



F I E L D R E P O R T

Residential Segregation and Access to Basic Amenities: A Village-Level Case Study

Shamsher Singh*

INTRODUCTION

Residential segregation on the basis of social origin is a well-known fact of the Indian countryside. When the term “Scheduled Caste” was first used — that is, in connection with the Government of India Act of 1935 — one of the characteristic features of people of the Scheduled Castes was described as residing in “social and physical isolation from the rest of the community” (cited in Thorat 2009, p. 2; Sharma 1996, p. 2). As Sukhadeo Thorat (2009, p. 5) points out, “Scheduled Caste settlements in rural areas are generally characterised by relative segregation” (*ibid.*, p. 5).

This paper is a case study of how the residential segregation of Scheduled Castes (Dalits) in a village is associated with deprivation in access to adequate housing and basic amenities such as domestic electricity, piped drinking water, lavatories, common open spaces, street lighting, and drainage. The case study, based on Saaraspur village, Bijnor district, Uttar Pradesh, shows that Dalit and non-Dalit settlements are not just locationally separate, but are qualitatively different from the rest of the village with respect to living conditions.¹ The two main Dalit Castes in Saaraspur were Chamar and Balmiki, and the two main other castes in the village were Tyagi and Dhivar.²

Data for this paper comes from a survey of all households in the village conducted by the Foundation for Agrarian Studies in 2006 as part of the Project on Agrarian Relations in India (PARI) and from subsequent visits that I made to the village. Quantitative data on housing and other basic amenities were collected from the census survey of the village in 2006. Qualitative data were collected from my field

* Research Associate, Foundation for Agrarian Studies, shamsherbham@gmail.com

¹ Saaraspur is a pseudonym. I have also changed names of the individuals I have interviewed and quoted in the text.

² The spellings of various caste titles are taken from the official documents available at <http://socialjustice.nic.in/pdf/scorder1950.pdf>, <http://www.bcmbcmw.tn.gov.in/bc/faq/uttarpradesh.pdf>, and http://scholarship.up.nic.in/2007_08/list_obc.htm.

visits to the village, through group discussions and interviews with key respondents, panchayat representatives, and local development officials.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY VILLAGE

Saaraspur village is located in Najibabad block, Bijnor district, western Uttar Pradesh. The village did not have an all-weather pucca road at the time of the village survey in 2006. Work on the road started in 2011 but was still incomplete in November 2012. The village had a primary school and a middle school. Rice was cultivated in the kharif season and wheat and rapeseed were grown in the rabi (winter) season. Sugarcane was grown as an annual crop. The village is irrigated by canals and tubewells with electric connections, and major agricultural operations were mechanised.

Saaraspur Village: Some Social and Economic Features

Saaraspur is a multi-caste village. There were 110 households in Saaraspur village at the time of the survey in 2006. Dalits (Chamar and Balmiki) were the single largest social group in the village with Chamar households being the majority of Scheduled Caste households. Tyagi households constituted the economically and socially dominant caste in the village. They were the major land-owning caste in the village. Tyagi households comprised 28 per cent of all households in the village and owned 83 per cent of agricultural land. Dhivar (Other Backward Class or OBC)

Table 1 *Distribution of households and ownership of agricultural land by social group, Saaraspur, Uttar Pradesh, 2006 in number and per cent*

Social group/ caste	Category used in the analysis	Number of households	Proportion of total households (%)*	Land owned as proportion of total agricultural land (%)
Chamar	Scheduled Caste	36	33	4.8
Balmiki	Scheduled Caste	4	4	0.3
All Dalits		40	36	5.1
Idrisi	Muslim	13	12	3.7
Brahmin	Other castes	1	1	0**
Tyagi	Other castes	31	28	83.0
All Others/ Upper castes		32	29	83.0
	Other Backward Classes (OBC)			
Dhivar	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	24	22	8.2
Carpenter	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	1	1	0.0
All OBC		25	23	8.2
All		110	100	100

Notes: *Figures are rounded off. **This is a single-person Brahmin household settled on the village temple land.

Source: FAS survey data.

households could be characterised as poor and lower-middle peasant and manual labour households. Idrisi (Muslim) households comprised 12 per cent of all village households but owned only 3.7 per cent of agricultural land. Even though Idrisi households were cultivators, Tyagi households kept them at a distance in village life. Young Muslim men were engaged in non-agricultural occupations in nearby towns, for example, as painters at construction sites and other buildings.

