

## A Systematic Review on Empowerment of Dalit Women: Trends, Insights, and Gaps

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### Abstract

Dalits experience widespread mistreatment, discrimination, loss of human dignity, and a persistent type of untouchability. Dalit women are especially vulnerable to these issues. Despite extensive study on violence against Dalit women, there is a paucity of papers that reflect the present scientific output. In this study, systematic analysis has been used to evaluate the 223 documents from 2000 to 2022 based on WOS databases. These documents were analyzed quantitatively by VOSviewer software. In addition, the top-cited papers were analyzed qualitatively. The research findings show that the United States is a leader in this field with the most highly cited articles and also the most number of publications followed by the India, UK, Canada, Australia, and South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany . A total of 223 documents were collected from the WOS database and were analyzed in VOSviewer. Keywords analysis indicates that most articles focus on Dalit women empowerment", " Dalit women" OR "marginalized women" ) AND ( "untouchable" OR "scheduled caste" OR "socio" OR "economic " OR "discrimination" OR "moderation" OR " meditation" OR "Psychology" OR "Perceived Stigma" OR "Health" Sources such as the “Contemporary Voice of Dalit”, “Journal of international Women S Studies”, “Journal of family Violence”, “Violence Against of Women”, “Economic and Political Weekly” are the top most productive in this field. Examining the articles showed that the vast majority of women have experienced Discrimination, perceived stigma.

**Keywords:** Discrimination, Dalit Women, Empowerment, literature review, VOSviewer

### Introduction

Indian society has historically subjected women to subjugation, discrimination, and general deprivation. Given this context, it is not surprising that Dalit women have occupied the lowest position. The term "Dalit" inherently denotes the most impoverished segment of society across all dimensions; therefore, it is a term that merits condemnation. The census directives have classified women belonging to the scheduled castes as "Dalits" in the present study. Long socially marginalized, dalit women in India face precarious lives in health, education, and the economy, all of which are considered fundamental necessities (Sharma, 2012). Their conjunction with the prevailing risk factors of being 'dalit' and 'female', their socioeconomic vulnerability and absence of political representation render them more susceptible to potentially violent circumstances and diminish their capacity to flee (Guntaka, 2014).

Ancient Indian In addition to analyzing the role of Dalit women in the 1857 uprising and challenging mainstream and traditional historical narratives, Dalit popular literature has become a vital resource for gaining a deeper understanding of Dalit politics and identity (Gupta,

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C., 2007). In addition to navigating the intricate intersections of caste, gender, and class, the article looks at the upward social mobility of six accomplished Dalit women in Chennai who were primarily motivated by their education and supported by family resources, affirmative action, and personal agency. They also managed to maintain a strong sense of community responsibility and belonging. The study emphasizes the interconnectedness of identities and socio-cultural circumstances in determining South Asian women's experiences in North America, as well as the urgent need to address the complex psycho-social variables escalating intimate partner abuse. An evaluation of a person's general economic and social standing is known as their socioeconomic status (SES). Typically, we think of SES as a latent construct and measure it using a composite index that includes education, income, and occupation, or their combinations, as important variables (Baker, 2014).

Social and behavioral research contexts frequently use proxy indicator variables to measure socioeconomic status (SES). These range from single indicators, like parental income on a monthly or annual basis, to full scales, like the Duncan Socioeconomic Index (Cabrita et al., 2018). Since caste and gender are the primary determinants of what constitutes economic discrimination in India, it is impossible to discuss this issue in isolation. The root cause of economic inequality-based discrimination in India is caste-based discrimination, which gender-based discrimination exacerbates. In contrast to "upper" caste pregnant women, "lower" caste pregnant women were more likely to experience discrimination, accept discrimination, and keep quiet about discrimination, according to a study by Khubchandani et al. (2018) on perceived discrimination among pregnant women in rural India. As previously stated, "lower" or marginalized castes are more likely to work in low-wage, inadequately secure jobs, so negative experiences of discrimination based on gender and caste are likely to spill over into experiences of discrimination based on economic status.

