From Slavery to Dignity

– How critical thinking and empowerment among Dalit women working with manual scavenging is implemented

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis is a result of a 9 week Minor Field Study that was performed in Madhya Pradesh, India in spring 2012. The purpose of this study is to investigate how the Garima Abhiyan (Campaign for dignity) rhetorically implements critical thinking and empowerment among Dalit women working with manual scavenging. Removal of human excrement is a Dalit tradition bound practices were 98% of the manual scavengers are women. Manual scavenging has its roots in the Indian caste system and is primarily a Socio-Political issue. This inhuman practice was banned in India in 1993 but is still occurring and denies a life with dignity.

Through field observations and qualitative interviews I wanted to listen to how the activists at ActionAid and Jan Sahas explain how the women’s liberation process work and what rhetorical strategies are used to promote empowerment and critical thinking.

Numerous rhetorical strategies such as repetition, symbolic gestures, improvisation, provocation and antithesis were used to implement messages and to stimulate critical thinking and empowerment. The main conclusions of this study are that the Garima Abhiyan is working on different levels to promote critical thinking and empowerment. There are several different actors involved in the liberation process: the activists from ActionAid and Jan Sahas, the children of the Dalits and the Dalit women themselves. In the liberation process, the activists focus on logos argumentation and the children stands for pathos argumentation when they are persuading and motivating the women to quit manual scavenging, and the women themselves use their own strong ethos to convince other women to quit the practice. Garima Abhiyan creates empowerment groups and educates Dalit women in becoming influential rhetors and thus a path into citizenship, which is an opportunity to take and be a part of society. As the women are strengthened through the Garima Abhiyan, several power relations between men and women are changed. These Dalit women who have never been allowed to be located in these villages or to take part in public space are suddenly given power. In the empowerment groups ideas are transformed into action and critical thinking has a chance to germinate and grow. By raising the awareness of these women they are also given opportunities to understand how they can influence their situation and be a part of the solution.

Keywords: Garima Abhiyan, India, manual scavenging, Dalit women, empowerment, intersectionality, critical thinking, dignity, doxa
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Thank you.
"There are two ways of being rich. One is to have all you want and the other is to be satisfied with what you have”

Quote of the day at the ActionAid Head Office in Delhi 2\textsuperscript{nd} of April 2012

"Kvinnor vakna, organisera er, utbilda er. Vi har inget att förlora utom våra bojer."

From: \textit{Towards a Dalit Theology, 1989.}
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1. Introduction

This bachelor thesis is a Minor Field Study (MFS) which is a scholarship funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). A MFS scholarship aims to give university students a better understanding of third world countries, a possibility to gather material for a bachelor or a master thesis and provide a foundation and merit for further international work. A Minor Field Study scholarship made it possible for me to go to India during 8 weeks to investigate the Garima campaign. This Minor Field Study examines a dignity campaign (Garima Abhiyan) run by the religiously and politically independent agency ActionAid and the NGO Jan Sahas. The Garima Abhiyan is successfully working towards the eradication of the inhuman and illegal practice of manual scavenging and for the empowerment of the Dalit community, which is involved in this practice. More specific, this study scrutinizes the campaign’s organisational structure from a rhetorical perspective and how this structure is making the women abandon this practice.

This field study was performed during the same time as Anna-Carin Svensson’s Minor Field Study From scavenging to sisterhood – a rhetorical investigation of narratives and their role for a changed life situation of former manual scavengers in Madhya Pradesh, India (2012). Both studies investigate the Garima campaign’s effect on Indian Dalit women, however the studies are independent and differ in several ways from each other. The studies investigate the campaign from different perspectives and together they give a broader perspective on the Garima Abhiyan as a whole. Since Svensson's study focuses on the campaign from the Dalit women's views, the studies can be seen as a good complement to each other.

1.1 Purpose of study

In this study my aim is to investigate the Garima campaign from the perspective of the activists working at the NGO1 organisations ActionAid and Jan Sahas. First, I am interested in seeing how a specific part of the Garima campaign is structured and organized from a rhetorical perspective and how the activists at the ActionAid- and Jan Sahas organisations describe how the Garima Abhiyan work to make the Dalit women contemplate their situation, develop critical thinking and become empowered. Second, I would like to investigate what rhetorical strategies can be inferred from the liberation process in the Garima Abhiyan.

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1 Non-Governmental Organisation
The Garima Abhiyan has been successful in involving Dalit women to take part of a liberating rhetoric in spite of the fact that the prevailing caste system is a deeply rooted cultural tradition in India and I would like to study how this success has come about. Third, I am interested in looking at how different actors in the Garima Abhiyan provide different perspectives to different actions and what rhetorical effects it has to the campaign as a whole. To investigate the structure of the Garima Abhiyan might in the future lead to more efficient work with the development of oppressed people in the world, but most important, the study will highlight and inform a broader public about the manual scavenging issue in India.

1.2 Research questions

The research questions for this study are:

- How does the Garima Abhiyan’s organisation structure promote critical thinking and empowerment among the Dalit women working with manual scavenging according to the activists?

- What rhetorical strategies can be inferred from Garima Abhiyan’s empowerment process and what are the possible effects of these strategies?

