

# Phenomenology of Caste Violence in Education and Limitation of Empathy: A Vimukta Perspective

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*This article is written from the author's position as a Vimukta woman and an advocate of feminism. The article attempts to include the unique situatedness of Vimukta in the discourse on caste violence in education. In doing so, it critically revisits the decade-old ongoing debate over the question, can Savarna feminists write on the experience of Dalit, Adivasi, and Vimukta women? The article highlights the limitations of the claim that empathy makes the experiences of Dalit, Adivasi, and Vimukta women accessible to Savarna feminists. It engages with the writings on the website "Savari" in which women belonging to Dalit, Adivasi, Vimukta, and backward communities share their articulation about their situation in caste society and call out the violence in Savarna feminists' academic endeavors.*

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Vimukta communities commonly known as Denotified Nomadic Communities, are in a unique situation of derailment with society, and their unique situation poses a challenge for feminism in India. Savarna women-led feminist movement of the 1980s in India advocated for harsher criminal law to safeguard their comportment in public or private space (Menon, 2004, p. 4) without engaging in the complexities of the notion of dissent and crime within the caste system (Patil, 2014, p. 231; Wadekar, 2022), which keeps Vimukta women at the receiving end of the criminal justice system and carceral caste society. In his address, delivered to honor the Late Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Dr Ambedkar asked, "Is there any society which has got a population of Criminal Tribes?"

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(Ambedkar, 2019, p. 219; Goswami, 2023, p. 755-758). This question needs an extension: What civil society would not problematize the notion of crime, justice, and safety despite having a history of systemically criminalizing communities outside the caste system?

The Vimukta women are either assimilated within the “Dalit women” category or negated in the binary of “non-Dalit and Dalit women” (Herbert, 2020; Jadhav, 2019; Lata, 2015). This binary needs to be challenged to have an inclusive discourse on the elimination of caste violence. Henceforth, for reference, this article uses “Savarna” to address the ruling class of caste Hindus (Ambedkar, 2019, p. 112)

### **The Debate on Writing the Experience of the Oppressed**

Gopal Guru, in his commentary “Dalit women talk differently,” draws attention to the claim that solidarity among women erases the identity of Dalit women, thus giving advantage to the Savarna women to speak on behalf of Dalit women (Guru, 1995, pp. 2548–2549). Guru gains this insight from the Dalit women activists who have called out Savarna women and have rejected token guest appearances and terms of organizing led by Savarna women (Ciotti, 2014, p. 305; Sonalkar in Pawar & Moon, 2014, pp. 29–30). In negating the experience of the oppressed groups, the oppressors control the understanding of humankind, its experience, scope, and structure within epistemology. Furthermore, it generalizes the oppressor’s experience as a human experience (Heinämaa, 2003, p. 73). Guru suggests that an epistemological standpoint can help us understand the autonomous organizing of Dalit women. According to this perspective, the oppressed members of society have a routine connection with social reality more than the rest since the position of the oppressed grants them a particular epistemic privilege over others (Guru, 1995, p. 2549). Guru’s understanding of the advantage of oppressed location can be traced back to Paulette Nardal. In her essay “From an Electoral Point of View” Nardal writes, “To political action, they will bring their fresh strength, but also their good sense and the sort of insight that daily connection with material realities offers” (Nardal & Sharpley-Whiting, 2009, p. 33; Nya, 2019, p. 35).

According to Guru, Dalit women speak from a stable position of difference. A Dalit woman speaker shares this position with fellow Dalit women; thus, she can be a genuine representative. Moreover, in doing so, she foregrounds her identity for herself and fellow Dalit women.

Rege and Paik criticize Guru for promoting narrow identity politics by centering the condition of being a Dalit woman to write and speak on the Dalit experience. (Paik, 2018, p. 7; Rege, 1998, p. 39). According to Rege, the Savarna and Dalit women must be able to explore each other’s positions. Rege considers that upholding difference can lead to narrow identarian politics. Rege does not clarify why the assertion of the identity of the oppressed group with a heritage of culture and resistance is narrow politics. By educating themselves about Dalit cause, utopia, and struggle, other groups can reinvent themselves as Dalit feminists; the

reinvention will address the concern raised by Dalit women that Savarna women speak “as” and “for” Dalit women (Rege, 1998, p. 45).