Dalits experience widespread mistreatment, discrimination, loss of human dignity, and a persistent type of untouchability. Dalit women are especially vulnerable to these issues. They experience extreme poverty and a life that is degrading due to their lack of education, bad health, and estrangement in the workforce. Because caste is covert, it is a distinct kind of discrimination. The appearance of caste can be deceptive. There is an "intrusive archeology of caste" in daily interactions (Jogdand, 2013). An individual from a lower caste is continuously in danger of losing his identity. For instance, you can find out someone's caste by asking about their surname. For lower castes, this happens frequently since their surnames either make their caste clear or obscure it. In terms of demography, women surely make up more than half of the population in our country. However, in terms of their physical attributes, social structures, cultural customs, or economic status, they do not represent a homogenous class or category. They are different in terms of caste, religion, employment, education, and status, and they belong to several strata. Rather than being a part of a single, homogenous class, they are members of multiple social and economic classes. Because of the disparities in culture and financial status, we are unable to attempt to generalize about anything.

Since Dalit women are members of a society that is socially, economically, and culturally disadvantaged, they have historically been subjected to subordination and gender-based discrimination. The patriarchal social norms that are pervasive in Dalit households make the life of Dalit women dreadful. They are the world's most downtrodden people. The vivid and precise accounts of the Dalit women's living conditions, including their exploitation, humiliation, and persecution, shock even the most humane person. Her problems are dual. She

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bears some of the general sufferings as a woman. She also suffers from other sorts of social, religious, economic, and cultural exploitation since she is a Dalit woman. Compared to non-Dalit women, she experiences patriarchal dominance more severely. Statistics claim that for millennia, Indian Dalits have been among the communities in the world least heard and defended. Women are one of the most vulnerable sections within the Dalits. According to Mossé (2018), caste discrimination has evolved and now takes on many forms in various contexts. Researches that have been conducted thus far describe the type, manifestation, and effects of caste discrimination on college students.

### **Objectives:**

This study uses grounded theory analysis to highlight casteism and gender dynamics in their organizational experiences, as well as an examination of the impact of caste on empowerment changes among Dalits in India, with a focus on the reasons behind their departure from STEM disciplines and the factors that sustain their socio-psychological status.

RQ1: Does this pattern apply to articles about Dalit women's empowerment published between 2000 and 2022?

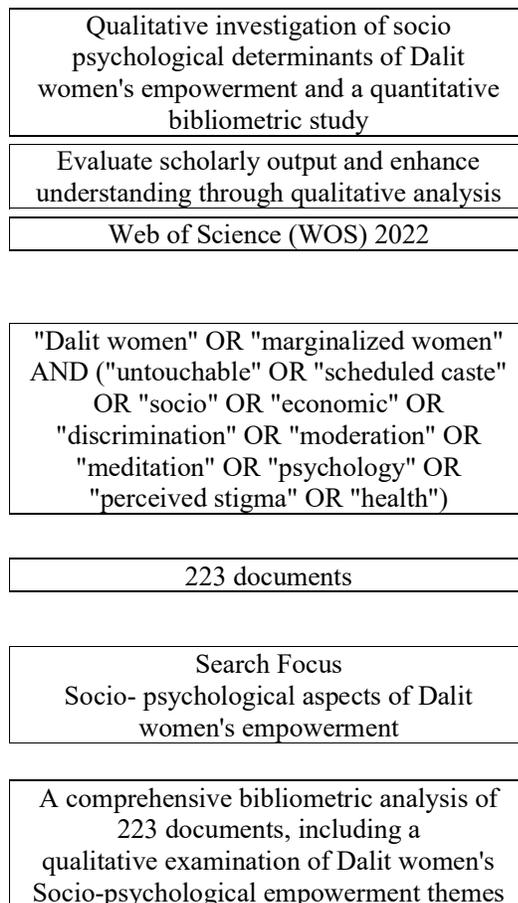
RQ2: Which publications, nations, and organizations are giving Dalit women the most attention?

RQ3: Among co-authors, what are the most successful cooperative partnerships?

### **Methodology**

In the WOS core collection database, filters were applied based on the following: language (English), date (2000–2022), document type (articles, reviews, and early access), WOS categories (Humanities and Social Sciences), and records were exported in ris.tex format with full records and cited references option. We included a total of 223 records in this Review by VOSviewer version 1.6.17 was released on July 22, 2021, eliminating duplicate records in MS-Excel 2021. Gathering information and exporting records was the first stage. The data was sourced from Clarivate Analytics' WOS Core Collection database. We chose the topic, title, abstract, and keywords to revolve around the word "Socio-psychological Dalit women empowerment." We limited the document type to only publications written in English, resulting in the discovery of 223 papers in total. We conducted a more focused search in WOS database using the terms "Socio-psychological Dalit women empowerment" in the title, abstract, and keywords. By restricting the results to the humanities and social sciences as subject areas, we retrieved 223 documents. Loading the data, converting it to frame, and opening VOSviewer constituted step.

