



## Caste, capital, and modernity: Theorizing Dalit resistance in contemporary India

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### Abstract

This paper explores the intersection of caste, capital, and modernity in shaping contemporary forms of Dalit resistance in India. Modernity in India functions not as a rupture from caste hierarchy but as its transformation through capitalist and cultural processes. Using a theoretical framework grounded in Ambedkarite thought, subaltern studies, and decolonial theory, the study examines how economic inclusion, digital activism, and feminist interventions collectively redefine the contours of Dalit empowerment. State initiatives such as the Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes (VCF-SC) demonstrate attempts to institutionalize Dalit participation in capitalist modernity; however, these efforts often risk reproducing entrenched inequalities. The discussion highlights the emergence of new modes of resistance — particularly through digital platforms, cultural production, and intellectual engagement — that challenge both material and epistemic exclusion. The paper contends that Dalit resistance today operates as a dual process: engagement with neoliberal structures to gain agency, and critique of those same structures to expose their limitations. By situating Dalit agency within global debates on capitalism, decoloniality, and social justice, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how marginalized communities reimagine modernity. It concludes that Dalit modernity embodies an ethical and epistemic reconfiguration of resistance, one that transforms the moral foundations of India's democratic and capitalist order.

**Keywords:** Caste, capital, modernity, dalit resistance, neoliberalism, ambedkarite thought, digital activism, decolonial theory, feminist politics, social justice

### Introduction

The intertwined relationship between caste, capital, and modernity continues to shape India's socio-economic landscape in the twenty-first century. While neoliberal economic reforms and digitalization have transformed modes of production and social interaction, they have not dismantled the deeply entrenched hierarchies of caste. Instead, caste has adapted to modernity, functioning as both a structural barrier and a site of renewed contestation. Against this backdrop, Dalit resistance — historically articulated through struggles for political representation, social dignity, and access to education — has entered new terrains of economic empowerment, digital activism, and cultural production. The emergence of Dalit entrepreneurs, activists, and creators reflects a multifaceted redefinition of resistance that intertwines social justice with market participation and technological engagement.

One of the most notable state interventions in this domain is the Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes (VCF-SC), established by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and managed by IFCI Venture Capital Funds Ltd. This initiative, operational from 2021 to 2026, seeks to promote entrepreneurship among Scheduled Castes by providing concessional finance, incubation support, and mentorship for innovation-driven ventures. Its explicit objective is to “promote entrepreneurship amongst the Scheduled Castes who are oriented towards innovation and growth technologies” while enhancing financial inclusion and employment generation. The program marks a significant shift in the Indian state's approach to caste upliftment — from welfare-based redistribution to empowerment through participation in the market economy. However, the embrace of capital as a means of liberation raises critical theoretical and ethical questions. Can the mechanisms of capitalism, which historically reinforced

caste exclusion, also become instruments of emancipation? Scholars such as Banaji (2018) <sup>[3]</sup> argue that the contemporary Indian state, under the ideological influence of Hindutva modernity, deploys capitalist development as a cultural and political project that re-inscribes hierarchies under the guise of progress. Banaji conceptualizes this as the rise of “vigilante publics,” where modernity itself becomes complicit in authoritarian and exclusionary practices (Banaji, 2018) <sup>[3]</sup>. In this sense, Dalit participation in capital markets may risk assimilation into hegemonic structures rather than transformation of them.

At the same time, caste continues to define social status and access to opportunity, even within ostensibly meritocratic systems. Berg (2023) <sup>[4]</sup> revisits the comparative frameworks of Louis Dumont and Max Weber to show how caste remains a dynamic social order that coexists with, rather than opposes, capitalist modernity. This suggests that the modernization of the Indian economy has not eliminated caste-based stratification but has instead embedded it into new institutional and corporate arrangements. The persistence of caste privilege in the market underscores the need to view Dalit entrepreneurship not merely as economic participation but as an act of counter-hegemonic resistance — an effort to reconfigure both economic relations and social perceptions.

