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**WHY “RITIYA” COULD NOT GO TO SELL VEGETABLES?  
MYTH VERSUS REALITY IN TERMS OF CASTE, CULTURE AND  
LIVELIHOOD**

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study focuses on the challenges faced by the upper-caste Brahmin women in rural areas of the district of Katihar, Bihar, India by focusing on their education, cultural values, and choosing the means of livelihood in the milieu of newly transformed rural areas in Bihar. A drastically decreasing educational quality in terms of skill and morality combined with the message of education translated as knowing the rights to maintain equity and equality have excluded the upper-caste women from the benefits of government policies. There is a paucity of research that could reflect the suppressed voice of insecurity and psychological dependency of these women, who like other communities are an integral part of the harmonious rural transformation in India. Based on Grounded Theory, this study was conducted on 20 upper-caste women (age 24 to 44) through semi-structured interviews. The respondents of this research reside at three different villages: namely Manihari, Nepra and Pokharia of Katihar. The interviews ranged from 39 to 140 minutes with an average duration of 56 minutes and the study was conducted over 29 days. The analysis of the qualitative data reveals the agents of hindrances that keep this group of rural India economically handicapped and thus as a dependent but “commodity of honor” among their relatives or as a liberated but a “commodity of sex” for the others.

The target of this study is Brahmin women who reside in the remote rural area of Katihar District, Bihar in India. Katihar District consists of 16 blocks and each block has four to eight village panchayats<sup>1</sup>. All the villages are in the proximity to each other within the radius of 3 kilometers to 20 kilometers. Due to the sensitive identity of the target group of this research, I used the snowball sampling to reach these Brahmin women. I chose three villages of different caste-based structures for this study, named Pokharia, Nepra and Manihari, falling between the varied ranges of 10 to 20 kilometers from the district headquarter. In India people of the same caste live together, and therefore practically each village has its caste-based identity. It should also be noted that due to this village structure the government development policies and initiatives targeted to improve the conditions of lower-caste people have also brought a region-based disparity in the rural areas. Pokharia is a small Brahmin neighborhood comprising of 18 Brahmin families but they stay very close to Other Backward-Caste (OBC) communities too. Nepra has 14 Brahmin

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<sup>1</sup>Smallest unit of governance in India.

families and have Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the majority, and Manihari is a suburban area comprising of people from all castes, especially Scheduled Castes and religions, including Muslims, and has 16 Brahmin families.



FIGURE 1. MAP OF BIHAR

Informed by the literature review of previous caste-based research, I spent 29 days with my respondents as an engaged researcher. The idea of the research was bestowed on the fact-finding measures through the detailed probing, talking and formal interviews with the target group to investigate what type of psychological, economic, social and educational problems they face while choosing to step out of their home. What problems are encountered when they are identified with the rural poor Brahmin girl identity in contrast to that of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes

TABLE 1. KATIHAR DISTRICT BRIEF INTRODUCTION

HEADQUARTER. ....	Katihar					
AREA. ....	3,057 Sq. kms					
POPULATION. ....	Total	1,825,380	Rural	1,653,761	Urban	171,619
SC POPULATION. ....	Total	160,046	Rural	142,186	Urban	17,860
ST POPULATION. ....	Total	101,792	Rural	99,717	Urban	2,075
SUB DIVISIONS. ....	Barsoi	Katihar Sadar	Manihari	Korha,	Barari,	Samaili,
	Katihar,	Kadwa,	Manihari,	Falka,	Pranpur,	Kursela,
BLOCKS. ....	Barsoi	Ahamdabad	Balarampur	Alamnagar,	Mansahi	Hasanganj
AGRICULTURE. ....	Paddy					
INDUSTRY. ....	Jute	Paper Mills				
RIVERS. ....	Mahananda	Kosi	Ganga			

(SC/ST), and Other Backward Class (OBC) of the society<sup>2</sup>? Although untouchability was abolished under India's constitution in 1950, the lower castes and those who own the wealth but are categorized as backwards have been showing solidarity to conserve their resources. If we read carefully, then the basic tenet of Conservation of Resources Theory is that individuals strive to obtain, retain, protect and foster those things that they value (Hofboll 2001:341). Moreover, ever since India obtained independence, caste-based politics has emerged as a grave problem due to a long run and constant pro-Dalit government policies and schemes implemented in the rural areas (Gupta 2005; Jannuzi 1974; Kohli 1987, Kohli 1990; Michael 1999; Singh 2000). Sahay (2010:412) ascertains that caste-based problems are fabricated in loyalty and networking:

Caste may enter into the political process in a number of ways. Firstly, appeals may be made to caste loyalties in a general way. Secondly, networks of interpersonal relations are activated both during elections and at other times for mobilizing support along caste lines, caste associations, may seek to articulate caste interests in an organized manner.