- What aspects of action as a rhetorical means can be inferred from the Garima Abhiyan?

2. Background

The background intends to give the reader a broader context of the Dalit situation in India but it also aims to clarify ActionAid’s and Jan Sahas’ relation to each other and show the campaign from a wider perspective. The Indian caste system is complex; therefore, this background only intends to sort out some fundamental aspects that will help put this thesis into context.

India is the world's second largest developing country with a current population of 1.22 billion (India Online, 2012). India is also the world’s largest democracy but still, the caste
system is socially relevant. The caste system is a defining feature of Hinduism, which encompasses a complex ordering of social groups on the basis of ritual purity (Sekhar, 2004:12). Since 1949, discrimination based on the caste system is banned under the Indian Constitution but the application of these laws has been weak. It is still the case that less sought after work, such as sanitation and the manual handling of corpses, is conducted by people belonging to the lower caste, while the rich with good jobs and power usually belong to any of the higher caste. It is a well-known phenomenon, that the caste instead of the constitution, rules India. Therefore, everything that relates to politics, society, and economics are operated by the caste system. Also class differences are visible in the use of language. In total, India has about 15 major languages. Hindi is the most spoken language (45 %) even though English is the language of official communication and primarily known by the urban middle and upper class (Johansson & Lindholm, 2011).

2.1 Reason to study the Garima Abhiyan

The Dalits are the most marginalized part of Indian society and does not only suffer from severe poverty, but are also victims for exclusion and intensive discrimination in the economic territory because of caste, origin and employment. The poverty among the Dalits is still very high. According to NCDHR (National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, 2004), were 43 per cent of the Dalit people, in the registered casts in year 2000, were living below the poverty line both in the countryside and in the cities (Hardtmann & Thorat, 2006).

In July 2011 my colleague Anna-Carin Svenssson and I had our first contact with ActionAid in Stockholm. We found out that ActionAid runs a campaign in India to make Dalit women quit the manual scavenging practice, strengthen the Dalit women’s situation and to help them access their given rights. The campaign is called Garima Abhiyan, which means “dignity campaign” in Hindi and we both found the campaign very interesting to investigate from a rhetorical point of view. I think there lies much potential in investigating how and why the Garima campaign works and to study how a project such as this one can affect India in the long run.

It is interesting to see that this kind of discrimination, from the whole Indian society is still an everyday occurrence in 2012. Efforts to abolish manual scavenging date back to the early twentieth century in India– efforts that have been largely unsuccessful. The Garima Abhiyan strategy for eradicating manual scavenging is radically different from previous efforts. Therefore, it is very interesting to investigate this specific campaign in order to see the campaign’s effort to raise the status of Dalit women in India.
2.2 ActionAid

ActionAid is a religiously and politically independent agency that works with over 2,000 other organisations around the world. The agency and its members believe that poverty is an injustice and it works with the poor to strengthen their own initiative to get out of poverty. ActionAid focuses mainly on women and girls' situation because they have recognized this approach to be the most effective to reduce poverty in an area. Women and girls are among the most vulnerable in the world, they lack not only food, clean water and health care, but also education and opportunities to get out of their situation (ActionAid, 2011). ActionAid also works with local organisations to help improve the lives of the poor and they have over 35 years of experience in fighting poverty (Ibid.).

The Garima Abhiyan started in 2000 when ActionAid was drafting an untouchability report. During the production of this report, they came to know about the manual scavenging practice. When Ashif Shaikh (presented in 4.5) registered his organisation Jan Sahas in 2007, ActionAid, who funded the Garima Abhiyan, handed over the whole coordination of the campaign to Jan Sahas. Jan Sahas is an NGO and right now the coordinating organisation of the Garima Abhiyan and also in charge of implementing the campaign. However, ActionAid still supports the Garima campaign.

2.3 A broader perspective on the Garima Abhiyan structure

Even though the major work of the Garima Abhiyan focuses on the community, the campaign also strives to make the society and the Government accountable. The NGO Jan Sahas describes the work of the Garima Abhiyan in a wider perspective as follows:

National Campaign for Dignity and Eradication of Manual Scavenging (Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan), has been working intensively for complete eradication of the inhuman practice of manual scavenging since 2002. The key interventions include getting the involved people out of this practice, organizing and capacitating them, ensuring education for their children and working for their holistic development and empowerment. The campaign has also brought about many policy changes in the state and at national level. Garima Abhiyan is working directly in 50 districts of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. Advocacy efforts on this issue are also being taken up at state, national and international level (Jan Sahas, Uncompleted and unsuccessful rehabilitation of manual scavengers and their children in India – Brief Report, 2012).

The Garima Abhiyan has been working to widen the scope of the campaign in many ways. Furthermore, some of the points that are included into the work policy of the Garima Abhiyan can be described as follows:
• Forming organisations
• Consolidating solidarity
• Build networks and partnerships with other community based organisations, movements and government bodies to advance shared goals
• Mobilize liberated manual scavengers to form democratic community based organisations that challenge all forms of discrimination
• Elimination of discrimination at public places
• Prevention of atrocities against the Dalits
• Stricter and effective implementation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
• Work to implement schemes that benefit manual scavengers
• Provide legal and other support to manual scavengers who face opposition and social boycotts

2.4 Jan Sahas
Jan Sahas, which means “Peoples’ courage”, is situated in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh and has a rights based and bottom up approach to end manual scavenging among the Dalits. In year 2001 Jan Sahas started their work and movement of the Garima Abhiyan in the district of Dewas, after that the movement has extended to cover more districts. Today Jan Sahas cover half of the Madhya Pradesh, 20 districts of Uttar Pradesh, 10 districts of Rajasthan and 5 districts of Maharashtra, which in total means 55 districts of India. In the next 2-3 years Jan Sahas plan to extend their movement in 200 districts of India.

