra Pradesh, with units in the different government departments. These bodies are active in popularizing events around Dr. Ambedkar's life and in taking up work related complaints. Only one of the respondents had approached the body regarding her posting.

While the women reported their membership in the SC/ST employees welfare associations, they did not seem to be very actively engaged or using it as a forum for promoting social and gender justice issues.

Caste Identity in the Workplace
There is considerable openness about one's caste identity in the workplace in the government sector. 75% of the respondents also felt that it was good to be known by one's caste identity and that it did
not become a problem. There is certainly a shift from the education space to the employment space. At the education space, those who experienced caste discrimination, found it hard to live with it, while by the time it comes to the work period, there seems a more openness about the same.

Caste distinction in the government sector has moved beyond direct untouchability practices or direct forms of humiliation. It is reflected in more discreet attitudes and mindsets of dominant caste members maintaining attitudes of superiority, preferences to relate to members of one’s own castes, promoting opportunities for members of one’s own caste, questioning the merit of Dalit colleagues or making disparaging comments about reservation policy. These are more nebulous undercurrents that continue to prevent the interface across caste barriers and real integration among colleagues in workplace.

Some of the ways in which the respondents reflect the caste attitudes and mindset were by constantly pointing out that SC candidates were recruited because of reservation or that reservation is the only reason why SC candidates are on equal position to that of non-SCs –continuous comments on reservation. Our respondents reported that more times people would not directly state these facts, but imply them or say that other people in the office were making such statements.

Caste identity was a matter of open recognition in the government sector as seen above. DW recognized them as matters of social justice and were more confident to ensure their rights. Despite some of the very overt forms of caste discrimination have been eliminated, may reported the linking of caste and merit and caste based allegiance. It is a matter of concern that state has not taken any measures to promote educational programmes among employees to promote better workplace norms and inclusive environment as envisaged under ILO convention 111. This negligence also de-facto negates the rights to equality, liberty and fraternity, the pillars of the Indian Constitution.

State Role in Promoting Dalit Women’s Empowerment
Recognizing the historical and current caste based disabilities for Dalit women and men, the state has made many provisions in education and employment. However poor or non-implementation created hurrcles for these Dalit women in their efforts towards education, employment and empowerment, some of which are:

• Non-recruitment along with others and recruiting Dalits through ‘backlog’ recruitments
• Non-accountability and impunity of authorities in filling the vacancies against reservation

Sushila appeared for the interview for the post of Junior Assistant in the subregistrar’s office in 2006 while she was doing her graduation under the backlog recruitment. The results were to be informed to the candidates within a month. When she did not get any information, even after three months, she went to the office to find out and was told that she probably had not qualified. A few of the candidates that had appeared for the recruitment went to court about unfair means in the recruitment. It came out that even in the ‘backlog recruitment’ posts were filled up by non-Dalits on temporary basis through corrupt practices. After more than a year, she got her posting along with a few others.

D.S., Hyderabad

47.5% of our respondents stated that they don’t know any government agencies which provide information about employment, which reflects the fact that most candidates have to rely information sources of information, such as teachers, friends and family members. Unfortunately in this community there were often not many people who could provide good information or
contacts in the government sector.

More than half of the students (52.5%) could not access the entitlement of the state during their education. They faced various institutional impediments in accessing them. The information about the government provisions was not easily available or accessible. Institutions did not ensure that the complete package of entitlement was available as a right to the students; information was at best patchy and often not available on time. Students had to go to many government offices to access community, income or other certificates. Given the nature of university admissions where admission was provided in batches under various lists, the student had very little time to ensure that all relevant certificates and finances were in order.

Vasantamani could not access her scholarship in the second semester of her MCA. The mark-list of the first semester was not published on time, which is a must, as they have to re-apply with the marks at the beginning of every semester. Requiring that the student re-apply every semester, requiring that students should clear their subjects every semester to be eligible for the scholarship and not providing it as a rights as long as a student is studying a course increases the chances of students not accessing them.

V.M., Hyderabad

While a number of special provisions are listed out to promote greater representation and participation of Dalit women and men in government employment, DW reported many experiences where they were not able to access these information and provisions. They experienced negligence at times intentional barriers at others. Regular monitoring and reporting with facts and figures are essential to ensure their implementation and facilitate DW to access them.

Perceptions About Family

Very clearly, income and financial support stands out as the most important contribution to the family, be it the natal or nuclear family. Along with this was the recognition and status improvement for the family and the ability to ensure better education for children and siblings. A few responses, like the ability for economic planning, were also reflections of what the family may not have been able to do, coming from the background of an economically dependent community for livelihood.

The aspect of recognition and status to the family having been a recurrent theme became conscious of the social function of employment to the individual and the family in addition to the economic function. Thus socio-economic benefit to the family was of critical importance.

Aside from the few responses that cited constraints such as the inability to spend time with children, having to place extra burdens of children on elders, insufficient time for family and household, not enough time spent on children's education, or inability to support natal home after marriage, the majority find their employment of positive impact on their families.

Table 9.6 – Perceptions of Family Gain and Loss

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Impact to the Family</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial support and income to the family</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and status to family</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support better education of children and siblings</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved standard of living and facilities for family</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The responses also made it clear that by and large DW accepted their gendered role in the family and community; this was reflected in their concerns about balancing work and family life and in taking care of children. The women were appreciative of the support family members gave them in meeting these demands. The experiences of these women showed that the family were willing to support them, provided them conformed to the norms that were set by the family in terms of accommodating family needs and crisis, career plans and choices. What is interesting was that the DW in the study found avenues to negotiate these demands and found meaningful ways to move socially and economically forward.

An overwhelming response was in the arena of sharing information and guidance to the community through their work environment. This was shared by those directly in their work as teachers, nurses, Anganwadi workers,* in the Andhra Pradesh Administrative Tribunal, those in the medical department and scientists where there was an overwhelming sense that one needed to and could contribute to the development of the community. This is an important area to be taken forward in the further empowerment and development work with the community from the current model where any development work is anticipated and implemented through support from external donors. The ways that educated and resourceful persons from within the community can be engaged to contribute to the community have to be creatively explored with them. Respondents too expressed their interest to contribute and requested that some mechanisms may be evolved to engage and do so.

**In Conclusion**

The Dalit women have fared well in government sector employment in Hyderabad and were employed as regular permanent employees, including senior positions. The majority of them gained access to their jobs in a context where the government was downsizing its activities and costs. Their success appears to be the outcome of the following influences; i) the implementation of the government policy promoting caste and gender equity in education and employment, ii) strong motivation to gain government employment by acquiring education and iii) support from parents viewed such jobs positively.

*Anganwadi workers are women who manage early childhood education centres under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), as implemented by the GoI.*
The jobs in themselves were positive on several scores. Being recruited on regular permanent basis they enjoyed job security and labour rights. In the first place, the women themselves viewed this employment as a means of upward social mobility, and while gaining an income was an important factor, emphasis was also on the possibilities offered with regard to improving their career prospects and their contribution to society and the Dalit community in particular. Second, the women were on the whole, satisfied with their work and were pleased with their designations, salaries, benefits and prospects for promotion. Their work environment also gave them the opportunities to interact with persons from other castes and engage with wider social networks. While the state had made appreciable provisions to promote women's employment in addition to employment to Dalits, its negligence to promote worker education to overcome stereotypes and discrimination is reflected in the continued remarks linking caste to merit and the difficulties in building a truly inclusive work environment.
“Growth in the industrial sector declined from 7.36% to 6.2% between 1980 and post liberalisation 2000-01. The number of workers in the industrial sector remained stagnant during the period 1995-96 to 2000-01 increasing from mere 8,23,976 to 8,25,287 during this period. The number of notified vacancies decreased from 53,431 in 1980-81 to 10,919 in 2000-01. The service sector has overtaken both agriculture and industrial sector producing more than 48% of Gross state domestic product. As a matter of fact, major portion of this hike is being shared by the urban sector.”

A study of Andhra Pradesh, SER Division, Planning Commission of India

The chapter explores educated Dalit women’s experiences in private sector employment in Hyderabad’s growing context of LPG. It studies Dalit women’s efforts at accessing education to improve their employment opportunities and how Dalit women fare in the informal recruitment processes in private sector companies. This chapter also discussed caste-gender dynamics experienced by Dalit women in education and employment and how these dynamics impacted their access to gender and labour rights. It reported on how various institutions like the family, state and the market influenced Dalit women’s opportunities and efforts to gain access and perform in their employment. It interrogates the concepts of social and gender justice in the light of labour rights in the private sector. Lastly, this chapter explored Dalit women’s perceptions on the impact of employment on herself, her family and the Dalit community.

Profile and Background

Table 10.1 – Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25 years</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 years</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35 years</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.2 – Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

86.6% of the Dalit women that we spoke with in the private sector were relatively young, being less than 30 years of age, out of which 53.3% who were below 25 years of age. More than half (53.3%) were not married. It was also the first job for the majority of these women (67%). 93.3% belonged to the Hindu religion and 6.7% were Christians. 80% in the sample belong to Madiga and 20% to Mala communities. 80% of the DW in the sample were born and brought up in Hyderabad and 13% or came here after marriage. 7% had come from outside the city and taken up employment in the private sector.

In regards to the parents of the women sampled, 86.7% of mothers and 53.3% of fathers were non-literate or educated only until the 8th grade. Only 6.7% of mothers and 26.7% of fathers had completed their bachelor’s degree. 13.3% of the mothers and 40% of the fathers had regular salaried income in government or private sector including 6.7% in NGO sector. The majority had mothers who were homemakers (86.7%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Caste</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mala</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madiga</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.3 – Sub-Caste

The profile of these Dalit women presents a young workforce in the private sector reflecting that Dalit women in urban areas were approaching the private sector as an important employment opportunity. The fact that this was the first employment for 67% of respondents, suggested a new opportunity for employment to educated Dalit women. This was even more commendable as these women did not, for the most part, have female role models in their families – as noted earlier 86.7% had mothers who did not go out of the household for work. The women came from families where the education levels of the parents were low and more than half of the respondents came from families employed in wage or casual labour. That small proportion of the respondents (7%) were coming from outside the city to take up private sector employment which suggests that Dalit women from outside the city either did not have access to information about private sector recruitment or did not find the terms attractive enough to move to the city to take up the jobs.
Dalit women in the study were highly qualified with 86.6% holding university degrees. One third of the women were postgraduates with degrees in Medicine and Hotel Management along with MBAs and MCAs. 40% of the women from intermediate to post graduate education acquired additional technical qualification in computers. This showed that the community recognizes the value of both basic graduate and technical education in accessing employment. Several of the women had to take a break in their education at some point due to either family constraints (40%), financial constraints (13.3%) or marriage (6.7%). 73% of the respondents reported that their motivation for higher education was to access employment and many continued to improve their levels of education, and thus opportunities for employment, even while they are employed.

Reservation played an important role in educational achievements with 53% of the women having selected their specific subjects because of reservation and seat availability. In addition, 53% also said that they chose their particular course of study owing to the high employment opportunities in that field. 80% of the respondents said that their education relates to their present employment. They also made good use of opportunities under distance education to improve their qualifications.

Dalit women who came from families where at least one of the parents was educated and had regular income were better placed in accessing higher professional qualifications. It is interesting to note that even when families did not have such backgrounds, respondents accessed short-term technical courses to augment their employment opportunities.