India has a long tradition of patriarchy (Bhasin 1993; Dube 1988; Kumar 1993; Vindhy 2007) and the modern day politics in India have always targeted the caste-based discrimination rather than the gender-based disparities. Caste at least does not debar people from earning their livelihood as it is a classification based on the kind of occupation one clan has been involved in rather than chaining them from the freedom of all kinds, as it happens, in the cases of upper-caste women. The new government policies and schemes have not yet been made to target the poor sections of India directly. Brahmin females, being the least numerous, deprived economically, socially and educationally, and marginalized in terms of both gender and caste, are the most disadvantageous identity in present India.

Ritu (a Sanskrit word, meaning season, and habitually people would degenerate the names while calling their near and dears in the rural area, and hence Ritiya) is

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<sup>2</sup>Scheduled Caste (SC), popularly known as Dalit (since 1850s, during British rule in Indian subcontinent, were recognized as depressed classes), and Scheduled Tribes (ST) popularly known as Adivasi (original inhabitants) have been given special status and reservations by the Constitution of India to bring them back to main stream since 1850s. As these categories were not clearly defined in terms of economic conditions another interest group comprising majorly well-off working classes, already recognized by the constitution in 1953 as Other Backward Class (OBC), vigorously came into being in 1979, established by Mandal commission. It should be noted that India before independence and after independence too was significantly a backward nation and therefore the caste-based categorization was illogical.

a representative respondent of this research. She is 36 years old, a well-behaved woman, a good wife, and a good mother. She is a dropout from middle school and wants to do odd jobs, including selling vegetables, which is not considered a very good job in her community, to earn for her family. She finds it very hard to step out of her home as there are social, economic, educational, and family constraints. She explains that her identity as a Brahmin woman is the main reason for her multiple deprivations and loss of social capital today.

Unlike what Van Deth (2003) has claimed in *“Measuring Social Capital: Orthodoxies and Continuing Controversies,”* that contemporary democracies (such as those in the European Union) increasingly suffer from a declining involvement by their citizens in the political process and a general weakening of the bonds that hold society together, this has kept the interest groups of the government of affirmative action policies in India bonded together. Here primarily SC, ST and OBC are strongly bonded and bridged together, and leaving Brahmins, especially women, excluded from social, educational, and economic engagements.

Are Brahmin young women falling behind in the stampede for qualifications and jobs? Are they suffering from new form of social, economic and educational disadvantages today? If one is to believe the Indian media, press and the social world research since the mid-1970s, then the answer to both the above questions is yes. There have been cases when SC and economically well-off OBC people have fraudulently used ST fake identity to get jobs in Bihar; one headline included, “44 Fake STs as Teachers” (Singh 2012). This research is significant because no research has yet been conducted on the upper-caste women in Bihar of north India.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

To access the previous research articles and their reviews on this subject in English, I explored the web sites of academic journals and articles at the National library of China, Beijing, during 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2013. I was interested in the recent academic articles that concentrate their study on the caste-based problems in northern India. I limited my search for the materials between January 2009 and December 2013, with the keywords (e.g., Dalit, Brahman) and the keywords of the similar values if found in the title of the research articles on the academic journal database. Among these articles, some were not directly related to the research on rural women of north India and therefore were excluded from the literature listing (see Table 2). For example, Ram (2009) investigated the rationalization of gender

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TABLE 2. LITERATURE LISTING (N)

KEYWORDS	PROQUEST	EBSCOHOST: HIC	SAGE
Dalit. . . . .	2	37	23
Brahmin. . . . .	0	5	10
Brahman. . . . .	0	2	3
Caste. . . . .	0	32	38
Dalit Wom. . . . .	0	0	0
Brahman Wom. . . . .	0	0	0

and caste owing to resonant phrases in movies in one of the most influential southern provinces of India. Other articles such as those by Rao (2009), Pandey (2009), Devika (2013), and Kinra (2010) were not included as they were not directly related to the topic of investigation. One article focused on politics, caste and religion during the 18th century, another one was related to early modern India, and the other one was related to high-caste Hindu women in the United States. Similarly, one article was focusing on the immigration and caste-based society at in the United Kingdom. Seven articles were related to various kinds of caste-based problems in the Southern provinces of India, and four articles were related to the caste-based problems in Pakistan and Nepal, and hence were not reviewed.