Jan Sahas is implementing four different campaigns; in these four campaigns the Garima Abhiyan is one of them. Jan Sahas gets support from various organisations and also support from Europe, India, and from other countries like the United Kingdom and USA. Exclusively for the Garima Abhiyan campaign Jan Sahas has four donors. Except from ActionAid the Garima Abhiyan has support from ILO (international labour organisation), ChristianAid and from UN Slavery Fond.

Jan Sahas’ bottom up strategy works to empower the most vulnerable and discriminated people to make them become a potent force for social change (Jan Sahas, 2012). Jan Sahas’ approach for empowering the communities they work with consist of three key elements; educate, capacitate and organize. Because Jan Sahas is working with implementing the
Garima Abhiyan strategy these key elements are also used in the Garima Abhiyan. These three key elements are depicted in the diagram as follows:

![Organisational Structure, Jan Sahas, 2012](image)

Jan Sahas is primarily working with the Garima Campaign on grass-root level, but has also made a significant impact to stop manual scavenging on national level (Jan Sahas, 2012:4).

### 2.5 The gender issue

According to ActionAid, 98% working with manual scavenging in India are women. Until about 2008, the Garima Abhiyan looked upon the manual scavenging issue from a caste perspective. In 2010 the Garima Abhiyan did a complete make over to equally focus on caste and gender and are working on evolving strategies for addressing the gender issue. This enhances that the campaign is always in progress and the gender aspect of the campaign is an important part of this Minor Field Study. Sarika Sinha, Regional Manager in Madhya Pradesh ActionAid India, explains the gender issue with an example:

You might be really good at arranging people outside your home. You might be able to get them into rally. You might go against the state and protest. But at home. How do you change your position, within your family? When you go on a rally, does your husband cook? Or are you rallying and come back home and cook again? The battle starts and ends in your bed.
This example shows that the Dalit women have to face lots of discrimination in their homes as well. In other words, the gender issue brings another important dimension aside from the caste perspective.

2.6 Manual scavenging

Manual scavenging has its roots in the Indian caste system and is primarily a Socio-Political issue, which denies a life with dignity. This inhuman practice was banned in 1993, through passing legislation by the Parliament of India. Prior to 1993 there have been various attempts to put an end to this custom. In 1901 Mahatma Gandhi raised issues related to the work and social conditions of those involved in this practice and Dr B R Ambedkar\(^2\) also raised his voice against this practice. Many committees have been formed since the independence in 1947 and the Planning Commission of India formulated many programmes in its five year plans to put an end to this practice. Several Government Schemes and programmes have been launched with this object but still the custom prevails across the country (India Water Portal, 2011). The Dalits involved in this practice, most of them women, not only suffer from the inhuman pain of scavenging human faeces but also through the pain and humiliation of discrimination, untouchability and social exclusion (Ibid.).

The manual scavenging practice is passed from generation to generation and is a practice performed by Dalits, mainly women and young girls. Daughters-in-law “inherit” the practice from their mothers-in-law. According to Jan Sahas mothers-in-law frequently insist that daughters-in-law maintain the practice used to support their families for generations despite its paltry compensation (2001-2012:14-15). The practice is about manual removal of human excrement from toilets without flush system, i.e. dry toilets. The containers of these toilets need to be emptied on a daily basis. Early in the mornings the Dalits go to the villages to empty the toilets using brooms, small tin plates and baskets. The excreta are covered with ash before it is put in the basket to reduce the smell. The baskets are then carried on the heads of the women. Human Rights features (HRF/129/05-31/10/2005) explain that the manual scavenger becomes the polluter, “someone to be kept at bay, at the margins of society and unworthy of dignity and respect”.

\(^2\) Dr BR Ambedkar, 1891 - 1956, have been seen as a Dalit hero. He raised his voice against the high-class people and was a member of the committee, which formulated the Indian Constitution.
2.7 The caste system

Dalits are a large group of people born outside the four major groups in the caste system. Today there are 167 million (16,2 %) Indian citizens in the so-called registered castes, who are Dalits (UN, 2009). Some Dalit families have access to land and other capital assets that they were previously excluded from. In the cities, about 38 % of the registered castes found employment on the basis of priority rules, and literacy rates have slowly increased (Hardtmann & Thorat, 2006). Every fourth Indian would be a Dalit if those who have converted from Hinduism to Islam or other religions would be counted in this category (2006:304). Even though it is prohibited the Dalits are still named “the untouchables”.

The most vulnerable are Dalit women who are at the bottom of the hierarchy ladder. Girls are often married off when they are very young and rape and assault is common.