Parallel developments in cultural and digital domains further extend the terrain of Dalit and subaltern resistance. B.K. and Jiang (2024) <sup>[2]</sup> highlight how Muslim and Dalit women in India use digital platforms to challenge gendered and communal oppression, constituting what they call “online feminism.” Similarly, Dasgupta and Mahn (2023) <sup>[9]</sup> explore how queer South Asian creative cultures navigate visibility and resistance in both physical and digital spaces. These studies illustrate the emergence of what can be termed networked subaltern modernities, where marginalized

groups employ digital media not just for representation but for political negotiation and coalition-building.

Within this ecosystem of hybrid resistance, Chandra (2015)<sup>[6]</sup> urges scholars to rethink subaltern politics beyond binary conceptions of domination and submission. Subaltern resistance, he argues, often operates through negotiation, adaptation, and re-signification rather than open confrontation. Dalit entrepreneurship, in this light, becomes a form of pragmatic resistance — appropriating the idiom of capital to assert dignity, agency, and belonging within a system historically designed for exclusion. Meanwhile, ideological and educational apparatuses continue to shape how caste and modernity are represented. Anand and Lall (2022)<sup>[1]</sup> demonstrate that India's school textbooks have become mediums of state-led political communication, promoting Hindu nationalist narratives while marginalizing subaltern perspectives. The control of knowledge production thus remains a critical site of resistance. In a related vein, Brandist (2022)<sup>[5]</sup> reinterprets Soviet Indology to show how earlier Marxist critiques of colonial philology prefigured Dalit studies' challenge to Eurocentric epistemologies. Together, these perspectives suggest that Dalit modernity involves not only economic participation but also epistemic decolonization.

Further, the question of justice and freedom in Dalit modernity must be situated within broader ethical frameworks. Gasper (2023)<sup>[22]</sup>, drawing on Amartya Sen, contends that social justice lies not merely in formal equality but in the expansion of capabilities — the real freedoms people have to achieve valued ways of living. From this vantage point, the success of initiatives such as VCF-SC depends not only on the number of enterprises financed but, on their capacity, to enhance dignity, self-determination, and social mobility for Dalit communities. Dalit resistance in contemporary India cannot be understood solely in terms of identity or ideology; it must also be theorized through the lens of capital and modernity. The intersection of economic policy, digital activism, and cultural production reflects a complex reconfiguration of resistance — one that challenges both the material and symbolic dimensions of caste. The evolving figure of the Dalit entrepreneur embodies this transformation: simultaneously a participant in neoliberal modernity and a critic of its exclusions. This paper thus situates Dalit economic agency as a form of critical modernity, where the pursuit of capital becomes a strategy for social justice, cultural assertion, and epistemic renewal.

## Literature Review

The relationship between caste, capital, and modernity in India has undergone significant reinterpretation in recent scholarship, as researchers attempt to understand how entrenched hierarchies adapt to and persist within changing socio-economic systems. The evolution of Dalit resistance—from early political struggles to contemporary engagements with capitalism, technology, and culture—reveals how caste remains deeply embedded in the structures of modern Indian society. Modernity, often celebrated as a harbinger of equality, has paradoxically enabled new forms of exclusion, leading scholars to examine how Dalits and other marginalized groups negotiate agency within these evolving frameworks.

The nexus of caste and economic modernity has long been mediated through state policies, industrial transformations,

and neoliberal reforms. Banaji (2018)<sup>[3]</sup> argues that the contemporary Indian state deploys a rhetoric of progress and modernization while simultaneously reinforcing Hindutva-oriented hierarchies, producing what she terms “vigilante publics.” These publics, driven by majoritarian nationalism, function as instruments that naturalize caste and religious inequality in the name of cultural modernity. This perspective resonates with Berg's (2023)<sup>[4]</sup> comparative study of Dumont and Weber, which concludes that caste persists as a social logic within modern capitalist systems, defying assumptions of linear progress toward equality. Harikrishnan (2022)<sup>[13]</sup> extends this argument by emphasizing that modernity in caste societies is inherently spatial; urban planning, housing, and public infrastructure continue to reflect caste segregation and social exclusion even in ostensibly “modern” spaces.

