
UNIT 2 CASTE, CULTURE AND RELIGION

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a social phenomenon. Every year lakhs of women are subjected to a wide spectrum of violence, ranging from rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dowry murders, sati, witch hunting, dumping of harmful contraceptives, homophobia and lesbian suicides, to dispossession and displacement, denial of wages, rejection of authority as Panchayati Raj representative, caste and communal violence, atrocities during armed conflict and civil strife and so on. According to the National Crime Records Bureau in 2019, the rate of crime against women in India that mainly included cruelty by husband and his relatives, sexual assault, kidnapping and abduction, rape etc. was registered as 62.4 (per lakh women population). Such documented and undocumented forms of violence indicate intricacies of violence as social structure that controls and subjugates women repeatedly and with social sanction. The social institutions of caste, religion, and culture, along with other institutions like family and state are pivotal in instigating, shrouding, and justifying violence against women from different social groups. They make possible most egregious forms of violence that seem a blot on humanity. Even though law seeks to protect women and penalize violence against them, albeit limitedly, the structures of caste, religion and culture make justice and dignity elusive for women. In this unit we will deal with the above-mentioned issues and its relation with violence.

2.2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this Unit, you are able to:

- Analyze the intersectionality between caste, religion, culture and patriarchy;
- Relationship between violence caste, religion and culture and
- Know the impact of caste, religion and culture on laws.

2.3 CASTE, RELIGION, CULTURE AND PATRIARCHY

You have already read about patriarchy and its ideological point of views in the unit 1. Patriarchy is a persistent system of exploitation of women upheld through coercion as well as consent of people, and even women. People accept patriarchal practices that oppress women, knowingly and unknowingly, and consider those as ‘normal’, as part of the culture. This masking of social power that underlies the violent patriarchal practices is a masterstroke of patriarchy. The social structures of caste, religion and culture facilitate such consolidation and naturalization of patriarchy. In this section, we would try to understand these institutions first.

2.3.1 Caste

Caste or *jati* is a pattern of hierarchical organization of society into units fixed by birth, and defined by endogamy i.e., marrying within the group. It is widely understood in terms of the dichotomy of ritual purity and pollution. This implies that the castes considered ‘pure’ are entitled to and have monopoly over varied forms of social interactions and resources, whether access to get water or to get knowledge. While those considered ‘polluted’ are confined to most degrading and dehumanizing occupations. Thus, caste is a system of graded inequality. It means that every caste loses some rights and entitlements as one goes downwards in the caste hierarchy. The sufferer at the bottom of this hierarchy are also divided because of unequal burdens and benefits. The idea of ‘dominant caste’ points out that in the local contexts, castes are ranked in terms of material wealth and coercive political power. A distinct marker of separation amongst castes is untouchability. Those marked as ‘untouchable’ are relegated to certain disabling differences: landlessness and bonded agricultural labour for survival, spatial segregation preventing access to common resources, and widespread practices of exclusion and humiliation. Caste exists in modern India not as a vestige of past tradition, but as an enduring, pervasive and adaptable social phenomenon, despite myriad changes over the centuries. The experiences and mobilizations of ‘lower castes’ have underlined caste as a system that institutionalizes humiliation (Jodhka, 2015). They have pointed out varied practices of everyday disgraces and humiliation of Dalits such as casteist insult and abuse, sexual shaming of women, assertion of caste power by denying them riding a horse or wearing shoes in upper caste localities and so on. Caste rests

upon the sexual regulation of women, and inscribes the ideas of chastity, honour and propriety of women. It disciplines women through endogamous marriage and differential rules of mating and lineage. Thus, women of 'high' castes are confined to irrevocable, monogamous, chaste marriage, and their relationships with lower caste men get severely penalized. While 'low' caste women are subjected to the secondary forms of marriages and sexual exchanges that mark them as available to the 'high' caste men. Caste further governs women, their sexuality and labour through the caste based sexual division of labour. It condemns 'low' caste women to the dehumanizing and forced sexualized labour that generates everlasting stigma. Thus, as pointed out by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, women are the gateways of caste system. The concept of Brahmanical patriarchy (Chakravarty: 2006) brings out how the hierarchical caste system and patriarchy reinforce and reconsolidate each other in complex ways by controlling sexuality, reproduction and labour of women. In the following section, you will read on the role of religion.