Most Dalit households in the village did not own any agricultural land. Chamar caste households constituted one-third of all village households and owned only 4.8 per cent of agricultural land. All Scheduled Caste households constituted 36 per cent of all village households, and owned only five per cent of village agricultural land. Of 40 households, there were only four Dalit households, three Chamar and one Balmiki, that owned some agricultural land.

The proportion of literate persons in the age group 7 years and above was 58 per cent in the village. The corresponding proportion was 44 per cent for Dalits and Muslims, 51 per cent for Other Backward Class households, and 84 per cent for Others (FAS 2012, p. 35).

In general, incomes among Dalit households were low: 80 per cent of Dalit households (compared to 38 per cent of Other Backward Class and Other caste households) earned incomes below the official poverty line (Rawal and Swaminathan 2011, p. 123). Most Dalit workers were employed as manual workers in agriculture and some as construction workers in the vicinity of the village. Some Dalit households reared calves given to them by Tyagi owners; they sold the calves after two to three years and shared the gains from sale 50:50 with the owners. A few households had workers with salaried Government jobs.

DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGE SETTLEMENT AND HABITATION PATTERN

Figure 1 shows the residential location of different social groups in the village.

At the entry to the village from Madavli, the nearest town, a few Dhivar households live on both sides of the katcha road. Further down, there is a small cluster of Muslim households. At the time of my visit to the village in August 2010, the entry to the Muslim locality was muddy and full of sludge. The street that led to the Muslim area was on low land, and collected waste from neighbouring houses. There was no drainage in this area. The 13 Muslim households lived in a congested area with no open space.

A pucca brick road leads from the entry to the village towards the eastern side of the village, where Tyagi and Dhivar households live. This area of the village (one wide street) has more space and drainage facilities. The village ration shop is located here, as is the village temple, open only to caste Hindu households. There are no streetlights in this area but some houses have installed lights outside their houses.

