Exploring Narratives of Victimization, Resistance, and Resilience Among Dalits Using Thematic Analysis

Aritra Mukherjee[1], Garima Agarwal[2], Charvi Tandon[3], Aakanksha Meena[4]

Abstract

Despite an increase in representation in politics and other fields, Dalits face structural violence in Indian society. There is limited psychological research on how Dalits make sense of their victimization and cope with and resist casteism. This study investigates the experiences of Dalit individuals in India, focusing on their experiences of caste-based victimization, resilience, and resistance in urban spaces. The study uses a qualitative approach to study the narratives of these individuals, highlighting the juxtaposition of victimhood narratives against resilience narratives. The data of 13 Dalit participants, collected using a semi-structured interview schedule, was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2019) reflexive thematic analysis method. Two main themes were identified that indicated the 'ways of victimization' and 'ways of resistance and resilience' in the experience of Dalit participants. Sub-themes identified under the theme 'ways of Dalit victimization' are microaggression, deficit intergroup contact, upper caste disgust and shame among Dalits, and stereotyped assumptions. On the other hand, sub-themes under 'ways of Dalit resistance and resilience' include education, reclaiming classroom space, affirmative action, confronting individuals, having aspirations and generating solidarity, dismissing merit, and an appreciation of ancestry. The analysis also highlighted notions of Brahminical colonization and establishing ingroup indigenization. The findings shed light on the varied forms of collective resistance/ resilience, especially focusing on the underpinning psychological processes.

[1]PhD Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, University of Delhi
[2,4]Independent Scholar
[3]PhD Research Scholar, Department of Liberal Arts, Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad

Corresponding Author:
Aritra Mukherjee
E-mail: aritraduphd@gmail.com

Keywords

Dalit narratives, caste victimization, Dalit resistance, collective resilience, reflexive thematic analysis

Introduction

Caste is an inextricably linked system of labor that is impossible to evade and is distinguished by its "graded inequity" (Ambedkar 1936). Power, privilege, and access to riches were all governed by caste (Deshpande 2010). The Indian constitution implemented a substantial measure to address caste inequalities by granting employment and educational reservations to scheduled tribes and scheduled castes, colloquially referred to as Dalits. The majority of upper castes continue to view caste as a rural concern. This, meanwhile, is the opposite of reality. Caste oppression not only persists but also transitions from overt discrimination to a multitude of microaggressions inside urban environments (Jogdand 2023). Caste may function as a kind of invisibilization in metropolitan areas, such as in neighborhoods where Dalit households are unable to afford the basic necessities of life (Mandal 2020).

Empirical investigations in the field of social psychology indicate that structural violence targeted against marginalized social groups is seldom tolerated without eliciting opposition and resistance (Rosales & Langhout 2014). Even in the face of the most terrible circumstances, disadvantaged community people maintain their potential for resistance and resilience (Leach 2020; Jogdand, Khan & Reicher 2020). Similarly, among Dalits and lower castes, caste inferiority is questioned and resisted in the form of rage, pride, and assertion, as opposed to being passively accepted (Jogdand et al. 2016; Jogdand 2023). Moreover, social psychology's emerging study on collective victimhood has enhanced our comprehension of victimization and resistance (Vollhardt 2020). Significantly, Leach (2020) has illuminated the psychological foundations of the "affective politics" of collective victimhood through the use of an appraisal technique that emphasizes the vital significance of meaning-making in individuals' collective victimization experiences. Nevertheless, this body of literature has paid scant attention to caste-based oppression and resistance (see also Jogdand 2023; Jogdand, Khan & Reicher 2020).

This article examines the recollections, exclusion, violence, and lived experiences of caste-based structural inequities among Dalit participants via the lens of narratives detailing victimization, resistance, and resilience. Hence, beyond investigating the manner in which individuals belonging to the Dalit community encounter victimization, this study seeks to comprehend the means by which they navigate the daily occurrence of casteism, the sources of motivation they consult, and the strategies they implement to oppose and fortify themselves.

Collective Victimhood: Consequences of Structural Violence

Structural Violence Encountered by Dalit Community and Students

Structural violence (Galtung 1966) is a form of violence that involves reduced access to resources and occupation of space. It is classified as direct violence, where the perpetrator is known, and carrying insidious violence, where the system or ideology is difficult to hold accountable. It can lead to learned inferiority, vulnerability, and loss of identity. Structural violence (Scheper-Hughes 1996) can manifest as everyday violence, where violations become part of people's reality. Moreover, this operates within the caste system, through hierarchical stratification, and violence against those who try to break the status quo. Furthermore, caste oppression is a vehicle of structural violence, and it significantly impacts socio-psychological dimensions, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (Sawariya 2021). Marginalized caste groups and the Dalit community experience lower mental health, including social isolation, anger, withdrawal, low self-esteem, and poorer well-being (Johri & Anand 2022; Pal 2015). Mental health issues faced by marginalized caste groups are not addressed due to institutional denial of caste-based discrimination and lack of caste-centered therapy (Komanapalli & Rao 2020). Despite this, caste has still not found its place in psychology, with only a few psychologists working towards and on it (Sawariya 2021; Jogdand 2015).

The upper castes' access to education, influence, and privilege is starkly compared to the Dalit community, who must prove themselves in a system they cannot control (Deshpande 2013). In addition, marginalized caste groups and Dalits become "hyper-visible" as soon as they avail reservation, whereas the upper caste becomes the de facto meritocratic, caste-less outgroup (Deshpande 2013; Kumar 2022). Further, the lack of caste in the curriculum creates a lack of engagement with Dalit students' issues (Sawariya 2021). Subsequently, this raises issues of representation in policy spaces and everyday media. For instance, according to Oxfam India (2019), there are no people from scheduled castes or scheduled tribes holding any of the 121 leadership newsroom positions surveyed. The mainstream media also limits itself to portraying caste characters, presenting them as harmful, dark-skinned individuals, often gangsters or oppressed individuals needing saving (Kureel 2021).

Further, the upper caste lifestyle is sold as an escape from their own 'downtrodden' life and the only life worth living (Yengde 2018). This exclusion of the Dalit population and their negative portrayal is a double-edged sword that decreases Dalit individuals' self-esteem and increases upper-caste individual's confidence (Jaspal 2011). The events and activities can be collectively termed "microaggressions"—the experience of a normalized form of indignity through different modes of behavior expressed by the dominant group against the minority group individual (Sue et al. 2007). Microaggression and prejudice also serve to relegate minoritized individuals to the margins of society or an institute (Sue 2010). However, in psychological literature, less is known about how victims of structural violence, especially the caste system,

have resisted and developed resilience when combating structural violence in the form of caste.