The main motivations for pursuing studies were to improve their financial standing and to contribute to the family income and its status in the community. 40% were happy to be able to raise the social status of their families, while 47% were pleased that they were able to ensure financial support to their families. 27% also felt that education helped to improve the community’s image in society. It needs to be noted that they completed higher education often against odds, which required a lot of will power and perseverance. These were impressive achievements given the fact that only 10% of each cohort of students at the All India level moves into higher education.¹⁰⁸

Caste discrimination was reported by 20% of the respondents as caste based humiliation and being looked down upon by peer groups. The majority (80%) did not report caste discrimination,

indicating that caste based discrimination in very overt and obvious forms in urban areas were declining. Considerable numbers of the respondents were also educated in private or management schools which may also relate to lower reports of caste based discrimination. Caste based discrimination in schools and colleges clearly work against the fundamental Right to Education and state’s acknowledged international convention against discrimination in education. These further negate right to equality and right to equal opportunity given its continued influence in their lives.

**Employment in the Private Sector**
The motivation of DW in securing employment in the private is not very different from that of pursuing employment in the government sector including regular income to the family, which remains the priority. This is followed by DW’s interest to have a career and also to improve their recognition and status in society. About a third of them also saw their employment as a means to contribute to the community and society.

**Table 10.5 – Nature of Employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Institutions where Respondents were Employed</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT (BPO and related)</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institutions</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical institutions</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking and finance</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The state had been and is aggressively pursuing privatization in various sectors, which is reflected in the diverse sectors where Dalit women have accessed employment. 53.3% were employed in IT related employment while the remaining women were employed in other growing private sector employment; education, finance, health care, and hospitality industries. The IT sector evidently provided the most opportunities amongst those sampled.

**Access Through Informal Recruitment**
20% of the Dalit women respondents who were employed in the private sector went through a formal application and recruitment process while 80% got their employment through informal processes. 80% of the respondents got information about the vacancy through teachers, friends or relatives. It is interesting that 20% of the women received this information through family members reflecting contacts with private sector employers. 80% attended a personal interview as the process for recruitment that included scrutiny of certificates in the case of 46.6%. Only 20% had accessed this information through formal channels such as newspapers and the Internet. 20% underwent written tests as part of the recruitment and 13.3% had to undergo group discussion for being recruited.

Given the very informal nature of recruitments, the information about job vacancies does not appear to reach rural and distant areas. There were apparently no mechanisms in these organizations for broad basing their recruitment. 67% of the respondents also reported that this was their first job, showing that the company was willing to accept persons without previous work experience or that the nature of job was such that persons without experience could fulfill the job.
The above indicated that there were openings in the private sector in urban areas, where EUDW from urban areas could explore employment opportunities. They had the opportunity to get employment without previous experience, which normal would have not been possible.

10.6 – Salary Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Salary</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below Rs. 3,000</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 3,000 - 4,999</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 5,000 - 9,999</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 10,000 - 14,999</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 15,000 - 20,000</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that the majority of these women earned fairly good salaries. 46.6% of the respondents earned Rs. 10,000 and above as monthly salary. Another 6.6% earned between Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 10,000 per month. 6.7% earn below Rs. 3,000 per month (actually being just Rs. 1,000 per month). However the fact that a percentage of the women earned below Rs. 3,000 per month, reflected the need for ensuring minimum salaries that provide decent living standards to workers. In the growing privatization process, the role of the state to set standards and regulate the practices is paramount to promoting DW’s opportunities in the private sector. Without these, while the women themselves appreciate the opportunity to work on regular salaries, they fail to access decent standard of living despite their investments in education and skill training.

These salaries compared favourably with the equivalent jobs in the government sector, the normal preferred job for Dalits.

Working Conditions in the Private Sector

We gave a detailed question on aspects related to decent working conditions with 21 indicators looking at labour rights provisions offered by their employers. One can see that less than half the women in the study enjoyed minimum labour standards.

- 27% of these DW worked in companies that provided less than five provisions (most commonly include a few from among casual leave, over time payments, provident fund, travel allowance, medical benefits and minimum salary)
- 27% worked in companies that provided between 5 and 10 provisions (in addition to the above may also include equal wage, annual leave, separate facilities for women, maternity leave, leave on loss of pay, insurance benefits)
- 47% worked in companies that provided between 10 and 15 provisions (in addition to the above may have additional benefits like housing allowances, travel allowances, dearness allowances and night time travel facilities).

Women employed in the private sector did not report being part of associations and trade unions that ensure workers rights and can negotiate their welfare. By and large, women reported that their jobs kept them busy and they did not find time to engage in other activities during their work time. It is doubtful that such institutions are promoted by private sector. Even if there are such institutions in the making, DW participation and role in these are negligible or absent.

93
Employment Analysis
There was high level of satisfaction with the employment. 87% of the women were content with their designation, which they felt reflected their skills, dignity and authority (administrator, executive, technical recruiter, front office person and officer) and did not have traditional connotations of servitude or labour.

Only 40% felt satisfied about the salary package, the larger proportion, 60%, reported that they were not satisfied. It can be correlated with income of Rs. 10,000 per month and above which is earned by 46.6% of the respondents. This shows that Dalit women with higher education expected monthly salary of Rs. 10,000.

100% of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the safety and security they experience in the workplace, with more than half saying they were very satisfied. This also related to the fact that these workplaces were local, that the women had connections to known people and that they were often informal. Security being a priority area for parents of unmarried girls, they would most likely have ensured safety and security at the workplace.

It would be very difficult to make an assessment of the objective level of the company’s employment conditions based on the opinions of the respondents, as this was the first job for many of them. 67% of the respondents were appointed on contract basis. This often allowed the company to escape obligations that would be given to regular employees and generally the terms and conditions of contract employment were not communicated in a formal manner during recruitment. Respondents also report that their work kept them busy with very little time to talk and discuss other matters.

Employment tenure and security in the private sector can be limited. Only A third of the respondents said they had been given a long tenure job while 60% said they were on contract. 7% were on daily wage basis. This reflected the temporary nature of their employment in these organizations. It also reflected the lack of any security in their employment.

Institutional Mechanism for Protection Against Harassment
About one fourth of the private institutions where the DW worked technically had some functional body where they could lodge complaints if any. Most often these were included with the HR body and were not a separate body as provided under the Visaka guidelines on harassment in the workplace. Functionally however, none of the women had lodged any complaints though this. There understanding was that there is no real value attached to these bodies. It also showed that even if they may be there, there is no dissemination about their role and tasks or the value of engaging with these bodies. 67% of the women reported that there was no such body in their organization, while 6.7% reported that they do not know.

Relevance of Caste in the Private Sector
67% of the respondents expressed that they were in favour of disclosing their caste identity in the workplace, while 73% reported that their caste identity was actually known by their colleagues. Caste continues to be taboo in the private sector with an alleged focus being on the merit and skills of the worker, despite many scholars’ works suggesting that merit in itself is a very subjective matter and social construct. Private sector companies did not give attention to caste concerns or disadvantages, and several of the Dalit women preferred to abide by these norms and not identify their caste backgrounds.
Under these circumstances it is useful to examine this apparent caste-neutrality in the private sector and consider the following questions:

- Are people in the private sector not concerned about caste identity in reality?
- Does glossing over caste identity create conditions of freedom, equality and fraternity in a positive manner to Dalit women and men in the work environment?
- Are Dalit women comfortable with the current situation?

In order to answer the first two questions it is constructive to understand the experience of Tata, one of the foremost private sector companies in India.

The fact that 90% of the Tata Sons employees were willing to volunteer their caste identity, and that 73% of the DW in these local companies stated that their identity was known by their colleagues, which showed that caste was not a hidden factor in the private sector. People knew each other’s caste identity and in the context where all aspects of life—social, economic, cultural and political are built around caste factor, it is likely to be an influential factor in the private sector as well. Studies by the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies and Princeton University also suggest that caste identity plays a role in recruitment albeit in modern frames.

However, the third question— as to whether the Dalit women are themselves comfortable with exposing their caste identity— is also relevant. The study showed that 67% thought that it was good to expose ones caste, while 33% found this unnecessary.

Dalit women in the private sector were well aware of the public image, and stereotypes prevalent about the community in society. They were also aware that even when unsaid, the same perceptions were carried forward to work places and personal relationships. Those who preferred to have the identity exposed were keen that; i.) these unsaid myths could be disproved by building new relationships based on actual persons and performance, ii.) their individual contribution and performance would be recognized and iii.) they could share their sense of achievement in reaching such levels despite the hardships and disabilities.

The women in our sample had other reasons for openly admitting their caste identity. They feared that that sudden exposure over time to their colleagues would bring about a negative reaction. Dalit women would like to build friendships in the workplace with people who were genuinely above caste identity and for whom caste identity did not stand in the way of relationships and performance. When identity was kept hidden and exposed later, they feared that the others would think that the secrecy was an intentional act on the part of Dalit women meant to cheat their colleagues.

Dalit women also viewed themselves as representatives of the community and their role in rewriting the image of the community. Hence through their work they liked to expose the skill and professionalism of their community and to negate stereotypes like being lazy or easygoing.

In hiding the caste issue and hiding from the caste issue, the private sector is likely to be doing a disservice to the marginalized as well as the productive resources in society as a whole. As caste does not go away nor can it be wished away, both formal and informal spaces and activities need to be
created for the dismantling of this practice.

The question about availability of such spaces and activities that can cut across caste and other social barriers, 47% of the respondents reported that there are no organized social spaces available or practiced in their organizations or companies. 53% said that these opportunities existed but that participation varies.

**Table 10.7 – Socialization in the Workplace**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Participation</th>
<th>Recreation Programmes</th>
<th>Outings</th>
<th>Office Festivals</th>
<th>Visit Homes of non-Dalits</th>
<th>Partake in Festivals of non-Dalits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always do</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes do</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never do</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above reflects changing norms and more open practices, particularly when it comes to visiting the homes of non-Dalit colleagues and participating in the public functions of non-Dalit colleagues. However one must recognize the continued social barriers across caste communities despite the considerable growth of the private sector and their global engagement and competitive edge, which undermine the social justice provisions promoted by the state.

**Role of the Family**

The family functions as an important supportive unit for these working Dalit women. The different members of the family provide moral support in education and work, help in household chores and help with looking after the children.

60% of the women reported that they are able to manage their work life because of the support they get from family members in managing household chores and childcare. Many different members of the family may be engaged in this support both from the natal and marital family. In the case of single unmarried DW taking up work, the family exempted her from almost all household chores, which was highly appreciated by the DW.

13% of respondents specially mentioned support from husbands, which is interesting. Given the patriarchal nature of families and the gender division of labour, women do not demand and also do not expect support from husbands in managing the home and childcare. Hence it is a matter of pleasant surprise when they do receive it.

For 13% of the women, it mattered that their family respected and consulted them in the decisions of the family. One woman stated ‘they do not treat me as a girl’. This helps boost up the self-confidence and capability of the woman herself.

20% of the DW came to know about the employment through family members. This reflects the family’s social contacts and their interest that the respondent finds employment. The limitation is also that the family decides whether the particular employment is suitable or not and has the possibility of keeping a constant tab on the DW through their own social contacts. This also means that the employers also know the caste identity of the respondent even if the DW herself may not
want to expose it. 33% of the DW also expressed that their family’s encouragement facilitated their working.

Even when DW are educated and can access work, there tends to be some form of overt or unsaid permission required from the family in their decision to take up work. This is evident from 33% of women who felt that the family ‘allowing and encouraging’ them to work is a great support which laid the foundation for other support to them from the family. Thus evidently while DW are important contributors to the family and can negotiate their way, they still are expected to follow gender norms in major decisions.

**Role of the State**

These Dalit women did not find any special support from the state in their efforts at accessing employment in the private sector. In fact all around negligence towards SCs was evident in the performance of the state despite many policies and provisions made in routine manner.

