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Gender, Caste, and the Politics of Defiance: Gender Issues in Y. B. Satyanarayana's *Sadalakshmi: The Political Rebel*

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Abstract: T. N. Sadalakshmi's life as a Dalit woman who defied gender, caste, family, marriage, religion, and male-dominated politics is reconstructed in Y. B. Satyanarayana's *Sadalakshmi: The Political Rebel*. This essay looks at gender issues in the biography, focusing on how caste and patriarchy interact. Sadalakshmi experienced exceptional freedom and support as a kid, but as she grew older, she encountered gendered constraints related to leadership, education, marriage, household duties, motherhood, and political involvement. Her relationship with her husband exemplifies uneven expectations within marriage, and her intercaste marriage demonstrates the confluence of patriarchal authority and caste prejudice. Her political career serves as more evidence of how a Dalit woman seeking institutional power had to balance caste hierarchy and male authority at the same time. As the Telangana movement's leader, minister, and deputy speaker, Sadalakshmi questioned preconceived notions about women's leadership potential. Her involvement in the 1969 Telangana movement, her reforms as Endowments Minister, and her readiness to challenge prominent political figures and chief ministers turn political engagement into a form of gender resistance. This study contends that Sadalakshmi's existence cannot be understood solely in terms of gender, drawing on Dalit feminist theory. Her life story illustrates how women's prospects are shaped by caste patriarchy, but it also shows how self-respect, education, political engagement, community support, and autonomous decision-making can produce resilient female agency.

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Introduction

In Y. B. Satyanarayana's *Sadalakshmi: The Political Rebel*, gender plays a complicated role. Although the biography purports to be a political life story, Sadalakshmi's political accomplishments are inextricably linked to the gendered conditions that gave her power. Sadalakshmi, who was born into a Bhangi family and went on to become a minister, legislator, deputy speaker, leader of the Telangana movement, and supporter of Dalit concerns, frequently entered areas that had previously been dominated by males from higher castes. Because of this, her life combines two systems that cannot be discussed separately: patriarchy and caste hierarchy. Her story shows that living as a woman from a socially marginalised caste location significantly complicates the issue of women's empowerment.

A suitable framework for analysing this intricacy is provided by Dalit feminist criticism. According to Gopal Guru, "the patriarchal domination within the Dalits" is one reason why Dalit women defend their need for a unique political articulation (Guru 2548). Any presumption that caste emancipation inevitably ensures gender equality is called into question by his formulation. Within groups that are subject to caste oppression themselves, patriarchy may persist. Sadalakshmi's life serves as an example of this paradox: she encounters gender hierarchy in marriage, family, and politics while also dealing with caste hierarchy in public institutions.

Susie Tharu also warns against viewing gender and caste as separate but sometimes overlapping categories. She contends that the writing of Dalit women is "not an intersection of issues (caste, gender) that have separate real lives elsewhere" (Tharu 159). This finding is supported by Sadalakshmi's experience. Caste and gender work together in her marriage, education, parenting, political career, community identification, religious reform, and Telangana activism. Her political prospects are influenced by her gender identification, but the specific types of discrimination she faces are determined by her status as a Dalit woman.

Nidhi Sadana Sabharwal and Wandana Sonalkar suggest that economic and institutional disparities must also be addressed in light of Dalit women's social circumstances. "Woman" in

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India is not a uniform concept (45). Caste, economic location, education, access to political institutions, and social status all have an impact on gender experience. Because Sadalakshmi's life challenges traditional tales of Dalit women's deprivation, it is especially instructive. Her father supported her education and self-assurance, and her parents attained a certain level of financial stability. However, neither financial security nor familial love could shield her from patriarchal systems after childhood.

Her upbringing was remarkably unusual. Her father "wanted to raise his daughter as a boy" Satyanarayana (19). She gained confidence in sports often associated with men and learned how to swim, play kabaddi, fly kites, and fight with a stick. The gender framework around infancy is evident in the language itself: bravery, athletic prowess, agility, and combativeness were perceived as traits of men. Sadalakshmi developed these traits because her father allowed her to transgress the gender norm rather than because they were traditionally accepted as feminine characteristics.

