
Intersectional Time Use Analysis: The Role of Caste and Gender in Shaping Leisure Inequalities

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Abstract:

The time use policy is an embodiment of the social division, gender disparities and economic constraints in a caste-based society like India. This paper emphasises the need to understand how Dalits are denied the right to leisure with the intention of enlightening people who believe in social equity. A combination of caste discrimination and the inequality of gender plays a key role in restricting the leisure activities of Dalits. In India, social conditions, financial constraints, and family responsibilities have made it harder for Dalits to engage in leisure activities.

The current study examines the leisure gap among Dalits, the experiences of university students when leisure is offered, women's restrictions on travelling, and the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve transparency, the study utilises conventional statistical procedures, sociological concepts, and a review of the available literature, providing a comprehensive analysis to guide policy action towards leisure equality.

Keywords: Time Use Analysis, Dalit, Caste, Gender Inequality, Leisure, Social Stratification, India

Introduction**Background and significance**

Indian society is a social design that is a constant according to the caste system. This not only affects people's economic status but also their social and personal lives. Dalits are never allowed to have a role in this caste system. This caste-based discrimination is being worsened by gender inequalities, and multiple instances of violence against Dalit women

coexist. Despite their best efforts to manage family responsibilities and limited income, they are not spared social and economic discrimination and have very limited free time (Raj 1; Kala and Ghatak 1).

Leisure has been widely regarded as a social restorative practice that supports personal growth and mental and social well-being. Nonetheless, these freedoms are not treated equally in India's caste society. Only the representatives of the upper castes have ideal conditions to be fully engaged in leisure. In this regard, Dalit leisure will serve only as an instrument for their social availability and awareness (Raj 1), in addition to work, rest, or psychological reprieve.

Research Questions and Goals (Research Questions and Objectives)

The following are some of the main questions that this study attempts to comprehend:

- How are Dalits positioned within caste structures?
- What gender inequalities does this leisure complicate?
- What impact have traditional social systems and economies had on the leisure of Dalits?

The primary aim of this research is to determine the procedural adjustments required to address the demands of Dalits.

Methodology and Data Sources

The aim of this paper is to learn the transformation of caste and Gender differences with time through the study of various sources. In particular, Leisure Time Activities Among Students of the University of Lucknow (Raj 1) and Caste, Gender, Labour, and Covid-19 in the Urban Informal Economy (Nanda et al. 7, 12). The analysis will help illustrate the effects of caste and gender on time-use inequalities, highlighting the study's role in tackling social inequalities.

This study emphasises the value of sources, primarily community-based studies, time-use analysis, and underlying research analyses, selected for their relevance to caste and gender dynamics. Such a selection provides a level of methodological rigour and is aligned with the study subject of social inequalities throughout history.

Theoretical framework

Time-use analysis is a significant method for studying social structures. Leisure is a social system that discusses human life, freedom, and self-growth. Nonetheless, it varies according to social class, Gender differences, and economic conditions. In India, caste discrimination, particularly among Dalits, makes leisure an underprivileged right. Caste and gender combined put leisure in a lower range, as Bourdieu (1984) references, since cultural capital is at stake. This realisation has led to the necessity of taking these inequalities seriously to achieve social justice.

Cultural capital theory affirms that leisure does not simply mean physical rest or an opportunity for rest and engagement at any time. It differs in social divisions, education, access to economic resources, and class levels. The upper caste members are free to adopt the Vihara as a mode of living, but when it comes to Dalits and other oppressed groups, and women in particular, Leisure is defined by systemic discrimination and unequal access to resources (Kala and Ghatak 1).

To explain the power of gender inequalities, one can refer to the concept of intersectionality, introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. This theory states that the Dalit women do not only experience caste discrimination but also gender discrimination. The combination of these limitations results in increased restrictions, as family demands and societal structures do not provide them with the opportunity to live a free life, so specific policy interventions are necessary (Prabhakaran 92).