Rege does not explain the process of reinvention (Herbert, 2020). Do Dalit feminists and women have the possibility of reinventing themselves as Savarna feminists by merely educating themselves? It becomes a mystic exercise without an explanation of how a method functions. Paik regards Rege’s intentions as sympathetic. However, in Rege’s reinvention program, Paik sees no benefit for Dalit women. The proposal does not leave space for Dalit women to build their potential. It does not protect Dalit women (Paik, 2018, p. 10). According to Herbert, the reinvention theory of Rege is an act of academic dishonesty and violence that is not limited to academia but translates into violence against Dalit women in the virtual space of social media (Herbert, 2020). An attempt to reinvent oneself as a Dalit feminist is to know the other mind through the “argument from analogy” (Bilgrami, 1992, pp. 566–571). Zahavi criticizes the argument from analogy by using Levinas’s understanding of the other. The lack of access to the others conveys their presence as others. The alterity of the other appears in the inaccessibility (Zahavi, 2008, p. 155).

In response to Rege’s Dalit Feminist Standpoint, Chhaya Datar (1999) wrote a paper, “Non-Brahmin Renderings of Feminism in Maharashtra: Is It a More Emancipatory Force?” One is required to trace Datar’s core argument amid value judgments and casual remarks. Datar raises the concern of class dynamics within Dalit women’s organizations where educated Dalit women hold the mic. Moreover, uneducated Dalits are mere listeners (Datar, 1999, p. 2967). Based on her observation of the meetings organized by Dalit women leaders, Datar makes a judgment that the mainstream feminist movement led by Savarna women is much more democratic and participatory. According to Datar, Vimukta women have nothing in common with Dalit women. Datar, in her prescriptive haste, advises Dalit feminists to resolve their bias against Gandhi and embrace his vision as reinvented by eco-feminists (Datar, 1999, p. 2968; Desai, 2021, p. 69). Datar lays the erasure of prejudice as a condition for developing a liberation theory for Dalit women. According to Datar, the Dalit women’s movement, emphasizing a cultural revolt against Brahminical symbols, cannot lead to social change because such rebellion does not change the material condition of Dalits. Dalits are losing their livelihood due to the degradation of the environment (Datar, 1999, p. 2968).

Datar’s concern for DNT Vimukta women is praiseworthy, but to suggest that concern for Vimukta women and the concern of Dalit women are not the same (Datar, 1999, pp. 2967–2968) is a disservice to the anti-caste feminist project. Datar appears distant from the organic reality of the “world of life” coinhabited by both Dalit and Vimukta communities.

For instance, in 2018, the two Ambedkarite women Kantabai Ahire (belonging to a Dalit community) and Sheela Pawar (belonging to the Vimukta Banjara community) inked the statue of Manu on the premises of the Rajasthan High Court. They continue to face criminal charges for their protest (Shantha, 2020). In Rajasthan and other parts of the country, Dalits and Vimukta communities

share graveyards. In the summer of 2020, I visited Delta Meghwal's<sup>2</sup> grave. She sleeps in a cemetery in the deep desert of the Indo–Pakistan border in Barmer Rajasthan. The Meghwal community shares the cemetery with the Nath Jogi (Vimukta) community. Dalits and Vimukta share ways of worship, too. In his autobiography, “Jhootan” Omprakash Valmiki relates that his community would celebrate Janmashtami by worshipping “Jaharveer” (Valmiki, 2015, p. 53), a disciple of Guru Gorakhnath, the chief guru of Nath Jogi sect (Briggs, 1989, p. 235).

In some cases, Dalit and Vimukta communities share the experience of untouchability and vigilante justice at the hands of flagbearers of caste society. In his evidence before The Indian Statutory Commission on October 23, 1928, Dr Ambedkar said that the criminal tribes have a minimal social relationship with the settled Savarna communities. If this social relationship ever grows, the Savarna society will treat criminal tribes as untouchables (Ambedkar, 2019, p. 463).

Mahadevan (2019), in her paper “Dalit Women’s Experience: Toward a Dalit feminist theory,” argues that with empathy, a Savarna researcher can write about the Dalit experience. According to Shailja Paik, it is essential to acknowledge that Dalit women dwell in multiple contradicting spaces (Paik, 2018, p. 10). To address the concern of nonlinearity of the experience of Dalit women, Paik writes, “We need to pay close attention to the different forms of incremental intersecting technologies that thwart Dalit women in tenuous historical conjunctures.” (Paik, 2018, p. 10). Paik explains Dalit feminist thought in terms of the “Dalit womanist-humanist complex.” Here, the focus is not centered on smashing the patriarchy but rather on encouraging an in-depth grasp of the life-worlds different Dalit women inhabit (Paik, 2021, pp. 127–135). A Dalit womanist-humanist viewpoint is undoubtedly distinct; however, others can develop empathy toward the pain and subjugation of being a Dalit (Paik, 2021, p. 135). Drawing from her active participation in community service during the preventive COVID-19 lockdown, Sujatha Surepally urges to inform the praxis of development through the practical everyday life of Dalit women (Surepally, 2021). Surepally emphasizes that the Dalit feminist agenda is to emancipate families and communities, not women alone (Surepally, 2021).