Collective Resilience and Resistance

Collective victimization and collective resilience often go hand in hand—that is, they are 'two sides of the same coin.' Narratives of collective resilience could act like resources to fall back on (Selvanathan, Jetten & Umch 2023) in the face of discrimination and marginalization. Despite being scarce, psychological literature has explored how a victimized group's history includes collective resilience (Selvanathan et al. 2023). It has been seen that while being a member of an oppressed group exposes people to collective trauma, it can also promote psychological resilience by providing access to social support within the group (Muldoon et al. 2020).

While collective resilience and resistance have been documented in studies of trauma and victimology, the two terms are often used together or interchangeably, especially in the practice of 'everyday resilience' (Rosales & Langhout 2014). In this study, we would categorize resilience as a protective factor against the effects of the caste system, such as building caste networks. In addition, studies on resilience (Atallah et al. 2019) have pointed out that resilience is not just in the community's potential to bounce back but also in its ability to bounce forward through participating in meaning-making and confronting the logic of the oppressor in creative ways. Whereas resistance would be any action that challenges the will of the oppressor, i.e., challenges the Brahminical and casteist logic and practices. As a word of caution, it is difficult to demarcate the exact lines between resilience and resistance and to account for what precedes what. For example, a group that has been displaced would count on getting educated or using their education to overcome their circumstances as a form of resilience (see Datta 2017 on the Kashmiri Pandit community); however, a group that has been historically denied access and the right to gain education, i.e., the Dalit community, would count education as resistance against the oppressor.

Moreover, groups that encounter violence and injustice and undergo victimization often seek to redress and cope with their victimization (Vollhardt, Okuyan & Ünal 2020) in creative and effortful ways, leading to resistance and the development of collective hope (Braithwaite 2004). Resistance within marginalized caste groups and Dalits exists, and unsurprisingly, it's as old as the caste system itself (Jangam 2021). In the past and present, Dalits and other marginalized communities in the Hindu caste system have protested through the rejection of caste culture and Sanskritization (Mahalingam 2003). Practices such as Theyyam in South India have been protest sites for Dalit individuals (Ahammed 2019). Furthermore, engagement with victimhood by the Dalits has been agentic and active (Vyas & Panda 2019), which can be envisaged through political assertion in the form of demands or votes. Moreover, the Dalit Panthers movement in the 1970s popularized the term "Dalit," which was a protest against the Gandhian coinage of 'Harijan'. Thus, resilience emerges in the use of poetry in the movements by preserving and writing about experiential realities. Autobiographies and poetry have been avenues for individuals to highlight their pain,

anger, grief, and hope for marginalized caste groups. Additionally, presence of caste-sensitive movies and portrayals, as well as the internet used by Dalit creators are used to give rise to anti-caste movements (Kureel 2021). They have used the same media that misrepresents marginalized caste groups to find resistance and representation (Kureel 2021). Overall, highlighting individual, cultural, and societal differences in the ways of resisting and exhibiting resilience within the community itself.

Theoretical Foundation: Appraisal Model of Collective Victimhood

As highlighted in the above section, the Dalit community has engaged in diverse ways to handle caste oppression and also have experienced it in different ways. Moreover, they have appraised a diverse emotional range and thus, appraisal theory of understanding collective victimization has been employed in this research (Leach 2020).

The appraisal theory broadly focuses on the meaning-making process of a victimizing event and how the group copes with it. The theory stresses the role of intra-group heterogeneity and values diverse positions on a particular subject. Further, the approach highlights the agentic capacity of the individual in making sense of the event and their coping mechanisms with it.

Appraisal theory has two levels of the appraisal process: (a) at the primary level, it is about highlighting if the victimizing event is of importance to the group's goals or values, and (b) at the secondary level, people provide meaning to it in terms of assigning responsibility and consequence; the different emotional responses are also noted. Different coping strategies are formed depending on the group's capacity and resources, such as demanding acknowledgment, restitution, and collective actions (see Jeong & Vollhardt 2021).

The appraisal theory fits well with seeing how it can aid in explaining both victimization (stress) and resistance and resilience (coping) among different groups (Vollhardt et al. 2021) and is judged as an adequate lens to understand victimization and resistance in the caste context.

Present Research

To summarize the above discussion, existing research on caste has majorly reinforced stereotypes by focusing on pointed themes like reservation, poverty, etc.—pathologizing our/their everyday lives. Despite the historical trauma, marginalization, and victimization, Dalit Love and resistance persist, which is "a beautiful rendition of pain and joy, healing the past and getting consciously lost in a future of possibilities and faith" (Yengde 2020). Furthermore, it is imperative that we focus on resistance and resilience narratives that challenge sole narratives of victimhood. Given the scarcity of research on the everyday realities of life as a Dalit person, the current study set out to fill that gap while also focusing on aspects of resistance and resilience in their lives—to avoid the dangers of half-truths (Adichie 2009) of powerless victims, focus on disrupting these popular discourses, and, finally, engage in a process which

aids in de-brahmanizing and decolonizing caste (Ingole 2020). This study aims to explore processes of victimization and processes of resilience and resistance among Dalit community members at a collective level experiencing structural violence.

Research Questions

1. What does victimization mean to Dalit community members?

2. How do individuals from the Dalit community understand resistance and resilience?

3. What mechanisms do they employ to demonstrate their resilience and resistance?

Method

We employed qualitative methodology to report our work by keeping caste as the center of the historical context of the experiences of Dalit persons. To excavate the multiple realities of our participants, we employed the method of narrative inquiry, which advocates "pluralism, relativism, and subjectivity" (Leiblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber 1998: 2). Narratives are a discourse representative of related events in succession (Shkedi 2005). Narratives allowed us to understand the participants' worldviews because of the wide range of functions they provided. The participants' narratives allowed us to dream, hope, remember, love, learn, doubt, hate, criticize, and experience various emotions (Kim 2015). Further, consistent with the assumptions of narrative interviewing, the focus was on the narrator's personal identity, culture, and world view. Hence, narrative interviewing in the form of asking about biographical details was employed in our research.

Table 1: Paradigmatic Assumptions

Area	Assumptions
Ontology	Reality is rooted in one's historical and social context and is multiple, context-sensitive, and complex
Epistemology	Reality can be understood as is narrated by participants
Methodology	Narrative Inquiry–understanding discourses representative of connected events in succession, providing for the worldview of the participants
Method of Analysis	Narrative interviewing and Reflexive thematic analysis

Sampling: Recruitment and Participant Details

All members of marginalized caste groups and Dalits between the ages of 20 and 35 years could participate in this research. Participants were recruited through social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. An open invitation was prepared where we highlighted our purpose, aim, and what kind of questions would be asked and would not be asked, such as our insistence on describing events of

discrimination and trauma that were not to be given undue focus. This was our attempt to offer participants transparency about our research process.

While recruiting, we only asked for the initials and the last two digits of the participants' phone numbers as identifiers. We requested that they provide any contact details they were comfortable providing. In keeping with this, we have not changed or given pseudonyms but have used codes and revealed as less as possible so that they do not become easily identifiable.