Even though the caste system has been formally abolished since 1947 it still lives on. Religion, caste and language are major determinants of social and political organisation in India today (U.S Department of State, 2012). The caste system, which has existed for nearly 3,000 years, has come to dictate the lives of the Indian people by ruling social class and status (Singh, 2009). This ancient hierarchy system divides people into different groups. These divisions symbolise status, from the upper class to the lowest category. R.K. Pruthi tries in his book Indian Caste System (2004) to examine and understand the fundamental aspect of the Hindu society. He explains that there are four castes: The Brahmin (priests and teachers), the Kshatriya (warriors), the Vaisya (traders/artisans) and the Shudra (farmers/labourers). Each of these main divisions have numerous subdivisions and each forms an independent unit. This caste pyramid omits the tribal people and those outside the caste system formerly known as untouchables/Dalits.

![Pyramid of the caste system](Markville history n.d)
Shudra are divided in two categories. One is touchable Shudra and one is untouchable Shudra, which in other words means Dalits. The manual scavengers belong to this untouchable Shudra. There are 46 sub castes within the Dalits and the manual scavengers are in the lowest range. Untouchability is a major issue in the manual scavenging community. Not only the upper class treat manual scavengers as untouchables, also the manual scavengers practise the untouchability within their community. Manual scavenger women are untouchable within the family as well and the children practise the untouchability with the mother because she is in the practice of manual scavenging. Therefore, this is a very difficult issue in the perspective of untouchability.

2.8 Voices on the Dalits situation

In Eva-Maria Hardtmann & Vimal Thorat’s book The story on my back: Indias Dalits in revolt against the caste system: prose, essays, documents (Berättelsen på min rygg: Indiens Daliter i uppror mot kastsystemet: prosa, essäer, dokument, 2006) a number of major Indian Dalit writer’s texts are published. One of these writers is Kanshi Ram who published the paper Why is Bahujan Samaj Dependent in Independet India? (1997) in which he urged the Indian people to critically examine what has occurred since the independence of India in 1947. Kanshi Ram was together with his party colleague Mayawai leader for the Bahujan Samaj Party. This party, which held power in the state of Uttar Pradesh during several periods in the 1990s, went down in history as the first party ever, which was led by Dalits (Hardtmann & Thorat 2006:288). In Kanshi Ram’s paper, he lifts the concerns, which Dr. Ambedkar already expressed when India's constitution was about to be introduced, namely, that equality in front of the law doesn’t necessarily mean that the economic and social life will be equal. Dr. Ambedkar also suggested that unless the conflict between the law and the social and economic life was eliminated, nothing would in fact change. Kanshi Ram discusses in his paper how reality turned out to be even worse than what Dr. Ambedkar predicted.

Kanshi Ram believes that India has not only failed to bring about economic equality, but also political equality (Ibid. 293).

It is common with intimidation of voters belonging to the deprived castes of society. While threats against candidates and voters from the weaker sections of society have increased, the richer and especially educated middle class, have been busy working and has not had time to vote. The highest castes sitting on the voting power vote for themselves and the lower castes vote for those who say that the life situation of the lower castes should be better, but once the
higher castes win there is no improvement. This shows that after more than 70 years since India's independence, the weaker sections of society still have no power to change their situation by voting.

Furthermore, Kanshi Ram says that electoral reform is what is being talked most about in India, but the electoral reform is also what the politicians do least about. The elections are victories for the privileged few high-caste-people who have control over the money. Kanshi Ram also quotes Dr. Ambedkar:

There is no denying that political power in this country for too long has been a monopoly of a few and that most are not only beasts of burden but also the prey (Ibid. 294).

Although Article 46 of India's constitution outlaws discrimination on the base of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, the quest for Dalit justice is a continued struggle.

In the publication *Caste, Race and Discrimination: Discourses in International Context* (Divakar in Hardtmann & Thorat, 2006:314) Paul Divakar, one of the major leaders in NCDHR, writes about the Dalit discrimination. If a Dalit is violated by a non-Dalit it is almost impossible for the Dalit to file a report. First, a huge pressure from the local leaders of the dominant castes is put on the Dalit not to submit the complaint. Second, Divakar continues, the Dalits are forced to agree to a compromise that is often biased to the part of the accused non-Dalit. The police refuse to take on the case and if, against all odds, the police agree to register the notification they ignore to investigate the case and the registration is closed. If the case is brought to court it is delayed for several years and after that closed down for technical reasons, or it is declared that the accused is innocent (Ibid. 314). In 99% of cases the Dalits receive no justice when they are trying to utilize available legal means.

Despite much progress, the differences between Dalits and other sections of Indian society remain. Discrimination against Dalits includes access to community services such as education, healthcare, housing and participation in political life. Although the Dalit situation is better than it was 70 years ago, there are still major issues that need to be resolved before people can live a life with dignity and respect.

**2.9 Gender inequality in India today**

Oppression vary from different socio-economic, political and cultural systems. For Indian women, however, the situation is very different compared to the rest of the world. The
situation in India is complicated in that this is not just a class division, but also a caste division.