The tension between female autonomy and family authority became much more apparent after her marriage. Sadalakshmi physically stood between her brother and the armed danger when he tried to stop her from marrying T. V. Narayana. "She is also my sister and she is grown up," her sister Venkamma said, defending her independence. She is entitled to select her spouse (Satyanarayana 26). The remark is noteworthy because, at a time when caste and family authority claimed extensive control over women's weddings, it recognises adult female consent as adequate grounds for marital choice.

However, equality was not always a result of marriage. Sadalakshmi encountered assumptions that women should handle household duties, antagonism from her mother-in-law, and inadequate support from her husband. As a result, rather than emerging outside of personal conflict, her political career progressed alongside it. The unpaid care that her sister Venkamma provides for Sadalakshmi's kids also highlights the often unseen female labour that makes it possible for another woman to pursue a public profession.

These informal discussions evolved into a more significant challenge to male authority during Sadalakshmi's subsequent political career. She checked the Chief Minister and

reprimanded lawmakers in her capacity as Deputy Speaker. In her capacity as Endowments Minister, she introduced women and Dalits onto temple trust boards and contested caste restrictions in temples. She challenged male political figures on leadership and accountability during the Telangana movement. As a result, Satyanarayana characterises her as a woman who "single-handedly faced the challenges of patriarchal society and its values" (9).

This essay contends that Sadalakshmi's gender: The Political Rebel functions as a framework that links family, marriage, education, motherhood, religion, caste, political representation, and historical recognition rather than as a stand-alone issue. Sadalakshmi is significant not only because she overcame discrimination but also because she turned political power into a tool for resistance.

Review of literature

Prof. Visweswara Rao Chenamallu, in "Breaking the Caste Threshold: Sadalakshmi's Struggle for Dalit Dignity and Political Recognition in *Sadalakshmi: The Political Rebel*" (2026), offers a straightforward critical framework for comprehending Sadalakshmi's political existence. Chenamallu emphasises the connection between political acknowledgement, resistance, caste marginalisation, and dignity. Because Sadalakshmi's rise to political power is inextricably linked to her identity as a Dalit woman, the subject is especially pertinent to a gender analysis. Her fight for acknowledgement is an intrusion into institutional arenas where access to authority has historically been decided by caste and gender, rather than just personal political success. By focusing on gendered barriers in marriage, family, religion, and political leadership, the current study expands on this methodology.

A more comprehensive framework for understanding Dalit women's transition from marginalisation to agency can be found in Prof. Visweswara Rao Chenamallu's "Dalit Women and Their Journey toward Self-Emancipation" (2026). Sadalakshmi benefits from its emphasis on self-emancipation because her empowerment cannot be summed up as something bestowed by male mentors or governmental organisations. Despite the fact that men helped her at different times, she gradually formed her own political identity. Her career serves as an example of how

self-emancipation entails gaining self-assurance, a public voice, institutional authority, and the ability to oppose gendered expectations and caste dominance.

Gopal Guru's "Dalit Women Talk Differently" (1995) remains central to Dalit feminist analysis because it challenges both the limited representation of Dalit women in mainstream feminism and patriarchal practices within Dalit politics. Guru argues that, in the post-Ambedkar period, Dalit leaders often subordinated or suppressed women's independent political voices. Sadalakshmi's biography gives this argument a concrete political context. She insists on making her own decisions, demands financial accountability, confronts senior male leaders, and refuses to remain silent. Her career shows why Dalit women must be recognised as political subjects in their own right, rather than treated solely as members of a larger caste community.

Susie Tharu's "The Dalit Woman Question" (2014) challenges oversimplified intersectionality frameworks. According to Tharu, Dalit women's lives involve a "uneasy confluence" of caste, gender, family, sexuality, domestic abuse, political leadership, education, land, and daily life (159). Sadalakshmi's experiences defy categorisation into distinct gender and caste groups, making this framework useful for her analysis. Her marriage is both caste-marked and gendered at the same time; her ministerial power confronts Brahmanical and patriarchal structures; and her marginalisation throughout the Telangana movement concurrently addresses caste, gender, regional politics, and historiography.

Nidhi Sadana Sabharwal and Wandana Sonalkar's "Dalit Women in India: At the Crossroads of Gender, Class, and Caste" (2015) provides a structural perspective of multifaceted discrimination. They contend that Dalit women face caste identity and related types of impoverishment in addition to gender discrimination (44). Their paradigm makes it clear why Sadalakshmi's accomplishments need to be examined from a perspective other than that of a female politician. Compared to the rise of socially affluent women, her ascent to ministerial office as a woman from a scavenging community bore a symbolic and structural significance that was profoundly different.