We conducted thirteen interviews with participants between the ages of 20 and 35 years, of whom six identified as men, six as women, and one as non-binary. Our participants are all third-generation Dalit community members; third generation here denotes persons whose grandparents were either young or unborn during the independence of India and the beginning of the affirmative action through reservations policy. Further, most of our participants were second-generation literate, and two were first-generation graduates. They were born into a generation that had availed of or knew about affirmative action policies in government jobs and institutions. The participants belonged to West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Delhi.

Table 2: Participant Details

S. No.	Participant Code	Biological Sex	Educational Qualification
1.	KI	Female	Masters/post-graduate
2.	AM	Female	Masters/post-graduate
3.	VS	Male	Bachelors/undergraduate
4.	SI	Male	Bachelors
5.	BI	Female	Masters/post-graduate
6.	AC	Male	PhD Scholar
7.	AT	Female	Bachelors Pursuing
8.	GI	Female	Masters/post-graduate
9.	SU	Male	PhD Scholar
10.	RI	Male	Bachelors/undergraduate
11.	SH	Male	Assistant Professor
12.	DI	Male	Bachelors
13.	JI	Female	Bachelors

Procedure

Step 1: Data Collection using Semi-Structured Interviews

One of the authors took on the immense task of educating her upper caste-community co-authors about their traditions, traditional practices, inside knowledge, and resistance practices that might have escaped the dominant caste author's gaze. Through a series of discussions, the following areas of Inquiry were identified: i) self and navigating everyday life; ii) cultural history and community practices; iii) creating their definitions of caste; iv) caste discrimination and their engagement; v) representation in politics and media; and vi) caste mobilization.

Each part of the research was vetted by people from the Dalit community,[1] as in Fig. 1, including a Ph.D. scholar working within this area for the last five years. They suggested that our DBA author be present in all of the interviews—with another UC researcher or alone at times. Out of the 13 interviews, our DBA author was present with a UC researcher, and in three interviews alone, as requested by the participants. Our interviews ranged from 1 to 2.5 hours.

Table 3: Examples of Semi-Structured Questions in the Study

Domain	Questions
Self and navigating everyday life	"How many times are you asked about your caste? ('*Aap kaunsi jaat se ho'? Yeh kitni baar sunne ko milta hai?*) "Where do you get to hear it?" "How do you see yourself and your group?" "What effort did you make to get yourself here?"
Cultural history and community practices	"How would you describe your community?" "What are the rituals and practices central to the group? Are some of them stigmatised?" "Do you do anything that your grandparents or parents used to do? How do you wish to preserve your family's legacy?"
Creating their definitions of caste	"What is caste to you?"
Caste discrimination and their engagement	"Have you or people in your life experienced caste atrocities?" "What have been some ways in which you felt discriminated against in everyday space?" "Have you ever voiced your opinion on it? Do you know of anyone who has done it in the past? How did that make you feel?"
Representation in politics and media	"Do you know of any actors and singers who are from your community? What roles do they get? Are they in the mainstream?" "Do you know of anyone from the Dalit community who is in the media?"
Caste Mobilization	"What steps has the state undertaken as a reparation for caste atrocities?" "Have you participated in any protests?" "Did your ancestors engage in any events to demand their rights?"

Step 2: Data Analysis using Thematic Analysis Framework

To analyze the obtained data, reflexive thematic analysis was employed, a framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). For this work, we used a constructivist approach that focused on privileging the participants' accounts and experiences as openly as possible and also accounting for our reflexivity. However, acknowledging that it was the researchers who deemed an account as resistance or a display of resilience, calling on the researcher's ability to evaluate how they have read resilience and resistance (see Yosso 2005; Rosales & Langhout 2020), to the DBA researcher, "You must be familiar with this..." to highlight their shared common identity of experiences.

Moreover, semantic and latent coding structures were utilized (Byrne 2022); a semantic level of coding was used in most cases, privileged by the participant's

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[1] In our research, we refer to our participants as Dalit. Conversely, when we mention 'upper' castes, we encompass all the predominant castes under this single term.

experiences. However, a latent level of coding was needed for some themes concerning shame and disgust, as participants highlighted the notion that something changed in their or the other's body, language, behaviors, and mannerisms but one that was hard to state explicitly in words. Moreover, for this article, the researchers used an abductive coding framework, i.e., the integration of deductive and inductive frameworks for coding (Thompson 2022). We have employed the Appraisal theory of collective victimhood (Leach 2020) and categorized the various themes into two broad domains: the ways of victimization and the ways of resilience and resistance. Victimization corresponds to the first and second levels of appraisal, whereas resilience and resistance are captured as coping strategies for victimization. This framework of categorization was previously used by Jeong and Vollhardt (2021) in their study of Korean newspaper coverage of the colonization of Korea in modern times. However, while these domains served as two repositories to categorize the themes into, the themes were inductively deduced and categorized into whether a theme aligned closer to victimizing narratives or if it aligned closer to resistance and resilience narratives.

Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend a six-step phase of reflexive thematic analysis. Phase one deals with familiarization with the data collected through multiple avenues. Each interview was transcribed, and the authors read and re-read the transcripts multiple times to find connections and use specific words. Important quotations deemed to be of specific interest to the research objective were highlighted.

The evaluation of each transcript resulted in the creation of the initial codes. Researchers aired their views but never overpowered them; they sought meaning in the data, and multiple interpretations of the same data were entertained and encouraged to generate codes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), coding reliability is not important for reflexive thematic analysis, but reflexive engagement with the data was given paramount importance.

By returning to the data numerous times and creating various tables and connections, the researchers generated and "churned" the final themes on the broad domains. Some themes and subthemes that were unique to one or two participants were also retained, such as the fact that female participants pointed out that Ambedkar is a feminist thinker, and two participants highlighted Dalit's indigeneity to aid in our understanding of multiplicities in narratives. Moreover, the guiding theoretical framework of appraisal theory and the domains of victimization, resilience, and resistance aided the researchers in selecting excerpts and codes that fit the themes encompassing these two domains. Furthermore, we did not focus on saturating our data (Braun & Clarke 2019) but on getting rich and complex narratives that help us understand the multi-faceted nature of victimhood, resilience, and resistance.