Many of the labour provisions were automatically waived and self-certification was allowed by private sector units especially ICTs, including maternity benefits, minimum wages, employment exchange notification, payment of wages and contract labour (regulation and abolition). 109

> “Women constitute 30% of the total working IT population in the state….A vast majority of them are relegated to call centres jobs in ITeS/BPO operations which require them to work 24x7x365 on shift or staggered timings….Women need to be promoted into key roles as decision makers, entrepreneurs and other senior positions….All efforts need to be made to ensure that the self esteem, individual and collective confidence of women is held up at all levels in the organisation….Women participation must be encouraged in all public and internal activities of the company.” 110

In terms of support in education, it was found that reservation in education was used widely while other entitlements such as the provision of scholarships, residential hostels and books were not widely used. Many had not accessed these entitlements as they did their education in private schools and colleges, where despite the availability of provisions, the institutions do not pursue them. Delayed provisions also resulted in many students having to make their own arrangements. Respondents also reported not using the entitlements owing to their parents being employed with the state or having regular salaried employment where they did not come within the income bracket.

**Conclusion**

In many ways, the private sector is becoming the preferred or the only choice for EUDW substituting the once privileged government sector. Only 13% of the respondents had tried to access jobs in the government sector and 77% had directed their attempts only in the private sector. This seems to suggest that Dalit women are exploring private sector employment at least from certain sections. It is interesting to analyze why this is so.

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110 ibid: 16.
If one were to simply go by the nature of their qualifications, they qualify for many of the jobs in the government. It could be the fact that vacancies in the government have drastically come down and there are very few announcements except for the periodic central and state government services, or periodic recruitment of teachers, periodic recruitment of the railway boards. The competition when these are announced is so high and the level of favoritism and corruption so great, that it becomes difficult to get them. Many of these are running a couple of years behind schedule. A number of times, the prescribed posts under reservation are not filled, giving the excuse of not finding suitable candidates; after which the position is temporarily staffed for a few years with non-Dalit candidates. Many government departments currently recruit for project-based or contract employment, which also do not have the same benefits as regular government employment.

In many ways, both positions held by Dalit women, i.e. to expose their caste identity or keep it a secret, stem out of deep entrenched feelings of unfairness, injustice and unequal status. In hiding caste, the private sector closes up any space for re-visiting images, re-negotiating spaces and re-creating relationships. The lack of a serious public education and dialogue on what the new on caste messages need to be is a serious lacuna in our public space.

On the other hand what seems to make private sector employment attractive to the DW is the ease in getting it, the informal process linked to it, and the local nature of the employment, though the salaries and the work conditions are not attractive. The private sector, except those that are well recognized and fairly large do not provide labour rights as mandated by national commitment and international conventions. They also do not proactively create provisions to promote employment opportunities for DW, addressing their caste and gender disabilities along the social and gender justice frames discussed earlier. Despite the limitations, given that more DW are getting educated, the growing private sector provides them opening opportunities and they take them up with the hope of moving forward.
Chapter 11

HYDERABAD

NGO Sector Employment

This chapter studies Dalit women's employment opportunities in the NGO sector of Hyderabad. It analyzes the nature of education that facilitated access employment for Dalit women and their reasons for choosing this sector. It also explored DW’s experiences of caste and gender dynamics in the NGO sector and how they influenced and impacted their access and performance professionally. It looked at the role of the family and community and how they helped or hindered these DW in performing their work responsibilities. Lastly it presented DW’s perceptions on the impact of employment for herself, her family and the Dalit community. The chapter looks at how labour rights are envisaged and practiced in the NGO sector. The chapter also analyzes DW experience in the sector from the perspective of decent work and gender and social justice.

Table 11.1 – Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profile of Dalit Women in the Study

The age profile of the women in the study showed that 20% were 30 or older, 60% were between 26 and 30 years old and 20% were below 25 years of age. This reflected Dalit women's efforts to access employment at as young an age as possible, sometimes starting their efforts even before completing their studies.

Table 11.2 – Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married but Separated</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11.3 – Sub-Caste
Half the respondents were married. 15% were previously married but now single. One was a single mother living alone with her two children; she depended on her work in the NGO and was pursuing her graduation at present. The second took divorce owing to harassment from husband and marital family. Two important aspects that come up from the marital status of the employed women were that 35% were unmarried and 2 of the women were divorced. The marital status of DW in the NGO sector showed that while marriage and families continue to be prevalent social norms, DW were also beginning to negotiate space for their career opportunities and also independence to a smaller degree, reflecting some cracks in these dominant norms.

The respondents came equally from the Mala and the Madiga Dalit sub castes, the two major sub castes in the state. 60% belonged to Hindu religion and 40% were Christians.

**Native Place**

50% of the women in this study came from outside Hyderabad from other districts for accessing higher education or employment. That young Dalit women traveled and moved on their own for education and employment is an interesting change. Given the fact that many of them may not have had families that were settled in the city, they were very much on their own. Often they came without many personal or professional in the. The fact that despite these constraints 50% of the women in the study were able to negotiate with families and also find their own solutions to move to the city to pursue education and employment reflects their initiative, courage and an ability to put up with constraints and move forward in life with enthusiasm.

**Role of Education in Employment**

To finish one's education below 12th grade did not make sense to these Dalit women and none of the women in this section of our study had finished their education before receiving at least a bachelor's degree.

**Table 11.3 – Education Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12th grade</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

60% of the respondents were postgraduates and above, with one person completing M.Phil studies. Only 10% of the women stopped after 12th grade, even among them one was currently doing their degree by distance education. While DW had considerations about the costs and their ability to fulfill course requirements, employment opportunity (50%), interest in the subject (55%) and
reservations and seat availability (70%) were the main reasons for the choice of their study. This showed the importance of state provisions that facilitated their higher or technical education.

While the majority of women were able to complete their studies without any break, 30% of the respondents had to break their education due to financial or other family crisis. This reflected the context of DW where the gender norms about girl's responsibility and support in times of family crisis over and above their own interests and choices constructed the gender frame.

It is interesting to note that among the Dalit women who were accessing employment in the NGO sector there were very few who had completed technical courses. Rather there was a perceived interest in pursuing masters degrees in social work, as shown by the fact that ten per cent were currently pursuing a MSW, while one earned MSW as a second post graduation degree.

“I like this work and so took a second post graduation degree in MSW when an NGO stared working in my village. For a while I worked with them and after marriage I looked for work in NGOs in Hyderabad.”

N.A., Hyderabad

Employment opportunities for those who were below intermediate level seemed to be of the traditional casual wage employment. What these Dalit women were seeking from their education was more regular salaried employment and they realized the need for university education for this objective. Hence even when they had to take up employment to meet family financial needs, many of them continued their education along with their employment. Their constant effort to improve their qualifications and move forward can be seen from the fact that one fifth of them were pursuing their studies while they were currently employed full time.

Two were pursuing undergraduate studies. Three were pursuing postgraduate studies, two of these being in social work. The increasing interest among DW to take up social work studies reflect the growing awareness and interest in the NGO sector as potential employment sector by them.

### Dalit Women’s Efforts at Accessing Employment in the NGO Sector

Dalit women’s interest in having a career and employment is also seen from their consistent efforts to find employment. 85% of the respondents have made many attempts in accessing employment. Making attempts for employment in the current context of the Dalit women meant making active efforts to find employment opportunities, preparing for the same, ensuring that one has all the necessary documents and references and being there on time. These were generally seen as constraints rather than opportunities for women in this society and more so for Dalit women who had considerably less social networking, financial resources, mobility outside the family and access to information. Despite these facts it is important to notice that half of them had made more than 3 attempts for finding their first employment.

### Table 11.5 – Reasons for Exploring Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for exploring employment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was interested to work and have a career</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For regular income to family</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To contribute positively to community and society</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For gaining greater social status</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To have a career, to provide regular income to the family and to gain greater social status stood out as the three main reasons for Dalit women to explore employment.

85% of the women in the study reported that they were working because of their interest to work and have a career. Given the fact that only 20% of these women’s mothers were employed, and only 30% of the fathers were employed in salaried jobs, the woman’s own initiative to be employed was very visible. This was also reflected in the fact that only 5% of the respondents took up employment owing to family interest or pressure.

45% of the women reported their aspiration to provide regular income to the family for taking up employment. This reflects the importance of providing security and the ability to plan for the growth and development of the family. This was further reflected from the fact that 55% felt that their families had economically benefited from their employment in terms of better income, sustained income and ability to provide for the financial needs of the family.

Dalit women’s interest to be employed and have a career could be seen from the fact that 30% of the women continued their education despite having to take a break for financial or other reasons. They continued their education even when there was little pressure or precedence in the family shown by the fact that only 35% of parents (4 fathers and 3 mothers) were educated above secondary schooling.

**Recruitment**

In general NGOs used informal mechanisms to recruit their staff. Information about employment was primarily provided through informal and personal channels and half the respondents received the information from family, friends, teachers, Dalit student forums or other well-wishers from the non-Dalit community. Because of the informal process, 75% of the DW did not report any difficulty in accessing information or in the recruitment process. Even information about being selected was mainly received through known persons (45%) or through the phone (30%). A formal announcement through the post only came to 10% of our respondents. This worked both ways for Dalit women, it provided them comfortable access when they had contacts but some were not able to access employment opportunities if they do not have the contacts. In the larger frame though, the informal processes can distort labour market opportunities and processes.

**Table 11.6 – Informal Recruitment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of information on employment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News paper, regional language newspaper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment news</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend or teacher in college</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only 25% of these women accessed information about their current jobs from formal sources like newspapers or job boards on the Internet. Also, 85% of the respondents felt that their non-Dalit peers were much better placed than they were when accessing employment.

The reasons for this differentiation were reported as:

i) Wider social circle – wider contacts, connected across different sectors, more educated circles gained access through informal means from this circle and formal means was only a formality for the others.

ii) Better access to sources of information – it was reported that non-Dalit persons had better access to newspapers, employment news, English dailies, and to the internet and television.

iii) Proactive families – the respondents also felt that if their families had been better educated and informed about educational and employment opportunities, they could have pro-actively supported their children to choose courses and careers.

iv) A small proportion also mentioned that there were active and discriminatory means by which non-Dalits access information and where Dalits were denied information. The fact that non-Dalits circle was wide and in diverse sectors, it was reported that they accessed information quickly and through informal channels. The formal channel was only a formality by which time decisions are already made on who will access the opportunity. One person also stated that information was denied to Dalits even when they seek it.

v) Better informed on emerging markets and values – respondents also reported the difference in attitudes between them and non-Dalit students. The latter were more clued into competitiveness, conscious about improving wealth and assets and more willing and prepared to explore diverse opportunities to enhance their economic situations.

It was also shown, that in a context where unemployment rates were high, Dalit women accessing employment at a very young age reflected that they would rather take up employment at the first instance rather than wait for the right job to come along. While not ideal, this is understandable given the economic conditions in their families and their own aspirations for social and economic mobility.

It was interesting that about 70% of the respondents who were employed in the NGO sector were previously employed in the private sector and switched over. Of the remaining 30%, only 5% had shifted from another NGO to this NGO. For the remaining 25% this was their first job. The evidence seems to show that EUDW were keen to get employment in the NGO sector.