Ruth Manorama is seen internationally as one of the Dalit movement's most famous women. Manorama is herself Dalit and writes in *Towards a Dalit Theology* (1989), (which is published in *The story on my back: Indias Dalits in revolt against the caste system: prose, essays, documents*) about Indian society where the Dalit women are the most reviled, least respected and regarded as "promiscuous." She emphasizes that it is these women who suffer most. They must not only endure violence and verbal abuse from people from higher castes, but also from their own men. She describes that these Dalit women have developed a special patience, a strength to endure prolonged suffering. Manorama clarifies that these women not only accept submission, but also yearn and strive to one day be freed (Manorama in Hardtmann & Thorat 2006:275).

It is important to keep in mind when investigating the Indian society that gender and equality differs in several ways from a Western approach. Maria Johansson and Sofia Lindholm (2011) have conducted a study called *Jämställdhet i Indien* (Equality in India). The purpose of their study was to examine how a particular group of Indian women perceive their situation in Indian society where only men are given social security benefits. With their investigation they wanted to show how these women themselves reason about gender roles and how they relate to gender equality in a male-dominated society.

Their study showed that women in Indian society describe their feminine gender role in a positive way even though they are still denied social opportunities. Johansson and Lindholm also found that education was an important way for the women to achieve gender equality even though the definition of equality in India is complex due to the Indian culture.

Martina Calero has investigated in her study *Kulturproduktion och makt – En intersektionell analys av candombespelande kvinnor i Uruguay* (Cultural Production and power - an intersectional analysis of candombe playing women in Uruguay) how power relationships change when women from Uruguay start to play candombe, which is traditionally played by men within the black minority in the country. She found that the women who played candobe challenged hegemonic notions of gender and legitimized an alternative way to be a woman who dares to take place in the public domain. Calero also found that the candobe playing women developed a habit of being seen and heard, which reveals and questions the stereotypical role of women, and challenge power relations.

Joni Seager states in her book *The Penguin Atlas of Women in the World* (2008) that women in Indian society are very vulnerable in comparison to women in other parts of the
world. With India's modernization, more and more women started working outside the home to get their own income. In 2005 between 30 % and 39 % of Indian women worked for wages. The prevailing doxa says that a married woman belongs to the man. Furthermore, Seager says that the woman must often request permission to work outside the home and the chores of women differ considerably from men’s tasks. The women are usually segregated into occupations in the informal sector, such as housework, market trading and the like, while men dominate in the industry. Not only profession differs between men and women, but women usually have much lower wages than men. Women often work longer hours per day than men; some of those hours are unpaid as they are engaged in domestic work in their own homes (Seager 2009).

Furthermore, in India the family is very important and heritage is essential. Girls are expensive for the family because of the dowry. Therefore, many girls are married off when they are young. The older the girl is, the higher dowry the girl’s family has to pay to the husband’s family. Seager argues that domestic violence in India is perceived as a private matter for many families and is more than often ignored by the state. In other words, dowry means that the woman's family gives gifts to the husband's family so the family should receive the woman. A devastating consequence of this may be that the woman becomes the victim of so-called honour killings, because of the husband and his family are not satisfied with the offer of a dowry (Seager, 2009). Martha C. Nussbaum (2002) claims that the family contributes to the oppression of women; therefore the family is the major cause of keeping gender inequality alive.

3. Theoretical framework

The Theoretical framework of this thesis aims to present relevant theories that can be related to the investigation of the Garima Abhiyan. The theoretical part also intends to give the reader a greater understanding of the research field.

3.1 Theory discussion

There are many theories that could have been used to highlight the Garima Campaigns work and organisational structure in this study. The theories that have been chosen for this study are selected partly to their crucial theoretical tools for understanding power relations - partly because the theories contribute to a multidisciplinary approach, which can be important in the development debate.
The concept of intersectionality helps to understand gender and at the same time raise the awareness of power relations besides gender discrimination. Lisa Storm-Villadsen, Jens Elmelund-Kjeldsen and Christian Kock’s perspective on rhetorical citizenship contributes to make this thesis rooted in rhetorical theory research and to give another perspective on intersectionality.

Paulo Freire’s pedagogy is an essential reference to ActionAid’s work and therefore, his pedagogy is crucial to understanding the background of the Garima Abhiyan’s development. Empowerment is a strategy, which helps me to understand the individual process from a bottom-up perspective, and this theory gives me essential tools for analysing the campaign from an empowerment perspective.

3.2 Intersectionality
Intersectionality is a tool for analysing power. With intersectionality it is possible for me to illuminate that the various specific situations often are more complex than they may appear on the surface, which is very important when analysing specific issues in the Indian society. Tina Mattson writes in *Intersectionality in social work. Theory, reflection and practice* (Intersektionalitet i socialt arbete – teori, reflektion och praxis, 2010) that the intersectional approach shows that gender is not only constructed by putting men and women against each other as each other's opposites. Rather it is a matter of the gender oppression often going hand in hand with socio-economic inequality and racial oppression. The intersectional analysis is linked to gender studies, feminist and the postcolonial research field. An intersectional analysis has the ability to break down the preconceptions that exist in a society. Together with a critical reflexive approach to intersectionality it helps to understand the processes that create and maintain power structures. Mattson says that with an intersectional perspective it becomes possible to challenge the beliefs that lead to oppression and discrimination.