We acknowledge that in dense, experientially rich data, themes might often seem repetitive, and their boundaries blurred, but we have tried to keep close to Patton's (1990) dual criteria of theme building, such that themes provide a coherent and internally consistent account of the quotations from the data unique to that theme itself. The names of the themes and subthemes have also undergone revision, i.e., from stereotyped behavior to "challenging intergroup contact" to "deficient intergroup

contact," highlighting not only that intergroup contact is fraught with complexities but also that in many of these intergroup contacts, the Dalit individual is made to feel lesser and subjected to marginalization and stereotypes.
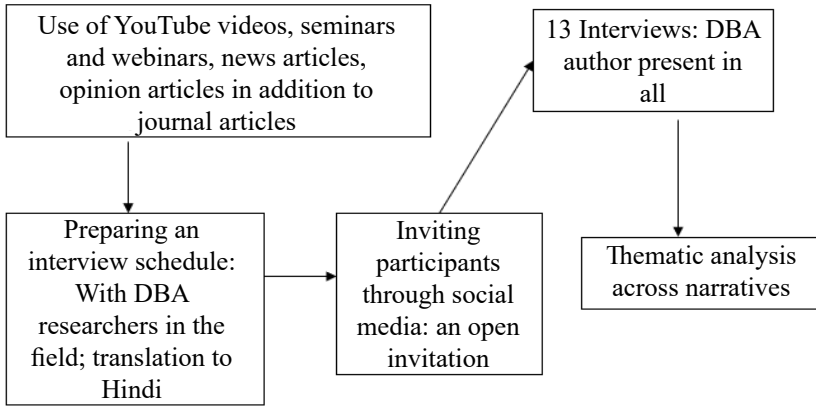

Figure 1: Methodical process

Researchers' Reflexivity

Through interviews with Dalit individuals, we witness narratives transform from discrimination and oppression to healing and trace the footsteps of growth. As one of our participants highlighted, it is often 'two steps ahead, one step back'. Hence, we see each interview as an act of trust conferred on us in which we are made to bear witness not only to their pain and trauma but also to their resistance. We are made to think about our complicity in the UC gatekeeping structures our participants pointed at. Through this endeavor, we also wish to move from guilt to action through engagement with our participants and our future commitments. Through their empathy and affective solidarity (Hemmings 2012), they are a testament to the project of Dalit Love (Yendge 2019).

By accepting the Dalit community's views of the UC community, three of our authors feel it is a beginning of decolonial and de-brahminical (Ingole 2020) healing, as well as where we take the opportunity to accept the sins of our ancestors. We heal by knowing that now we can confront our families, our relatives, and our professors who have for long denied Dalit achievements and caste in textbooks and syllabi (Kain 2022). For the DBA author, however, it represents a journey of acceptance of pain—a hope that coming together of the two ends is possible.

Findings

The themes identified have been conceptualized against the two domains of 'Dalit Victimization' and 'Dalit Resistance and Resilience Strategies,' as in Fig. 2. The victimization strategies correspond to primary and secondary appraisals. In contrast, coping strategies emphasize the later portion of the model (Leach 2020).
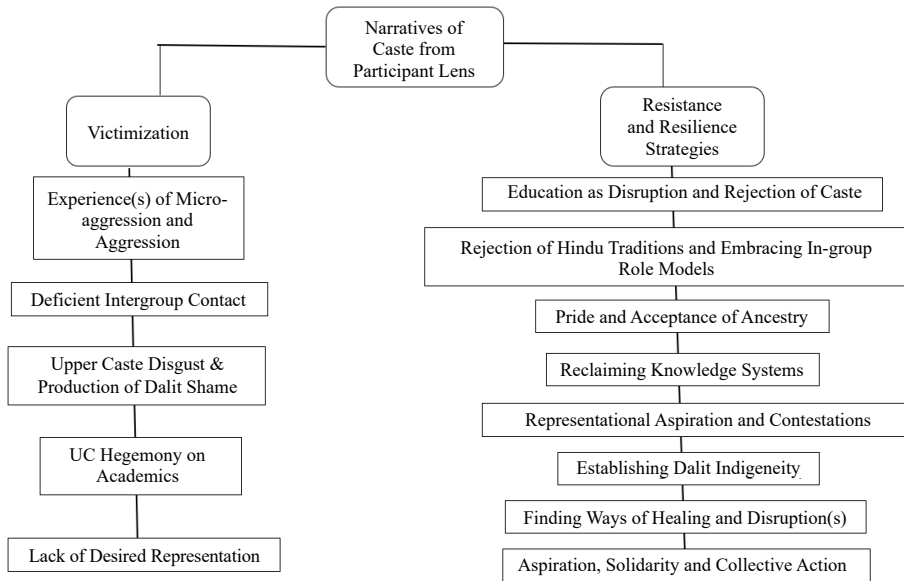
Figure 2: Thematic map of findings

Ways of Dalit Victimization

Ways of Dalit victimization have been conceptualized as everyday engagement with structural violence that leads to issues of esteem and also challenges access to resources. Moreover, victimization has been construed through the ascription of the events as 'unwarranted' and 'unjustified,' leading to feelings of being wronged and thus victimized. The domain of victimization comprises themes around experienced microaggression and aggression, experiences of 'outing,' embodied disgust by upper caste members, felt embodied shame as a result of disgust, and deficient intergroup contact with other castes. Furthermore, feelings of victimization increase with feelings of upper-caste hegemony in academia and a lack of representation in media and movies.

Experience(s) of Micro-aggression and Aggression

Microaggressions have been the source of humiliation among Dalit individuals (Jogdand 2023) and are one-way intergroup contact that occurs among different castes. This has been the case in this study, where participants noted that upper-caste people frequently use "casteist jokes" and "casteist slurs." One participant noted, "I felt really small when people cracked these jokes, and I had to pretend not to hear it or laugh about it" (BI, female), and another participant, after scoring poorly in semester exams, notes how an upper-caste colleague addressed the situation by stating, "…after this, don't say that I am a Dalit, and that is why discrimination is happening to me" (SH, male). Furthermore, it leads to an increased sense of prejudiced assumptions about the community and also dismissal of Dalit achievements, as one participant hints that "She (the professor) asked that how did I got the first division" (BI, female) or even

starting a sentence with the caste identity, "you are SC, how was your exam?" (AC, male). Additionally, the Dalit participants frequently heard words like "freebies" and "freeloaders."

Prejudiced assumptions about clothing and styling are realized through a certain sense of class and caste aesthetic, often attributed to caste labels like "dressing like a Bhangi" as one participant highlights: "There were girls in my class who came from villages and didn't speak English too well, and they were seen differently with comments like 'they are definitely from the reservation category, who has given them admission?'" (KI, female). Another participant has stated that the upper castes assign "facial" characteristics to certain castes. Hence, many Dalit individuals try to conceal their caste as much as possible, and the experience of being "outed" leads to stigmatization and a source of stress for these individuals as they know that once they are outed, their colleagues will treat them differently.

The tension to pass as an upper-caste member with a certain aesthetic sense has been documented by differentiating between a Dalit that belongs and one that does not, as one participant tells her upper-caste colleague of her caste identity who are quick to differentiate between those who look 'lower caste' and those who don't as they state, "no, but you are different; these ones look like they are from lower caste" (BI, female). The constant tension to 'pass' and also being constantly subjected to hearing stereotyped opinions about the community, "Look, he is a 'chamar,' they are speaking like 'chamars' how am I to tell them that I am also a chamar!" (AC, male)—this sense of stress can also lead to poor psychological well-being in the long run, as highlighted by a female participant: "It took a toll on the kind of people I was socializing with; I wanted to remain with the cool people." This suggests that identities are negotiated with a tension between their social location and the differential social location of upper-caste individuals.