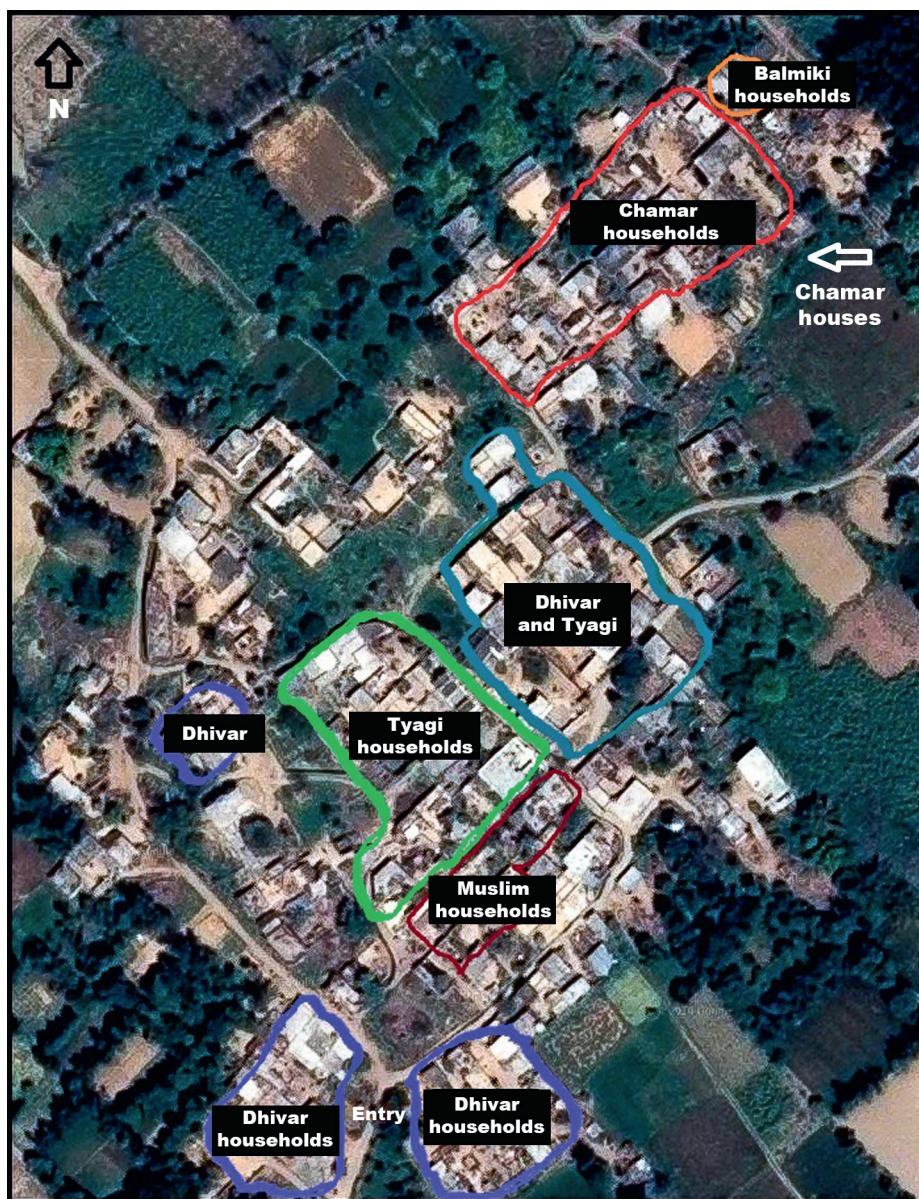


Figure 1 Settlement map of Saaraspur, Uttar Pradesh
Source: Google maps.

Further in, the central part of the village, which is on elevated land, is populated by Tyagi and Dhivar households. In this part of the village, there is a drainage channel built on both sides of a brick street, both constructed by the village panchayat a few years ago (Figure 2). Most houses in this area are pucca, i.e., made of brick, concrete, and cement and the homestead plots on which they are built are large. The houses have electricity connections, hand pumps, and piped water connections; a few have



Figure 2 *Street and houses in the Tyagi area, Saaraspur, Uttar Pradesh (photo by author)*

lavatories as well. Just a walk through this area shows that this part of the village has better public as well as private infrastructure and stands out in terms of living conditions.

Further north-east, there are a few Tyagi and Dhivar households (mostly Dhivar). A few Tyagi households have cattle-sheds in this part of the village. Though this area has pucca streets, drainage is not good and the area gets waterlogged in the rainy season. Other than these two major Tyagi and Dhivar settlements, a few Dhivar and Tyagi households reside on the western side of the village, near the agricultural fields.

Chamar households live in the north-eastern corner of the village. Their settlement is called *Harijan basti* (hereafter, Chamar/Dalit settlement). This settlement is completely separate from other settlements in the village, as shown in Figure 1. It is a low-lying area. Around 36 Chamar households live in this settlement. Four Balmiki households live at the northern end of the Chamar settlement.

The settlement comprises two main pucca streets and a couple of narrow katcha streets. When I visited the village in August 2010, the entry to the Dalit settlement was choked with waste water. There was no adequate provision for waste water drainage in these streets. Water from Tyagi and Dhivar settlements as well as excess water from neighbouring fields flows in here. A katcha drain flows through the



Figure 3 Interior of Dalit settlement, Saaraspur, Uttar Pradesh (photo by author)



Figure 4 An abandoned house, belonging to a Dalit household and damaged in the floods of 2011, Saaraspur, Uttar Pradesh (photo by author)

middle of this settlement. There is no street light and there are hardly any open spaces. The Chamar settlement in Saaraspur has neither electricity distribution poles nor piped drinking water supplies.

Krishan Kumar, a resident of the Chamar settlement, told me that the katcha drain did not exist a few years ago. During one monsoon, Tyagi households began to release excess water from their fields and, as the Dalit settlement area is a low land area, the water from the fields started flowing through it. Eventually, the drain became permanent and the water is two to three feet deep during the rainy season. Because of water from nearby fields this settlement gets flooded every year. During my visit to Saaraspur in November 2012, residents of the Chamar settlement told me that the previous year many houses were submerged when water was released from the fields by Tyagi households. The affected families had to vacate their houses and take shelter with their relatives. Krishan Kumar also told me that a few years ago a child from a Chamar household drowned in the drain. Neither the village panchayat nor the local administration was moved to action.