2.3.2 Religion

Religion refers to the collectively shared system of beliefs and practices of people concerning supernatural beings, sacred and spiritual things. It also includes moral prescriptions and world views about human relationships, rituals for symbolic communication, institutionalized knowledge and doctrines, and specialists dealing with philosophical as well as mundane issues. Religion is not merely a personal matter of faith and worship, as is popularly assumed, or a transcendental, mystical phenomenon. It enables people to pursue material interests, and steers economic and technological changes. Religion is rather interwoven into the very fabric of social life across different material domains such as food, arts, education, economy and law. It has not disappeared with the modern rational thinking; rather it has recast its strong hold in the society. It acts as a mechanism of social control in private as well as public realms by sanctioning dominant practices and ideas that seem sacrosanct and immutable being rooted in faith. Religion then becomes a conservative force that creates false consciousness, and mystifies the real material relations in the hierarchical social order. It makes virtue out of suffering in the unequal world through mystical ideas, and justifies it. Yet in the everyday lived social experience, religion has also been a pathway to social change and progress. India has a long and multi-faceted history of religious diversity that has existed with state secularism in modern times. There has been fluidity in religious faith and practices allowing for religious syncretism, and religious conversion (Robinson, 2004). Nonetheless, there has also been ethnicization of religious boundaries rigidifying communities and identities based on religion. Religion is expressed thus in exclusionary and partisan terms leading to communal divisions and discrimination, and the politics of religious majoritarianism dominates in the democratic society. Religion often exalts women as the bearers of its essence and purity, and prescribes norms that bind them in submission. It creates the notion of ideal womanhood that subordinates and regulates women, and sanctions patriarchal ways of life, and gendered divisions. The religious politics instrumentalizes women to produce communal tensions, sidelining the concerns for women's emancipation. At the same time, women across the

world have struggled to draw from spiritual and religious spaces to voice and pursue liberatory possibilities, like other socially marginalized groups. From Buddhist *Theris-Bhikkhunis*, and *Bhakti-Sufi* women saints, to women's groups reinterpreting Quran, women have found an anchoring point in the religious imaginaries to challenge the patriarchal norms. In the next section, you will read on culture.

2.3.3 Culture

Culture is a field of patterned meanings created by people as members of society. It is articulated diversely as arts and architecture, or customs and lifestyle. In such dominant terms, culture is perceived as civilization or heritage emphasizing unique and distinctive features of the society. Simultaneously, it is identified *as the* tradition that remains unchanging for time immemorial, and is passed down across generations. While the former definition distances culture from the so-called unsophisticated masses, the latter separates it from the present (Ghosh, 1996). However, culture is a vehicle through which people communicate meanings, make sense of the world, define values and norms, and construct their identities. It is not as static way of life or a bounded entity, as denoted by generationally inherited customs or 'high' refined traits. But it is a constantly changing, dynamic and heterogenous arena in which actors continuously struggle and reconstitute patterns of expression and creativity. Culture is not merely symbolic or mystical, but embedded solidly in the social world. It encompasses everyday quotidian life and ordinary practices and ideas. It denotes the production of a complex whole of symbolic and material relations through human agency. Thus, culture is placed in opposition to what is natural and biological. When framed as civilization or tradition, culture is considered as an inner, interior attribute of the society, as against the outer, exterior social world. It is then sought to be preserved against any change and diversification, sometimes leading to cultural fundamentalism. Historically, women across the world are treated as the torch bearers of culture, representing its essence. In India, given its colonial past, the claims about its cultural superiority have imbued the identity of the nation, as against the material progress of the west. Hence performance of culture in its so-called purest form against the forces of transformation has remained women's responsibility. This means women as the emblems of culture are celebrated in the singular frame and are subjected to stringent regulation and policing to ensure their purity. Women have to therefore navigate the cultural terrain, accepting as well as negotiating, modifying, mocking and even resisting the dominant cultural meanings. Thus caste, religion and culture are key social institutions impacting women and their lives. Caste has persisted as a discriminatory and exploitative system institutionalizing and justifying violence against women in general and Dalit and 'low' caste women in particular. The hierarchical division of caste is generated and legitimized by religion. Religion, in its communal articulation has continued to divide and oppress people, though it is also pursued for the possibilities of liberation of women and the downtrodden. Culture is a contested terrain of both normative and creative practices in which social power is consolidated as well as challenged. Thus, caste, religion and culture work in conjunction with each other and form a tried in reinforcing multiple

social hierarchies, by sanctioning its exercise in the everyday contexts. Let us read in next section on patriarchal violence.