Additionally, limiting them to the "upper-caste gaze" by making references to the social and cultural capital that members of dominant castes possess and separating the "good Dalit" from the "bad Dalit," who manifest themselves by looking like a Dalit (Dutta 2019; Jogdand 2023) are all examples of microaggressions. This has to be constantly negotiated with upper-caste individuals' desire to find and locate one caste; participants expand on instances when, following casual conversations, people would often enquire about their surname, which is one of the markers of caste, or ask about their father's occupation and ancestral village. This knowledge has multiple social implications, like friendship, marriage, and business, as hinted at by our participants.

Deficient Intergroup Contact

Intergroup contact is the phenomenon where two members of different identity groups engage with each other, popularized by Allport (1954) through the contact hypothesis, which asserts that prejudice and discriminatory attitudes are reduced by mere exposure and contact with another group member. While studies in social psychology have highlighted the beneficial potential for intergroup contact, our study has found that when Dalit members make contact with UC members, it has not been fruitful and

is frequently anxiety-provoking. Our participants have highlighted that upper-caste individuals are 'pathologically' obsessed with purity and often are uncomfortable allowing other caste members into their group. As a participant notes, "Once my uncle said that I will get married to a Muslim girl, that is fine, but an upper caste woman will not get married to me," (AM, female) perhaps the obsession with endogamy displayed by upper caste people has adequately captured this. Often, participants hear direct forms of discrimination, such as parents preventing their children from going to their (participant's) house. The different dining options at hostels for vegetarians and non-vegetarians highlight how reduced contact also comes in the form of purity practices. A participant highlights that contact can become psychologically violent given how upper-caste families treated them; he states, "Brahmin households, they wouldn't allow that kind of sharing from one plate to another plate, especially if somebody who comes from the lower caste, they wouldn't share because it's a question of purity and pollution" (AC, male).

Furthermore, while ingroup solidarity is encouraged for groups to function well, the nature of caste highlights that ingroup solidarity can exist within very insular small groups, which excludes other groups. Upper-caste solidarity often comes at the price of penalization for other castes. As one participant suggests, "They do not think twice before labeling a person from another caste, a criminal. They do not even consider if that person has committed a crime" (GI, female). Other participants highlight upper caste solidarity with people they choose to interact with: "They will talk nicely but only with those close to them, like Dwivedi (sic) will talk to a Tripathy and give jobs to a Trivedi" (AC, male). Hence, caste operates through an espoused level of castelessness in academic circles but gets practiced in pedagogy and social interactions (Kain 2022; Jogdand 2017).

Upper Caste Disgust and Production of Dalit Shame

This theme was challenging to define for the participants as their observation of disgust among upper caste individuals towards marginalized caste groups was at an embodied level, often given as a "look" or "gaze" mixed with "contempt." One participant states, "They do not say anything, but their expression changes. It becomes a judgment; their tone becomes judgmental" (GI, female). Another participant highlights how disgust is perceived through behavioral actions "The minute they find out who you are, they have this smirk as if everything has come to you for free" (BI, female). This embodied aspect of victimization is coupled with microaggression and feelings of inadequacy and humiliation experienced by the participants. Further, this disgust was associated with a strong sense of pride amongst the upper caste, which takes on an essentialist note (Mahalingam 2003), where Brahmins were attributed as thinking that they were superior just by their caste (Pathania & Tierney 2018).

Shame is a product among the Dalit participants through constant microaggressions, disgust embodied by upper-caste individuals, and dismissal of efforts made by ingroup members. It manifests as imposter syndrome, self-doubt, constant pressure to perform, feelings of space violation, and un-belonging to specific spaces (Kumar 2022).

Feelings of imposter syndrome, which were prevalent among most participants, made the feeling of shame worse. As one participant highlighted, "Always that feeling of being an imposter comes; if everyone is doing well and performing well, then why am I not able to perform?" (SS, male). Self-doubt can be a common manifestation of this, and often feelings of unbelonging are common, such as "I started doubting myself a lot, academically. I started feeling like all these people here have studied more than me and have got more marks than me" (AM, female). It might also increase negative self-fulfilling behaviors. As a participant highlights, "I would pretend that I don't study in public like I don't study, and then I would end up getting really good grades (BI, female)." This is often coupled with shame, and as it is felt at a physical level, the word embodied has been employed. As a participant points out, "I felt dirty from within" (KI, female). Shame can be understood as one way that humiliation manifests and could lead to negative self-esteem and other psychological outcomes.

Upper Caste Hegemony on Academics

Since most of our participants were post-graduates or research scholars, we noted an emphasis on how upper-caste individuals control academic spaces during interviews. This takes the form of espousing merit, cherishing meritocracy, dismissing reservations, and also the invisibilization of caste in syllabi in different fields (Kain 2021). Participants highlight that this leads to differential treatment of upper-caste students, as highlighted by a participant: "It is so conditioned in their minds from the very beginning of their education that somebody with a dominant upper-caste surname is very meritorious" (SI, male). Furthermore, this leads to a denial of the achievements of Dalit professors or professionals. As another participant highlights, "Reservation-availing professors have no merit; they have no standard; it's all a fluke" (BI, female).

Upper-caste individuals also signal caste blindness or deny caste in its existence: "I have been seeing that students are uncomfortable acknowledging caste, and they do not want to acknowledge it" (SU, Male). All of this leads to the dismissal of reservations, as it is seen as a way of getting "freebies." The lack of educational resources on caste furthers this: "We read so much on culture, globalization, and diversity, but why not on caste?" (KI, female) and further highlighted by its lack of appearance in the formal curriculum, as the same participant highlights, "Why is it not there in the syllabus? If it is not there in the syllabus, then how will the students point it out?" (KI, female). Historical denial also manifests in the removal of Dalit freedom fighters from syllabi, as one participant highlights: "Before, we did not have the opportunity to study; now that we do, then we see that our people are only not there (in books)." (VS, male).

Hence, caste to upper caste is only represented in reservations. As one participant points out, different castes experience caste differently, which leads to the dismissal of affirmative action efforts. "We talk about the pride of caste; we don't talk about the shame of caste; they don't know enough for them that caste equals reservation". Highlighting that while for upper-caste individuals' caste has served as a resource, and often in times of adversity, for lower castes, it has been a source of shame and humiliation passed on through generations. This creates a sense of historical denial over casteism and also a dismissal of the need for reservation.

Lack of Desired Representation

This theme pertains to media, books, and news channels. Dalit participants have highlighted that community narratives are either stereotypical or invisibilized, especially in the case of caste-based atrocities, as many participants have cited the lack of representation in media and newsrooms (Kureel 2021). One participant points out their frustration that those who have benefited from the caste system cannot appropriately represent caste issues. Further, they highlight that even liberal news reporters ignore the issue of caste, as one participant points out concerning the Unnao rape case: "Ravish Kumar (senior journalist), he has ignored Chandrashekar (Azad, a Dalit activist), he did not even show one second of his work."