### **Limitations of Empathy in Caste Society**

To be empathetic is suitable for everyday social harmony (Prinz, 2011, p. 211). The Chief Justice of India, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, emphasized inculcating a sense of empathy in educational institutions while raising concern over death by suicide among students belonging to marginalized communities studying at central universities. (Chowdhury, 2023) However, can we rely on empathy for social justice and development in a caste society?

Using the phenomenological understanding of existence as an intersubjective, Mahadevan explains that a researcher from an oppressor group can write about the women who belong to an oppressed group. According to Mahadevan,

a researcher and the participant can collaborate because, through embodiment, they dwell in the same spaces. Using Beauvoir's phenomenological understanding of being in the world, Mahadevan expects a researcher to conduct research with empathy (Mahadevan, 2019, p. 232).

For Mahadevan, experience is a bond that is empathetic given the intersubjective existence. It is not a distance between the subject and the object. Therefore, according to Mahadevan, listening to the narrative of oppression from a Dalit woman will help the oppressor caste feminist woman suspend her subjectivity. A researcher can identify the agency in the voice of Dalit women who do not have the theoretical apparatus accessible. Recognizing the agency of Dalit women will help the researcher ask questions about the inequalities between her and the Dalit women. In this process, the oppressor caste feminist researcher not only asks questions but also resists the institutions that enabled her to thrive on the suffering of Dalit women (Mahadevan, 2019, p. 232). This seems to be a plausible situation where a Savarna feminist researcher can take a journey of self-actualization and help Dalit women find agency in their voices. Kapoor (2018) argues that self-reflexive dialog and engagement remain missing due to the exercise of power in the caste discourse, making empathy impossible (Kapoor, 2018, p. 265).

Empathy can also cause harm (Agosta, 2010, p. 70). There is significantly less evidence to suggest that empathy is necessary for being moral (Coplan & Goldie, 2014, p. 211) or leads to positive action (Agosta, 2010, p. 14).

The problem of empathy is defined as the problem of intersubjectivity, the problem of the other mind (Hollan & Throop, 2008, p. 386). The investigation of intersubjectivity extends beyond empathy (Zahavi, 2008, p. 155). Empathy is a thematic encounter with a concrete other and is taken to be derived rather than a fundamental form of intersubjectivity. Empathy is taken to disclose rather than to establish intersubjectivity. According to Zahavi, characteristics of intersubjectivity cannot be explained by focusing solely on empathy. (Zahavi, 2008, p. 156). "The empathetic approach is a thematic encounter between individuals where one is trying to grasp the emotions or experiences of the others; this very attempt to thematically grasp the experience of the others is the exception rather than the rule" (Zahavi, 2008, pp. 163–165). According to Levinas, there cannot be an authentic encounter with the other. No intentionality can allow us to access the other's mind, including empathy; if the other were graspable, how would they be other? (Zahavi, 2008, p. 172).

The unknowability of the other is the limit of empathy (Kirmayer, Lemelson, & Cummings, 2015, p. 159). This ethical situation demands reciprocity; in this situation, the other may question or raise moral demands (Levinas, Peperzak, Critchley, & Bernasconi, 1996, p. 54). The other is present to the self as the other when the self embraces accountability for the other (Zahavi, 2008, p. 172). In everyday life, empathy is a practical tool to understand others and can be used to do good or cause harm. Empathy can either humanize or dehumanize because being human includes a capacity for victimization (Agosta, 2010, p. 76). an animal-loving nonprofit organization got snake charmers belonging to a Vimukta

Madari community arrested by the police, who put these community members in cages meant for dogs (Bajrange & Schwarz, 2021, p. 51). The animal rights advocates failed to recognize that Madari community members are humans with dignity. Sonia Kruks explains Beauvoir's understanding of existence as freedom with practical subjectivity in her book "Retrieving Experience." Kruks sees Beauvoir's concept of subjectivity as inter-relational, as each person's ability to "act in the world" in a way that enables them to take up "one another's projects" and infuse them with the possibility of future meaning. Beauvoir contends that an equal and just field of action is required to produce subjectivity that accomplishes the potential of freedom (Kruks, 2001, p. 35). According to Beauvoir, the situatedness of the self and the other is not always equal from the perspective of freedom (Kruks, 1995, p. 82). Ethical relationships demand an egalitarian plane (Oinam, 2015, p. 254). Phenomenological ethics requires reciprocity and accountability; this reciprocity determines interpersonal moral relationships (Oinam, 2015, pp. 242–253). But Vimuktas are viewed as less than human, and are thus kept outside the purview of human concern. .