DIMENSIONS OF RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION IN SAARASPUR

A useful framework to study dimensions of residential segregation is offered by Massey and Denton (1988) in their study of racial segregation in housing in urban areas of the United States. Massey and Denton identified the following five dimensions of residential segregation: evenness, exposure, concentration, centralisation, and clustering (Massey and Denton 1988, p. 283).

Evenness: A minority group is said to be segregated if it is unevenly distributed over areal units that is, some groups may be located in a way that they are under-represented in some areas and over-represented in others.

Exposure: “Residential exposure refers to the degree of potential contact and interaction between groups within geographic areas” (*ibid.*, p. 287). For example, “Different groups may be distributed so that their exposure to other groups is limited by virtue of rarely sharing a neighbourhood with them” (*ibid.*, p. 287).

Concentration: Concentration refers to the relative amount of physical space occupied by a minority group in the living environment. Groups that occupy a small share of the total area in a city relative to their population strength are said to be residentially concentrated. The dwellings of minority groups may be “spatially concentrated within a very small area, occupying less physical space than the majority members” (*ibid.*, p. 283).

Centralisation: Centralisation is the degree to which a group is spatially located near the centre of an urban area.³

² In urban areas of the United States, African-American communities lived near city centres.

Clustering: Clustering refers to the extent to which areal or geographical units inhabited by members of the minority adjoin one another, or cluster, in space. According to Massey and Denton, "...when areal units inhabited by minority members adjoin one another, or cluster, in space areas of minority settlement may be tightly clustered to form one large contiguous enclave" (*ibid.*, p. 293).

Four dimensions of residential segregation of the five described above are, I argue, applicable to an Indian village. I discuss these four dimensions with respect to caste-based residential segregation in Saaraspur village.

Evenness

No household from any non-Dalit caste lived in the Chamar settlement. No Chamar or Balmiki household lived in areas where Tyagi and Dhivar households lived. Such was the unevenness of caste-wise distribution of households in terms of location of residences. Such a pattern makes settlements of different castes or groups exclusive to households of those particular castes or groups. Households of Chamar and Tyagi castes in Saaraspur were clearly segregated in terms of physical location in the village.

Exposure

Observational material on the exposure dimension of segregation confirms the relevance of this dimension. People belonging to the Tyagi and Dhivar castes, especially the Tyagi caste, hardly visit the Chamar settlement. Most Tyagi and Dhivar houses are located either at the entrance to or centre of the village. Their residences are near the main road. Chamar and Balmiki households hardly get a chance for social intercourse with the non-Dalit population of the village. The village temple, as noted earlier, is located in the Dhivar and Tyagi area and Dalit households are not allowed to visit the temple. Dalit households are not involved in any common socio-religious-cultural events of the village.

Mukesh Kumar, 24 years, an undergraduate student belonging to the Chamar caste, said:

People from our caste are not invited to village festivals, marriages, and other celebrations. Important decisions related to the whole village are taken by a group of people in that (Tyagi) area. Even the elected ward representatives are not consulted.

Concentration

The total area of the Dalit settlement was 61,000 square feet. The homestead area of Tyagi and Dhivar households alone was more than 600,000 square feet, of which Tyagis accounted for more than 400,000 square feet. The average extent of homestead land was 1600 square feet for Chamar and Balmiki households, 8400 square feet for

Dhivar households and 13,369 square feet for Tyagi households. One Tyagi landlord household owned a homestead plot (92,000 square feet) which is one and half times that of the entire homestead area of the Dalit settlement (60,000 square feet). Dalit households are concentrated in a relatively small physical space.

Clustering

Lack of enough residential space in the Dalit settlement causes clustering of dwellings within a small geographic area. This in turn affects households' access to amenities, living space, kitchen, lavatory, and bathing facility. As Table 2 shows, most Chamar and Balmiki households had single room structures. Dwellings were clustered next to each other in this area of the village. Cattle were accommodated in the living area, verandah or just next to the living quarters. There were no open spaces in the settlement and streets were narrow. On the other hand, Tyagi households had big homestead plots, separate plots for keeping cattle, and large open spaces.

As shown in the preceding description, four distinctive features of residential segregation identified in the international sociological literature — evenness, exposure, concentration and clustering — are very visible in the settlement pattern of Saaraspur village.