It is interesting that Dalit women from the private sector had moved to the NGO sector as it was generally assumed that private sector provided better working conditions and advancement opportunities. The fact that 35% of the respondents cited better salary in the NGO as one of the reasons for the shift showed that they were not suitably employed as per their educational and professional qualifications and that their position did not give them the feeling that they had future opportunities. The other reason given for their shift to the NGO sector was the lack of a positive work environment in the private sector.
85% of the DW in NGOs were employed in activities that required technical expertise or knowledge as programme coordinators, accountants or administrators or as consultants, which shows the availability of DW with educational qualifications and skills that matched the roles and responsibilities in these tasks. However, the fact that many organizations in the study reported that they did not have DW working at headquarters indicated the barriers these organizations had in terms of DW accessing such opportunities. This can also be concluded from many NGOs where the response was that they did not have DW employed at headquarters, but placed them in the field operations in rural areas.

With a large part of the state being rural, much of the NGO field operations were in rural areas. The second opportunity was in field-based work in urban poor areas. In spite of this it was felt that there was a sensitivity and openness of the NGOs on caste issues and their recognition of its role in development outcomes strongly influenced these DWs’ access into the NGOs in addition to the availability of suitably qualified DW in the urban area.

### Salary Scales

The salary scales of the respondents working in the NGO sector (as shown in the above table) were comparable to both private sector and government sector. 40% of the respondents earned above Rs. 10,000 per month and only 20% earned less than Rs. 5,000 per month, and it was found that they were employed as field level employees or in very small organizations. However, with the added impetus of working for the benefits of community and the opportunity to change their and other’s current social environment, it has become a favoured option among Dalit women.

There was considerable variation even within similar job profiles, which was based on the size of the organization and also the skill or experience of the individual employee. It ranged more than 3 times of the lowest paid in the same position from as low as Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 16,000.

### Satisfaction in Employment

The level of satisfaction about the work and work environment for these EUDW was mixed. Almost all of the women (90%) were satisfied with the designation they were given in the organization. Satisfaction with salaries is mixed with only 55% being satisfied. Many of the respondents chose not to answer on their level of satisfaction with regard to facilities in the organization (35%) and opportunities for promotion and upward mobility (60%).

### Social Relationships in the workplace

The workplace provided a space to re-work perceptions and relationships across caste groups.

---

**Table 11.8 – Nature of Employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of employment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Monthly salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration and accounts</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Rs. 3,000-14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field or community programme</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Rs. 2,500-5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program coordinator or officer</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Rs. 5,000-16,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Rs. 5,000-7,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About 25% of the respondents said that the organization they worked for did not provide opportunities like recreation activities or outings, which could possibly facilitate better understanding and engagement with colleagues from different backgrounds in new ways. However, the majority reported social activities in their organizations, such as:

- **Recreational activities** – 47% reported that they always participated in recreational activities while 40% reported that they participated sometimes, and 13% reported that they did not participate in such activities.
- **Excursions** – 40% reported that they always participated, 33% that they sometimes participated, while 27% said they never participated. As excursions meant being out of the office, it was not only the women's individual choice, but family willingness and context could also be responsible for her decisions.
- **Office functions and festivals** – 33% reported that they always participated, while 47% reported that they participated sometimes and 20% that they never participated.
- **Visiting the families of non-Dalits** – 25% reported that they often visited families of non-Dalits on family festivals and occasions, 47% that they did so sometimes and about 25% report that they did not visit non-Dalit homes.

This mixed picture shows that caste continues to influence the participation of DW in their social relationships at the workplace.

### Nature of NGOs where Dalit Women Find Employment

Dalit women were employed in NGOs where they:

- Specially articulated their mandate in addressing caste based discrimination, focusing on Dalit communities and promoting Dalit leadership.
- Focused on other issues of exclusion like gender, religion and along the way took on caste also as an important vector of exclusion.
- Recognized the disabling nature of caste on people who come from Dalit or other lower caste sections of the population and how this is most concentrated within urban poor and street children and work in areas such as disaster relief, livelihood development and local governance.

### Caste Dynamics in Employment

All of the respondents in this section reported that their caste identity was known in the organization and workplace. Not only the employers but also their colleagues were also aware of each other’s identity in the work place. It is also interesting that the majority (80%) felt comfortable with the fact that their colleagues knew their caste identity and this was not a hidden factor in the workplace.

The respondents showed that their caste identity was open knowledge in their organization and much of this information was known through the process of recruitment. One thus confirms the impression that the organization either was open to acknowledging caste discrimination and its impact or in some ways was is engaged in addressing it.

In a contemporary context, it was quite understandable that caste bias, stereotypes and mindsets might have emerged within organizations and that there would be with a need to address this. It is also understandable that this would also have impact on the comfort and performance levels of DW in the organization. This led to a difference in opinion as to whether it was good or not good to reveal ones caste at work.
Those who said that it was good to review caste argue that it was right to explicitly state ones caste in the workplace so that others were aware and there were no surprises later in life to ones identity. This would allow others to make their decisions on how they relate and engage with the respondents. This was very much a self-protection mechanism where the respondents said they would like to avoid breaks of relationship caused by being accused of intentional hiding of identity later on. Two things become clear from this rationale:

- Caste identity continues to play an important role in building friendships and collegiality
- DW did not feel that they were equally placed as non-Dalit women in initiating friendships and collegiality with non-Dalits

Positive rationale for one’s caste identity in workplace were that:

- Others would be less likely to make derogatory comments on caste
- One could express their views and opinions on issues without feeling an internal constraint or fear
- They would be able to build exposing friendships with those who were willing to go beyond the caste identities

However 20% of our respondents did not see the need to expose ones personal identity of caste as the workplace demands skills and efficiency and not ones identity. There was also the argument that when caste identity was revealed, non-Dalits formed a biased and stereotyped view that undermined the skill, knowledge, role and responsibility of the DW limiting their performance and affecting the prospects of the women and their professional growth in the organization.

The respondents reported the need for dialogue on caste-based discrimination within the organizations when they were confronted by it and took a position to address it in their organization. It is important to stress on broader human rights norms and constitutional guarantees as well as organizational accountability mechanisms that often stand in contradiction with traditional caste based norms.

**Family Role for Dalit Women**

The EUDW had a variety of support from the family, mainly with regard to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities at home, including taking care of the household, child care and family support, which is expected and received from the larger family. Support from husbands in terms of household chores and childcare shows a divergence from the regular patriarchal norms.

These women also looked for encouragement and support from their families about their workload and work responsibilities and the acceptance to make the necessary adjustments needed to ensure that they can fulfill their work responsibilities.

15% of the respondents reported that they received no help from the family, and that they had to finish household work before going to work and there was a strong gender division of labour as to what were the tasks related to women and to men in their homes.

DW employed in the NGO sector also faced resistance from families when they had to travel to the field or come home late. There was also a pressure to look for alternate employment in government sector. This in some ways reflected the Dalit community’s preference for government employment. In spite of this there was not much engagement on the actual issues about the actual work these women were engaged in.
The State’s Role in Promoting Employment
To a question about their familiarity with state agencies that provided information on employment, only half of the respondents had received any information about such agencies. The gap in providing such information was a big opportunity gap for students who did not have many other opportunities.

It was found that the government SC/ST programs that were supposed to be available in colleges for the benefit of helping these students access jobs markets when they had finished their studies were either not functional or simply unavailable. Only 10% respondents reported the availability of programs like this in their college.

Impact and Perceptions On Self
45% DW respondents indicated increased self-confidence and independence as the most important outcome of being employed in the NGO sector. This was closely associated with the greater income and economic security employment has brought to them (30% of respondents). 25% felt that they had increased their social status and recognition due to their employment.

The incessant thirst for learning, knowledge and awareness about society and the Dalit community was stated as a personal gain by 30% of the respondents. It was exciting to learn that 10% report on greater equality between husband and wife and the same number report job satisfaction as a personal gain from employment.

Providing income support and recognition to the family were important benefits. In addition there was considerable emphasis placed on being involved in the planning towards development in the family, specifically about education of siblings, future of children, family asset building, improved savings and well being in family and better management of the home.

Gains for Dalit community
It is important to note that Dalit women also had a community angle to their employment. They saw their employment as a means of promoting better social recognition to the community, and that they were able to provide a social capital and network through information sharing, guidance and connections along with being a role model to others in the community.

Conclusion
Employment potential in the NGO sector is gaining recognition at national and international levels. Like all other sectors, Dalits have entered this sector as volunteers or field workers. The NGO sector in Andhra Pradesh went through much churning in the mid-1990s in the aftermath of the violent atrocities against Dalits in the state. Dalit led NGOs and platforms emerged as part of this process, and the Dalit agenda began to take shape. The increased visibility to the Dalit agenda and Dalit leadership also created a re-thinking among other NGOs and donor agencies, with some of them coming forward to support Dalit led NGOs. Some non-Dalit NGOs took a more inclusive approach and more Dalit women and men found employment opportunities there. Their number

* Karamchedu (1985) and Tsundur (1991) massacre of Dalits by dominant castes in AP raised questions about violence, state protection and left movements in the state and emerged Dalit Mahasabha, a mass based led by Dalits in the state. Following this there were also NGO review of Dalit leadership and development issues in the sector. Dappu, Dalit Voluntary Action Forum (DVAF) evolved during this period promoting Dalit led NGOs and platforms at the state level.
continues to be a handful while Dalit involvement continues to consist of fieldwork and work in the lower cadre in most of these NGOs.

The increased education levels of Dalit women and more in-depth knowledge on community issues and aspirations are positive features that can facilitate DW’s entry into more senior positions in the sector. This however needs to be increased with greater dialogue in the sector and promoting a facilitative environment of caste and gender equality for Dalit women.

Given the fact that NGOs are fairly independent and without strict norms of employment and labour rights, norms and regulations that are found are often designed and operational at the individual NGO level. Reporting by the NGOs to the state primarily concerns the receipt and utilization of funds and not on labour rights and employment practices. The over-arching perception of the NGO sector as the ‘voluntary sector’, where people work based on their passion and commitment to social issues and social change, also put employment and labour rights on the back burner. The experiences of the DW in the study reflected overarching and humane practices along with a commitment to address conflict as they arose. The respondents in this section expressed few concerns about gender justice, in terms of safety, protection and a positive environment, without harassment towards women. Their efforts in promoting opportunities for DW within the organization’s leadership and decision-making is more recent and nominal.
Chapter 12
HYDERABAD
Entrepreneurship

The chapter studies DW entrepreneurs in Hyderabad, wanting to understand the full range of DW employment profile including self-employment and entrepreneurship. The study explores the profile of the women who made decisions to move away from paid labour and their reasons for initiating these enterprises. This was particularly of interest given the occupational obligations and the gender-caste disabilities placed on Dalit community and DW. Entrepreneurship called for set of resources and skills that are traditionally not associated with the community. The study looks at the nature of enterprises run by DW and the dynamics of caste and gender in their operation. It analyzes current state policies on entrepreneurship and if and how DW connect to them. It also studies DW perceptions about the success (or constraints) of their enterprises and its impact on them and their families.

Table 12.1 – Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 and above</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.2 – Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married but living separately</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the Dalit women in our study who had initiated and developed enterprises in Hyderabad were over 30 years old (71.5%), married (94%) and belonged to the Madiga and Mala subcastes (69%). Most of them (86%) are Hindus and 75% are either native to Hyderabad or came here after marriage. Among those who came from outside 7 out of 9 came here looking specifically for employment.
Education Qualification among Respondents
80% of the respondents stopped school with 10th grade or below of whom 40% were illiterate. Only 20% were educated to their Bachelor's degree or higher. They also came from families with low literacy levels; only one woman’s father had finished a university degree while 57% of the mothers and 43% of the fathers were illiterate.