Empathy is not an effective tool to ethically navigate the concern of social justice because it only extends to others who are not different (Bloom, 2016; Luttrell, 2019, p. 42; Prinz, 2011, p. 226). Humans are not innately impartial. In everyday life, people choose to help those they are related to over distant ones (Silva, 2017, p. 241). Pandian highlights such acts of empathy in academia. Despite being an expert on caste, M.N. Srinivas does not talk about himself belonging to the dominant Brahmin caste (Pandian, 2008, p. 39). Only after receiving criticism does Srinivas confess his affection for his community of Brahmins from south India who were distressed by the caste reservation in public institutions (Pandian, 2008, p. 39). However, Srinivas hides his empathy toward his disturbed relatives by being concerned about the deterioration of academic space due to affirmative reservation (Pandian, 2008, p. 39).

On racializing practices, Alcoff writes, "racializing perceptual practices are used to produce a visual registry of any given social field; this field is organized differentially to distribute the likelihood of intersubjective trust, the extension of epistemic credence, and empathy" (Alcoff, 2006, pp. 196–197). Empathy is not always moral (Bubandt & Willerslev, 2015, p. 6). Empathy is not necessarily motivated by the good; self-interest can inspire empathy, deception, and violence. Bubandt and Willerslev call it the "tactical empathy" (Bubandt & Willerslev, 2015, p. 7). On limitations of Empathy, Prinz and Alcoff point out the problem in promoting empathy as the core of morality in cultural feminist ethics (Alcoff, 2006, p. 139; Prinz, 2011, p. 225). Under oppression, women have developed the positive trait of being empathetic that men lack. Glorification of empathy developed within coercive socialization is counter-productive to social justice (Alcoff, 2006, p. 139; Prinz, 2011, p. 225). According to Prinz, empathy cannot be a tool for women's liberation but can perpetuate inequalities. Freedom from oppression requires outrage, intolerance of oppression, and disruption (Jaoul, 2008). However, such intolerance is equated with phallogocentric emotions or irrationality;

thus, empathy is invoked in their place. Such empathy can make the liberation movement passive (Prinz, 2011, p. 225).

In 2017, Raya Sarkar published a list of academicians who had sexually harassed their counterparts or students. Instead of investigating and paying attention to the needs of the people who participated in crowd-sourcing the list and the complexity of the situation, 13 prominent feminists published their statements urging the withdrawal of the list and to follow due process (Menon, 2017). In this case, the invocation of empathy was an authoritarian demand to follow due process.

### **Phenomenology of Caste Violence in Education**

From the point of view of phenomenology, one cannot claim that a sheer experience of violence exists. Be that as it may, the layered meaning formed in experience is of fundamental importance to our understanding of violence (Staudigl, 2014, p. 2). In her article, "How My Life Changed," Vithai Zaraunkar (2019) shares that she lived with a sense of derailment till she reached university, fighting all odds that caste society offers to any Adivasi person. To access knowledge institutions, Vithai had to hide her identity of belonging to the Adivasi community. Through a mean choice of words, Vithai's school upper caste teachers told little Vithai that civil ways of being are not meant for Adivasis. Such statements made little Vithai feel embarrassed about her people and her community, thus harming her sense of intimacy with herself, her people, and her community. Little Vithai could not protect herself, her family, and her community against the image of her created by the teacher, which challenged her sense of identity, which was developed within a shared existence. It is an ethical provocation for Levinas. The situatedness of Vimukta, Adivasis, and Dalits within caste society is characterized by basic existence. According to Levinas, this basic existence is something one desires to hide but cannot hide (Levinas, 2003, p. 64). Through an example of poverty, Levinas explains that the shame of poverty lies in the bareness of existence. There is no way to hide it. It is not the bareness of the body but the inescapability of covering oneself and its absolute intimacy (Levinas, 2003, p. 64). The embarrassment is not an emotion but a situation for Vithai. The academic excellence helped Vithai comport in the savarna dominant higher education space. However, she remained alert to protect the veil, which could project her as anyone but not an Adivasi.