The articles selected for literature review were mainly explaining the problems of Dalit people in India. However, none of the articles suggested the problems faced by Brahmin woman from the northern part of India, particularly from the province of Bihar. For example, Devika (2013) has pointed out that the Dalit identity politics has been perceived as a serious threat by Kerala's powerful left parties whereas the transformation of politics itself in the mid-1990s from the public action mode to the liberal mode was rejected by the Dalit and tribal communities. The government of India initiatives has been to abolish the caste system but the wrong implementation of the policies have encouraged the lower-caste people to keep their identity intact. Dr. B.R. Ambedker, in 1976, even asked his Dalit followers to enlighten the Dalit of greater values,

Through your literary creations cleanse the prescribed values of life and culture. Do not limit your objectives. Remove the darkness in villages by the light of your pen. Do not forget that in our country the world of the Dalit and the ignored classes is vast. Get to know intimately their pain and sorrow, and try through your literature to bring progress to their lives. True humanity resides there (Limbale 2004:50).

The extent of “Dalitization as an oppressed” is mainly based on the poverty, not on the social status. Brueck (2010) agrees that the Dalits have achieved striking success using new forms of literature as a vehicle for radical social change:

Dalit, no longer content to be represented by others, have now turned a critical eye on mainstream literature that claims to speak from a Dalit perspective. No longer wanting to be limited as objects of sympathy, revulsion, or desire, Dalit writers have embraced the call of Ambedkar to not only intimately reveal the pain and sorrow of Dalit lives, but more significantly also to bring progress.

In an academic sense, especially the attempt to demonize the Brahmins from the title of the article, “*Fighting Back: Good Dalits and Bad Brahmins*,” Brueck (2010) establishes the fact that academia is blind folded due to the plethora of research and literatures available in support of the Dalit community in India nowadays and how strongly Dalits and OBC have formed the social capital through Dalit literature.

The myth that the Brahmins are living a heavenly life established through these literatures is a stark example of partiality by the academic researchers, especially against upper-caste women who are constantly facing the fate of multilateral suppression. This also raises questions about how the research is conducted, and how the research papers are evaluated.

## METHODS

For this study, I used semi-structured interviews with long and extensive probing on political, cultural, educational and social advantages and disadvantages these rural Brahmin women perceive today. The information so obtained was starkly against the established presumption that the lower-caste people are the real sufferers in India. Fairbrother (2007:42) has rightfully stated that the qualitative method as the best fit for such small-scale research: “In the qualitative tradition objectivity is challenged, and the process of research and the facts it reveals are seen to be laden with values; qualitative approaches see researchers themselves as instrument of data collection.” The questions were asked in the colloquial language of the respondents and later were translated into English. The 20 recorded interviews were transcribed and prepared for coding.

Based on the Grounded Theory (Corbin and Strauss 1990) the themes were identified using NVIVO-10. The coding was performed upon four main axes: social, cultural, political disadvantages and disadvantage in terms of getting a livelihood



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TABLE 3. INTERVIEW DATA SPREADSHEET

PARTICIPANT	MINUTES
P1.....	140
P2.....	64
P3.....	48
P4.....	40
P5.....	46
P6.....	45
P7.....	49
P8.....	39
P9.....	52
P10.....	42
P11.....	53
P12.....	69
P13.....	41
P14.....	89
P15.....	63
P16.....	57
P17.....	43
P18.....	56
P19.....	43
P20.....	41
Mean	56
Standard Deviation	23

faced by them today. Being culturally very traditional, there were instances when my respondents found themselves culturally bound to not to answer some questions, especially if related to their marriage, husband and personal life, but simultaneously they did not hesitate to explain their political, cultural and

occupational expectations. All such unclearly answered data or not answered responses of the interviews were coded into the GreyZone (see Table 4). Proposed by Deng (1982), Grey System Theory has also long been used by social scientists to provide techniques, notions and ideas for resolving (analyzing) latent and intricate systems. The Grey System has been defined by Deng (1982:28-29) as, "Grey (partially informed) system theory focuses on the system, structure and event that fall in between the white (informed) and black (un-informed system) and has been widely used in social world research today." Liu and Forest (2007:117) have elucidated the use of Grey System Theory in sociological research as well:

The application scope of Grey System Theory has extended to industry, agriculture, social affairs, economy, energy, transportation, oil, geology, water conservancy, meteorology, ecology, environment, medicine, education, sports, military, legal, financial and other fields, and have resolved many practical problems in production, life and scientific research successfully.