Data analysis, in two stages: developing networks for co-occurrence, co-citation, and collaboration analysis using the VOSviewer, and a descriptive analysis of the bibliographic dataset. Data visualization can be represented using network mapping, word maps, and thematic maps. VOSviewer is a software tool for building maps based on network data as well as for visualizing and analyzing these maps. VOSviewer is designed mainly for bibliometric network analysis, but it may also be used for creating, visualizing, and exploring maps based on any kind of network data. It is unusual in other libraries that it made it possible for us to access various graph kinds. In order to conclude our research, we conducted a content analysis on the gathered articles and found 223 publications that discuss the empowerment of Dalit women.



## Software Used

This paper conducted a qualitative investigation of the socio-psychological determinants of Dalit women's empowerment and a quantitative bibliometric study. Bibliometric research cannot replace qualitative peer review. Therefore, we should restrict their use to the evaluation

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of scholarly output only. To enhance understanding of the scholarly outputs under investigation, a bibliometric study can benefit from the inclusion of a qualitative analysis. As a result; this study not only analyzed the most referenced papers on the socio-psychological aspects of Dalit women's empowerment, but also conducted a bibliometric analysis. Web-based citation databases such as WOS commonly provide information for bibliographic studies. Firstly; we conducted a WOS title search using the intended search phrase to identify the most suitable database for data collection. Title: "Dalit women" OR "marginalized women" AND ("untouchable" OR "scheduled caste" OR "socio" OR "economic" OR "discrimination" OR "moderation" OR "meditation" OR "psychology" OR "perceived stigma" OR "health"). This search term was taken from published documents and trustworthy sources about Dalit women status. 223 documents were retrieved from WOS as a result of the title search for the search term conducted in 2022. WOS was chosen as the recommended source for data collection as a result. A computer application for bibliometric mapping called Vosviewer was the software utilized to analyze the data. The primary data and document categories for the bibliometric data that was gathered are shown in the table.

## Literature Review

Dalit women are considered to be "the weakest in the society" due to their gender and status as members of the "depressed class" (Ambedkar). Women in India have no rights because of the patriarchal nature of the country and their status as lower caste members in a hierarchical social system. Heartbreaking tales of Dalit women's pains and tribulations can be found in both Bama and Kamble's literature. Even in today's free market economy, caste is a social structure that contributes to inequality and poverty (Thorat & Madheswaran, 2018). This is because politicians and policymakers in the past saw caste as a static or residual sociocultural issue rather than a dynamic relational one (Mosse, 2018). According to Chandran and Hashim (2014), writers are free to rearrange and present events or experiences in accordance with the significance that seems acceptable during the rebuilding process. As a result, while writing on the oppression and marginalization of the Dalit community, the authors of the chosen texts exhibit a strong inclination towards feminist issues, as gender and caste combine to create a fatal combination for women. The chosen texts most frequently examine the intertwining of caste, gender, and class oppression. A study of women's endurance and fortitude, along with their involvement in the development of the Dalit community, follows.

Feminist perspective theory acknowledges its debt to sociologists who highlighted the significance of the "stranger's" social position, particularly Marx, Engels, and more recently Lukacs' logic of proletarian standpoint (see, for example, Harding 2007). Thirteen in a patriarchal society, the masculine is normative; therefore, those who are dominated—women, gay people, or Dalits—are in a position to question this social framework based on their perception of what is normal. The *Prison We Broke* (2008) by Kamble and Sangati (2005) by Bama are two of the important works of Dalit literature that address how marginalization operates through Dalit men as well as upper-caste individuals. Their social marginalisation affords them a perspective as outsiders within society. Their portrayal of the community and of themselves both demonstrates this. According to Beauvoir (1989), women are "the second sex" and have a lower social status.

As Dalit awareness grew, literature from a male perspective predominated, ignoring the specific experiences of Dalit women, who had particular difficulties because of their

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intersectional identities. Early literature and trade union campaigns did not acknowledge Dalit women as autonomous entities with distinct challenges. The past reliance on Jajmani relationships, which were prevalent in rural India, has not significantly changed the status of the poorest Dalit women. Their dependence on patrons forces them into exploitation traps in an attempt to maintain their financial or employment security (Sarvesh, 2017).