CONDITION OF HOUSING AND BASIC AMENITIES AMONG DALIT HOUSEHOLDS

Some features of housing and basic amenities of 40 Dalit households (36 Chamar and 4 Balmiki households) are listed in Table 2.

House Structure, Space, and Crowding

In India, the Census of India and National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) define types of house structure on the basis of type of material used in the construction of the roofs and walls of each structure. A major problem with the current definitions is that they do not take into consideration the material used in constructing floors. I have categorised types of structure from my data on the basis of the material used to construct roofs, walls, and floors.

Houses have been classified into three categories:

- Fully pucca: a structure that has roofs, walls, and floors all made of pucca/permanent material.
- Fully katcha: a structure that has roofs, walls, and floors made of non-permanent material.
- Non-pucca: a structure that has one or two components made of non-permanent material.

Table 2 Condition of housing and basic amenities of Dalit households living in segregated settlement, Saaraspur, Uttar Pradesh, 2006 in number

HH. No.	Caste	Number of rooms	Persons per room	Separate kitchen (Yes/No)	Type of house*	Latrine (Yes/No)	Electricity (Yes/No)	Water within homestead (Yes/No)
1	Chamar	1	4	No	Non-pucca	No	No	No
2	Chamar	1	3	No	Non-pucca	No	No	No
3	Chamar	1	8	No	Non-pucca	No	No	No
4	Chamar	1	6	No	Fully katcha	No	No	No
5	Chamar	1	1	No	Fully katcha	No	No	No
6	Chamar	1	7	No	Non-pucca	No	n.a	No
7	Chamar	1	5	No	Fully katcha	No	No	No
8	Chamar	1	8	No	Fully katcha	No	No	No
9	Chamar	1	6	Yes	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
10	Chamar	1	6	No	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
11	Chamar	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Yes
12	Chamar	1	1	Yes	Non-pucca	Yes	No	Yes
13	Chamar	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Fully katcha	No	No	No
14	Chamar	1	1	Yes	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
15	Chamar	n.a.	5	n.a.	n.a.	No	n.a.	No
16	Chamar	1	n.a.	No	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
17	Chamar	1	2	No	Fully katcha	No	No	No
18	Chamar	1	2	No	Fully katcha	No	No	No
19	Chamar	1	6	No	Fully katcha	n.a.	No	No
20	Chamar	1	7	No	Fully pucca	No	No	Yes

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued) Condition of housing and basic amenities of Dalit households living in segregated settlement, Saaraspur, Uttar Pradesh, 2006 in number

HH. No.	Caste	Number of rooms	Persons per room	Separate kitchen (Yes/No)	Type of house*	Latrine (Yes/No)	Electricity (Yes/No)	Water within homestead (Yes/No)
21	Chamar	1	2	No	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
22	Chamar	1	7	No	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
23	Chamar	1	8	No	Non-pucca	No	No	No
24	Chamar	1	5	No	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
25	Chamar	1	7	No	Non-pucca	No	Unauthorised	No
26	Chamar	1	2	No	Non-pucca	No	No	No
27	Chamar	2	5	Yes	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
28	Chamar	2	3	No	Fully katcha	No	No	Yes
29	Chamar	2	3	No	Fully katcha	No	No	Yes
30	Chamar	2	3	No	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
31	Chamar	1	10	No	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
32	Chamar	3	2	No	Fully pucca	No	No	Yes
33	Chamar	3	9	No	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes
34	Chamar	4	1	No	Non-pucca	No	Unauthorised	Yes
35	Chamar	6	5	Yes	Non-pucca	No	Authorised	Yes
36	Chamar	6	2	Yes	Non-pucca	Yes	No	Yes
37	Balmiki	4	2	Yes	Non-pucca	No	Unauthorised	Yes
38	Balmiki	2	4	Yes	Fully katcha	No	No	Yes
39	Balmiki	1	3	No	Non-pucca	No	No	No
40	Balmiki	1	6	No	Non-pucca	No	No	Yes

Notes: n.a.= Not available.

*See text below for the definitions of different types of house structure.

Source: FAS survey data.

Pucca/permanent material includes burnt brick/tile, cement, concrete, stone, tin/metal/asbestos sheets. Katcha/temporary material includes mud, straw, thatch, wood, bamboo, and polythene.