The capitalist turn in post-liberalization India has introduced new contradictions. Cross (2019)<sup>[8]</sup> demonstrates how caste prejudice permeates social enterprise initiatives aimed at serving the poor, revealing that market-based development models often replicate social hierarchies under the guise of inclusion. Similarly, Shakthi (2023)<sup>[22]</sup> examines the rise of “corporate Brahminism” in India's technology sector, where meritocratic discourses obscure systemic caste privilege in recruitment, culture, and workplace hierarchies. These findings indicate that capitalist modernity in India not only fails to dismantle caste but frequently reconfigures it into new forms of symbolic and structural domination.

At the same time, the state's efforts to integrate Dalits into the capitalist economy have created new arenas for resistance. The establishment of initiatives such as the Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes (VCF-SC) exemplifies attempts to promote entrepreneurship and innovation among marginalized communities through concessional finance and incubation support. Yet, as scholars like Kapoor and Fridell (2025)<sup>[16]</sup> suggest, contemporary development discourse often lacks a decolonial understanding of power relations, thereby risking the perpetuation of economic dependency rather than true empowerment. The Dalit entrepreneur, while symbolizing agency, often operates within systems that privilege upper-caste access to networks, capital, and legitimacy.

Cultural production and representation also play crucial roles in reimagining resistance. Anand and Lall (2022)<sup>[1]</sup> reveal how India's school textbooks have become instruments of political communication, embedding Hindu nationalist ideologies that marginalize subaltern voices and histories. This pedagogical control over historical narratives reinforces the Brahmanical vision of nationhood, aligning education with political hegemony. In contrast, Brandist (2022)<sup>[5]</sup> revisits Soviet Indology and the intellectual contributions of Aleksei Barannikov to highlight how early Marxist critiques of colonial philology anticipated the epistemic challenges posed by Dalit studies. His work underscores the importance of counter-hegemonic scholarship in decolonizing Indian knowledge systems.

Furthermore, Dalit resistance today intersects with digital activism and gender politics in transformative ways. B. K. and Jiang (2024)<sup>[2]</sup> explore how Muslim and Dalit women utilize online platforms to articulate feminist resistance, connecting struggles against patriarchy with those against caste and communal discrimination. This “digital feminism,” as they term it, reclaims visibility for marginalized women who are doubly excluded by gender

and religion. Gopinath and Jindal (2025) <sup>[12]</sup> similarly investigate hashtag activism surrounding the Sabarimala temple entry issue, illustrating how social media can function as both an emancipatory and contested space for feminist and caste-based mobilizations.

The intersectional dimensions of modernity also emerge through comparative analyses of gender, religion, and caste. Chowdhury (2021) <sup>[7]</sup> traces how Muslim women's self-fashioning in postcolonial India negotiated modernity and respectability, while Kazmi (2024) <sup>[17]</sup> interrogates representations of Hyderabad Muslim femininity under colonial modernity. These studies reveal that the politics of identity formation in India's modern public sphere remain inseparable from the hierarchies of caste, religion, and gender. Similarly, Krishnan (2023) <sup>[18]</sup> examines Christian young womanhood in South India to demonstrate how religious spaces can simultaneously reproduce and contest patriarchal norms, offering alternative imaginaries of modernity for marginalized groups.