Even in student politics, most decision-makers are upper-caste individuals, as participants highlight that only "Banerjees, Chatterjees, Mukherjees and Bengalis" are part of leftist decision-makers. Hence, caste is less discussed; when it is, it is in the light of the Savarna gaze (Kureel 2021).

Ways of Dalit Resistance and Resilience

The domain of resistance and resilience in this research have been used in conjunction, though differences exist, such that resilience is more of a protective process that aids a group in sustaining itself, whereas resistance is more of a process of confronting oppressive forces. However, some resistance strategies such as confrontation, political representation, and reclaiming knowledge systems also added to the resilience potential of the community, i.e., they engaged and created resistance capital (Yosso 2005). It is also important for us to point out that structural violence, due to its pervasive presence, is often negotiated at an everyday level, i.e., everyday resistance. Often challenging denial or forming ingroup solidarity in a climate that forces one to doubt oneself can be seen as emancipatory, resilience building, and honing resistance. It also increases the possibility of ingroup power and constructive power (Power Basis Theory by Bou Zennedine & Pratto 2017). This makes us think of these themes in the bigger picture of resistance that turns into resilience, which leads to healing zones like having goals and building caste-based solidarity against the larger political narrative of Hindu oneness, caste denials, and caste violence.

In this study, we identified the value of education and the rejection of the concept of caste. It also comes in the form of rejecting Hindu traditions and highlighting the role of sages who have mobilized for the cause of Dalits. Moreover, participants highlighted a movement from shame to pride about ancestry, seeing historical narratives differently, reclaiming spaces, and establishing belonging. Participants pointed out how Ambedkar is a crucial figure in their healing and that there would not be India as we know it today without Ambedkar.

As consistent with appraisal theory (Leach 2020), ingroup difference has existed in terms of mobilization and the role of politics, but most participants expressed gratitude that a political force does exist. Moreover, participants have demanded acknowledgment by reclaiming knowledge systems and establishing why they belong

in academia. Alternate ways of healing have also been highlighted through the internet, caste-affirmative therapy, and other psychological healing. Overall, it highlights that resistance by Dalits has been agentic and active (Vyas & Panda 2019; Hardtmann 2009; Yengde 2019).

Education as Disruption and Rejection of Caste

Getting educated is conceptualized as one significant way that discrimination can be challenged, as it also corresponds with the Ambedkarite doctrine of "Educate, Agitate, and Organize." Hence, the value of education has been highlighted strongly by most participants, as one participant emphasizes, "to be strong, education is the way, we need to gain knowledge" (SS, male), and some have highlighted that speaking in English is one way to confuse upper-caste individuals but a step towards social mobility. Moreover, a strong sense of assertion about academic ability was also present, as many participants clarified that they scored well if not outright as 'toppers' in their educational institutes. The value of education is one way Dalit individuals envisage social mobility and explore providing mentorship to fellow ingroup members once they enter the academy so that UC networks hold reduced power over them.

The rejection of caste takes place through rejecting the value of caste, rejecting the UC urge to locate caste, and rejecting stereotypes through confrontation through both assertion and humor. One participant said, "Once I was asked my surname, I said it is Singh" (SH, male). This kind of identity concealment or ambiguous surnames, as another participant possessed, allowed them to challenge caste location and point out the follies of the upper-caste individuals' attempts. Moreover, some participants reject the importance of caste by suggesting it is just a "label," and others have dismissed it as "nothing" in their lives.

Furthermore, when faced with casteism, participants have hinted towards direct confrontation with the casteist individual: "Dalit category people no longer sit and get hit but also counter nowadays; if they (upper-caste) hit one of ours, we also hit five of theirs" (VS, male). Whereas, in daily life, it could just be as commonplace as confronting a friend when they crack caste-based jokes or make prejudicial comments: "If someone is close to me and they make problematic comments, then I try to bring that up, like 'you know what you said bothered me, was offensive to me, and I hope that you don't say this again'." (AM, female). Interestingly, confrontations can also be humorous. A participant stated that they used to make fun of their casteist professors or students and used humor as a tool of resistance in their daily anti-caste practices (see Vollhardt et al. 2020).

There could also be instances of workplace discrimination, especially in academia, which has also been confronted. As a research scholar highlights, "I have fought against many casteist forces in my university, where they have casteist professors and students and taunt students from oppressed backgrounds" (SH, male). All these forms of resistance highlight everyday forms of overt and covert resistance that are often not easily captured in collective action literature (Leach & Livingstone 2015; Vollhardt et al. 2019).

Rejection of Hindu Traditions and Embracing Ingroup Role Models

It was interesting that participants signaled disillusionment with traditional Hindu gods but claimed to worship or have seen their parents worship gods and goddesses that cure medical issues or solve social problems like "Sheetla Devi." Further, one participant stated that Periyar's Ramayana must be read as it challenges the way most majoritarian Hindus see Rama. Some participants highlighted saints who have been influential in the emancipatory movements like 'Guru Ravidas,' which aspired for perfect equality among all beings, and one participant spoke of Bangladeshi saints such as "Guru Harichand and his son Guruchand," who mobilized against upper-caste hegemony in Bengal (Mukherjee 2018; Sinharay 2022).

However, some participants offer a complete rejection of religion or the importance of religion in their families. This is perhaps because it is through Hindu practices of karma that caste gets justified by upper-caste individuals. Participants have highlighted "my grandparents were atheists, and they followed no religion" (KI, female) and "I have become anti-god after reading newspapers and seeing what happens to our women" (SI, male).

Moreover, while there is a certain rejection of Hindu tradition, their source of hope is generated by looking up to Ambedkar as an ideal figure. Ambedkar, in the words of our participants, is seen to be a feminist, a guide, a reformer, as well as the maker of the nation-state. There is a strong sense of reverence for Ambedkar. "Babasaheb Ambedkar is worshipped and respected. We had bhajans on him and even songs" (VS, male). Another participant stated, "If you visit my house or my grandfather's house, there are so many photos of Dr. Ambedkar. He's not treated as a god but as somebody you look up to like a god" (AM, female). Moreover, other caste emancipators are also given importance in family functions such as marriage, as posited by one of the participants: "There will be Buddha's portrait, Dr. Ambedkar's portrait, or Savitribai Phule's portrait" (SH, male). Moreover, women participants hinted at Ambedkar's importance in bringing women's rights to India. However, a few narratives suggest that Ambedkar's ideas must also be questioned and challenged through a critical and moral standpoint that Ambedkar himself envisioned.