Check your progress-1

- 1) *Discuss caste, culture and religion in your own words.*

2.4 PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE

Like caste, religion and culture, violence is a social institution. It is not a random, individual phenomenon resulting from psychological perversion or derangement of some men. Nor is it an aberrant act deviating from social norms and values. It is rather an institutionalized feature of society that routinely recurs over time and space, and is permitted and made possible through social rules. It is a social structure, like family or state that upholds and makes acceptable the dominant social order (Walby, 1989). Violence thus can be defined as a constellation of social relations of force and coercion that produces hurt and injury to those who are at the bottom of social hierarchies in its exercise of power. Women restrict themselves, or get restricted even in anticipation of violence. Thus, violence impacts women's actions and lives even when it is not actively used by men against them. For example, women's mobility in public space is regulated as the public sphere gets marked as dangerous for them as the site of violence. Or Dalit women are confined to the stigmatizing low paid occupations like manual scavenging or agricultural labour, as transgression of the division of labour implies harsh penalty. Rather violence undergirds the very mechanisms of women's protection and safety. The protectionist approach is embedded in the cultural ideals of women's respectability and vulnerability that limit women's mobility, dignity and freedom. Violence manifests in varied forms as a tool of political, economic and cultural power. The state monopolizes on terrorizing people through police brutality and stringent laws. The cultural practices of non-elites are disparaged as trash and women artists as vulgar. A coercive control over land, resources and livelihood marginalizes Dalits, tribal and Muslims. Rather the systems of dominance oriented towards capitalist accumulation, exploitation and colonization are predicated on violence against women (Mies, 1986). The forces of modernity have reformulated blatant and horrific violence against women, notwithstanding the assumptions about its decline in the civilized societies, or its shift towards regimes of discipline and securitization, from that of retribution. In this section, we would discuss how violence in modern times is normalized and made acceptable through the triad of caste, religion and culture. In the next section, let us try to understand institutionalization of violence against women.

2.5 INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Caste, religion and culture justify, normalize and mask the violence against women as social institution. They play key role in normalizing violence in the collective consciousness of society by separating selectively only some forms of violence as reprehensible and therefore punishable as crime (Kannabiran, 2016). Many other forms of violence are vital to the dominant social order governed by this triad in its exercise of power. They therefore remain tolerated and unpunished by the society. The interplay of this triad unfolds in varied types of violence against women, spectacular and mundane, public and private, collective and individual, physical and psychological, material and symbolic. On one hand there is spectacular violence that is overt, immediate, and extreme and erupts into public visibility as horrific. This includes collective violence of riot, lynching, 'honour killing', gang rape and bodily mutilation and so on. It involves individualized forms of spectacular violence such as acid attack, or women' killing out of power relations and patriarchal reasons. Such spectacular violence is generally recognized as crime, though it may also be defended indirectly. On the other hand, there is every-day covert violence trivialized as ordinary, which may not get recognized as violence and crime at all. Even when it may be legally punishable, it is often socially tolerated or even sanctioned. It includes different practices of violence, from the private acts of wife battery, or coercion of detrimental birth control measures, to the public acts of sexual harassment at workplace, schools and colleges, or humiliation and harassment of Dalit *sarpanch* women. These different forms of violence are institutionalized through varied cultural practices.

Caste system is predicated upon reproduction within endogamous heterosexual marriages to ensure purity of castes. Though violence against women is mediated through cultural practices, violence is not merely cultural in a narrow sense. It has material underpinnings. The culturally sanctioned violence is constituted by the material conditions which are dynamic, and specific to time and space. For instance, the custom of witch-hunting branded women as witches or evil spirits is seen as an embarrassment for modern rational society labelling tribal culture as superstitious and backward. However, in central and eastern India is linked with the curtailing of property rights and sexual autonomy of women, especially of widows and single women, within the changing economy marginalizing the tribes. The violence against women is of intersectional nature. The intersection of gender with caste, class and community produces variation in the practices of violence experienced by women of different castes and religious communities. There are distinct patterns of violence that dalit women are subjected to within Brahmanical patriarchy, ranging from hateful and derogatory slur, eviction from their land, coercion of work without wages, to sexual violence, imposition of 'prostitution' and so on (Aloysious, Mangubhai and Lee:2011). Significantly, women from the marginalized communities have stood up with courage and resilience against this violence, asserted their right to be treated with equality and dignity, and refused to have their life and aspirations