Data in Table 2 show that most Dalit households lived in poor quality structures, i.e., either non-pucca or fully katcha structures. Of 40 Dalit households, only 2 had fully pucca structures with walls, roofs, and floors made of pucca material. These two households belonged to households of Chamar caste. No Balmiki household lived in a fully pucca structure.

Table 2 shows that, of 36 Chamar households, 24 households (67 per cent) lived in single-room dwellings. The corresponding proportion was 6 per cent for Tyagi households and 22 per cent for Dhivar households. Of these 24 single-room houses, 3 were occupied by single-person households (two were unmarried male manual workers and third was a blind man).

If we look at an alternative indicator of crowding, persons per room, we find that the majority of Dalit houses accommodated more than two persons per room, the norm recommended by the United Nations Housing Rights Programme (UNHRP) (UN 2003). Our data show that 70 per cent of Dalit households lived in dwellings that accommodated more than two persons per room. The corresponding figure was 16 per cent for Tyagi households. Further, of 36 Chamar households, 18 dwellings accommodated 5 or more persons per room and, in nine Chamar households, there were 7-10 persons per room. Lack of living space was a serious problem for Dalit households in Saaraspur.

Data in Table 2 show that the majority of Dalit households did not have a separate kitchen in their dwellings. Only 22 per cent of Dalit households lived in dwellings that had a separate cooking room or kitchen. This proportion was over 80 per cent among Tyagi households.

Case Study: Hari Chand (45) and Sunita (36)

Hari Chand, aged 45, is an agricultural worker belonging to the Chamar caste. Hari's wife, Sunita, aged 36, does household chores and takes care of their buffalo and calf. Sometimes she also works as an agricultural worker. The buffalo has been leased-in from a Tyagi landlord household. The couple have three sons and three daughters, who range from nine to 18 years. The eldest daughter, Lakshmi, aged 18, dropped out of school after class 5 and now stays at a relative's place. The remaining children attend the government primary and post-primary schools in the village.

The family owns 10×20 feet of homestead land. According to Hari Chand, he and two of his brothers inherited this land from their father. The land was not enough for three families, so his two brothers sold Hari the land. Hari paid them cash borrowed



Figure 5 *Members of a Dalit household with only one room and a verandah, Saaraspur, Uttar Pradesh (photo by author)*

from a village moneylender. On this tiny plot of land, he has built a one-room hut with walls of brick and mud, a wood and thatched roof and mud floor, and a thatched verandah. Next to the verandah, a polythene sheet stretched over bamboo poles serves as a temporary cattle-shed. All seven members of this family live in this one room and sometimes the verandah is also used to sleep on. Some of the family members sleep on the floor, as there are not enough cots or, indeed, space for cots for all of them. The verandah is also used for cooking as the household does not have a separate kitchen.

Sunita and her daughters bathe in the verandah behind a screen of cloth set up on standing cots. Sunita told me that when guests visit the household they have to accommodate them in the same space by providing a separate cot. Such situations cause embarrassment and inconvenience to the family, in particular to the women of the household.

There is no electricity in the house. In summer months, it is impossible to stay indoors. The men and boys take shelter under trees during the day. At night, Hari and his sons sleep in the street, while Sunita and her daughters use the verandah. In the rainy and winter seasons, the buffalo and calf are also accommodated in the verandah as the cattle shed is inadequate to protect them from severe cold and rain.

Availability of Domestic Electricity

There was no electricity line in the Chamar settlement. According to the Ministry of Power, Government of India, one of the criteria to define a village as being electrified is, “The basic infrastructure such as distribution transformer and or distribution lines is made available in the inhabited locality within the revenue boundary of the village including at least one hamlet/Dalit Basti as applicable...” (Ministry of Power, Government of India, 2015). It is thus not clear how Saaraspur was officially declared to be an electrified village, since there is no provision for electricity connections in the Chamar settlement.

In the Chamar settlement, four households did, however, have access to electricity. Three had unauthorised or illegal connections. One household had a legal/authorised connection. The head of this household was a government schoolteacher. His house was at the edge of the Chamar settlement, and at a short distance from the last electricity pole in the Tyagi-Dhivar residential area, from which he drew.