In the realm of political economy and ethics, Gasper (2023) <sup>[11]</sup> provides an important theoretical bridge by revisiting Amartya Sen's notions of personhood and democracy. He argues that ethical modernity must be defined by the expansion of individual and collective capabilities rather than the accumulation of material capital. This framework is particularly relevant to Dalit empowerment, where access to markets or finance alone does not translate into genuine freedom unless accompanied by dignity, participation, and recognition. In similar spirit, Jha and Christiansen (2025) <sup>[14]</sup> reinterpret the writings of B. R. Ambedkar and R. M. Lohia as articulations of "organic intellectualism" that fuse moral philosophy with socio-economic critique, presenting a model of resistance rooted in intellectual and ethical labor.

The political economy of caste also intersects with the question of labor and unfreedom within global and regional value chains. Siegmann and Sathi (2022) <sup>[23]</sup> analyze South India's tea value chain to show how laborunfreedoms persist despite neoliberal reforms, as caste-based stratification continues to regulate access to wages, mobility, and dignity. Their work underscores that economic liberalization without structural redistribution merely repackages caste dependency within global capitalism. Singh (2022) <sup>[24]</sup> similarly explores dispossession under the renewable energy sector in borderland India, revealing how "clean energy" projects reproduce caste and class inequalities through the violent clearance of land occupied by marginalized groups. Both studies highlight that modern capitalist development, framed in terms of sustainability and innovation, often conceals extractive logics that target Dalit and Adivasi communities.

Linked to these structural exclusions are the politics of secularism, religion, and modern state formation. Rathnam (2024) <sup>[20]</sup> examines feminist movements in India and their engagements with religion, showing how secularism itself has become a contested terrain where upper-caste feminism frequently excludes the voices of Dalit and Muslim women. This aligns with Wadhwa's (2021) <sup>[7]</sup> ethnographic study of Adivasi participation in governance discourses, which demonstrates how the language of rights and participation is often appropriated by the state to neutralize subaltern resistance in conflict zones. The appropriation of emancipatory discourse into bureaucratic structures, as both scholars suggest, represents one of the key paradoxes of

modernity — a system that invites inclusion while disciplining dissent.

At the cultural level, Sen (2023) <sup>[11]</sup> provides an illuminating account of Hindu festivals in small-town India, where ritualized forms of patronage and piety continue to reinforce caste dominance under the guise of communal harmony. The performative religiosity of such spaces ties directly to the ideological project of Hindutva modernity, as Banaji (2018) <sup>[3]</sup> earlier observed, where spectacle and affect operate as technologies of power. These festivals exemplify what Harikrishnan (2022) <sup>[10]</sup> calls the "spatial history of caste modernity," in which public celebrations and religious spaces reproduce hierarchies of purity and privilege within urban modernity.

In contrast to these hegemonic practices, feminist and Dalit collectives have developed new vocabularies of resistance. Kadiwal (2023) <sup>[15]</sup> discusses how critical feminist educators and activists resist the politics of hate in India by reimagining pedagogy as a form of social justice. Similarly, Mathew and Martin (2025) <sup>[19]</sup> engage with gendered education mobilities across India and China to propose an inter-Asia framework that situates education as a site of transnational feminist resistance. Their work underscores the global dimensions of struggles for equity, while Yunus (2022) <sup>[10]</sup> highlights the micro-level exclusions that persist in Indian classrooms, where "labour class" children face systemic bias rooted in caste and poverty. These findings reveal that education, often celebrated as the cornerstone of modernity, continues to mirror the inequalities it seeks to overcome.

At the level of intellectual history, Jha and Christiansen (2025) <sup>[14]</sup> revisit the contributions of Ambedkar and Lohia as "organic intellectuals" who theorized modernity not as imitation of the West but as a radical reconfiguration of social relations in pursuit of justice. Their comparative analysis reveals that both thinkers envisioned equality as a moral and structural transformation requiring the annihilation of caste and the democratization of knowledge. Van Schendel (2023) <sup>[25]</sup> adds a transnational dimension by showing how postcolonial India's resistance to Bengali dominance and regional inequalities parallels similar struggles for self-definition in neighboring Bangladesh. Together, these works position Dalit and regional resistances within broader debates about postcolonial modernity and the uneven geographies of decolonization.