restricted by caste norms. For their flouting of abusive caste norms, they however face retaliatory violence by the dominant castes. Ironically, when the issue of violence against women came to be politicized by the early women's movement, the shared common experience of women of violence came to be invoked. The specific and distinctive nature of violence against women from the socially marginalized communities remained obscured then. Thus violence, its myriad forms, and differences and similarities experienced by women of different social groups, emerge as a social institution governing social life and exercising social power (Rege, 1995).

2.6 WOMEN: RESOURCE FOR COMMUNALIZATION

Women are seen as the symbols of caste and religious community, and embodiment of its honour. Their bodies have continued to be battlefields for shaming the 'other' community. Historically women have been routinely subjected to brutal violence during caste and communal riots. The horrific violence of partition that accompanied India's independence has been one of the major episodes of communal violence scarring the life of the nation. People became citizens of new nation-states experiencing trauma and pain of physical assault and bodily mutilation, sexual violence and torture, uprooting and eviction from one's own land and home, dispossession, loss of family and friends, betrayal from people considered one's own and so on. But the violence does not end here, as its memories have continued to trouble individuals and communities. The effects of such gruesome violence unfold in the everyday experience of pain and suffering of the survivors, in their subjectivities. The survivors cope with, endure, work through, break apart, and transcend, traumatic violence. Its traces are visceral in their local worlds, interpersonal relations, and individual lives, long after such tragic events (Das, 2006).

While this violence perpetrated by the 'other' community has garnered attention, the one employed by one's own family and community is erased. What one witnesses in the instances of communal violence is fear, not about women losing their home and lives. But even in the midst of most devastating carnage, there are specific anxieties about women losing their purity and honour, if sexually violated by men of the 'other' community. With such panic about defilement of community, women came to be killed by their own families and communities to protect their honour. The devaluation and elimination of women's autonomy and lives in this violence gets masked under the cloak of their heroism. This has led to a long silence about partition as people are unable to confront the horrors of partition (Butalia, 1998). It is not just due to trauma and shame about the violence and humiliation experienced by them, rather of their own entanglement in violence as passive bystanders or aggressors, even in case of their own intimate people. However, along with this victimization of women, their complicity and consent to the violence against the 'other' religion or caste is a significant, but neglected fact. In case of communal and caste violence, women are found to be not just passive witnesses of public violence, but also

active and direct participants and instigators. (Menon, 2012). Women are thus a crucial tool of communal violence. The invocation of violence against women acts as a relaying point leading to eruption of animosities across communities and violence of avenge. Rather violence against women, its memories and even rumour about it has become a resource for communalization, or the othering of castes and religious communities. The stereotypes about the 'other' community are constructed through women and violent regulation of them. As pointed out by Charu Gupta (2009) the deployment of women and their sexuality was central to the emergence of communal tensions.

2.7 CULTURAL IMPUNITY AND MISRECOGNITION OF VIOLENCE AND SUFFERING

The triad of caste, religion and culture, by making violence against women 'acceptable' to the society, creates impunity i.e., exemption from punishment for even most gross acts of violence. One form of impunity that has remained largely intact over period is the one against violence within marriage and domestic arena. There is vehement refusal, both legal and social, to recognize marital rape, despite women's struggles to foreground it, even within child marriage or separated couple. This underlines how the institution of marriage is guarded as a bastion of husband's sexual right over wife. Similarly, the defence of father's right over unmarried daughter, even adult one, masks the familial violence in the name of honour, in case of elopement of daughter for inter-caste marriage and so on. Notwithstanding the legal punishment of domestic violence, the impunity to it persists through the cultural ideals of masculine desire and conjugal relationship shared widely across the patriarchal societies. (Geetha, 1998). Cultural practices and symbols bring alive the norms governing sociability across castes and religions. They uphold the social order that privileges 'upper' castes and majority religious communities, and mediate social relationships amongst them pertaining to food, spatial organization, sexual and affective intimacy and so on. These practices create boundaries of good and forbidden; attraction for and inclusion of the prescribed social relations, and then exclusion of and revulsion for what is prohibited (Geetha, 2016). For examples. caste specific food practices or endogamous desire are viewed as good, while the food practices of the 'other' or inter- caste marriages are considered forbidden. This interplay of desire and disgust is rehearsed in everyday ordinary contexts, and manifested in terms of routine discrimination and degradation against the social inferiors. Further any transgression of these boundaries meets with violent penalty which seems acceptable. The violence of both, the imposition of boundaries and punishment for its infraction gets misrecognized either as social rule or as socially appropriate penalty. It therefore masks the pain and torment of survivors of violence. The violence and sexual violence thus, have pedagogical function of socializing and disciplining people into caste norms. This means that the violence against women gets recognized in the dominant social order only when it is perceived as dishonour of women, family and community, as emasculation