People I met in the Chamar settlement told me that they wanted access to electricity and were willing to pay installation costs, as well as monthly charges. They were deprived of electricity because the local authorities had not taken any step to extend the electricity line to their settlement.

Sources of Drinking Water

There are two main sources of drinking water in Saaraspur. There are private hand pumps and piped water brought from the water tank of a neighbouring village. Some Tyagi and Dhivar households have personal piped water connections and the panchayat has installed public stand-posts in the Tyagi and Dhivar settlements. Most households use hand pumps as the panchayat piped water supply is erratic because of the poor supply of electricity in the area.

While rest of the village has piped water supply connections, public as well as private, there were neither public nor personal piped water connections in the Chamar settlement. Data in Table 2 show that among Dalit households a little more than half had private hand pumps in their dwellings. The remaining Dalit households were dependent either on a source owned by other Dalits or on a single public hand pump in the locality. By contrast, almost all Tyagi households (97 per cent) had access to a private source of drinking water.

At the time of my visit to Saaraspur in 2012, respondents from the Dalit settlement said that water from the public hand pump had been worm-infested for over a year. Many people had fallen ill because of the contaminated water. A respondent said, “Even after many complaints to the local authorities, no action was taken to repair or treat the water source.” The public hand pump was surrounded by waste water (see Figure 6). Households that earlier fetched water from this source are now



Figure 6 *The sole public hand pump in the Chamar settlement, Saaraspur, Uttar Pradesh*

dependent on sources belonging to other households. Some people continued to use the public hand pump for uses other than drinking. There was one hand pump in the government primary school, which was located near this settlement, but Dalit households were not allowed to draw water from the school hand pump.

Kela Devi, in her late 40s, who is from the Balmiki caste said:

The only teacher in the school belongs to Brahman caste. He has warned people against using water from this hand pump. He says that this hand pump is for the use of school only and no one from outside is allowed to take water. She said he shouts at us when we go to fetch water from the school hand pump. According to him, the school hand pump will become contaminated too if people start using this.

There were a few households in the Dalit settlement that wanted to get a private water connection but could not because distribution was restricted to the upper-caste areas. This was demanded by Dalit residents of the local administration many times, but in vain. Suresh Kumar, a 45 year old primary school teacher said:

I am willing to pay for the installation and monthly charges for a water connection, but that is not an option for households like ours that can afford to get water connections, because private water supplies are strictly limited to the Tyagi and Dhivar area of the village.

Access to Lavatories

As shown in Table 2, only two Dalit households had lavatories within their houses. In one household, the head of the household is blind, and hence his relatives helped him to construct a katcha lavatory, and, in another, the head of household is a retired sugar mill employee who also owns some agricultural land. By contrast, more than 90 per cent of Tyagi households had lavatories in their houses.

Dalit women respondents in Saaraspur told me that they had to go out to relieve themselves — in the dark, either before sunrise or after sunset. Nearby agricultural fields were used for defecation. Most of these fields were owned by Tyagi households.

Rathi Devi, a Chamar caste woman in her fifties, said:

There are separate places for men and women to use for defecation and everyone follows this practice. There is a small dry canal located only around 200 metres from the Dalit settlement, men use one side of the canal and women another. It is more inconvenient for women than men as men can go anytime they want but women have to go only in the dark. We women and girls have to go in groups.

Govind Singh, 27 year, a manual labourer belonging to the Balmiki caste, said:

When there is a crop on the fields or some operations going on, people are unable to use the fields as lavatories. Members of Tyagi households guard the fields in the morning and evening. They abuse and chase away anyone who tries to enter the fields.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR DALITS IN SAARASPUR

Saraspur gram panchayat comprises three villages in addition to Saaraspur. In 2005-10, there were 4 Dalit representatives in the panchayat out of a total 11 of members. Out of 4 Dalit representatives, two were from Saaraspur. However, Tyagi households from Saaraspur, with the support of Dhivars, dominated the village panchayat. Dalit representatives were never called for any panchayat meeting or discussion and all decisions were taken by the Tyagi sarpanch (head of the village council) and his fellow caste members and other local officials.

There were various provisions in existing policies that would benefit the Dalit habitants of the village with respect to housing and access to basic amenities. My interviews with the local development officials and analysis of various documents at the block development office showed that village panchayat and local development officials had no interest in implementing these schemes and provisions.