It is restricted not to the family duties but to the rules put in place. As an instance, although male individuals have the right to leisure, the Dalit male is discriminated against in almost all instances. Caste-based discrimination in public spaces does not provide freedom to Dalits. Conversely, when upper-caste men occupy some common space in life, Dalit men have slim chances of gaining such opportunities or even doing some types of physical labour. The analysis of the significance of intersectionality has shown that Dalit women struggle with certain issues. In every work, family and economic restriction, leisure equality is lost. This does not occur exclusively due to the traditional family system, but also due to leisure. In this regard, the time-use analysis offers a holistic approach to the concept of leisure in Dalit society. It is found through numerous studies that the Dalits have little spare time in life (Raj 1). There is a need to propose sound policy modifications to counteract this disparity and avoid it.

The theory of cultural capital formulated by Pierre Bourdieu offers an essential lens through which the unequal distribution of leisure in the caste societies can be interpreted. Cultural capital is not purely in terms of economic resources but in terms of access to knowledge, social practices, and way of life, which are authorised by a prevailing social set-up. In Indian culture, upper-caste individuals have traditionally had greater cultural capital and have been able to pursue leisure as a socially acceptable practice. Conversely, Dalits are not structurally included in such capital, which affects their capacity to engage in leisure. The marginalisation does not stop at the material level but also extends to the symbolic level, where leisure is associated with privilege and social legitimacy.

Moreover, the notion of habit expounds the internalisation of these inequalities. Dalit people, because of historic marginalisation, tend to form underexpressed expectations about leisure, viewing it as a secondary activity to survival and work. This can be compared with the results that leisure activities are influenced by systematic discrimination and limited resource access (Kala and Ghatak 1). This framework is even more important when it is combined with intersectionality. Being at the crossroads of the caste and gender hierarchy, Dalit women face a further form of exclusion, as both structural and internalised norms limit their access to leisure (Prabhakaran 93). Therefore, inequality in leisure is not an accident but a latent aspect of the social fabric and cannot be changed by personal modifications but by structural change.

Caste, Gender, and Time Use: A Critical Examination

Caste and gender are the two pillars of the community system in India. Their effect extends beyond lifestyle to social sanctions that limit Dalits leisure, making it less a luxury and more a constrained right. This section analyses how caste and gender shape the leisure experiences of Dalit women and men.

Dalit Women and the Double Burden

Dalit women are considered one of the most oppressed groups in India. They face caste and gender discrimination, which significantly restricts their leisure, often limited by work and housing responsibilities. Their time is also significantly less than the disproportionate workload of unpaid labour (Dhungel 5). Specifically, family responsibilities further reduce the leisure time available to Dalit women. Compared to the rest of the caste women, the lack of social support systems is also a big problem. In most cases, their leisure is to provide the necessary services to the community. In a study, this institutional discrimination explained that "Dalit women endure the suffering of caste, gender, and three layers of discrimination, including financial inequality" (Kharbe 43).

Dalit men and public leisure spaces

Dalit men are traditionally confined to their physical body roles and are denied access to leisure rights. Caste-based discrimination restricts their participation in open spaces like plains, gatherings, and playgrounds, which are predominantly reserved for high castes, thus limiting their leisure opportunities.

Leisure is possible by participating in sports activities, but Dalit men are facing discrimination in this aspect as well. In most parts of India, Dalits are having less opportunity to join general sports associations, or they are assigned only second-tier roles. Similarly, the possibility of getting social support through leisure is also limited to Dalit men. They are socially isolated and do not have chances to belong to society. Despite understanding how important leisure is for social coordination, caste-based discrimination separates them from the same society (Kala and Ghatak 1).

COVID-19 Effect and Dalit Leisure

The COVID-19 epidemic has had a profound impact on leisure. Most importantly, more irregularities have been revealed. During this time, Dalits, especially in labour-intensive sectors, have faced an increased financial burden. As a result, their leisure time has been completely nullified. Dalit workers in the informal sector faced significant challenges accessing government support during COVID-19, which highlighted structural inequalities. This increased economic vulnerability, in turn, further limited their access to leisure (Nanda et al. 7, 12).