and humiliation of men considered as their guardians. The everyday violence of boundary making remains illegible. So, in case of rape of Dalit women, individual crime may get recognized if it is spectacular and overt, but hardly as a caste-based atrocity, as a systemic issue. What is therefore needed is to detect and then to challenge the impunity to this everyday violence that undergirds the spectacular violence. We need to identify the seemingly innocuous practises of habitual cruelty and humiliation against social inferiors which are produced for consolidating boundaries of caste, religion and gender. An insidious outcome of this impunity is the division between 'good' and 'bad' women. While the former is seen as pure, innocent and violable, the latter are seen as promiscuous, uncontrollable and hence not-violable. Sexual violence is based on the logic that categorises women in misogynist fashion. The chaste women whose sexual violation is recognized as rape, and unchaste women whose sexual violation remains unrecognized as rape.

Pratiksha Baxi (2000) points out how the anti-rape law is imbued with an implicit sexual contract. This contract between men and the state entails that some women are made available exclusively to some men, their husbands, and hence their sexual abuse by other men gets avenged as a breach of this contract. While other women are treated as sexually available to all men, not just in marriage but also outside of it, and hence their sexual violation gets glossed over. This impunity to sexual violence against 'bad' women is produced through the double economy of caste that works in complex ways. This sexual circuit allows sexual appropriation of dalit women as the right of 'upper' caste men, while enforcing caste purity through intra-caste marriage especially for 'upper' caste women. This institutionalized sexual privilege of 'upper' caste men is a public secret, defined into dalit women's sexual subjectivity (Rao, 2009). Such impunity produced through cultural ideas and practices are harder to break. The impunity that operates widely through caste, religion and culture, thus entailing failure to restore justice to the survivors of violence needs further attention. Let us learn in the next section on legal terrain and the triad of caste, religion and culture.

Check your progress-2

- 1) *What do you mean by patriarchal violence.*
- 2) *Discuss the various dimensions related to institutionalization of violence against women.*

2.8 LEGAL TERRAIN AND THE TRIAD OF CASTE, RELIGION AND CULTURE

Legal intervention into the relationship of violence with caste, religion and culture is complex and contentious. On one hand, modern law is a secular, universal tool to eradicate violence entrenched in caste, religion and culture. On the other hand, the law also reiterates, directly or indirectly, the violent

practices orchestrated by this triad. The caste and cultural norms further slip through law and produce impunity to certain practices of violence against women, while penalizing only some.