"Resistance and Resilience: The New Woman in Dalit Feminist Narratives" (2026) by Lodhi Kranti and Nisha Indraguru is pertinent to Sadalakshmi's blend of endurance and

resistance. Her life is full of examples of perseverance, but in her situation, resilience does not mean accepting hardship. She transforms personal struggles into public action and exclusion into conflict. She consistently turns perseverance into an aggressive declaration of self-respect, whether she is confronted with opposition to her marriage, educational limitations, neglect in her marriage, caste prejudice, or political marginalisation.

Sadalakshmi's electoral career can be better understood in light of Muddepaka Narender "Dalit Women Empowerment through Political Participation: A Study on the Impact of Women's Representation in Dalit Politics." (2023) Although political representation allows underprivileged women to enter institutional spaces, Sadalakshmi's life story shows that presence is not enough. She transforms her position into meaningful action. Her leadership in Telangana, her work as Deputy Speaker, cabinet reforms, and her dedication to Dalit concerns show the distinction between effective political agency and symbolic inclusion.

Gogu Shyamalamma, in "Biographies to Read Caste Histories: A Dalit Case Study Women's of Telangana" (2018) offers a methodological framework that is particularly pertinent. Through human lives that traditional political narratives can marginalise, biographies allow histories of gender and caste to be recreated. In a similar vein, Sadalakshmi's biography uses firsthand knowledge as a source of social history. Together, her marriage, schooling, political career, caste identification, and local activism shed light on the social structures Dalit women faced in Telangana during the 20th century. As a result, biography becomes a crucial tool for rescuing women's contributions from historical marginalisation.

Objectives

To analyse how patriarchal systems and gender inequality are portrayed in Y. B. Satyanarayana's *Sadalakshmi: The Political Rebel*.

To examine the relationship between gender and caste in Sadalakshmi's personal and political life.

To look into how gendered structures in the biography include marriage, schooling, motherhood, household duties, and political involvement.

To research Sadalakshmi's growth in independent agency and self-respect.

To assess her ministerial policies and political leadership as ways to empower women.

To investigate how gender influenced the marginalisation of her contribution to political history and the Telangana struggle.

Methodology

Close textual analysis of Y. B. Satyanarayana's *Sadalakshmi: The Political Rebel* is used in this qualitative study. It examines gender, caste, marriage, education, domestic work, political engagement, and leadership from Dalit feminist and intersectional viewpoints. The critical foundation is provided by secondary research by Guru, Tharu, Sabharwal and Sonalkar, Chenamallu, Shyamalamma, Lodhi and Indraguru, and Narender.

Discussion

Gender Socialisation, Education, and Public Mobility

In Y. B. Satyanarayana's *Sadalakshmi: The Political Rebel*, gender initially emerges as a socialisation issue. Sadalakshmi's father does not limit her to activities that are often associated with girls, which makes her childhood unique. She picks up skills in stick fighting, swimming, kabaddi, and kite flying. Kondiah "wanted to raise his daughter as a boy," according to Satyanarayana (19). In addition to describing the freedom she enjoys, the statement reveals a presumption that boys should be the ones with bravery, athletic prowess, and independence.

Sadalakshmi's later public character is shaped by her early events. She can practise occupying space, contending, and defending herself thanks to her physical confidence. The girl who learns to take on opponents through stick fighting grows up to be a politician who is prepared to take on influential individuals. Her story contradicts the notion that assertiveness is inherently masculine; the biography demonstrates how it develops via experience and chance.

Her confidence is bolstered by her education. She becomes the first person in her family to matriculate and achieves academic success. At first, her father wants her to become a doctor. However, she is still subject to caste hierarchy and limitations on female mobility despite her family's comparatively stable financial situation. "Woman" in India is not a homogeneous category, as noted by Sabharwal and Sonalkar (45). Sadalakshmi's unique situation as a Dalit

girl whose family supports education while still navigating traditional gender standards must be taken into consideration while analysing her chances and limitations.

Travel is now a gender issue due to her admittance to Nizam College. At a time when women are under-represented in public places, she travels alone between Bollarum and Basheer Bagh. She has to balance the responsibilities of her studies with the risks associated with mobility while carrying a little dagger for defence. Afterward, her brothers are against her going to a coeducational school. She convinces her mother to allow her to continue her education at Queen Mary's College in Madras against their objections. Her perseverance demonstrates that disputes over a woman's freedom of movement and choice are just as important to her access to school as financial resources.