Kavita makes pickles at home and sells them in the shops and in big apartments. Her business has been steadily improving with people placing orders on the phone now. In her initial period of selling pickles at the apartments, a well-meaning Dalit woman told her not to expose her caste. Kavita has not exposed her caste as she fears that this will negatively impact her business.

K.T., Hyderabad

It was found that unlike other sectors of employment, more DW in the older age group of 30 years and above were running their enterprises. Being native of Hyderabad also seemed to provide greater possibility to set up ones enterprise, may be because of the long term stability in the location and familiarity with contacts, local needs and market opportunities. These older women also did not seem to consider education as being important to manage their enterprise given the fact that 40% were illiterate. All these could also have been because these women initiated their business to ensure that family needs are met and thus took the courage and the risk to initiate small local demand-driven enterprises. On the other hand, younger DW seemed to make a conscious career choice when they took up enterprises.

The Role of Education in Entrepreneurship

Table 12.3 – Sub-Caste

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Caste</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mala</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madiga</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.4 – Education Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th and below</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th grade with vocational training</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the majority of these women had low educational achievements, they also had limited opportunities for employment in the organized sector, a situation that became even more problematic with the general increase in the unemployment of women in the urban areas lasting the previous decades. The choice then was between wage labour and starting one's own enterprise. Given the historical tendency of the community engaged in wage labour, taking up an enterprise was a fairly big step. While older Dalit women seemed to take up enterprises based on livelihood needs, younger educated women seemed to take them by choice when some of them could have accessed other employment. These young women had to convince their families as they were qualified for other employment, and families were not willing to invest in their enterprise given the fact of them getting married and moving away sooner or later. It was found that younger DW took up enterprises based on market demand, their skill or interest and not so much to meet livelihood needs.

The Experience with Entrepreneurship
These Dalit women were engaged in a variety of enterprises ranging across sales, production and service.

Purchase and sales seemed to be the most feasible activity, with approximately 66% of the women engaged in running a variety of shops providing everyday necessities to the local community, selling provisions, vegetables, food products, fancy items and sarees.

5.7% of the women in the study also ran food products units in which they purchased grains and cereals from the wholesale markets or farmers and added value by cleaning and powdering them. These were then re-packed to specified weights and sold to shops. The smaller provision shops would engage the woman and her family members occasionally. However, some of the women we spoke with engaged as many as 16 workers, reflecting these women's skill and ability to manage these larger enterprises.

Production related enterprises were more limited, representing just 14.3% of our survey, and included tiffin centres (providing breakfast), pickle making, garland making and saree printing. The DW encountered problems when they did food related enterprises. Traditional taboos of purity and pollution came into play and Dalit women often chose not to reveal their caste identity.

20% of the entrepreneurs in the study ran service enterprises in the nature of tailoring units, beauty parlour, boutique and a tent house. Both beauty parlours and boutiques were new avenues for Dalit women as seen from their young age (3 members all below 25 years of age). Bhagyamma runs the tent house on behalf of her Self Help Group (SHG). Self Help Groups are promoted by the state under the Women's Empowerment Program for economic development. They primarily engage in thrift and credit activities.

The Dalit women's versatility and perseverance was evident from the variety of enterprises they took up. No one had a family history of running enterprises and thus they neither had the business contacts nor the business knowledge that may have been available to members of business castes. This was a noticeable shift for these families where 83% were dependent on agriculture and agriculture wage labour. This is a major change in just one generation, especially by women.

Ownership of Business
86% of the women reported that the enterprise was self owned, meaning they initiated it and managed it. 9% own it along with other family members or relatives. One has a non-Dalit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bachelor's degree</th>
<th>14.3%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
partnership and business is owned with the help of a SHG.

The fact that families did not have a history of their own enterprise left it to the women themselves to come up with their enterprises. 26% of the women were single and managed their enterprises themselves. Dalit families also did not have a history of owning and managing enterprises, which may have left a space for the women to manage the enterprise on their own.

74% of the DW ran the enterprise by themselves along with some support from the family. 23% had Dalit and non-Dalit workers in their enterprise. The fact that almost one fourth of the women were running enterprises employing other workers and managed enterprises where even non-Dalit workers work was a reflection of their effort and ability to carry their enterprises forward. It should be also acknowledged that they were doing this with negligible support from other persons or institutions, least of all the state, which is meant to support them in the process.

The Two Ends of Enterprise Operated by Dalit Women

Dalit women’s enterprises in the city while running along a continuum also present two ends of the spectrum on enterprises.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Business</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailoring</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision shop</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangle shop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tent house</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable shop</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffin center</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boutique</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saree business</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower business</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty parlour</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jute products</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food products</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper products</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy shop</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enterprise as a Substitute for Wage Employment

For various reasons the Dalit women who come to the city did not naturally find wage employment. Sometimes family responsibilities did not give them the time to engage in wage employment. However, there were cases where women are compelled to take up entrepreneurship to augment family income or to meet family needs when she is the sole breadwinner, as in the case of widowed women, which was the reality for 20% of the women in our study.

What was the profile of the Dalit women who took up enterprises to ensure the basic minimum needs of the family? This could be studied from 6 of the women who were widowed and hence had to maintain their families on their own:

• In terms of age, they fell in the older age group, 4 being 36 years or above and the other 2 were between 31 to 35 years.
• They fell in the lower literacy levels 4 being illiterate and 2 not having completed school finals.
• They ran their enterprise primarily from their homes in the Dalit habitation. 3 operated provision shops, 2 had vegetable shops in the market area and 1 ran a tent-house, which was owned by a SHG of which she was the leader.
• In terms of investment, 5 out of the 6 paid less than Rs. 50,000 in initial investment, the exception being the tent house, which was an investment of the SHG.
• Income earned for this group fell into the lower categories, with these women earning less than Rs. 4,500 per month.

In the context that they were all first generation entrepreneurs they had great odds to get across, it was interesting to try and understand why they choose to start their own enterprise. Why start your own business when there was no family background, no social support mechanisms, no credit or other mechanisms to help promote them?

• 80% wanted to meet the financial need of the family
• 20% could not find other employment
• 3% wanted to escape verbal abuse of employers
• 43% knew they had the skill and understood the market opportunity for the enterprise.
• 9% considered enterprise better than employment
• 20% always wanted to start their own enterprise
• 17% said that their families were interested to start a business.

It is the mix of need, positive and negative experiences, knowledge, aspirations and family support that encouraged the DW to start their own enterprise. However, in the larger analysis these were all micro to small sized enterprises, which ended up doing little more, financially, than substituting their wage labour. In fact, more than half of the women in the study were running provision shops, vegetable shops, or tiffin centers and earning an income of less than Rs. 5,000 per month.

Enterprise from an Urge to be an Entrepreneur

20% of the Dalit women in the study said they always wanted to start their own business. This group represented the emerging face of DW entrepreneurs, which were few in number. They were educated and qualified to start an enterprise. They also started their companies in emerging business areas.
A.P. completed her MBA and was employed as lecturer in a private college. In 2006 she left her job, to start a business. She invested Rs. 5 lakhs and started a paper products unit. She took orders for stationery, printing and bookbinding. She employed 6 Dalits and has monthly income of about Rs. 15,000.

A.P., Hyderabad

P.G. completed a course in Fashion Design with National Institute for Fashion Technology (NIFT) and initiated a boutique called Ruffles with a partner less than one year ago. Her initial investment was Rs. 1 lakh and she was earning Rs. 10,000 per month. She is keen to branch out and set up another boutique on her own.

P.G., Hyderabad

R.J., who completed a bachelor's degree, and whose husband is non-Dalit started a unit making jute products where she buys jute material and has them made into bags. She initially invested Rs. 5 lakhs and was employing 8 workers. Her monthly income was roughly Rs. 15,000.

R.J., Hyderabad

- 20% of the women in the study invested more than Rs. 1 lakh into their investment.
- 9% underwent formal training to start their enterprise
- Most of them set up their enterprise in the market area and not the Dalit habitation
- They earn above Rs. 10,000 per month
- They employ other Dalit and non-Dalit women.

This new generation of DW entrepreneurs made this choice even when they had other options and even when their families were not convinced about it. Especially since having an unmarried girl start an enterprise may not make good sense, particularly in the Dalit community.

Perceptions of DW About Their Enterprise and Impact

91.4% of the Dalit women entrepreneurs felt that their enterprise was successful. The indicators given to explain their position included an increase among customers (69%), increased income (43%), increased family status (9%) and the ability to earn satisfactory profit (11%). These showed that both financial and social indicators marked success for these women and their enterprises. Given the current nature of unemployment including reduced casual labour, Dalit women’s enterprises, provide them the means to support and sustain their families.

Constraints in Setting up and Running their Enterprise

- 77% of the respondents had not accessed any training in connection to the enterprise the run.
- 2.9% had taken some informal training given by another entrepreneur
- 17% accessed training from a government agency

While training for entrepreneurs was not all that common, specifically amongst the DW we
Interviewed, the Nadar* community from Tamil Nadu is an interesting case study in a community coming together to provide training for its own members.

This community was considered untouchable and was engaged primarily in toddy tapping (collecting sap from Palmyra trees). They then moved into retail provision shops. The community had a strong network where they provided on the job training to new entrants, facilitated credit, provided linkages for procurement and sales and today they are at the level of the trader community as far as retail provisions shops are concerned. The community has also their own commercial bank and has moved upward into other spheres.

S.L., Hyderabad

From this and other experiences, we see the need for training and support mechanisms for DW to move out of traditional forms of employment to start their own enterprises. In some cases, Dalit women tried to acquire the training in an informal manner from their neighbors. However, this does substitute for formal training.

Credit at High Interest Rate
Credit from a local moneylender was available if one had a local contact that could back the loan for them. Here the women did not need physical assets or documentary proof, which led to many turning to a local moneylender for credit. In this situation though it was noted that family members, husbands or other known persons (often male) would have to accompany them when they met with the moneylender. A new phenomenon of women moneylenders from backward and other middle castes has been noticed recently. Families that had some money to spare were willing to lend it to women entrepreneurs along the similar terms of micro-finance but without the institutional frame.

- 91% of the DW in the study took loan and continues to take loan from local moneylenders.
- A mere 9% have not got into the vicious cycle of taking loan from the moneylenders.

Taking credit from the moneylender is also a risky matter. The women were always anxious that they might not be able to repay it on time, that their assets would be confiscated, and interest might add up and take away all their efforts and profit.

S.L., borrowed Rs. 10,000 at an annual interest rate of 60%, which is the going rate locally. Every week she repays Rs. 250 making it Rs. 1,000 per month and she has to repay for 20 months. The total amount she will repay is Rs. 20,000 double what she had borrowed.

S.L., Hyderabad

Another form of interest available in the market place was on a daily basis. Here if the woman borrowed Rs. 1,000 in the morning she had to repay Rs. 1,150 at the end of the day. Despite the problems of taking credit from a moneylender, 46% of the women felt that the moneylender was the most feasible source of credit if they want to start a business; this was followed by family, local society or a committee. Another option the women used was a SHG of Microfinance Institution (MFI) ‘Banks are not interested in giving us loans’ is the perception of Dalit women about accessing bank loans. Respondents report that the banks have too long and complicated a process; there is demand for bribes. DW were not able to produce the surety demanded. Only 23% had even

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*The Nadar community was originally involved in toddy tapping. Now, in the rural areas, many members of this community are running retail shops.
approached the bank for a loan. 9% among the respondents had been able to access bank loans so far.

Micro credit networks have expanded considerably in Andhra Pradesh through the micro finance and SHG movement. Despite this, very few of our respondents were able to access this.

**Limited Access to Market and non-Dalit Locations and Clients**
While a number of factors decide on the income from an enterprise location seems to play a critical role in the income from an enterprise. It also led the women to find different ways to engage new clients.