Pride and Acceptance of Ancestry

This involves appraising Dalit history as one of the producers and hard laborers instead of stereotypical notions that are associated with the community of 'freeloaders.' These challenge the feeling of shame experienced by our participants, as often shame results from feelings of inadequacy due to the lack of social and cultural capital that upper-caste individuals seem to possess (Alha 2018) and reclaiming and reappraising their ancestral experiences in a positive light can often serve to increase pride amongst the devalued group. They specify how they have navigated shame to pride over their ancestors, as the same participant states, "…I wouldn't invite anyone to meet her (grandmother), even if my grandmother were cooler; probably now I realize that my grandmother was way cooler than them (colleagues and classmates)," (BI,

female) and other participants have highlighted that their ancestors did not 'beg' for money but worked hard in their respective fields to earn their sustenance. Another participant discusses the negotiation from shame to no shame as an achievement and a form of healing with their identity "I no longer feel shame; even if I do not take pride, at least I do not feel shame. I am not demonizing my identity or accepting slang against my community," (AC, male) This highlights that a movement toward pride is not necessary for healing, but even movements that reduce shame and reduce the experience of humiliation could be equally valuable.

Moreover, success stories of parents and community are also seen as providing grounds for mentorship and serving as ideals for others to follow: "If I go to villages where the community is essentially Bahujan, then they are proud of my mother" (BI, female). Others acknowledged the space that Bahujan professors make for students. "He (professor) was very accomplished, but he made students feel like there is space for you here... Bahujan teachers make you feel that you belong." (BI, female).

Some participants have highlighted how they have been seen as role models themselves: "(a person to him) 'I didn't know that our community had such good people." He further added, 'I am happy to see you do research; good to see you reading and writing; just glad" (AS, male). Another scholar adds, "Since my joining as a professor, there are students who have become very confident because I have been teaching Dr. Ambedkar's idea of the annihilation of caste in India, I'm teaching Prof. Kancha Ilaiah's texts. Upper caste students are also joining the discourse" (SU, male)—highlighting how caste scholars have transformative potential themselves, de-ideologizing merit, and creating caste-sensitive spaces. Moreover, we also find the concept of paying back to the community as a strong motive in terms of the resources these participants had, and it could be in the form of using the internet to spread awareness, to the aspiration of being a mentor, and further, to help educate others (see also Sinha 2020). Hence, the goal remains one of social emancipation of the masses rather than only of a few select individuals.

Reclaiming Knowledge Systems

This theme focuses on highlighting the contribution of Dalit individuals, atrocities committed by upper-caste individuals, justifying reservation, de-ideologizing merit, and the importance of raising awareness among other caste members. Valuing reservation as just is seen as a continuous struggle, as participants have stated how there has been reservation for Brahmins in education for over 3000 years and highlighted its role in empowering the minoritized population. A participant said, "Reservation is a small part of caste; it is not a poverty removal drive, but it is about representation" (AC, male). Another participant mentions that it is necessary because they have never had access to the capital and network that upper caste individuals deprived other caste individuals of having. Hence, support for reservation is strong among Dalit individuals (Bhanot & Verma 2020).

This is also coupled with problem-awareness raising in themselves and others, generating a sense of pride among Dalit individuals. One participant adds, "If you look

at Dalit and Adivasi living and their practices, you would see that their food practices are democratic and nutrition-oriented" (SH, male). Further, the lack of Dalit freedom fighters is also a "we have to let people know that all fights and sacrifices were not made by upper-caste individuals, but also have been given by people whom you threw outside of your villages" (VS, male).

Moreover, justification of reservation follows de-ideologizing merit and redefining the markers of deservingness through notions of 'hard work.' A participant posited, "Lower-caste people have only used the help of their talent to come to this level and not availed other help" (VS, male), and another participant highlighted that even though their parents possessed all the necessary qualifications, they were subject to discrimination on both the gender and caste front, which led her to abandon the value of merit as proclaimed by upper caste individuals.

Establishing Dalit Indigeneity

The politics of indigeneity in India is complex and fraught with contestation and complexities; however, historical accounts of Dalit resistance and Adivasi resistance have highlighted that both groups assert and claim indigeneity in India (See Baviskar 2006 for an in-depth discussion on Dalit assertions of indigeneity). Two participants, in particular, highlighted that Dalits and Adivasis are the original inhabitants of India, and Brahminism is a foreign concept that has come through Aryan invaders. They point to caste movements that have been trying to establish Dalit indigeneity: "There is a movement, like the Aadi Dharam movement, that is trying to establish us as people of this land and that we are not Hindus but Aadhi Dharmis" (AS, male). Another adds, "My grandfather told me that we are against Aryans because we are the original inhabitants; basically, we are Dravidians" (AM, female). Both of these lines emphasize the Brahmin as a "foreigner' propagated through Aryan migration/invasion and that Dalits are either an alternate group opposed to the Brahmin or have existed before Brahminism took root in India. Both of these narratives highlight the wedge of Hindu unification that has persisted in modern nationalistic politics, and laying claim to indigeneity can also lead to political mobilization.

Finding Ways of Healing and Disruption(s)

In this section is highlighted the role of newer modes of voicing and healing that goes beyond the realm of collective action and politics and are often based at an individual level, such as propagating caste-affirmative therapy (Sawariya 2021), the use of the internet for communication, and internal psychological healing. For instance, one participant highlights that "caste-affirmative therapy accepts that these are my experiences and gives me the intervention. It gives me the freedom to tell the stories" (AM, female). The findings of Sawariya (2021), who emphasize that the psychology curriculum is caste-blind and frequently fails to account for Dalit experiences, support this and show the need for alternative spaces for these people to air their views. Other participants advocate the use of the internet and explain how it can be a zone of anti-caste politics: "When I started the anti-caste page, I wanted to talk; I had nobody

around me to talk about these things; I wanted to connect with like-minded people" (SI, male). The internet provides a safe arena to disclose caste and often find people who have similar thought processes, thus generating social bonds and cohesion. Another participant adds, "There is a lot of resistance on Instagram now; lots of pages are coming up; people are opening and talking about it; it gives me hope and a feeling that I am not alone" (AM, female). Hence, traditional invisibilization by media is countered through social media spaces where one can seek representation (Mehra et al. 2004).

Aspiration, Solidarity, and Collective Actions

These themes highlight the potential for the development of ingroup solidarity, establishing affective solidarity (Hemmings 2012), and future aspirations (Yosso 2005). Most participants highlighted the value of ingroup solidarity, which often takes the shape of understanding and empathy. One participant running an Instagram page states, "If you have empathy for the bottom of society, then you will understand the situation of your people" (SI, male). Often, it comes from solidarity through similar fate and experiences "My reservation friends, I can discuss my struggle or someone else's struggle or their struggle" (GI, female). Others have highlighted the value of community, stating, "I would probably be the same (with self-doubt and low self-esteem) had I not found a community" (BM, female). Participants have highlighted that anti-caste solidarity also involves questioning and challenging your own privileges and acting on the teachings and principles you claim to aspire to.