The Intersectionality perspective believes that various classification categories never operate autonomously; neither can they be isolated from each other. It is not just about defining different groups/categories, or denying that there are different groups, but also to reflect on what meaning they are given and the resulting consequences, that is the power relation between them. For example, differences in power between men and women are not only a matter of differences between genders, it is also about differences in economical and social structures.

The concept of intersectionality is relatively new in Sweden, but it has been discussed in recent years, since de los Reyes, Molina and Mulinaris book *Maktens (o)lika förklädnader.*

Paulina de los Reyes, an associate professor of economic history and Diana Mulinari, associate professor of sociology have both together and individually, written several texts on Swedish feminism and intersectionality and their publications on intersectionality have been a starting point for most Swedish intersectionality researchers.

According to Nina Lykke, who is Professor in Gender and Culture at Linköping University in Sweden, intersectionality is seen from an international perspective - both theoretical and political - a present feminist concept (2003). Mattson says that the intersectional analysis is a useful tool for critical reflection. The tool aims to create understanding of how power relations operate. Mattson states that theories for an intersectional analysis should be a constructivist point of origin and to link their understanding of power perspective (2010).

The central point of intersectionality is that gender, sexuality, class and ethnicity are power structures on top and subordinates people and create beliefs about human beings. These are conceptions that help to maintain the power structures. The critically reflexive approach aims to raise awareness about these power structures so that we can challenge them and break them. Mattson continues saying that combining the critical reflection of the intersectional perspective helps us to draw attention to ourselves when we create and maintain a separation between others and ourselves (2010:167).

Mattson defines the concept of reflection as a way to respect yourself and your reactions and thereby be able to have a conversation with yourself and with others about the experience gained. She believes that by reflecting, you can see yourself from an outside perspective, which leads to a process of learning and development, something that Kristin Bie in Reflection Manual (Reflektionshandboken, 2009) also discusses. Mattson clarifies that when we reflect while we act, we learn not only of experience but also through and in experience (2010:168).

In Rhetorica Scandinavica (2008) Lisa Storm-Villadsen from University of Copenhagen, Jens Elmelund-Kjeldsen from Bergen University and Christian Kock from University of Copenhagen discusses the phenomena “Rhetorical citizenship”, which also involves how various forms of discriminatory power structures interact in a community.

Storm-Villadsen declares in her introduction to Rhetorica Scandinavica no 38 Temaintro: Retorisk medborgerskab that we cannot imagine democracy without thinking about rhetoric. In her article she asks the question: how can rhetoric be used as a basis for constructive
change? A question that is relevant when studying Garima Abhiyan as a rhetorical phenomenon. Furthermore, Elmelund-Kjeldsen discusses i.a. how rhetorical research may approach the fragmented, changeable and complex world (*Retoriske omstændigheter, Retorikken i en fragmenteret foranderlig og kompleks verden*). Elmelund-Kjeldsen advocates a more widespread social science and sociology-oriented rhetoric research that besides interviews and surveys also will open up for more theoretical perspectives that can contribute to the understanding of rhetoric. Elmelund-Kjeldsen emphasizes the importance of an actor perspective that can give us greater understanding of how rhetoric arises and how rhetorical processes work. He believes that it is important to study the structures and actors, and especially how they affect each other. In other words, actors provide different perspectives to different actions. Apart from a structuration theory it is possible to consider the rhetorical situation as a particular kind of structure where the speaker is an actor. Together they create a structuration dualism, a system, where it is not the situation that creates rhetoric or rhetoric that creates the situation, but these two together construct each other. This requires that we focus on how both the structures and actors interact and especially how they affect one another. Elmelund-Kjeldsen also mentions that this structuration theory invites us to try to reveal the rhetorical circumstances of our times in a fragmented, changing and complex world.

Kock states in his article, that most discussions of deliberative democracy “focus on the involvement of citizens in democracy as active rhetors or debaters” (2008:6). In his paper he takes the opposite opinion when he looks upon the citizens’ position as receivers instead of senders of deliberative rhetoric. He discusses the problem with politicians who take advantage of citizens not understanding what they are really saying. He believes that if a political debater would get his audience to adopt a position that many do not really agree with, then, it is an advantage if the audience is unaware of what he does or says (2008:64). Like Mattson states, this is also a conception that helps to maintain power structures.

Mattson refers to Fook & Gardner (2007) who says that through a critical reflexive approach we can question our own thinking and behaviour and thereby sensitize us to how we participate in the construction of power and maintain power relations. Reflection is a way to link practical experience with the theories of power and oppression that ultimately becomes a way to become aware of this. This is also the way to be able to change their behaviour.
3.3. Empowerment

Alec Carlberg, author of the document *A Better Life is Possible - On Empowerment and social mobilisation* (2005), says that empowerment is about giving people voices and can be seen as a way of involving specific target groups with a “bottom-up” perspective. Carlberg says that empowerment is an individual process, which is both physical and mental. According to Carlberg there are several stages in the empowerment process, which in many ways reminds of Paulo Freire’s (read more further down) view of development. Empowerment strengthens the individuals’ self-esteem and gives the people a better chance of taking responsibility. Furthermore, it provides the individuals with the possibility controlling decisions and events that are conclusive to the people’s specific life situation.