Dalit women, belonging to the most marginalized caste, faced extreme exclusion from historical documentation. Nair (2008) describes the omission of Dalit women's experiences during societal transitions as "sanctioned ignorance" in mainstream academia and history, even within the Dalit community. Consequently, dominant narratives focused on power transitions or nationalist histories of the colonial era often overshadowed Dalit women's histories. Early post-independence Indian feminism also exhibited a blind spot for caste issues. However, the emergence of Dalit counterpublics has challenged these historical orthodoxies, advocating for the recognition of caste as a significant political issue, not just a social one (Rege, 2006; Nair, 2008).

Women were not allowed to participate in yajnas when they were menstruating, and students were encouraged not to recite Vedic hymns for them (Olivelle 1999). This practice marked women's bodies as instruments of discrimination and continued untouchability, especially for Dalit women. Sudra women's marginalization is further cemented by the Atharvaveda's disparaging portrayal of them. To fully comprehend the claims made by Dalit women, it is imperative that we look at their experiences as they relate to movements, political activism, and literary creations. Since Nancy Fraser criticized American democracy for its shortcomings, it is critical to acknowledge that Indian democracy too has exclusionary practices, with the caveat that true democracy cannot exist without the inclusion of historically and structurally underprivileged populations. For millennia, Dalit women, along with other marginalized communities, have chronicled their struggles and demands for justice in their narratives (Irudayam S.J. et al., 2011). A social science student needs to be able to recognize these kinds of voices. We will now talk about the voices of Dalit women throughout South Asian history. There are certain synonyms for the word "Dalit." The Rigveda is the oldest extant scripture that mentions the four varnas (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras) that make up society. The historical classification process also refers to the Sudras as Scheduled Castes, Dalits, and Untouchables (Singh 2015).

## **Results and discussion**

The focus of the bibliometric analysis of the "Socio-psychological factors the Dalit women empowerment" is on the knowledge structures (conceptual, intellectual, and social) and research domains (analytics — sources, authors, and documents). During the 2004–2024 study period, 223 documents were published by 335 authors in 112 sources (books, journals, conference proceedings, etc.). Our measurements of collaboration show that there is weak collaboration in publishing articles on this topic: 98 single-authored documents, 5.43 documents/author, 2.11 authors/document, and a collaboration index of 1.9 (calculated as total authors of multi-authored articles/total multi-authored articles).

## **Results Analysis**



Figure 1. The number of publications in the research area from 2000 - 2022

Annual scientific production Figure 1 illustrates the publication trends in the intended research area in the period 2000–2022. The annual scientific production growth rate was 11.86%. The trend of publication has been growing continuously, reaching its maximum in 2020, with 223 documents published during this year. The table illustrates the average citation per year for each document. The maximum average citations per year (4.21) corresponded to 212 documents published in 2020. Figure show that presents the top 10 publication.

Interest in research on Dalit women's empowerment grew between 2000 and 2022. The top journal is shown in the figure above, along with the top 10 documents. The document's top ten countries and territories are displayed in the figure below: South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, India, the United States, and Canada. Additionally, the following universities are listed in the document above according to affiliation: Michigan State University (17), University of British Columbia (17), Minash University, University of Michigan (18), Ann Arbor (18); Jawaharlal Nehru University (30); Tata Institute of Social Science (23); University of Oxford (23); University of Toronto (20); University of Melbourne(20); University of Delhi(18); and University of Oxford.

The empowerment of women is a multifaceted process involving education, economic autonomy, health, and the capacity to make decisions that influence their lives and communities. Despite substantial global initiatives like the Education for All (EFA) movement and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) advocating for gender equality and universal education, the intersection of caste and gender in India has distinct problems, especially for Dalit women. Dalit women have historically faced institutional discrimination and socio-economic vulnerabilities, which have resulted in compounded oppression from both caste and gender. This has led to elevated rates of violence, illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment. Patriarchal standards, both within and beyond their communities, sustain their marginalization, often making them one of the most disenfranchised populations worldwide.