Few participants hinted at how they would teach their children differently so that they do not feel ashamed of themselves: "I will want to protect my children, but I will not fill them with shame about it. I will make them aware that there are certain castes, and you have to be cognizant of them" (AM, female). Most participants have highlighted the importance of teaching their children about the caste system so that they can navigate their experiences.

Representational Aspirations and Contestations

This was a contentious issue and brought forward substantial differences between the participants, highlighting that victim groups might appraise their victimization and the effectiveness of coping strategies differently (Leach 2020; Jeong & Vollhardt 2021). In media houses and movies, the participants have noticed a difference in how Dalit characters have been portrayed once a Dalit director is directing a film; as one participant points out, "Neeraj Gehwan (sic), the director of *Masaan*, takes out a casting call that is only for DBA members" (AS, male). Another participant highlights Neeraj Gehwan's (sic) influence on their lives: "The person who made *Masaan* also made *Geeli Puchhi*. After I got to know he belonged to the community, I saw his writings and his work, and I was filled with joy. Look at this man embracing it and killing it" (AM, female). Highlighting the space for radical hope, joy, and emancipatory potential that public figures and media representatives can bring to the community.

While representation in film and cinema has been viewed positively, politics, on the other hand, has been a challenging issue and is a contested area of Dalit aspiration and political movement. Dalit politics stand at a crossroads between young individuals such as Jignesh Mehwani, who mobilized Dalits for land in Gujarat, and Chandrashekar Azad, who is seen as a firebrand politician, and on the other side stand electoral party leaders like Mayawati. A participant stated, "I feel it's good that we have representation and young representation like Mehwani and Azad because the older generation is not very much in sync with the aspirations of young DBA members" (AM, female). While a difference of opinion exists, the Dalit vote bank is hailed as a feminist vote bank. As two participants pointed out, when the time came to choose a woman or follow a man, the Dalit electorate chose a woman in the form of Mayawati.

General Discussion

The current study analyzed how Dalit participants have understood their victimization, resilience, and resistance in their lives through narrative interviews, which were thematically analysed (Braun & Clarke 2006; 2019). The study presents a departure from previous studies on collective victimhood that have focused on intractable conflicts (Bar-Tal 2009) and have concentrated on structural injustices that affect a majority of people. Hence, in this study, the focus was on researching victimhood to explore how groups have actively resisted their victimhood through collective action and covert ways of resisting (Vollhardt et al. 2020). Like previous studies on colonialism (Jeong & Vollhardt 2021), we also find evidence of the primary appraisal process, secondary appraisal, and stress on coping strategies conceptualized as resistance and resilience against collective victimization in the context of structural violence.

We applied the appraisal theory to study collective victimization (Leach 2020) due to structural violence. We have found themes that highlight that the dominant outgroup is seen to be responsible for past victimization as well as continued victimization through acts of discrimination and microaggression. The article also sheds light on the 'pathological' desire of upper-caste individuals to control the Dalit body through ascribing certain aesthetics as well as desires to locate the caste of every individual, demarcating Dalit community members into Dalits who belong and Dalits who do not belong in certain spaces. The article also showed how different groups produce emotions in each other, as highlighted in Intergroup Emotions Theory, juxtaposing the upper caste member's disgust with the Dalit member's shame, which has been noted in the experience and propagation of prejudice and discrimination.

The article emphasized the varied forms of collective resistance/resilience, especially focusing on the myriad ways of fighting the devaluation of Dalit knowledge systems, Dalit individual's contribution to the freedom movement, and especially resisting the devaluation of their achievements. Moreover, it focused on ways of Dalit resilience through embracing their own identity, overcoming shame, celebrating their ancestry, aspiring to become role models for other Dalit members, and engaging in a project of radical healing and hope (French et al. 2021). Moreover, resistance was seen

through confronting microaggressions, valuing education, rejecting Hindu traditions, and embracing their own leaders, such as Guru Das, Ravi Das in the theistic fold, and Ambedkar in the secular fold. The study also highlights how Dalit individuals have creatively dealt with casteism by using covert ways of resistance, such as cracking jokes and not disclosing their surnames (Vollhardt et al. 2020). Moreover, the presence of aspiration and the desire to develop solidarity and engage in collective actions can be seen as avenues of resilience as well as healing, as they lay claim to a future that has yet to be realized. These allow the community members to restore their dignity, well-being, and self-worth.

Further, we find that the Dalit participants highlight the importance of proper acknowledgment through teaching history and drawing attention to their community's contribution to nation-building. In line with liberation psychology, Dalit groups have also stressed how important it is to "de-ideologize" both caste and merit, which is something upper-caste people have done to paint a stereotypical picture of Dalits. Further, this is one of the few studies exploring both psychological resilience and resistance (Sinha 2020) and victim beliefs among Dalits (Jogdand 2017; Nair & Vollhardt 2018). Interestingly, it also explores the importance of being heroes, role models, and community leaders, as that highlights long-term engagement with the problem and not a one-off event. It finds that claiming reservations can create a class of Dalit individuals who can potentially become mentors for future generations, and they can also aspire for social mobility. Hence, resilience is also one way to navigate the daily experience of humiliation (Guru 2009; Jogdand 2016).

Finally, it highlights that studies on minoritized groups should study how victim groups are replete with collective resilience and resistance resources, which traditional literature has hitherto underestimated (Leach & Livingstone 2015). Teaching about caste and acknowledging the historical effects of caste can be one way to have better interaction between Dalits and upper-caste individuals, where the upper caste is forced to recognize their violent past based on exploitation and oppression, forcing us to confront the insidious ways in which structural violence operates and victimizes.

Limitations

A significant limitation of this study has been that most of our participants were involved with academia as research scholars, graduate and post-graduate students, and professors. Hence, while not intended, the study has focused on caste resistance in academic spaces. Another methodological limitation is that these individuals were in contact through social circles or social media, where they ascribed a certain sense of anti-caste politics. However, many individuals facing discrimination may not resist or resist in the ways we have found in our study. Further, the research could also involve triangulation of methods, especially community-based participatory and action approaches, in understanding the effectiveness of different coping strategies within the ingroup and focus more on 'collective narratives.' While the lack of heterogeneity in the sample is a limitation, another limitation is the number of participants, which

prevents generalizability. However, research in qualitative psychology ascribes to different checks on the generalizability and validity of the data, which was firmly kept in mind (Tracy 2010).

Implications and Conclusion

The study also highlights the diversity of coping strategies within the community and how intervention in community resilience must also be multi-faceted, catering to the different needs of victim groups. This research is one of the many attempts to decolonize and de-ideologize Brahminism and caste discourse. Findings contribute to the larger discourse of anti-caste narratives—bringing their daily realities of hope and love to the forefront. It encourages sensitivity for affirmative policy and social action by problematizing the lens through which the Dalit community is viewed. Additionally, psychologists and educators can use the study's findings to develop curricula about caste and highlight Dalit individuals' contributions to community development and nation-building.

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