TABLE 4. DIMENSIONS OF THEMES OF THE DATA (N)

NAME	SOURCES	REFERENCES
Grey Zone. . . . .	11	16
Themes of Disadvantage.	20	97
Demography. . . . .	17	101
Themes of Advantage. . .	13	34

To be more precise and to break the prevailing myth that Brahmin are living a heavenly life, I selected respondents from those Brahmin families who do not have any member working currently in the government sector. They were asked about their perceptions about the consequences they are facing and remedies they expect under these unfavorable social conditions. Noticeably, when asked explicitly, they seemed not to recognize the government favored schemes made for them. The themes induced from the data were embedded in the free nodes of NVIVO-10, as illustrated in Table 5.

## RESULTS

The findings of this study illustrate descriptions of the categories that emerged from the interview data and it also deals side by side how these categories are interrelated with each other. Apart from the demographic information that the informants have given in detail, I was also interested in knowing their educational

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TABLE 5. EMERGENT NODES FROM THE INTERVIEW (N)

NAME	SOURCES	REFERENCES
Advantage. . . . .	13	34
Demography. . . . .	20	97
Disadvantage. . . . .	17	101

qualification, dependency for living, income in Rupee (currency of India) per month, and the number of children they have presently. Educational qualification and income were further categorized as shown in Table 6. The dependency-status of the informants was further divided into two categories. Table 7 explains that the incomes are sparsely scattered with different degrees of educational qualifications of the respondents. The data indicate that the less educated women often have less income, and the older ladies have less income than the younger ones.

TABLE 6. INCOME RS/MONTH VS. EDUCATION (N)

	EDUCATION	UNIVERSITY	12-COLLEGE	8-12TH	1-8TH
Income. . .	20	0	5	5	10
Above 1500.	4	0	0	3	1
1500-1000.	3	0	2	0	1
1000-500. .	5	0	1	2	2
Below 500..	8	0	2	0	6

The data show the same kind of trend when education is compared with dependency for living, and income is compared with education. A matrix between their educational qualification and status of dependency is shown in Table 7. These patterns are discussed in the next section in terms of Conservation of Resources Theory and Social Capital Theory. The data collected for the rural Brahmin women identities were categorized into two distinct dimensions of advantages and disadvantages. These two dimensions were further categorized symmetrically into political, cultural, social and occupational themes. To respect the respondents' right to privacy, and giving due respect to the sensitivity of the informants' identity, as they have demanded, some questions were not further probed and hence some data were not obtained clearly enough to be categorized in any themes; these data were put into the GreyZone (Chandu 2013) (see Table 4). In terms of their identity as a rural Brahmin woman, the data show a distinct trend as shown in the Table 8 below, which clearly details that most of the women do feel they are culturally better, yet they do even more strongly feel that they are socially and politically backwards.

TABLE 7. DEPENDENCY VS. EDUCATION (N)

	UNIVERSITY	12-COLLEGE	8-12	1-8
Self-Dependent.	0	2	1	0
Dependent. . . . .	0	3	4	10

Lastly, if we could recall from the Table 4 above the informants have clearly reported themselves more disadvantaged if their response is calculated in terms of their rural Brahmin women identity. The perception of being the disadvantaged was proportionate to the decrease in educational level (see Table 8).

TABLE 8. EDUCATION VS. THEMES OF ADVANTAGE (N)

	UNIVERSITY	12-COLLEGE	8-12	1-8
Grey Zone. . . . .	0	0	0	2
Political. . . . .	0	0	1	0
Social. . . . .	0	1	1	3
Cultural. . . . .	0	3	2	6
Occupational. . . . .	0	0	1	4

Contrary to the trend of perception of being disadvantaged with respect to the educational qualification, the perception of being disadvantaged was strongly related to decline in income of the respondents (see Table 9).

TABLE 9. : EDUCATION VS THEMES OF DISADVANTAGE (N)

	UNIVERSITY	12-COLLEGE	8-12	1-8
Grey Zone. . . . .	0	3	3	4
Political. . . . .	0	4	8	7
Social. . . . .	0	3	6	8
Cultural. . . . .	0	3	6	6
Occupational. . . . .	0	4	8	6

There is an acute anger in these rural Brahmin women toward the government policies and they find the negligence of government in policy making responsible for their marginalized plight today. One respondent explains her perception in tears, "Being a Brahmin woman, we could not get along with them and live the way they live. We pay three times more than Scheduled Caste students for admission in schools, for job applications and we have the same income as that of theirs. They have 'reservation', and you know, government make their home. Do we...?" The perception of economic deprivation is acutely high in them (see Table 10).