It is then about the opportunity to understand Dalits leisure through time-use analysis, which should be considered. Equality is not only about leisure activities but also about the right to improve the quality of their lives. Based on the issues analysed, it is clear that Dalits are linked to their social status and Gender differences.

Case Studies on Dalit Leisure Consumption

Caste and Gender differences in India seriously influence leisure. This will consider the lives of Dalit students, Dalit women, and Dalit families. In particular, analysing how educational institutions, travel experiences, and economic structures affect Dalit leisure.

Dalit students and leisure patterns

The student phase is a time to face many psychological and physical stresses. However, the situation of Dalit students is completely different. Their leisure activities are usually limited to social and political pursuits because they have no traditional pastimes available. According to a study, "Dalit students often face social exclusion and discrimination, which limits their access to leisure activities" (Raj 1). Leisure equality also makes a difference at the educational level. The higher the freedom to participate in sports, arts, and other cultural activities, the more Dalit students are usually left with fewer resources and greater social distances. Their leisure is often limited to low-cost resources.

Dalit Women's Travel Experiences

Travelling has become a responsibility for Dalit women, even when they are not excited about it. It usually happens for immigration, labour work, and family needs. The study of Gender and Caste Encounter with Travel Writing states, "Dalit women face the multiple burdens of caste and gender oppression" (Prabhakaran 93). Dalit women's travel experiences become more complex due to a lack of social security. Their motion is also limited to gender and caste discrimination. Moreover, compared to savarna caste women, they face more discrimination in the travelling leisure as well.

Leisure Consumption and Economic Structures

Dalit families also face the need to further control their leisure. Due to financial instability, they can spend only on necessities, rather than on other activities. Leisure consumption among Dalit households is rather motivated by systemic discrimination and a lack of access to education (Kala and Ghatak 1). Traditionally, the families of the upper castes have been involved in cinema, drama, and other cultural leisure activities. However,

Dalit families are usually limited to community-level festivals, religious activities, and local celebrations. Because of this, their leisure becomes a restrained experience.

Analysis of Case Studies

When analysing these aspects of Dalit's lives, it is clear how caste and Gender differences affect leisure equality. At the student level, leisure has become a privilege rather than a social right. At the women's level, leisure was completely hidden. Also, at the family level, the exchange is completely subject to financial limitations. Based on these observations, it is evident that policy changes are urgently needed to improve Dalit leisure.

Policy recommendations and the way forward

Social and procedural changes are much needed to achieve Dalit leisure. In the event of caste and gender discrimination, leisure rights are confined to separate castes, which strengthens the inequalities in society. Government policies, changes in the education system, and community-based programs are important for preventing these inequalities.

Although the government's policies are more focused on social justice, there is no proper action on leisure. It is necessary to establish special recreational centres, provide support funds, and offer financial incentives to enable Dalits to engage in leisure activities. Government assistance funds should be used, especially to create a special space for Dalits. In particular, public leisure facilities in rural areas need to be made available to all without discrimination on the basis of caste.

Changes in the educational system are also crucial. At present, higher education institutions are unable to provide adequate resources for students' leisure. Dalit students are more likely to reduce caste discrimination in society by providing opportunities. In addition, educational institutions should develop specific plans to increase Dalit participation in cultural activities. In this way, the educational system can promote greater equality (Raj 1).

Social programs can play an important role in providing leisure equality to Dalit women. It is necessary to establish women's community groups to increase their freedom of travel. Though travel experiences are crucial to personal development, opportunities for Dalit women are very limited. By converting leisure into social programs, their travel security and social freedom can also be increased (Prabhakaran 93).

Financial aid programs can also help solve this problem. The leisure time of Dalit families is declining due to current economic constraints. Governments and NGOs must develop plans to provide leisure specifically for Dalit families. Traditionally, the cultural programs available to the upper castes should be utilised by people of all classes.