In the case of some of the shops, the tent house and saree business, it was found that even though the enterprise is located in the Dalit habitation, marketing is done outside the Dalit habitation. This expanded the clientele or customers. In the case of a beauty parlour, which was located in a Dalit locality, the woman in charge expanded the scope of the enterprise by incorporating a training program into it, which broadened the business and allowed it to reach out to a larger client base.

**Caste and Gender Dynamics**
Location was the strongest give away of caste as reported by 60% of the women. This posed a problem as some women reported that they did not wish to identify themselves as Dalits.

In the case of food related enterprises, the Dalit women entrepreneurs experienced taboo and discrimination, which led them to not want to disclose their identity. It was also found that Dalit women entrepreneurs with the more promising enterprises and that were located in the market place asserted that they did not think it was necessary to expose their caste identity.

It was shown that Dalit women entrepreneurs ran units where they employed Dalit and non-Dalit workers. The experiences of Dalit women showed that whether exposed or not, caste continues to be an influencing factor for Dalit women and the operation of their enterprises.

**Family Support**
The women often sought help from their families for running shop part of the time. Most times this help came from children when they returned from school as most often is the shops were located next to the house itself.

In the cases where there was family support, a gendered role seems to be taken up in the management of the unit where outside work and sales work would but managed by the male members and inside work and production was managed by the women.

**Intersectionality and Rights**
The experiences of the Dalit women who had taken up entrepreneurial activities showed how they struggled for the livelihood rights in a context where they were impacted by caste, class and gender in a context where their employment and labour rights are also constrained. It is of credit to these women that they have been able to negotiate these different spaces to improve their financial status, their confidence and their status at work and within their families. At the same time, it is equally serious that these intersectionalities have also meant that the majority of these women continue to exist through a degree of self-exploitation, with little training, difficulty in accessing credit facilities and no support from the government.
In Conclusion
The urban Dalit women in Hyderabad struggled against many odds to run their enterprises. In spite of multiple disadvantages (poor educational levels, no previous experience in the family with business, lack of training in enterprise development, problems of accessing credit or borrowing at very high interest rates) they negotiated their space in a labour market characterized by shrinking formal employment opportunities, patriarchal values which mitigated against businesses run by women, and caste biases that limited the scope of Dalit establishment.

In general, these women managed to find their niche in the market and were involved in a wide range of enterprises, mostly in mercantile activities (buy and selling of food and other goods) and provision of services that were of direct demand to persons in their locality. At the same time, the majority of them were involved in what could be viewed as self-employment or own-account work — stretching themselves to work longer hours to manage their businesses, and at the same time still running their households.

A few of these women had the advantages of education, credit, family support and class background to have broken this mould, and made substantial gains in the market. The exposure of their services beyond the Dalit locality was also an important element in the success of the enterprise.

Overall, whatever the group, the women were very pleased with their enterprises and the possibilities they offered to contribute to the living expenses of their families. At the same time, their experiences gave them more self-confidence and status in their families and communities.
Chapter 13

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study analyzed the opportunities, challenges and experiences of urban Dalit women in the Indian labour market during the first decade of the 21st century. It examined the ways in which caste, class and gender intersected with trends in globalization and the liberalization reforms of the period and the implications these different processes held for the employment and entrepreneurial prospects of these women. It paid attention to gender and social justice concerns associated with promoting diversity, equality and equity in the work place. It also reflected on the labour and human rights of these women as a basis for engaging with the state and other relevant actors who are duty-bound to enforce such entitlements. The study focused on four key sectors affected by globalization and liberalization – the government sector, the private sector, NGOs and entrepreneurship. While reflecting on national trends, the study dealt in detail with the experiences of these women in Delhi, and Hyderabad, urban hubs that have been highly influenced by globalization. As there were no previous studies of this nature undertaken, the outcomes of this research are of relevance to policy makers, academics and activists interested in promoting the social, economic and political empowerment of Dalit women.

The main lines of the methodology used as well as the overall observations and specific aspects of interest and significance are highlighted below, followed by conclusions and strategic recommendations.

Methodology
The methodology involved different levels of interactions with DW and entailed collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. Initially the wider context of globalization and liberalization in India and its impact on employment and entrepreneurial activities was studied to locate the different dynamics that could influence the opportunities and challenges of urban Dalit women. At the next stage a purposive sample was selected to take on board the different types of experiences of the Dalit women in the key sectors of work. The study used data gleaned from surveys and interviews from a total of 215 DW between the two locations, of whom 155 were employed across different sectors – government (60 DW), private (55 DW), NGO (40 DW) and entrepreneurs (60 DW). While not being representative, this method provided an understanding of the range of strategies adopted by these women to negotiate for their spaces in different contexts (including the household) and how they challenged traditional norms while taking advantage of the opportunities presented in their context. At the same time, the case studies also revealed the pervasive nature of caste, class and gender biases and their disadvantages in spite of economic empowerment.

An important objective of the study was to enhance the capacity of Dalit researchers and organizations. The latter were involved in the research and data collection in Delhi and Hyderabad as well as in examining the existing national and state data sets and reports. As they were familiar with the local circumstances, they also provided a better understanding of the experiences of the women at work and in the families. The outcomes of the study were also shared with them for feedback. In many ways, such a process emphasized the participatory nature of this study, with regular input and engagement with Dalit researchers at different stages of the work.
Analytical Framework
A key concept used in this study was that of intersectionality, or the ways in which different structures of domination influence the identities and circumscribe the opportunities of Dalit women. The most important of these structures related to those associated with caste, class and gender, of which most of the Dalit women had been disadvantaged by all of them. It was noted that the combination these only served to worsen their situation. Their experiences were gauged in the light of the concepts of gender and social justice as associated with proactive policies of promoting gender and social equality, along with diversity in different work contexts (including the household). A matrix of key parameters of gender and social justice, as well as labour and human rights was used to benchmarking the experiences of the Dalit women in the levels of the family, Dalit community, state, market and larger civil society.

Caste and Class Background of the Dalit Women
Given the fact that the sample of employed DW was selected from those who were employed after January 2000, the respondents in the study across the various sectors were comparatively young with majority being in the age group of 20 to 30 years. The majority in both the cities came from (re)settlement colonies in the periphery of the two cities, where majority of Dalits live and are identifiable. The women came from different Dalit communities; Jatav, Valmiki, Khatik, Raigar and Dhobi in Delhi, and Madiga and Mala in Hyderabad. DW from numerically smaller Dalit communities who were in a few thousands in the state were not represented in the study.

The majority of DW in the study belonged to urban poor families where fathers were the principal wage earners, employed in private employment, petty trade or wage labour. The majority of mothers were homemakers. This picture changed in the case of several DW who had accessed employment even when their fathers had regular salaries and even when some mothers were employed outside the home. The majority of DW came from poor or lower middle class families and their achievements in education and employment were achieved with great efforts by the women themselves and most often showed minimum support from the family, state or market. The women had created and negotiated spaces in the family to make their own decisions about their education and employment and as income earners in the family.
Educational Achievements and Status of the Dalit Women

The study showed that educated Dalit women in urban cities were, on the whole, aware of the opportunities opened up to them through education and have consistently been negotiating at different levels to access these benefits. An interesting feature was their continuous and consistent struggle to improve their education qualifications and skills in keeping with market demands even when they were employed in the private or NGO sectors or when running their own enterprise. The majority had to break and resume their education at different points due to family and financial crisis, or marriage. Many of them have widely used distance education programme to do so. It was seen that these women did not wait to complete their education before taking up employment, rather began their search for employment soon after their basic qualification and since then continued to improve their education and career prospects by taking up higher studies and moving to better jobs as opportunities arose. What must be recognized is that the majority of the women themselves explored these opportunities for education and employment given the fact that most times, in their families they were the first generation going to college and as such their families could not guide them. In many cases, the women paid for their higher and technical education themselves through their employment and in addition contributed to their family income, which helped them negotiate their need to study and work with their families. A very small percent of the women had families where parents (primarily fathers) were graduates who then influenced and steered their children in their studies and employment; this was found most commonly with fathers and daughters who worked government sector. Women entrepreneurs and those working in NGOs came from families where education was by and large negligible, lower than those who found employment in the private or government sector. The state policy of reservation in education was widely used by the women while other provisions were used much lesser extent. An oft-reported problem by them was the lack of information and guidance in their choice of subjects, choice of colleges, and access of entitlements.

The efforts and experiences of the women show their concern to access higher education and the reality that education below graduate level and without technical skills provide very little opportunities for employment, career improvement or socio-economic mobility. The focus of the state to provide education only up to limited levels of secondary or higher secondary levels are clearly not in line with the aspirations or potential among these women who are clearly looking for an education that can provide salaried employment, and promote mobility, status and dignity.

A considerable number of them experienced and continue to remember the caste based discrimination in schools and colleges but persevered to complete their education to access employment. From their recollection, it was evident that these were painful negative experiences and had in ways, recognized and unrecognized, impacted their educational experience and performance. Experiences of caste-based discrimination in education were recollected as more painful and poignant than those at the workplace, where DW seemed to have gained the skills to handle it. Thus, state and civil society efforts to address caste-based discrimination in education needs to be revisited with vigour to ensure all children’s right to education.

Employment of the Urban Dalit Women: Challenges and Experiences

Like in education, DW’s own efforts in accessing employment were evident in the study. They explored employment opportunities and went about gathering information from both formal and informal sources (primarily informal) and consistently made attempts to access employment. Government employment continued to be the first choice for DW, owing to its connotations of being permanent, with social security and labour rights. Next came NGO employment where DW found that their education was valued and relevant and they were found to move from private employment to NGO employment. However, the private sector seemed to open the employment door for EUDW with many of them finding employment without experience in local small units where they were able to find employments through social contacts. It was interesting to note that
DW’s families also had contacts that provided information about employment opportunities in these private or NGO units and they could access them.

The process of recruitment, except in the permanent category in government employment or larger private companies, was all through informal social contacts and references. While the women in the study were able to access them through their family and friends contacts, the process excludes the many who do not have such contacts or are located in distant places. The lack of formal, transparent processes in recruitment came up throughout the study. The employment exchanges that are sprinkled throughout the country and provided an institutional mechanism to find jobs have become more or less dysfunctional. Initially envisaged as a mechanism to provide access to government employment, their role had not been revised to incorporate the growing private and NGO sector employment. DW did not approach these exchanges even when they knew about them.

While the liberalization process has resulted in shrinking opportunities in the government sector, nearly eliminating recruitment in different departments, it has opened up a wider range of jobs for these women in the private sector, allowing them to move beyond the more traditional focus on accessing government employment. Those who had received their bachelor’s degrees often improved their skills to the emerging needs of the labour market, and accessed jobs in the private sector, particularly in the area of computer technology. The NGO sector, which has expanded substantially with market-oriented reforms and government withdrawal from service delivery, has also been an important source of employment for Dalit women in urban areas.

The liberalization process has also created an increase in the unorganized sector including many who turned to self-employment and enterprises. DW in the urban areas also took up self-employment and entrepreneurship as a means of survival in many cases. Even here what comes across strongly is the agency of the women herself in initiating and managing the enterprise. The support of the family was most commonly came in the form of moral support with few families providing funds for the initial investment. Some of the women had done well economically, while the majority, even though not earning much, considered their enterprises to be successful.