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TABLE 10. INCOME VS. DISADVANTAGE (N)

	OCCUPATIONAL	CULTURAL	GREY		
			ZONE	POLITICAL	SOCIAL
Above 1500.	5	3	1	19	12
1500-1000. .	6	16	1	24	1
1000-500. . .	5	14	3	5	8
Below 500.. .	4	6	5	8	6

## DISCUSSION

The data and its varied projections in terms of advantage and disadvantage has brought the realities of these Brahmin women against the prevailing myth in the academia that presumes them to be wealthy and privileged. Keeping a very direct interface with the data, a constant comparison between the prevailing presumption and the reality about these Brahmin women are discussed in this section.

There is a wide spread myth that Brahmins are at the top of the caste system forming the most dominant group in the social hierarchy (Ashwini 2001; Brown 2000; Dumont 1980; Mitra 1992) in India. India, as a democratic republic values the number of votes. This number is exercised as an index of dominance in the politics by choosing the representatives of one's caste (Sahay 2004, 2010; Srinivas 2002). This dominance as a numerical strength in democracy like India defines the orientation of the policy initiatives taken by the government: "Dominance is constructed through a range of measures, including numerical strength, and economic and political power, but it is also contested" (Sahay 2010:412).

Based on the theory of Conservation of Resources, individuals with greater resources are less prone to resource loss and more capable of resource gain, and those who lack resources are more prone to resource loss and less capable of resource gain. SC and ST are no longer the un-wealthy sections of India. To conserve their resources and privilege they side with OBC to form one interest group to retain and protect the affirmative actions taken by the government for them. This dominance is quite visible at the lower levels of society. One respondent reports, "If I go out they behave in a very un-civilized way. They knowingly want to quarrel with us and take us to the police station. They are in all offices and government departments. They insulted me on caste line and all standing there sided with their caste." On the grass roots level this solidarity of SC and ST with OBC has endangered the normal life of the rural Brahmin women in India.

The World Bank (2011) defines social capital as the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions...it is the 'glue' that holds them together. Acknowledging the fact that concept of social

capital is misused, the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) has given credence to social capital in three categories: bonds (personal relationship), bridges (social network), engagement (civic engagement) and norms (trust and cooperation). The OECD (2011) also points out that almost by definition, tightly knit communities, such as some immigrant groups, have strong social bonds, with individuals relying heavily for support on relatives or people who share their ethnicity. Simultaneously, their lack of social bridges can turn them into eternal outsiders from wider society, sometimes hindering their economic progress.

One response here indicates the misuse of social capital intertwined with technology, for example, mobile phones,

They use abusive words and do not know how to respect relationships. I really do not want to talk to these people. Why should I put my life in danger? If I go for college they would call each other on phones and would gather together to taunt on me. There are so many in numbers. I do not have any cell-phone, could not find anyone for help. Why my brother does not do such things to girls? They do not have good intentions towards us and our family.

One respondent who is 29 years old and is a widow explains her social status as, "Your brother (her husband) died last year. I am left with two children and have the responsibility to take care of them. I could not eat everything, could not wear everything as I have restrictions."

A widowed Brahmin woman does eat (vegetarian) and wears the simplest clothes after the death of her husband. It is a wide known culture of Brahmins. Those who make the rules must be pure (Quigley 2012:123). A 36-year-old dependent woman reports, "It is not good to be Brahmin. They comment on us if we eat meat. They abuse us. My husband has opened a small shop even that is criticized by these lower caste people. They told my husband either you work like a priest or you sell things; could not do both." Many respondents have shown this kind of trend from the people around indicating as if the social agencies and services want these Brahmins to remain as "Brahmins" only. More important, these rural Brahmin women are not aware about the government policies or schemes implemented for women and girl children in the state of Bihar, India. In most of the cases they think the schemes are only made for the SC, ST, and OBC,

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They have everything better than us, and government gives them. They have home, food and even jobs. I have three children. Two of them are not able to study because of money. We asked the school headmaster for stipend. He replied we do not have schemes and funds for Brahmins.