Empowerment, according to Datta and Kornberg in *Women in Developing Countries: Assessing Strategies for Empowerment*, is also a contested and complex concept (2002). The criticism is all about empowerment being considered to be a Western concept, based on its individualistic culture. Carlberg also mentions, that “the term can be used in a positive, symbolic and salutary way, without any practical significance” (2005:6). Carlberg also points out that there is a risk that the empowerment term is being taken over and diluted by people in dominating positions. In other words, the empowerment concept has a multifaceted nature. According to the UN definition of empowerment it's a concept of a sense of self-worth, the right to make choices, the right to have power and control over your own life – both in and outside the home – and the opportunity to influence the direction of social change. UN also states that “Empowerment can overall be defined as all those processes where women take control and ownership of their lives” (UN, 2011).

John Friedmann, professor of urban planning at the University of California, Los Angeles, describes in his book *Empowerment The Politics of Alternative Development* poverty as a form of social, political and psychological disempowerment, which takes the household as a strategic point of departure (1992). Datta states that empowerment must come about through a “bottom-up” mobilisation and that it is only through grass root activities change in empowerment can happen (2002). Also Friedmann argues that an alternative development must begin locally, but he underlines that it cannot end there (1992:7). The state has a major role in alternative development as it needs to be more accountable to poor people and listen to their statements. In other words, the state has to cooperate with the local empowering actions in order to improve the situation of the poor and oppressed. Furthermore, the issue has to reach a national political arena. Friedmann says that if an alternative development strategy is to advocate the social empowerment of the poor and oppressed, it has to support their political
empowerment too (Ibid.). The state and the politicians are controlling the common resources of society, which is of huge importance to help these poor people become more integrated in society. Therefore, the state has to collaborate in giving the poor a safety net.

When Friedmann talks about empowerment he also talks about moral justification. In the introduction of his book he frames a question where he asks himself: “What is the basis for claiming that every person is entitled both to adequate material conditions of life and to be a politically active subject in his or her own community?” Friedmann answers with three statements: human rights, citizen rights and “human flourishing” (Ibid. 10). These three statements can be seen as three major proclamations for the foundations of the empowerment strategy. In article 25.1 of the Declaration of Human Rights (1981) it says that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. The citizen’s rights are according to Friedmann something that is specific to states and to the conditions therein. The third statement, which is named “human flourishing” by Friedmann asks us to reflect what it means to be a full human being and which rights and social conditions make human flourishing possible (1992:11). Calman (1992) discusses in her book "Toward Empowerment, Women and Movement Politics in India" the Women movements in India. She believes that movement3, in addition to creating outer change, can also generate personal change or what she calls the "psychological empowerment of those involved". According to Calman, different kinds of movements can acquire new knowledge and greater awareness of the surroundings and give the women increased self-confidence, make the women gain greater autonomy as individuals and give the women a sense of group solidarity. Calman emphasises that these changes are especially for those whose opportunities to participate in traditional political institutions normally are limited (Calman, 197:1992). Therefore, Calmans empowerment theory is very applicable on the Garima Abhiyan.

Friedmann is also very concerned when stating that alternative development always is specific to the people whose future is in question. With these words, he means that it is one thing to argue with people for an alternative development where values such as “human rights” and “human flourishing” are major claims. It is quite another thing to impose these

3 A movement is a collective effort to seek change (Calman, 1992:4).
values on a group of people who don’t share these values or don’t understand the extent of these values.

In the view of Friedmann, alternative development is about humanizing a system that has shut people out. This is accomplished through forms of everyday resistance and political struggle “that insists on the rights of the excluded population as human beings, as citizens, and as persons, intent on realizing their loving and creative powers within”(1992:13).

3.4 Paulo Freire and Empowerment

The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire emphasizes in Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) the importance of education. His pedagogy is about how human liberation can be achieved through practical and theoretical acquisition of knowledge. His pedagogy leads to insights, which in turn leads to a raised level of consciousness of the oppression that is exposed and, most importantly, how to get out of it (1970). The Pedagogy of the Oppressed was written for the liberation of the oppressed specifically in Brazil. His pedagogy is used to enable national development in Third World countries (1970). In this educational book, Freire explains, “The Pedagogy of the Oppressed is an instrument for their [the oppressed] critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization (1970:30).

Carlberg mentions that Freire does not use the word empowerment, but his thought and expression are based on what we today would call an empowerment perspective (2005:11). Freire wanted, through his liberating pedagogy to get people to critically examine their situation, and through awareness and knowledge give them the tools to change the world. Freire states: “The oppressed can overcome the contradiction in which they are caught in only when this perception enlists them in the struggle to free themselves” (1970:49) This was an essential mindset in Freire’s pedagogy He also assumed that oppressed people “[...] must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform” (Freire, 1970:49).

Freire discusses two words. One is conscientização, which means awareness of the oppression and the other word is “praxis”. Freire states that these two words can be seen as stages and in all stages, the oppressed must see themselves as women and men committed to the process of historical vocation of becoming more fully human (1970:47). In his pedagogy, reflection as praxis is truly important because reflection leads to action.

There are three stages in Freire’s pedagogy plan. These stages are that empowerment is a personal thing, which cannot be given or taken by anybody else. Secondly, he mentions that the only way to empowerment is through “actively testing your way and collecting and
cultivating experiences” (Carlberg 2005:11). At last, Freire highlighted the importance of responsibility among the oppressed people.