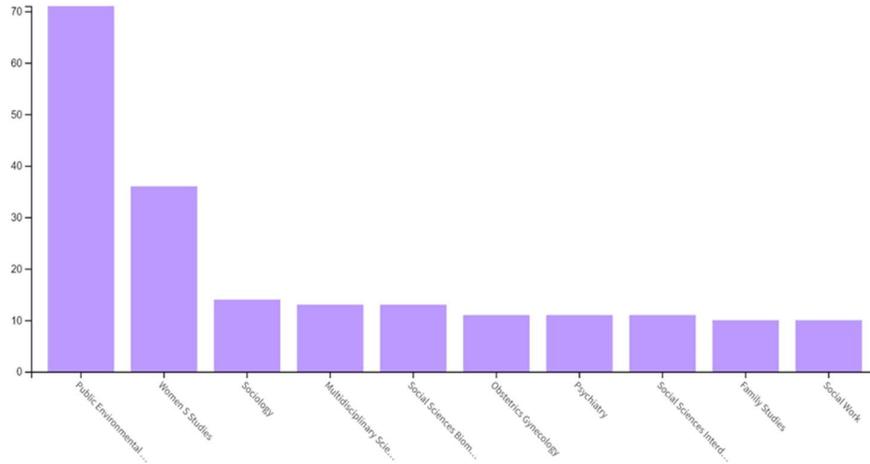


Figure: 2 Top 10 documents

Dalit women continue to face significant harm from violence, poverty, and illiteracy. Efforts to give them power must go beyond formal schooling and economic inclusion. They must also address the deeper cultural and social structures that keep them on the outside. According to Ambedkar and female scholars, real empowerment means giving people the freedom, sense of self-worth, and a voice to speak out against caste and patriarchal oppression. This kind of intersectional thinking is the only way for Dalit women to claim their proper place in society as equal and respected people.

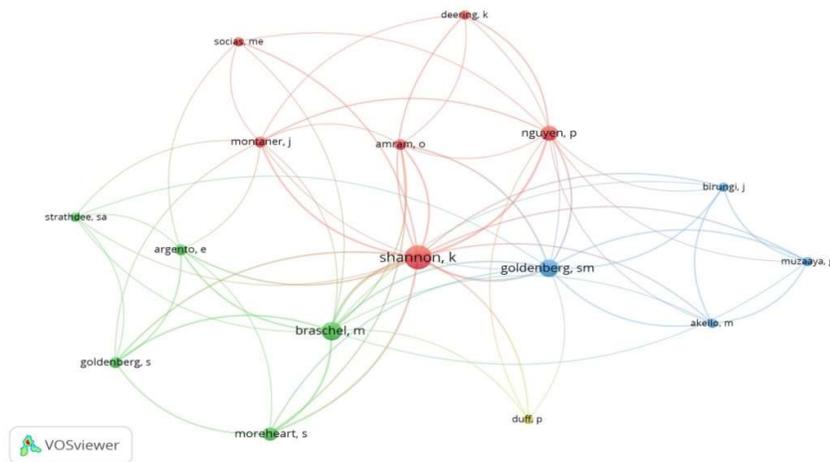


Figure 3: The network visualization of Top Author and Co-Authors

In the network visualization, items are represented by their label and by default also by a circle. The size of the label and the circle of an item are determined by the weight of the item. The higher the weight of an item, the larger the label and the circle of the item. For some items the label may not be displayed. This is done in order to avoid overlapping labels. The color of an item is determined by the cluster to which the item belongs. Lines between items represent

links. By default, at most 19 link are displayed, representing the 19 strongest links between items. The results shows that it shows 9 items highly relationship with co-authors and authors and it create 3 cluster, 19 links and total link strength is 32. In 1 cluster contain 4 items: bingham, Brittany: buxton, jane: krusi, andrea:ranville, flo . Cluster 2 show that it contain 3 items: brashel, Melissa: Goldenberg, shira m: Shannon, kate in cluster 3 shows it contain 2 items: boyd,ade: goodman, Ashley. So these are the top co-authors and authors relationship network visualization.