### *Gaps in Government Initiatives*

The government has implemented some schemes and programs targeting rural areas, often for the lower-caste people. For example, Jawahar Rojgar Yojna (also called Gram Samridhi Yojna) (JGSY 2013), which is in effect since 1989 to help SC and ST groups, reserves 30% of jobs for women in the rural area. Planning Commission Report PEO Study No 147 (Government of India 2002) reads,

Though the people below the poverty line were the target group for employment, the preference was to be given to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and freed bonded laborers. Thirty percent of the employment opportunities were to be reserved for women in rural areas. Gram Panchayats were to be involved in the planning and implementation of the program.

Another government plan called Swarnjayanti Gram Swaazgar Yojna, (SGSY 2013) was launched in April 1999 by the central government (funding 75%) with the collaboration of state governments (funding 25%) to provide self-employment facilities to the rural people. Introduced as a holistic plan to eradicate the poverty from the rural area; the scope of this program offers major benefits to the SC and ST in the rural areas. It covers the families below the poverty line in rural areas of the country, but provided these families come from the lower caste. SGSY (2013) has quantified the objective of this program as,

This programme covers families below poverty line in rural areas of the country. Within this target group, special safeguards have been provided by reserving 50% of benefits for SCs/STs, 40% for women and 3% for physically handicapped persons. Subject to the availability of the funds, it is proposed to over 30% of the rural poor in each block in the next 5 years.

Irrespective of the fact that the Bihar government has launched new programs and schemes for rural women, these schemes are not reaching the rural Brahmin women.

At the ground level the government employees are mainly from the lower castes or other backward classes who have been getting reservations in government jobs ever since India got independence. To conserve their resources these employees use nepotism and side on the caste line while distributing these funding. One respondent in tears reports,

They would push us, abuse us and if we just open our mouth they would shout for SC & ST case. We are truly even afraid to talk to them, they abuse when they spot us. Could we leave home in such circumstances? The schools are made especially for them, most of the teachers are from their community, and head master is from their community. For one certificate we need to pay them twice more than what lower caste students pay them. No one is for us, no one is from us.

Paxton (1999) has indicated that the basic components of social capital as social contacts, trust in other people and trust in institutions. While scrutinizing the favorable cases of literacy rates, longevity, and infant mortality rates in south Indian state of Kerala, Heller (1996) shows how that the state government initiatives as a social capital has played a crucial role in causing these results, by creating the conditions that enabled subordinate social groups to organize in their collective interest. Unfortunately, the problems of Brahmin women in Bihar have remained un-addressed by the government policies in India.

## CONCLUSIONS

Due to multiple layers of deprivation arising from the caste kinship between the SC and the well-off OBC as interest groups of reservation policies, unfavorable government schemes and programs, traditional values of culture, and the gender-based discrimination have made these rural Brahmin women one of the most segregated and disadvantaged groups in India today. They are forced to and destined to live a marginalized life. According to Rational Choice Theory one should assume that each individual is a rationally self-interested and utility maximizing agent, besides his behavior and transactions are driven by the interests (Clements 2005; Rawls 1993, 1999). When opportunities are provided according to the caste then the government policies could hardly reach them. It is the demand of the hour for the government at central, provincial, district and even rural levels to take initiatives for the Brahmin women residing in the rural areas of India. Reservations in education, jobs and other affirmative actions taken by the



government have been translated into interest to form the interest group, and as a resource to conserve it has made the rural politics quite detrimental for the upper-caste Brahmins. Being traditionally employed as priests or teachers these Brahmins are forced to lose their occupation and dignity today. The state government must take initiatives to reach this deprived lot directly through its schemes and program.

Lastly a question that deserves to be the core of the answers of all the questions presented above, “Who should be offered the economic and social opportunity to live a dignified life, a woman or a Dalit?” The type and the quality of education is one of the most important factors that determine the economic-competitiveness, health and hygiene of the society (Shaw 2011), but due to the wicked problem of caste-based preferences these rural Brahmin women have become the most deprived section of India. Nevertheless, no one could disagree with the fact that women need preferable actions from the society to live a dignified life due to biological and socio-cultural reasons in all kind of societies on the globe.

#### AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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## APPENDIX

List of semi-structured interview questions:

1. How do you feel when you go for job opportunities with a rural Brahmin Identity? (Probing)
2. What is your status as a rural Brahmin woman as compared to other caste woman? (Probing)
3. Which government policies you are benefited with? (Probing)
4. How advantaged or disadvantaged you feel while as a Brahmin women in terms of social, cultural, educational, political and opportunities for livelihood? (Probing)