When examined comprehensively, it is clear that leisure is not only a personal problem but also a collective one with social and economic connections. If the Indian society is to provide leisure for all classes of people, it is not just a personal practice. The whole society needs to change. To make real change, governments, educational institutions, and

social institutions must work together. "Dalit leisure is not just a social right; it must be recognised as a fundamental right".

In this way, leisure should become a major factor in the comprehensive development of Indian society. Refusing the effects of caste and gender is not only morally wrong, but it also further improves inequalities in society. Government policies, educational changes, and social inspiration are required to address this issue. What this research clearly reveals is that "true leisure equality is not only possible through the rules, but only possible by destroying caste discrimination".

One concept that helps explain leisure inequality among Dalits is the notion of time poverty. Time poverty is the inability to have leisure time for rest, recreational activities, or self-improvement due to excessive involvement in paid and unpaid labour. This is especially terrible for marginalised communities in caste-based and gendered social systems. Women are disproportionately affected by unpaid care and household tasks, which significantly reduce their free time (Dhungel 5). This disproportionate time distribution can be interpreted as the result of structural inequalities rather than a personal decision.

Moreover, the little time Dalit communities have is further aggravated by the nature of the employment they have access to. Dalits largely work in informal, labour-intensive industries, and economic insecurity and structural vulnerabilities determine working conditions (Nanda et al. 7, 12). Consequently, leisure is pushed to the limit as an aspect of everyday life that is limited and unavailable. Social and cultural exclusion cycles are further perpetuated even where time is available and meaningful engagement in a leisure activity is limited by social and cultural barriers. Thus, it is not just necessary to study leisure inequality by examining the unequal distribution of resources, but also by considering how time itself is not distributed evenly across caste and gender lines.

Conclusion and comprehensive analysis

This study has expounded the disruptions of caste and gender disparities that have a devastating impact on Dalit leisure in India. Even though leisure is a simple right, it is no longer a question of power for Dalit groups; it has become an ongoing fight to secure it. Unless the aspirations of Dalits are accepted by society, it will further fortify the caste domination over them. Dalits are losing leisure altogether by accumulating caste, gender and economic constraints.

Conventionally, Dalits have been viewed as a marginalised group to be hired for labour. It is not only the earnings of their daily labour, but they have no opportunity of contemplating leisure. Gender differences have also narrowed leisure. The Dalit women

generally spend more time at home, and the chances of developing oneself has been minimised.

This leisure deteriorated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dalits, who were predominantly employed in the unorganised sectors, were badly hit by the pandemic. Leisure time has been completely eliminated due to increased income uncertainty and pressure on family life. The policies at the time did not help much in curbing the structural insecurities of Dalit workers, especially those in the informal sector, even though the government assisted them to some extent (Nanda et al. 7, 12).

It is known that the discrimination of caste in schools is evident with regard to the examination of Dalit students. Students also cannot enjoy the same opportunities as other students since they spend more time on social movements (Raj 1). However, society is discriminating against Dalit men. Nor is there an opportunity to participate in sports programs or community events in regard to that of leisure.

The joint examination of Dalit women's experiences in their travels reveals their journeys as dominant. They are forced to do more commuting for family than for recreation (Prabhakaran 93).

A key conclusion of this study is that leisure is not only an individual right but also a social right. Dalit leisure should be advocated by the government, educational institutions, and social institutions. Special vacancies should be created to cut down the levels of caste domination, grant special leave to the students and also do what would help to ensure that Dalit women are safe even when travelling. Society must be transformed to ensure equality in leisure. The rules cannot bring true leisure equality, but can do so by eliminating caste discrimination. It should be an opportunity to guide towards personal, social, and procedural changes. Caste discrimination may prove to be a hindrance to driving the society of India. Consequently, governments, schools, and social movements should emerge to recognise the need for equal rights for society's survival and to uphold Dalit rights. Dalits also have a right to leisure.

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