Firstly, even in democratic India, religion has retained its hold over law through personal laws. Religion based personal laws emerged in India in colonial times, to claim autonomy of the Indian tradition in private familial realm, without any intervention from the colonial state. As we saw earlier, anxieties for the protection of culture from western onslaught has been overpowering in the Indian society. Interestingly these personal laws are not a simple codification of religious commands. They are retained through a complex process of rationalization by the secular state. They are disempowering for women, keep many religious practices that dispossess, discriminate and degrade women that are also under challenged. Moreover, inequalities in these family laws are further translated into the inequalities in other legislation pertaining to nationality, violence (domestic violence and rape) and employment law. Such legal plurality where the secular universal law coexists with religious law is justified on the basis of group rights of religious communities. It creates an environment where group rights as caste or community are upheld at the expense of women, their integrity and autonomy, and even lives. Similarly, caste, religion and culture have held its sway through parallel informal system too. They govern social life through localized extra- constitutional bodies such as *jat* panchayat (caste council), *Khap* panchayats (clan-based council), or *shalishiadalat* (community council). A resurgence of such extra- legal entities and their moral pressure is linked with an attempt to create semblance of continuity and order in the globalizing time of fundamental transformations, uncertainties and turmoil. In such turbulent times, the upward mobile castes and religious communities seek to strengthen their unity and exercise their influence as the self-proclaimed arbiters of justice. Thus, very skewed sex ratio in north-western India has led to difficulties in finding socially appropriate, endogamous brides for men confronted with the crisis of masculinity. This has entailed re-emergence of *Khap panchayat* seeking stringent regulation of women and their sexuality in the region (Kaur, 2010). These Kangaroo courts exercises legitimacy in rural as well as urban environments across India, and function as regulatory mechanisms with somewhat formal structures of customary authority. In the process, they subvert the democratically elected *Panchayati raj* institutions. They impose their 'order' through social boycott and fines, and archaic punishments humiliating those flouting their orders, even sanctioning murders or 'honour killings' of runaway couples marrying across caste or within 'gotra'. These entities seek to impose repressive customs by issuing orders that govern the everyday life, such as ban on women using cell phones or wearing jeans. Their enforcement of orthodox customs like 'virginity test' of new brides became controversial, and came to be denounced publicly. However, their routine organization of matters regarding family or livelihood, such as stigmatizing sexual labour of erotic dancing and entertainment to which women of their communities are relegated, gets unnoticed. Although women and young people have dared to challenge the writ of these bodies, the state bodies including police, village, and even the

family have been complicit in their violence.

Certainly, law has aimed to eradicate culture specific practices of violence. In India, the specific violence intersecting with caste and religion is brought in the legal ambit through 'Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989'. This legislation is exceptional in spelling out and creating mechanisms to penalise common practices of everyday cruelty and humiliation of SCs and STs. However, there have been constant attempts to dilute such measures seeking to prevent community specific offences. Even the bill 'Prevention of Communal and Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparation)' had to be withdrawn many times. This bill aimed at protecting religious and linguistic minorities including SCs and STs from the communally organized and targeted mob violence and hostile environment, but did not see light of the day. There are some central and state legislation that target harmful cultural practices such as dowry, forced child marriage, sati, devadasi or ritual dedication of women to the deity etc. Yet human rights activism advocates bringing many other practices such as witch hunting under the legal purview. The legal identification of cultural practices as violence is a complicated issue in India. This needs to be seen in the context of colonial politics when the cultural traditions of the colonized came to be implicated with violence against women. The practices of Sati, female infanticide, child marriage, devadasi, and so on came too highlighted, on one hand in the civilizing mission of the colonial state as the markers of barbarity and backwardness of the Indian culture. On the other hand, the project of modernization of the new middle classes strived to reform the socio-cultural practices in the process of making-of-the-nation. Ultimately, women, their status and violence against them were reduced to be mere ground on which the colonial politics played out. While the questions of women's survival, dignity and equality came to be over ridden. Even in contemporary times, the imperialist claim to be the saviour of 'third world' women have come to blame the oriental cultures and sought their civilizational upliftment. Such sensationalized and tingling narratives about the savage violence of dowry immolation, 'honour' killings etc. stigmatizes global south, and further leads to exclusion, policing and torture of its people. In the process the continuities and discontinuities that the violence experienced by the 'third world' women have with that experienced in the 'first world' remain unaddressed. The legal space addressing patriarchal violence is thus troubled by caste, religion and culture in subtle ways.

2.9 LET US SUM UP

The relationship of violence with caste, religion and culture is a tricky issue. What is distinct about it is not that this triad consolidates violence as an institution with social sanction, and incites specific forms of violence against women from different castes and communities. But that it justifies most inhuman and shameful violence, blames the victims, facilitates its repetition, normalizes it in the collective conscience, and even valorises it. The impunity crafted through the social relations of caste, religion and culture justifies perpetrators of violence by misrecognizing the quotidian violence, and

refuses to listen to the suffering of victims, isolating them. It is therefore imperative to name and foreground this connection of caste, religion and culture with violence against women so that the claims for protecting religion or culture can be nullified in the struggle against violence. In order to strengthen law as a subversive tool for elimination of violent practices, its underpinnings in this context need to be challenged. Thus, the ability to question these interconnections on time and again will help to justice and dignity for women to some extent.

2.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the intersections of caste, religion and culture and patriarchy. Give examples to support your arguments.
- 2) Analyze the impact of caste, religion and culture on law and its relationship to violence against women.
- 3) Discuss the impact of caste, religion and culture on laws.

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