Guenther explains that through social norms, other people do not merely repeat an image of a person because she should seem to them all as an object. They also compel the individual to react to the image's reproduction. So now, a person becomes a discourser in an argument in which she speaks as and for herself. Even though it is the person speaking, the others control her response, which grows as she responds (Guenther, 2011, pp. 31–32). The situation changed for Vithai when she read her senior Elizabeth Bara's dissertation, "Why Dance?" Bara's writing is an ontological act of affirming presence (Yagelski, 2011, p. 104). A fellow Adivasi's academic work became a safe space for Vithai. A space in which

Vithai started to bring together the broken bond of intimacy toward herself, her home, and her community (Zaraunkar, 2019).

Chuni Kotal belonged to the Vimukt Lodha Savara community. Her graduation degree became news in West Bengal because she was the first woman to graduate from the most policed and downtrodden community in West Bengal (Devi, 1992, p. 1836). Before joining the university, Chuni worked as a social worker at the Integrated Tribal Development Programme. The work was without holidays and required her to cycle 25 km daily (Devi, 1992, p. 1836). Susie Tharu notes that Chuni's work was never assigned to any woman from a forward caste (Tharu, 1998, p. 2916). According to Gayatri Spivak, Chuni was not a subaltern in the true sense because access to the university gave Chuni upward mobility (Sharpe & Spivak, 2003, p. 619).

No amount of positive news made Chuni visible in her classroom during her Masters in Anthropology. Her professor was free to mark her absent despite her presence; she lost a year due to low attendance. Chuni wrote applications, and an inquiry was set up in response to her application. However, the enquirer had the liberty to bring up the stereotype of Lodha Savara being a criminal at all points of the inquiry. As Chuni held herself up, another upper-caste female professor in the department pressured Chuni to file a case with the police. Chuni knew that filing a case would only be counter-productive to her cause. During these two years of fight, Chuni was in a long-distance marriage.

Chuni's husband, Manmatha Savara, was a simple person who used to work at the Railways workshop. The couple got married in court after 10 years of courtship; they had put the marriage reception on hold till Chuni attended to her challenges. On August 14, 1992, Chuni went to her husband's place. Mahasveta Devi writes that Manmatha found Chuni quite relaxed and without stress. On the morning of August 16, 1992, Manmatha went to work; on his return, he found Chuni's body devoid of any sign of life (Devi, 1992, p. 1836).

Chuni toiled herself in fields all her life yet continued to learn against all odds and stereotypes. A savarna professor denied recognizing Chuni, thus making her voice and presence ineffectual. Our voice is one of many mediums through which the embodied subject conveys itself to the world with a desire and a point of view. Our voice functions as a material mode of interpersonal relations; our voice, our mutually shared sense of words, connects with us while also giving us a place among personal others (Du Toit, 2009, p. 89). The voice is rendered ineffective when someone in power erases or appropriates it on platforms such as national newspapers and academic publications, which are beyond access to the majority. The coercion of voice is experienced as a living death since the process of "self-definition" is invaded (Du Toit, 2009, p. 89). No one wants to hear the voice, which is stereotyped as a lie, dramatic, undemocratic, disruptive to the order and larger scheme of things. The humiliation of caste violence one experiences is not an emotion for an individual; it is a situation. A well-constructed situation where one finds oneself immediately. The self and the situation are disclosed (Bartky, 1990, p. 85). Chuni's dignity was constantly questioned by the stereotype of her



coming from a community that was once labeled as criminal by the law and continued to be labeled as criminal by society. The dignity of the self is rooted in the “value-laden” meaning brought to the world in action and intentions (Bergoffen, 2014, p. 113). Chuni was coerced and denied the possibility of bringing meaning to her world.

Here, Nabina Liebow’s analysis of the difference between the internalized stereotype of feminine traits and the internalized stereotypes of criminality is critical (Liebow, 2016, p. 723). The label of crime puts a person outside the moral community altogether. Savarna women experience diminished self-esteem; however, they dwell in a normative moral space. They negotiate with patriarchy outside and inside a home from this moral space. Beauvoir notes this complicity and privilege in the account of the situation of White women (Gines, 2017, p. 53). Such moral space was unavailable for Chuni, her family, and her community. Such freedom is not available for Vimukta communities. The ascription of criminality (Bej et al., 2021) leaves no soft landing or bridgehead available for the Vimukta communities to participate in the moral realm of society.