This somewhat optimistic scenario has to be set within the more somber context where there are high levels of unemployment and few of the Dalit women had access to good education and were able to attain relatively good jobs. At the same time, significant numbers of Dalit women continue to be marginalized in the urban labour market. Even the government sector jobs, hitherto viewed as secure jobs with good conditions of work and other important benefits, have fallen in quality and many of the women are employed on a contract basis with less benefit entitlements. Private sector and NGO employment, while providing new opportunities, compromise on the labour rights associated with decent work, particularly in the areas of social security, collective bargaining and trade union formation. The entrepreneurial activities have shown different degrees of success; while some of the women were able to move ahead and expand their businesses, the majority continued to survive through businesses strongly characterized as own-account work, involving a high degree of self-exploitation.

**Employment in the Specific Sectors**

The government sector continued to be the preferred employment for the Dalit women, and it still performed the best with regard to social justice, human and labour rights with the policy of reservation, security of employment and welfare measures. However, there are significant changes with the liberalization policies and increased private sector engagement. Overall recruitment in the

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*The estimates of unemployment for the year 2004-05 vary from 10.8 million unemployed as per usual status that captures ‘open unemployment’ and 35 millions as per current daily status that captures open unemployment and underemployment – *Government of India, Annual Report to People* 2010.*
government has come down and recruitment is made in select departments in keeping with the overarching national and state economic growth plans and the negotiated roles between state and private sector in the same. Thus, there was increased recruitment in the power and irrigation departments in Hyderabad and increased recruitments for computer teachers in the education department in Delhi while many other departments reported nil or negligible recruitment. It was also noted that there were visible changes in the sector, which is now more informal and engaging in employment on contract terms, and situations where the state overlooked basic welfare provisions. Greater opportunities were noted for those that had technical and professional qualifications than those with basic higher education. DW with education qualifications below higher secondary did not figure in the employed in the sector. Caste identity was acknowledged more and members were more comfortable in identifying themselves across castes, despite the continued caste groupings and even subtle discrimination. Families are more willing to send out daughters to city to access the government jobs. More women have come from outside the urban centres to find work in the cities and this was more so in Hyderabad.

The private sector has provided openings for EUDW to attain regular salaried employment. Dalit women were employed at two levels in the sector; in recognized companies, where those with professional qualifications found better employment and local units where a large number found employment, again with education backgrounds favoring technical courses, primarily in computers. At the very local level, DW found employment in small domestic private units, which did not abide by the labour rights with regard to social security or collective bargaining. It was most often found that Dalit families with connections to these units were the ones to access employment there.

Remuneration in the sector depended on the job one was recruited for, based on the technical qualification, and did not have a basis on the general educational qualification of the candidate. While the sector was often the first opportunity, it did not remain the preferred option and Dalit women moved on to the government or NGO sectors when the opportunity arose, particularly those employed at the local level or in low paid positions. DW employed in the private sector were found improve their educational qualifications during the time they were employed. Families were supportive of their employment more in the local area even if it did not have the same security as found in government employment. The private sector does not recognize the influence of caste in employment and hence discourages any discussion around it. DW employed in the sector do not wish to be identified by caste, though their identity is known and caste does play a role in the workplace. Family backgrounds are a greater mix of casual or wage employment and regular salaried employment.

The NGO sector is emerging as an important avenue of employment for EUDW. Recruitment is highly informal, with considerable variation in the employment from field operations to programme coordination and administration. There is greater synchronicity between education and employment levels; salaries also followed this pattern. DW often came to this sector leaving their private sector employment. It was also noted that having come into the sector, DW were keen to equip themselves with social work and sociology degrees to improve their performance and advancement opportunities in the sector. NGOs, however, did not follow many labour standards. DW found the informal nature of their work environment, the greater flexibility in working conditions and their engagement with the community to be some of the more positive attributes of working in this sector. The families were supportive of their employment in the sector and supported them in fulfilling their work demands of travel and long work hours. In this sector there was greater information about caste identity in the workplace, though it differs across sub-caste identity. Caste issues, while not directly discussed at workplace, often influenced programme outreach to Dalit communities in the field. The larger debates on caste and human rights, caste discrimination and development inequality, and social exclusion have resulted in the sector taking greater cognizance of the caste issues. This was found to be more vibrant in Hyderabad where a number of Dalit led NGOs were also found.
Entrepreneurship was a new avenue for Dalit women, who were traditionally employed as wage labour. In some cases, it is a substitution for wage labour, in search of regular income, greater freedom, flexible timings and great balance to household responsibilities. Whatever the case, the courage and initiative of DW to take risks and financial burdens along with the ability to negotiate the market needs to be recognized. Mostly operated from the home with low investment, as they had little access to credit or training. They accessed informal training from private agencies or those already running similar enterprises in the local area. Despite an expansion in microfinance activities DW continued to depend on local informal source of finance, particularly moneylenders who charged noticeably high interest rates. The enterprises of these women rarely attracted any government attention or support despite many government provisions for promoting self-employment for women. The study found DW were managing and running enterprises by themselves, even in situations where the family had supported them to set it up. A small number of educated and trained younger DW were found to come into entrepreneurship as a choice for themselves. Within these enterprises, caste operated at various levels; when enterprises were run from the home, they primarily catered to the Dalit community in the locality. In a few cases caste bias had been overcome by perseverance, quality and a niche competitive edge. In some cases, particularly among those taking enterprise by choice, the women preferred not to expose their caste identity. It is encouraging for a community that does not have hereditary skills, financial and social capital or social contacts to have been able to establish market operations in this sector beyond their prescribed caste and gender barriers.

Delhi and Hyderabad

There were many common similarities and differences between the experiences of the Dalit women in Delhi and Hyderabad. Families in both the cities recognized and valued education including education of girl children but yet made efforts to support and promote their children's studies. However, Hyderabad was more proactive on this score; it has passed a special provision reserving 33% for women in education and employment in the public sector opening greater opportunities for Dalit women to gain skills and economic empowerment. There was greater mobility for people from the outside districts to access education and employment in Hyderabad than was observed in Delhi. This could be the distinction being a national capital and state capital. Hyderabad also witnessed some extremes in relation to DW undertaking entrepreneurship; there were few women who did very well; usually those with good education and economic resources from their families. At the other end were those who were own-account workers, who faced difficulties in accessing markets and credit, and who were relying on their own labour to manage both their entrepreneurship activities and the (unpaid) services and duties in their households.

The debates on caste were somewhat different in the two cities as well as across the different sectors. There were more open debates in Hyderabad on caste identity issues, and a greater acknowledgement of their own caste identity with the DW having greater confidence in stating their identity as a means to address the caste bias in society. In Delhi, on the other hand, there was much less debate on the issue, and there was greater preference not to indicate their caste identity generally out of fear that this exposure would result in a negative attitude towards them by their colleagues.

Caste Bias in the Workplace

Despite the economic growth, global competition and increased privatization, caste continues to play critical role in the experiences of DW in employment. DW spoke differently in this regard; many women were alright with exposing their caste identity in the work place, while there was a considerable number who also felt it was not necessary to identify oneself by caste at workplace, particularly when jobs are not got on the basis of reservation. Upon deeper probing, both of these positions were found to originate from the same position, that of a continued mindset of caste-
based discrimination in society and the workplace. DW aware of the social positioning and public perception about caste, suspected that when one identified one’s caste, one can predict other’s behaviour and hence, early on, would build feasible relationships and not be accused of hiding caste at a later point in time. Those who did not want to identify their caste also did so from the fear that the identity will change other people’s behaviour to them.

When looking at all the sectors, it was shown that Dalit women in the government sector were more open to recognizing their caste identity. This was supported by the affirmative action policies followed by the sector. This created an opportunity for DW to be open about caste identity even though subtle caste prejudices and own-caste groupings were common.

The private sector had the greatest difficulty in acknowledging caste as a factor in social or professional relationships. This was reflected by larger number of DW who did not wish to expose their caste identity in their work place. Despite this, it was found that far greater number of people actually knew each other’s caste identity even though they would have preferred otherwise. With the debate being opened up in 2006 by the Prime Minister the private sector has begun to take caste issues on board, albeit on a voluntary basis.

Unfortunately the state’s efforts of constitutional and legislative provisions, which opened up spaces for DW and even abolished untouchability and caste-based disabilities, these biases continue to operate in both public and private spaces. Sufficient efforts at public education or stringent monitoring mechanisms have not been able to tackle the behaviour. Thus the social justice efforts of the state need to be augmented and emerging and continuing disabilities and exclusion need to be addressed more effectively.

In many ways, both positions held by Dalit women, i.e. to expose their caste identity or keep it a secret, stem out of deeply entrenched feelings of unfairness, injustice and unequal status. In hiding caste, the private sector closes up any space for re-visiting images, re-negotiating spaces and re-creating relationships. The lack of serious public education on caste bias and abuse along with a dialogue on what the new on caste messages need to be is a serious lacuna in our public space.

**Gender Bias**

Gender discrimination and gender justice frames have been in debate for some time in terms of making policies and provisions to create a conducive and positive environment for women to work and have career. The state provisions in most cases were limited to reservation in education and community reservations in employment, except in Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad), which had special reservation for women within the community reservation for each population group. However there were no support mechanisms that DW could avail to explore and access employment opportunities. It was found that previously existing provisions like the employment exchange had become more or less defunct. On the family front, it was found that family contributions to the education and employment process were rather limited. By and large the women themselves had explored opportunities on their own and moved forward. They also accommodated family crisis and needs and set aside their own career plans by taking a break in their education or finding employment even as they were continuing studies. They were able to create a more important space for themselves in the families with their financial contribution, which also provided them space to negotiate for themselves, as well as in larger family decisions. It was found that families became supportive and allowed DW to continue their education and take up employment as it helped support the family. Members of the family including husbands were reported to be supportive and helpful liberating the women from some of the household responsibilities to be able to perform their work responsibilities. However it was found that despite the contribution and achievements of the women, they still had to maintain themselves within the broader patriarchal norms.
**State Role**

Reservation in education and employment was the state provision most commonly used by the women, particularly in accessing higher education that was costly in the market. This clearly indicates the need for such opportunities and provisions particularly for promoting their entry into education. Many of the provisions in education like scholarship, residential facilities, books and uniforms were not accessed by the Dalit women for various reasons; there was no clear information about these provisions, there was confusion whether these were uniformly available to all DW, and the institutions did not facilitate the process of access or other institutional delays and negligence, clearly making a case for transparency and accountability of the institutions in this matter. The current impunity of the concerned authority when these are not implemented created a feeling of complacency and neglect among them.

In the privatization process, the state had not revised its facilitative role on behalf of DW and other marginalized sections. On its own, it has not addressed the shrinking opportunities and the problems of non-recruitment (backlog) in available employment opportunities. It has also not revisited the ‘social justice’ approach embedded in the Constitution to facilitate opportunities, provide information, promote wider access to both rural and urban candidates nor ensure minimum salary and other work conditions in the work place. Even when it has created new Acts against harassment in work places and against domestic violence, women's access to these was curtailed in the absence of monitoring mechanisms. A major gap in the state machinery is the lack of understanding and sensitivity towards Dalit women and the historic marginalization processes that can only be reversed through sensitive, conscious reparatory and restoration mechanisms and processes. DW entrepreneurs are a case in point where they were not able to access skill training, work places, credit or other market linkages to enter or promote their enterprises. None of the current legislations of MSME or industrial policies covered them. Thus it was evident that DW had educated themselves or gained employment or initiated enterprises despite the negligence and abdication by the state, except for the provision of reservation in education and reservation in government employment. It must be recollected that repeated promises by various governments to expand the reservation provision to the private sector is time and again put on the back burner or reverted to exclude even existing provisions as in the case of The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation in Posts and Services) Bill brought to the parliament in 2008.