Meanwhile, Kapoor and Fridell (2025) <sup>[16]</sup> critique the contemporary development paradigm for its superficial invocation of decoloniality, arguing that without material redistribution and epistemic humility, global development reproduces the same hierarchies it claims to dismantle. Their critique is particularly relevant to the Indian context, where Dalit entrepreneurship schemes such as the VCF-SC risk becoming tokenistic if they fail to challenge the deeper cultural and institutional biases of the capitalist system. As Cross (2019) <sup>[8]</sup> and Shakthi (2023) <sup>[8, 22]</sup> have shown, the incorporation of Dalits into market structures does not automatically translate into emancipation unless accompanied by broader transformations in recognition, education, and access.

Finally, the ethical dimensions of Dalit modernity demand attention to personhood and collective dignity. Gasper (2023) <sup>[11]</sup> proposes that modernity should be judged not by economic growth but by the expansion of human capabilities — the ability of individuals to lead lives they

value. This idea resonates with Ambedkar's vision of liberty, equality, and fraternity as the moral foundation of democracy, emphasizing that true modernity is not material but ethical. When viewed through this lens, Dalit resistance in contemporary India encompasses both economic and epistemic struggles: the demand for access to capital, visibility, and education, as well as the insistence on redefining modernity itself as a shared human project.

Together, this body of literature reveals that caste, capital, and modernity remain intertwined in complex ways. While the Indian state and global markets promise inclusion through entrepreneurship, education, and development, these very frameworks often reproduce exclusionary hierarchies. Yet within these contradictions lies the vitality of Dalit resistance — a form of adaptive, intersectional, and intellectual struggle that reimagines equality through capital, technology, and critical knowledge. The Dalit engagement with modernity, therefore, is not passive assimilation but an ongoing act of theorization and transformation, challenging the moral and material foundations of India's modern order.

### Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive, and theoretical research design, emphasizing conceptual synthesis rather than empirical analysis. The primary objective is to theorize how caste, capital, and modernity intersect to shape contemporary forms of Dalit resistance in India. The analysis draws upon 27 peer-reviewed scholarly works published between 2015 and 2025 [6, 14], encompassing journals such as *Javnost – The Public*, *Contemporary South Asia*, *India Review*, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, and *Globalisations*. These sources were selected for their relevance to caste studies, postcolonial theory, feminist and subaltern resistance, and decolonial modernity.

### Objectives of the Study

- To examine the intersections of caste, capital, and modernity in shaping Dalit experiences within India's postcolonial and neoliberal context.
- To analyze the transformation of Dalit resistance as an economic, cultural, and epistemic process within capitalist modernity.
- To synthesize Marxist, feminist, and decolonial theoretical perspectives to interpret subaltern resistance and subject formation.
- To explore the role of state-led inclusion initiatives in mediating neoliberal development, social justice, and Dalit identity.

The research methodology relies on systematic literature review and critical discourse analysis. Following the approach outlined by Chandra (2015) [6], the study reinterprets subaltern resistance as a negotiated and adaptive process within existing power structures. The review integrates theoretical frameworks from Marxist, feminist, and decolonial perspectives, as seen in the works of Banaji (2018) [3], Berg (2023) [4], Kadiwal (2023), and Kapoor and Fridell (2025) [3, 4, 15, 16]. Texts were thematically coded under three key domains: (1) representations of caste and modernity; (2) intersections of capital, development, and exclusion; and (3) new modalities of Dalit and feminist resistance in digital, cultural, and educational spaces (B. K. & Jiang, 2024; Dasgupta&Mahn, 2023) [2, 9]. Rather than generating new data, this paper synthesizes theoretical

insights to construct an interpretive framework explaining how Dalit subjectivities emerge within capitalist modernity. The analysis aims to advance critical debates in sociology, political theory, and cultural studies by connecting state-led inclusion initiatives such as the Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes with broader discourses of neoliberalism, epistemic justice, and resistance.