A simple story of empowerment is complicated by the disruption of her schooling. Sadalakshmi's husband encourages her to return from Madras and pursue a career in politics, despite her desire to become a doctor. "She was forced to discontinue her studies from Queen Mary's college at Madras and had to come back to join politics," according to Satyanarayana (34). Her greatest accomplishments ultimately take place in the context of politics. However, she lost the educational path she had selected for herself at the start of that profession. The biography challenges readers to acknowledge both the limitations at the beginning and her subsequent political agency.

Marital Choice and Caste Patriarchy

Sadalakshmi and T. V. Narayana's marriage turns into a clear struggle for female sovereignty. Narayana stands in front of the man she has selected and says, "No, you cannot shoot him, you shoot me," when her brother shows up armed and threatens her (Satyanarayana 26). Her behaviour challenges the notion that male family members can decide her destiny among themselves. She centers the conflict around her own body and choice.

The fundamental idea is expressed by her sister Venkamma: "She is also my sister and she is grown up." She is entitled to select her spouse (Satyanarayana 26). Venkamma's intervention is significant because Sadalakshmi's adult right to make her own decisions is

publicly defended by another woman. Her resistance to parental power is aided by female solidarity.

However, obtaining the right to marry does not guarantee equality in a marriage. Sadalakshmi is rejected by Narayana's mother due to her Bhangi origin. "Get lost from here, how dare you marry my innocent son," she tells her, calling her a "Mehtar lady" (Satyanarayana 28). Sadalakshmi is humiliated in a way that is clearly caste-marked, treating her as an unwanted daughter-in-law.

This event is explained by Tharu's claim that the experience of Dalit women is "not an intersection of issues (caste, gender) that have separate real lives elsewhere" (159). In a patriarchal household, the mother-in-law is in charge and uses caste prejudice to show her animosity. Sadalakshmi's treatment cannot be entirely explained by caste or gender alone.

Narayana feels more alone as a result of her silence. Sadalakshmi anticipates his support, but he refrains from confronting his mother. Additionally, Satyanarayana expresses his conviction that "all household work" is "the sole responsibility of a woman" (30). Conventional expectations in the household are not eliminated by his education, reformist affiliations, and support for her political career. Thus, the biography demonstrates how a man's progressive public persona can coexist with unfair family customs.

This inconsistency is pertinent to Guru's explanation of how Dalit women's expression is suppressed in male-dominated politics (2548). Sadalakshmi experiences sexism in a variety of social contexts. Because of her experience, the study cannot identify gender disparity solely in institutions that are part of the ruling caste.

Motherhood, Female Solidarity, and Community Support

Sadalakshmi's political life takes on a new dimension as a mother. As she establishes herself as a legislator, she has three children, and the responsibilities of public service do not negate the need for care. Venkamma leaves her job to care for the kids, allowing her sister to carry on with her political career. Thus, Sadalakshmi's public career is partially dependent on the efforts of another lady.

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Throughout the biography, Venkamma makes a significant contribution. She takes care of the children, supports Sadalakshmi throughout marriage problems, and upholds her right to select her spouse. These acts demonstrate how relationships sustain political agency. A narrative that solely highlighted Sadalakshmi's bravery would ignore the care that enabled her to continue participating.

That support is not always given by the married home. According to Satyanarayana, Sadalakshmi "had to live on her own" due to her mother-in-law's abuse and her husband's little assistance (43). As a result, Sultan Shahi and the Mehtar community provide a sense of security and belonging. When her marriage leaves her exposed, her community connections help her build an independent life.

The idea of the lone political rebel is complicated by these connections. Sadalakshmi talks with uncommon intensity and makes tough choices, but her career also depends on her sister's support and the unity of her community. Acknowledging that support provides a more complete picture of how a Dalit woman enters and stays in public life.

From Political Representation to Legislative Authority

In an environment where men and upper castes predominate, Sadalakshmi, a young Dalit woman from a scavenging community, enters electoral politics. She rejects a purely symbolic role within political institutions and instead becomes a public speaker and organiser. Her time as Deputy Speaker serves as an example of the distinction between wielding authority and being represented.