### **Limited Understanding of Situatedness in Violence Prevention Research**

The bodies of women belonging to oppressed communities are perceived as a site of intimate communal bonding. The dominant group uses sexual violence as a tool to sever communal intimacy and collective self-esteem (Bergoffen in Staudigl, 2014, p. 117). Bergoffen problematizes the notion that men are immune to vulnerability. The assumed immunity to vulnerability is disrupted when the rape of women becomes a tool to exercise dominance and humiliate an entire community. A man’s vulnerability discloses his inability to protect the women in his community; when he is forced to witness the rape of women who are related to him, he is put in a position of vulnerability and shame (Bergoffen in Staudigl, 2014, p. 117). The caste-based sexual violence challenges the gendered understanding of protection and being protected and exploits the need to feel safe as a fundamental desire of human existence.

In contrast to focusing on the structural patriarchal caste violence that attempts to control the whole community, well-funded researchers belonging to dominant castes present a myopic view of domestic violence within Dalit families (Herbert, 2020; Kowtal, 2016; Ramdas, 2012; Subadra, 2020a- 20020b; Surepally, 2021). Criticism of myopic research on domestic violence does not suggest that preventing domestic violence is not essential. However, there lies a complexity that Anu Ramdas (2012) brings out in her essay “My Man.” Ramdas relates the story of a Dalit migrant couple, Laxmi and Shanmugam, parents of three children. The contractor gave make-shift accommodation to the couple at the construction site. The accommodation was not an act of generosity or reward but a conditional arrangement premised on the sexual exploitation of Laxmi and other female relatives of Shanmugam. The arrangement harmed both Shanmugam and Laxmi. It was not

moral for Shanmugam and Laxmi (Ramdas, 2012). Their situatedness is riddled with systemic caste violence (Kumar & Bakshi, 2022, p. 63; Patil, 2016). According to Ramdas, expecting Shanmugam or Laxmi to take a moral leap to protect themselves against contractors while maintaining a roof above their children is somewhat mystical. Kowtal's concern is that young aspiring Dalit scholars search for "Dalit women and Violence" when studies are limited to intimate partner violence and devoid of structural understanding and context (Kowtal, 2016).

## Discussion

The article describes Vimukta situatedness and the situatedness of Dalit and Adivasi women in academia, which can aid in developing a violence prevention framework. It does not suggest that the limitation of empathy makes empathy impossible altogether. Instead, it urges to recognize the spectrum of violence and how it shapes lives at the margins by repeatedly keeping us outside the moral realm. Education and upward class mobility can significantly change the quality of life. It enables a person to realize her projects and vision. However, such factors do not alienate educated urban Dalit, Adivasi, and Vimukta women from their situatedness with others who belong to them (Kumar & Bakshi, 2022, p. 60). Someone in their known circle of belonging is experiencing the spectrum of caste violence. The modern Dalit, Adivasi, and Vimukta struggle with the present trauma absorbed through daily news of atrocities and generational trauma, their everyday struggles and triumphs.

Dalit, Adivasi, and Vimukta community women shall be given the rightful space to read, articulate, organize, and publish their work. They are equally situated to have an honest relationship with fellow Dalit Adivasi and Vimukta counterparts. They utilized education and upward class mobility as an ontic tool to organize and lead the anti-caste movement. Even if they do not directly participate in anti-caste movement, their existence as free, autonomous, thriving subjects is an anti-caste statement. The possibility of empathy is conditional upon the annihilation of caste in all its spectrum. The caste system is analogous to Ursula K Le Guin's dystopian city, Omelas (Le Guin, 2014).

In her story "The One Who Walked Away From Omelas," Le Guin challenged liberal philosophers' ethics of utility with an example of a dystopian city, Omelas (Sandel, 2009, p. 40). The prosperity and freedom of Omelas rest on one child's misery locked up in a windowless basement of one of the houses in the city. The child did not always live in that windowless basement. They remember sunlight and the voice of their mother. It is morally good to bring the child out in the sun and reunite with their mother; however, it is believed that if the child is brought out under the sun, then the prosperity of Omelas would cease. What shall the people of Omelas do? Could the people of Omelas ever be moral? Are they ought to risk what they know for what is unknown? Like people of Omelas can savarnas imagine an ethical future without ages old caste system because the "ethical" is not possible within the caste system?

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