**Overall Conclusions**

The study showed that in spite of the potential neutral terminology and processes associated with globalization and liberalization reforms, caste continues to play an important role in the opportunities and relationships for Dalit women in their employment. It is a factor acknowledged more openly and used to gain opportunities in the public sector, and an issue of concern and even fear in the private and NGO sectors. Even entrepreneurs are often limited in their marketing and credit opportunities by practices of caste exclusion.

Another important conclusion of the study is that good education together with professional skills have played significant roles in helping Dalit women access better quality employment. Vocational and technical qualifications were particularly recognised and rewarded in the government and private sector. Under these circumstances the majority of those employed in the government, private and NGO sector accessed additional technical qualifications, most notably in computers. Distance education was found to be an important means used by DW to improve their educational qualification which they could do while they were still working. DW were seen to improve their employment opportunities through taking short or long term courses in the government or private technical training centres. While the government has also set up special bodies like coaching cum guidance centres to facilitate Dalit and Tribal student's entry into government employment these
were very few in number and not accessible to a large section among those who needed it. Employment exchanges, which were the main source of information on all types of jobs, had come down in their performance.

The third conclusion is that families have fully supported the educational and employment opportunities of the Dalit women, reflecting in a challenge to the existing patriarchal norms. A large number of DW were first generation learners, and many more were first generation to receive higher education. In most cases, the families, who were struggling to make ends meet and limited in their ability to guide them in their choices on education and employment, were keen that their children gain education and undertake employment. In some cases, women of this generation were found to be better educated than male members in the family. Families were found to identify and inform DW about possible employment opportunities in the local context. DW expressed their expectations from the family primarily in fulfilling their gendered household responsibilities of housework and childcare. DW’s contribution to the income of the family was substantial and had given them greater negotiating space in and outside the family. While this challenged some of the gender norms governing the division of labour in society, it would not be correct to conclude that patriarchy did not continue to dominate in their private and personal lives. It is nevertheless important to note that the employment and entrepreneurship activities have improved their status within the families.

From a gender justice framework it can be concluded that there were no serious measures undertaken in the different sectors to promote gender equality. In most cases the traditional gender division of labour and associated forms of authority structures and patriarchal norms prevailed both in their paid employment and in the households. The public sector had clearly undertaken social justice reforms with the provision of reservations in education and employment for the Dalits. This was not the case with any of the other sectors examined.

The public sector was where there was a shown attention given to the labour and human rights written both into international law and those enshrined in the Constitution of India. However, while the Dalit women are aware of these rights few of them have actually resorted to challenging traditional practices of recruitment or promotion indicating that it is not sufficient for these rights to be enacted but that the women should have the capability of accessing these rights.

**Recommendations**

**Government**

- Ensure that all staff are fully aware of the Constitutional provisions that prohibit caste and gender discrimination, and that protective legislations on both these scores (including reservation policies for employment) are fully implemented. Various international conventions can also be included to strengthen nondiscrimination in education and work place.
- Government Posts are not left vacant without backlogs. Current backlogs should be cleared in time bound manner in line with the reservation guidelines and recruitment of dalits should be done along with general castes.
- Contract jobs should have all the normal entitlements and labour standards of the government sector.
- Make sure that all entitlements, rules and regulations are available in a transparent manner.
- Support and enhance the capability of DW to access existing rights and entitlements through focused information dissemination, orientation programmes at educational institutions and work places and nodal persons in both these institutions they can go to for ensuring them.
• Periodically assess the implementation and impact of special programmes meant for educated DW meant to facilitate their employment (special coaching cum guidance centres, coaching for public service examinations…) and make necessary changes to suit the market demands.

• Make necessary changes in the Employment Information Act and Review the role and performance of the Employment Exchange Units in the light of the current labour market and ensure that they become the nodal units for information, and facilitate recruitment processes across all sectors.

• Ensure that vocational and technical training centres are adequate in number and location with adequate financing, equipments, and quality instructions linked with placement and their performance is periodically monitored.

• Make the IDDC review of the status of scheduled caste workers in all sectors regular and transparent.

• Set up a tasks force on scheduled caste employment-unemployment under the Planning commission.

• Promote policies to address caste discrimination along the lines of Vishaka Guidelines on gender discrimination.

• Promote greater financial inclusion in the government sector banks and link the community based financial bodies to them.

Private Sector

• While the study showed that there was no systematic or overt discrimination in the private sector, an important concern was the fear about revealing their caste identity to their colleagues that this might lead to negative repercussions. It is important to deal with this problem. The study recommends that private sector companies create spaces to discuss caste and other forms of exclusion.

• Salary and work conditions are highly varied – need to develop minimum common norms in keeping with education and experience.

• Education and training on caste based discrimination. Companies should provide regular education and training on discrimination to all employees with special focus on caste-based discrimination. The training should also clarify what types of behavior are unacceptable in the work place. All employees should be aware of how the company deals with breaches of the non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy. Training should cover issues of harassment and degrading treatment.

• Provide proportionate representation of Dalit women in training, employment and other workers representative bodies.

• Set up Anti Discrimination Grievance cells where members can take their grievances without fear and treat about their employment and ensure that any representation on it will be addressed without delay, efficiently and in a just manner.

• Advertise widely in local language employment opportunities to ensure that rural and difficult to reach areas are covered.

• Elimination of segregation and exclusion in workplace – In order to proactively support the intermingling of people of different castes at work place facilities and services that have the effect of supporting and encouraging the intermingling of people of different castes.

• Non-discrimination in job allocation –companies need to ensure that allocation of labour functions or occupation is based on objective criteria and relevant verification and not on traditional caste based exclusionary practices.
• Companies appoint a senior person to ensure non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy addressing caste-based discrimination.

• The company has a policy on non-discrimination and equal opportunity, has an action plan, which outlines implementation steps and allocates responsibility for implementation.

• Initiate measures to increase the representation of Dalits in the workforce in all occupational categories and throughout all levels in the workforce in line with their qualifications and skill.

• Provides special training and education programmes –internships – has training and education programmes aimed at preparing potential applicants from Dalit groups for vacant job positions, both when recruiting externally and internally.

• All companies should abide by the Employment Information Act and post their vacancies and recruitment process through the employment exchanges.

• CSR should focus on employment generation and skill improvement of DW.

• Bodies like CII and FICCI should review and report on the diversity profile of their members and take adequate measures to balance it with population proportion.

**NGO Employment**

• Enable (through recruitment and training) Dalit women to function at all levels in the employment hierarchy in line with promoting diversity and equity in the organization.

• Overt and covert forms of discrimination should be taken seriously by the management and addressed in the organization.

• Growing as a main employment sector, NGO sector needs to should set up common minimum labour standards for employees in line with labour and human rights.

• Engage with the government initiative on Policy for the Voluntary Sector to build a robust and conducive frame for work.

• NGOs should promote diversity profile at the board, senior staff and other levels of employment. NGOs working on labour and employment should include caste based discrimination and employment of DW in their analysis and advocacy.

• NGOs whatever the area of work, should take into account caste based discrimination and disabilities in their area of work and work to eliminate it and provide equity, equal opportunities for equality of outcomes.
Entrepreneurs

- Micro-finance programmes and Self-Help Groups – run by the government, NGOs and the private sector - should be encouraged to pay special attention to the needs of the majority of the Dalit women entrepreneurs. The latter require support with regard to accessing credit and finance, identifying suitable locations and markets, opportunities and training on accounting and other basic principles of business.

- Government bodies should ensure that caste discrimination in the provision of market spaces is penalized.

- SFDC and NFDC should include and support new and emerging areas of self-employment.

- Mechanisms to identify and support DW who are already struggling entrepreneurs.

- Have mechanisms for close monitoring of loan provisions.

- Make flexible provisions of loans.

- Ensure that the Scheduled Caste Special Component Plan resources are utilized to promote higher end enterprises among Dalit women.

Education Sector Recommendations

- Quality education till a minimum of intermediate with opportunities for branching out including open university systems.

- Expand higher education with opportunities for resuming formal education after breaks.

- Post matric scholarship to reviewed, enhanced and made available to all Dalit students irrespective of the institutions (government or private) quality, timely, dignity and respect.

- Increase availability and accessibility of Technical education for Dalit women and encourage them to avail of these services.

- Student loans and loans to set up units based on their skill acquired.

- Private education institutions –role and contribution to diversity, social justice and national goals and overall empowerment.

- Administrative mechanism to track discrimination and its redress.

- Institutions, Mechanisms and opportunities for those who have a break in education –to enter the mainstream.

- Institutions, Mechanisms and opportunities for education of those who are currently working.

- Information availability and support systems on facilitating Dalit students in the choice of colleges, courses.

- Need to monitor students’ presence and learning – studying and working at same time.

General

- A sub group is formed under the Ministry of MSME to monitor and report to the Ministry on the development of entrepreneurship among marginalized communities including Dalit women.

- Government sets up Equal opportunity Commission recommended by the Expert group without delay and expands its mandate to cover all aspects of Dalit life in addition to education and employment.

- Need for reservation policy to ensure their due share in income earning assets, employment in private and public sectors, education and other public spheres in the form of reservation.
Representation and participation in administration and decision-making processes at all levels, as it brings their experiences as well as sensitivity to the whole process.

- Making the excluded groups visible in statistics – should track disaggregated data and also issues of exclusion and discrimination are included in the tracking. Need to identify the less numerous and more backward communities even among Dalits and actively promote their opportunities for inclusion.

It is well known that India is signatory to many international conventions and have at national and state levels a number of legislations and provisions to promote development and participation of DW and other marginalized communities. A major gap in the realization of them is the gaps in implementation, which is closely linked to resource allocation, monitoring and accountability. Necessary efforts to gather accurate data and their analysis and concurrent monitoring that can provide feedback to take corrective measures and improve programmes is essential. In addition a parallel initiative is to strengthen DW as well as other marginalized communities to claim their rights, which involves adequate information, supportive institutional mechanisms and necessary orientation on how rights can be accessed. Building the capabilities of the marginalized communities is fundamental to ensuring their rights as impressed by Amartya Sen. A third pillar of such a process is to create a positive environment where identities are recognized, diversity is respected and ensured through massive public education. These three pillars of accountability of duty bearers, capability of rights holders and the building of positive environment are pivotal for DW to access their rights and entitlements in employment, entrepreneurship and education.
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Centre for Social Equity & Inclusion (CSEI) is concerned with deepening democracy and developing our body politic by enhancing the enjoyment by excluded communities of their social, economic and cultural (SEC) rights. We recognize the widespread prevalence of exclusion and discrimination against Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims and other socially excluded communities in our society, and the specific vulnerabilities of women, children and youth within these communities, as regards access to education, employment and governance. Poverty, disability, physical/geographic in-accessibility, forms of illnesses and other context specific characteristics make the picture more complex, demanding sustained efforts in unraveling and addressing exclusion independently and intersectionally. Major constituency is three communities- Dalits, Tribals and Muslims with special focus on women, children and youth in collaborating with Community led Organizations (CLOs). CSEI therefore undertakes advocacy- oriented research, social equity audits, policy advocacy and the piloting of model interventions with members of excluded communities in the critical areas of education and employment. Embedded in the experiences of excluded communities, CSEI works to bring together all relevant stakeholders: the excluded communities, state actors, civil society organizations, corporate sector and others. Consistent interventions in the above areas are undertaken through the CSEI Bihar and Delhi office. In addition, CSEI shares its materials, modules and lessons with other community-led organizations and civil society organizations. Education, employment, entrepreneurship and governance are the key intervention areas keeping “Exclusion – Equity –Inclusion” as our watch words.

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