Sadalakshmi leads the Assembly for forty days after the Speaker becomes unwell during a budget session. Despite her initial anxiety, she controls the proceedings and is commended for her decisions. When she says to the Chief Minister, "Will you please take your seat, honourable Chief Minister?," her power is particularly apparent. Let the relevant minister respond (Satyanarayana 61). She demands that the most powerful elected official in the state follow parliamentary protocol from the chair.

Gender, caste, and seniority expectations are rearranged as a result of the incident. Sadalakshmi uses her position as Deputy Speaker to control debate rather than just holding it.

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Because she makes decisions that others must respect, her presence becomes substantively meaningful.

This shift is furthered in 1962 when she was appointed minister. Since she is the only female member of Neelam Sanjiva Reddy's cabinet, the Mehtar community finds special significance in her elevation. The historical impact of "a scavenger, and moreover, a woman becoming a minister" is documented in Satyanarayana (63). Her appointment spanned gender and caste divides, which is reflected in the response.

However, Sadalakshmi's importance goes beyond the office's symbolic meaning. In order to address exclusion in the organisations she oversees, she makes use of executive authority. Thus, her career serves as an example of the transition from political entry to decision-making authority.

Temple Administration and Constitutional Equality

Sadalakshmi works in temple management as the Endowments Minister, a position influenced by long-standing caste and gender norms. Her activities include ideas for trained Dalit priests, efforts to allocate institutional resources to underprivileged populations, and the inclusion of women and Dalits on temple trust boards. Instead of viewing her own appointment as enough advancement, she exploits her position to increase engagement.

The boundaries of formal office are exposed in the Tirupati episode. Because of her caste, a priest is reluctant to recognise her as a minister. "How could you keep quiet when the purohit questions the validity of constitution?" asks Sadalakshmi, criticising the Chief Minister's inaction. (Satyanarayana 67). Instead of framing the episode as a personal slight, she presents it as a test of constitutional power.

Her politics are typified by this response. She holds individuals in positions of authority accountable for maintaining equality by questioning the Chief Minister's silence. Although she has a forum to highlight and challenge caste discrimination, her ministerial title does not eliminate it.

The occurrence is explained by Sabharwal and Sonalkar's insight that Dalit women experience prejudice based on both gender and caste (44). Sadalakshmi is a Dalit individual

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facing caste exclusion in a male-dominated religious institution and a woman in a position of responsibility. Through institutional action, she tackles both aspects by appointing Dalits and women on trust boards.

Gendered Resistance in the Telangana Movement

Sadalakshmi's involvement in the Telangana agitation in 1969 puts her political independence in direct opposition to male leadership. She assumes significant responsibility for maintaining the agitation in her capacity as vice-president of the Telangana Praja Samithi, especially in the absence of other leaders. Her dedication does not shield her from opposition within the movement.

The usage of movement finances is at the heart of a dispute with Chenna Reddy. He says, "How dare you ask me?" in response to her request for an account. "Yes, I will definitely ask you," she responds. You are responsible for the public funds (Satyanarayana 83). Her response disproves the notion that a leader's seniority shields them from criticism. She asserts that she is entitled to make an inquiry on behalf of a public purpose.

Satyanarayana notes that Chenna Reddy "had never expected a question from a dalit and a woman leader," highlighting the caste and gender presumptions that led to the altercation (82). Because of who made the demand, it is viewed as a violation. Here, Guru's statement that Dalit women "talk differently" takes on a specific political significance: Sadalakshmi demands accountability while speaking from a position that is supposed to be submissive (2548).

Satyanarayana's claim that "a dalit lady leading the movement was not palatable and digestible to the upper caste men" (83) further demonstrates opposition to her leadership. The criticism does not stem from her political prowess. She conducts leadership from a social position they do not regard as authoritative, which presents a challenge for those guys.

Sadalakshmi sells her necklace to maintain the agitation when movement funds are no longer accessible. She says, "I don't care for the jewellery, but I have no other way to run the movement" (Satyanarayana 83). When a woman uses jewellery as a tool for group action, it might give her personal financial security. The sacrifice also highlights the unfair load she

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carries when her colleagues don't back the cause she is leading. The occurrence should be interpreted as proof of both impediment and dedication.