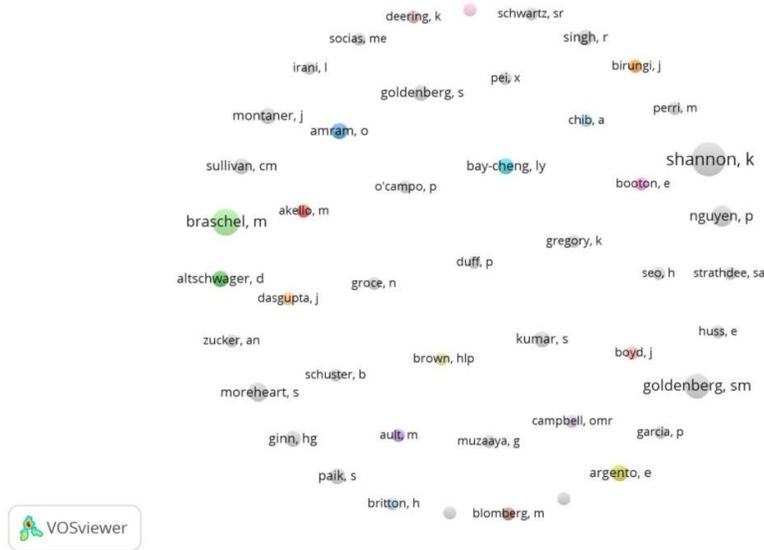


Figure 4: The network visualization of Top 30 citation density

The study examined the keyword dynamics among the top 30 authors. After the abstracts, the authors of the materials proposed top 30 citation density. To determine the strength of the relationship between the terms, the VOSviewer software employs both mapping and clustering techniques. The keywords that shared a high degree of association have been grouped together and displayed using the same colour. Figure 4 displays the network visualisation of author top 30 citation density. This figure depicts the association between the top 30 author citations. The most significant and prevalent keywords that create a cluster are : bingham, Brittany: buxton, jane: krusi, andrea:ranville, flo, brashel, Melissa: Goldenberg, shira m: Shannon, kate in , boyd,ade: goodman, Ashley. Results also shows the top 30 most popular author keywords together with their respective trends. In recent years, there has been an increase in the use of terms such as caste, India, Dalit, Dalit women, inequality, Dalit feminism, social justice, and subaltern, violence against women, stigma, discrimination, development, women's empowerment, gender-based violence, and mental health.



Figure 5: The Density visualization of Top 30 density bibliography

The item shows that density bibliography visualization, like the network and overlay visualizations, represents items by their labels. The item density visualisation, according to Van Eck and Waltman (2010), shows the density of things at each position by colour. Colours are by default blue, green, and yellow. A point's colour approaches yellowness in direct proportion to the number of objects nearby and the higher the weights of those items. Contrarily, as a point's colour approaches blue, the fewer items it shares with its neighbours and the lower their respective weights are. The figure represents the item density bibliography visualization.

## Findings:

This study seeks to discover and examine extensively cited works regarding the socio-psychological factors influencing the empowerment of Dalit women, emphasizing both the advancements achieved and aspects that need additional investigation. The results indicate a rising interest in this significant field, as demonstrated by the escalating number of publications—totaling 223 documents. This scholarly output highlights the worldwide acknowledgement of the difficulties encountered by Dalit women and the pressing necessity to tackle these issues through socio-psychological and institutional strategies. The findings reveal that 67.84% of the literature concentrates on fundamental subjects pertaining to the empowerment of Dalit women, including their contemporary voice, economic and political standing, health, psychological well-being, and violence against women. The examination of keywords such as “India,” “Dalit women,” “inequality,” “Dalit feminism,” “social justice,” “subaltern,” “violence against women,” and “development” highlights the extensive yet interrelated themes investigated in this domain. These phrases also signify the interdisciplinary character of the study of the empowerment of Dalit women, incorporating sociology, psychology, political science, and gender studies. Notable journals and contributions: The research identifies key sources that significantly contribute to the field, such as the "Contemporary Voice of Dalit", "Violence Against Women", "Economic and Political Weekly", and "Journal of International Women's Studies", among others. These periodicals serve as a forum for addressing important topics such as violence, discrimination, health, and socio-political factors impacting Dalit women. The existence of transnational and multidisciplinary journals underscores the global significance of these matters. Psychological Aspects of Empowerment: Recent research prominently highlights the psychological empowerment of

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Dalit women. The results affirm that violence against women persists as a widespread issue, transcending all societies and social strata. The literature consistently highlights empowerment via knowledge and awareness. Empowering Dalit women with information and skills can cultivate resilience and empower them to confront systematic oppression. Although social violence may not always be avoidable, equipping women to identify and evade violent circumstances constitutes a vital advancement.

### **Limitations and Research Gaps**

A major limitation in examining the empowerment of Dalit women is the underreporting of their experiences, frequently due to apprehension regarding social stigma and reputational damage. This not only obstructs data collection but also distorts comprehension of the presence and characteristics of issues encountered by Dalit women. The study's results underscore the necessity for prevention strategies and rehabilitation initiatives specifically designed for the distinct experiences of Dalit women. This method can yield more refined insights and guide more successful policy and practice. Although much study concentrates on India, comprehending the experiences of Dalit women in global contexts helps enhance the discourse. Comparisons may reveal universal trends and localized solutions for empowerment.

### **Conclusion**

The study emphasizes expanding research on the empowerment of Dalit women and its socio-psychological factors. It emphasizes the essential role of education, mental health, and systemic measures in combating violence and discrimination. This analysis establishes a foundation for future research by identifying widely referenced sources and emerging patterns, with the objective of promoting genuine change and aiding Dalit women in attaining empowerment and social justice.

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