### Discussion

The synthesis of recent scholarship reveals that Dalit resistance in contemporary India must be understood as a multidimensional negotiation between historical oppression and modern structures of power. Caste, far from being an archaic social residue, continues to structure access to capital, technology, and cultural legitimacy within India's modern economy. As Berg (2023) [22, 4] asserts, caste operates as a form of status that coexists with capitalist rationality, thereby challenging Weberian assumptions about the erosion of hierarchy through modernization. The endurance of caste in economic and social life demonstrates that capitalist modernity in India functions less as a rupture from tradition than as its rearticulation in new institutional forms.

At the ideological level, Hindutva modernity has produced what Banaji (2018) [3] calls "vigilante publics," where nationalism and digital propaganda reinforce caste and religious hierarchies. This aligns with Anand and Lall's (2022) [1] analysis of how state-controlled educational content serves as a tool for political communication, promoting majoritarian narratives that obscure subaltern histories. Within such an environment, Dalit resistance cannot rely solely on political representation; it increasingly manifests through cultural, digital, and entrepreneurial agency. Initiatives like the Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes exemplify attempts by the state to recast Dalit empowerment in economic terms. Yet, as Cross (2019) [8] and Shakthi (2023) [8, 22] demonstrate, capitalist inclusion often reproduces structural inequality through networks of privilege, meritocracy, and symbolic power.

Digital and feminist movements have become vital spaces for articulating counter-hegemonic voices. B. K. and Jiang (2024) and Gopinath and Jindal (2025) [2, 12] show that online activism enables marginalized women to challenge caste and gender oppression simultaneously, creating hybrid modes of feminist and Dalit resistance. Similarly, Dasgupta and Mahn (2023) [9] argue that queer and subaltern cultural productions expand the terrain of political visibility, offering new aesthetics of resistance. These cultural forms illustrate how digital modernity, while entangled with neoliberal power, can also facilitate the democratization of discourse.

From a normative standpoint, Gasper's (2023) [11] reinterpretation of Amartya Sen's theory of personhood underscores that justice cannot be reduced to economic participation but must encompass dignity and capability. Ambedkar's intellectual legacy, revisited by Jha and Christiansen (2025) [14], reinforces this moral dimension, envisioning modernity as a project of ethical equality and social fraternity. Therefore, Dalit modernity should not be mistaken for assimilation into the capitalist order; rather, it signifies a reconstruction of modernity itself through epistemic and ethical transformation.

In this theoretical context, Dalit resistance emerges as both an engagement with and critique of modernity—

transforming economic participation into political consciousness and cultural expression into moral critique. This dual strategy reveals the evolving nature of India's modern social order, where capital and caste remain intertwined, yet continuously challenged by subaltern visions of justice and emancipation.