Panchayat representatives and local officials said that Dalits were “unclean” and that “there was nothing the government could do about this.” They said that providing Dalits with better facilities would be “just a waste of resources.” The members of the Tyagi community in the village thought that the government was already doing too much for the Dalits.

Chander Singh Tyagi, a young Tyagi landlord and a politically influential person in the area, said:

Chamar (Dalit) is an impure and inferior caste and they cannot be treated as equal with Tyagis. Governments favour Dalits and they are taking all the jobs and seats in educational institutes. If this continues then who will work in the farms. It will not be possible to get workers.

He supported the village head's decision not to take up development work in the Dalit settlement. He said, "There should be a difference between how Tyagis and Chamars live in a village. If we provide them all the facilities then they will never listen to us."

It is not surprising that of 40 Dalit households in Saaraspur, only six reported receiving any kind of benefit from government with respect to housing and basic amenities. Of these six households, four received cash (one household received Rs 7000, another Rs 17,000, and two households Rs 20,000 each). One household received building material and another was given a constructed house in 1990. These benefits were received as long ago as 1983 (Rs 7000); the most recent beneficiary was from 2002 (Rs 20,000).

In the 2010 gram panchayat elections, the panchayat sarpanch position was reserved for a Dalit candidate. Tyagi households from Saaraspur, with the help of Dhivar and Tyagi households from the other three villages, made sure that no Chamar candidate from these four villages was elected as sarpanch. They supported a Balmiki candidate from a neighbouring village, a person whom they could control because Balmiki households were in a minority in that village and dependent in different ways on Tyagi households. During my field visit in 2012, Dalits of Saaraspur complained that the newly elected sarpanch had ignored the demands of people of the Dalit settlement.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This case study from Saaraspur village of western Uttar Pradesh shows that the historical exclusion of Dalit households in the village still continues in the contemporary Indian countryside.

Although the historical origins of rural residential segregation based on caste in India, and urban residential segregation based on race in the United States are very different, the frame of reference developed for the study of the latter provides a useful method for the study of the former. Four features of residential segregation identified in the international sociological literature — evenness, exposure, concentration, and clustering — can be seen in the caste-based residential segregation of Chamar and Balmiki households in Saaraspur.

No Chamar and Balmiki households lived in locations where Tyagi or Dhivar households lived, and no household from these castes lived in the Dalit settlement. Dalit households faced exclusion from the overall socio-cultural life of the village because of residential segregation. The unevenness and exposure aspects of residential segregation were reflected in the segregation of public facilities such as electricity distribution poles, drainage, and piped drinking water and in the official neglect of separated settlements.

The dwellings of 40 Chamar and Balmiki households were clustered and concentrated in a relatively small geographical area. The clustering and concentration aspects of residential segregation were reflected in the lack of space in the Dalit settlement to improve housing conditions, for example, by building more rooms, lavatories, kitchen, and open verandahs.

Caste-based residential segregation of Dalits is clearly associated with differences in social infrastructure and the quality of housing. The Dalit settlement lacked social infrastructure – including pucca streets, drainage, street lighting, and piped drinking water – that existed in non-Dalit areas of the village. Caste-based residential segregation of Dalits not only resulted in an absence of social infrastructure but also affected the quality of housing and access to basic household amenities. The Chamar settlement was located on low-lying land that was flooded every monsoon. An overwhelming majority of Dalit households lived in single-room houses with no open space, no lavatory, and no electricity. Even those who were willing to pay for electricity and piped water could not do so. Access to a source of clean drinking water was not ensured for Dalit households.

Exclusion and segregation were compounded by the dominance of dominant caste and landed Tyagi households in village-level institutions such as the panchayat and other local development bodies. A nexus between dominant sections of the village and the local bureaucracy was evident: as despite frequent complaints about the quality of water in the settlement, for example, the panchayat and other local officials took no action. Nor did they extend electricity and piped water to the Dalit settlement. The provisions in various central and State Government schemes for housing and basic amenities for Dalit households were neglected and often thwarted by the dominant castes.

Keywords: physical and residential segregation, adequate housing and basic amenities, deprivation and exclusion of Dalits, Indian villages, government schemes.

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