Historical Erasure and the Recovery of a Dalit Woman Leader

Sadalakshmi's involvement does not guarantee her legacy. She is left out of portraits honouring the leaders of the Telangana struggle, despite her leadership in it. "Who would write the history of a Dalit lady hailing from a scavenging community?" wonders Satyanarayana. (84). Caste and gender influence acknowledgement in historical writing and remembrance, according to the question.

Even if a woman organises meetings, maintains a movement, challenges powerful politicians, and holds public office, she may still be left out of the narrative that is subsequently presented about those events. It is evident from the absence that political representation encompasses both who was able to engage at the time and whose acts are regarded as leadership.

Sadalakshmi's absence cannot be attributed to a single type of bias, as Tharu explains in his explanation of caste patriarchy (159). A Dalit woman like Sadalakshmi is far from the organisations that have the power to identify and honour political leaders. By documenting her choices, disagreements, administrative tasks, and contributions to the movement, Satyanarayana's biography questions that exclusion.

Dalit Female Agency and the Meaning of Empowerment

Sadalakshmi's self-respect manifests itself in various ways throughout the biography. She opposes caste prejudice as a minister, defends her choice of husband, fights to finish her education, establishes an independent existence in the face of marital animosity, wields authority in the Assembly, and calls for responsibility within the Telangana movement. Rather than enduring passively, she responds to limitation by taking action and exercising judgement. This tendency is related to Lodhi and Indraguru's focus on resistance and resiliency in Dalit female narratives.

Her story also demonstrates why a single accomplishment cannot be used to gauge empowerment. Domestic patriarchy does not stop with voluntary marriage. Mobility constraints are not eliminated by education. Caste humiliation is not stopped by holding a ministerial

position. Being a leader in a historic movement does not ensure future recognition or support from peers. Every move creates an opportunity for Sadalakshmi to maintain her position of power.

By separating representation from the ability to act, Narender's description of political engagement as a path to Dalit women's empowerment can be expanded. Sadalakshmi's significance stems from her actions once she enters institutions: she issues verdicts, opposes discriminatory practices, expands access to temple management, and holds influential men accountable for their choices.

Additionally, her job defies a rigid dichotomy between political leadership and domestic life. The biography highlights her love of cooking and hospitality as well as her ties with kids and family. Her public authority is not diminished by these interests. Instead, her biography reveals the unequal care arrangements and societal expenses associated with a political career, while also expanding the opportunities accessible to a woman.

Chenamallu's focus on Dalit political recognition and dignity is relevant in this situation. Listing Sadalakshmi's offices is not enough to gain recognition. It necessitates recognising her as an autonomous political thinker whose choices and enquiries influenced public life. The networks that supported her, the hierarchies that opposed her, and the power she wielded in spite of them are all made clear in the book.

Thus, gender in *Sadalakshmi: The Political Rebel* is both a space of resistance and a system of limitation. Sadalakshmi is constrained at various points by family authority, educational limitations, unequal home labour, caste-marked marital rejection, male political control, and historical erasure. However, she consistently manages to behave and communicate in those contexts. Her political significance comes from transforming admission into the ability to challenge institutions' policies, biases, and silences.

Conclusion

A convincing explanation of gender as an integral part of caste, family, marriage, religion, and political power can be found in Y. B. Satyanarayana's *Sadalakshmi: The Political Rebel*. Sadalakshmi's independence as a child gives her a unique sense of self-assurance, but as

an adult, she must deal with the gendered reality of limited schooling, hostile marriages, unequal household responsibilities, motherhood, and male-dominated governmental institutions. Her experience shows that political representation does not always result in equality and that individual choice does not always eradicate patriarchy.

However, at its core, the biography is a story of resisting agency. Sadalakshmi transforms caste humiliation into constitutional protest, political office into institutional transformation, marginalisation into a desire for recognition, childhood confidence into political boldness, and marital exclusion into independence. Her leadership during the Telangana agitation and her job as Deputy Speaker and Minister of Endowments challenge the traditional restrictions placed on Dalit women.

Her biography serves as an example of why caste and gender analysis must be done jointly when read via Dalit feminist viewpoints. Her struggle validates Tharu's view of caste and gender as an inescapable social confluence and Guru's insistence on the unique political articulation of Dalit women. As a result, Sadalakshmi's political uprising is also a gender uprising: a persistent declaration that a Dalit woman is capable of making decisions, speaking, questioning, governing, reforming, leading, and claiming her proper position in history.

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