### Major Findings

- 1. Continuity of Caste within Modernity:** Modernity in India has not eliminated caste hierarchies but reconfigured them through capitalist, educational, and technological structures (Berg, 2023; Banaji, 2018) <sup>[3, 4]</sup>. Caste persists as a determinant of privilege and access even within ostensibly merit-based systems.
- 2. Capitalism as a Site of Rearticulated Exclusion:** Economic liberalization and neoliberal development have created new avenues for Dalit participation but also new forms of marginalization, where capital ownership and credit access remain stratified along caste lines (Cross, 2019; Shakthi, 2023) <sup>[8, 22]</sup>.
- 3. State-Led Inclusion and Its Contradictions:** The Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes (VCF-SC) demonstrates the state's attempt to integrate Dalits into the market economy, yet these initiatives often reproduce systemic inequalities due to structural barriers in access, mentorship, and recognition
- 4. Digital Spaces as Arenas of Resistance:** Social media and online platforms have emerged as transformative spaces for Dalit, feminist, and queer activism, allowing marginalized voices to contest dominant narratives and forge solidarities (B. K. & Jiang, 2024; Dasgupta&Mahn, 2023) <sup>[2, 9]</sup>.
- 5. Gendered Dimensions of Dalit Modernity:** Digital feminism and intersectional activism by Dalit and Muslim women challenge patriarchal and caste-based exclusion simultaneously, expanding the scope of subaltern resistance (Gopinath& Jindal, 2025; Rathnam, 2024) <sup>[12, 20]</sup>.
- 6. Epistemic and Educational Control:** Textbooks and institutional knowledge systems remain powerful instruments of ideological reproduction, promoting nationalist and Brahmanical narratives that marginalize subaltern histories (Anand&Lall, 2022) <sup>[1]</sup>.
- 7. Ambedkarite Ethics and the Moral Reconstruction of Modernity:** Ambedkar's vision, revisited by Jha and Christiansen (2025) <sup>[14]</sup>, positions modernity as a moral and ethical project rooted in equality, fraternity, and justice — offering an alternative to capitalist modernity driven by profit and hierarchy.
- 8. Labour and Development as New Frontiers of Caste Domination:** Studies of labour chains and renewable energy projects reveal how modern industries sustain unfreedoms and dispossession for Dalit and Adivasi communities (Siegmann&Sathi, 2022; Singh, 2022) <sup>[23]</sup>.
- 9. Cultural and Spatial Modernity Reinforcing Hierarchy:** Ritual spaces, urban planning, and festivals

continue to reproduce caste and religious privilege under the guise of tradition and modern celebration (Harikrishnan, 2022; Sen, 2023) <sup>[10, 11]</sup>.

- 10. Dalit Modernity as Critical Reconstruction:** Dalit resistance today represents a dual engagement — embracing economic participation while critically redefining the values of modernity itself (Gasper, 2023) <sup>[11]</sup>. It embodies an epistemic reconfiguration that seeks not assimilation but transformation of India's moral and social order.

### Conclusion

The present study has examined how caste, capital, and modernity intersect to shape evolving forms of Dalit resistance in contemporary India. The literature reveals that modernity in India does not represent a clean break from caste hierarchy but its transformation through the logic of capitalism, state policy, and ideology (Berg, 2023; Banaji, 2018) <sup>[3, 4]</sup>. Dalit resistance, therefore, must be conceptualized not merely as political opposition but as a dynamic negotiation involving economic participation, cultural assertion, and epistemic transformation. The emergence of Dalit entrepreneurs through initiatives like the Venture Capital Fund for Scheduled Castes reflects an attempt to redefine inclusion through financial and institutional access, yet such interventions must be critically assessed against their potential to reproduce systemic privilege (Cross, 2019; Shakthi, 2023) <sup>[8, 22]</sup>.

The discussion also demonstrates that the digital sphere, feminist movements, and subaltern creative practices have expanded the horizons of resistance. As B. K. and Jiang (2024) and Dasgupta and Mahn (2023) <sup>[2, 9]</sup> illustrate, digital activism enables marginalized voices to contest the monopoly of elite discourse, transforming online spaces into arenas of collective empowerment. These developments affirm that modernity, while historically exclusionary, can be re-appropriated as a site for alternative imaginaries grounded in justice, equality, and dignity (Gasper, 2023; Jha& Christiansen, 2025) <sup>[11, 14]</sup>.

Future research should deepen theoretical engagement with three key areas. First, there is scope to explore comparative models of Dalit capitalism, analyzing how marginalized communities across Asia and Africa navigate neoliberal economies. Second, longitudinal analyses of digital Dalit movements could reveal how sustained online resistance reshapes social and cultural hierarchies. Third, integrating Ambedkarite ethics with decolonial and feminist theory may yield new frameworks for understanding justice and modernity beyond Western paradigms. Such inquiries would extend the current study's conceptual groundwork, contributing to a more inclusive and global understanding of resistance, capital, and the reimagination of modernity.

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