

# **Women Empowerment : A Study of Dalit Women's Perceptions**

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**Abstract:** *This paper is based on the experience of Dalit women in the process of empowerment. Dalit women are socially, economically, and politically disadvantaged in Indian society. Caste is a significant factor which determines the process of empowerment. This paper explores areas of development of Dalit women who are discriminated and exploited due to caste, class and gender. It examines the theories of empowerment and the challenges of Dalit women, and critically examines caste and gender relations in the context of powerlessness, poverty, social isolation, abuse, lack of access to resources and participation. Empowerment means strengthening the capacities of individual and group, thereby transforming it into the development process. It encourages women to gain skill and capacities that allow them to overcome obstacles in life and improved the socioeconomic and political status in society. Theories of empowerment include participation process with focus on eliminating the gender inequality. It is called as development approach. The process of social development is to bring people into the mainstream. It is all about the well being of every individual and community irrespective of caste, class, gender, religion and languages. It helps to remove the barriers in society so that people can live a life with respect and dignity. This paper seriously looks into the field reality and self perception of Dalit women about their own empowerment in relation of caste.*

**Keywords:** Dalit women; empowerment; feminism; Dalit; socioeconomic circumstances; feminist discourse; caste discrimination etc