Kristina van Winkle writes in her paper (2003) that Freire is influenced by many different Greek philosophers such as Plato, Socrates and Aristotle. Using parts from these Greek philosophers, Freire forms their theories into a theory of his own, a theory that strives for the liberation of the oppressed (2003:19). Van Winkle adds that Freire uses a dialogic concept, which is very influenced by Socrates’ teaching method. This type of method requires that all parties involved in the interaction need to voice their opinion to form an agreement. Van Winkle states: “Once the oppressed and their teachers have developed a curriculum that will directly relate to the students’ needs, then the process of liberation may proceed” (2003:19.)

3.5 Bordieu and male dominancy

Pierre Bordieu (1998) notes in his book Masculine domination that male dominancy is so deeply ingrained in our unconscious that we hardly perceive all of its dimensions. He means that it is possible to look at the man’s role from a hierarchical point of view when the man is constructed as the norm, a structure that contributes to androcentric society with an unquestioned male dominance.

Bourdieu speaks of the concept of doxa, which he said is about what was never in questioned. What no one in the group ever will think of questioning. In the book Doxology (Doxologi) Mats Rosengren says that it is the context that determines the prevailing doxa, which also means that different social communities have different doxes at different levels (2008:79).

This is an approach that fits well in the Indian patriarchal society where men are valued much higher than women. Furthermore, Bourdieu speaks of symbolic violence. With that, he means that male dominance is the result of symbolic violence, which means that the woman is unaware of her submission when the violence is exercised through communication and knowledge from the man. Since birth, women are fed with the notion that men have a dominant position. Furthermore, the man in the household confirms this gender order when he presents his dominant position as natural to her. Bourdieu declares:

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4 The rhetorical Greek term *Doxa* is very important to understand e.g. other cultures. Doxa can be seen as a specific worldview based on general culturally rooted conceptions of reality.
This paradoxical submission is an effect of what I call symbolic violence, a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition, recognition, or even feeling”. (1998:2)

Bourdieu emphasizes how difficult it is to combat the prevailing dominance relationship and the symbolic violence. His perspective of the male dominance brings another view of the intersectional perspective. In conclusion, doxa and the male dominance perspective contribute to the understanding of the complex Indian society.

4. Methodology

The methodology aims to present my scientific background of this Minor Field Study and how the study was completed. Furthermore, this chapter will clarify which method that is the basis for the interpretation and analysis of the material. In this chapter I will also discuss the reliability and validity of this study, the limitations I made and highlight what ethical considerations I have had in mind when conducting this Minor Field Study.

4.1 Data

This Minor Field study was carried out in Delhi and Madhya Pradesh during two months in 2012, between 2nd of April and the 2nd of June. To collect my research material I used a combined method, which was comprised by interviews and observations. It is important to state that the interviews were my main data.

4.1.1 Qualitative research method

A qualitative research method is an in-depth study of specific case. In my qualitative research, I was a part of the social reality that was analysed. Therefore, data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously and interactively. According to Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann in The qualitative research interview (Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun) the research interview is a unique possibility to access and describe the lived everyday world (2009:44). In other words, the qualitative method helps to understand the phenomena and identify intangible factors such as social norms, religion and gender norms.

In the book Metoder i kommunikationsvetenskap (Methods in Communication Studies, 2006) Larsåke Larsson provides multiple perspectives and advice on how the methodology can be used to get as high a quality as possible. According to Larsson interviews are a very valuable qualitative choice of method when studying people’s experiences and descriptions of
specific phenomena. By starting from the interviewed people's point of view and experiences, it is easier to create an understanding of the social context they are in.

4.1.2 Interviews

The qualitative interview method is useful due to its ability to unveil how people perceive and describe a specific phenomenon. In this thesis the interviews were an appropriate qualitative method to use. Therefore, the main material was made of qualitative interviews with activists at the ActionAid Delhi Head Office, activists at the ActionAid Bhopal Office and activists at Jan Sahas which all are working with the Garima Campaign. For a definition of the term ‘activist’ see Limitations 4.4.

If my aim would have been to investigate how the campaign was built, it would have been sufficient to examine the material that is available about the campaign, but through qualitative interviews, I could also access what was behind the written material. In other words, with qualitative interviews I could access people's experiences, feelings and thoughts about how the campaign works up close. The interviews had a relatively open framework, which allowed me to ask follow up questions when needed. This approach allowed me to listen and to pick up various similarities and differences in the stories told by the informants. I listened very carefully to how they chose to express themselves about the campaign and in what way they described the different liberation stages.

The questions I had prepared before the interviews were developed with the theory and the Garima Abhiyan prospective document in mind. The Garima Abhiyan prospective document describes the campaign’s aim and work so far and helped me to get thorough knowledge of the subject. The qualitative interviews helped to access what was behind the writings of the Campaign’s organisation. In other words, the activists’ experiences, feelings and thoughts about how the Campaign is organised.

It is important to state that the interviews with the activists at ActionAid Delhi Head Office, ActionAid Bhopal Office and at Jan Sahas in Dewas differed in several ways from each other. Initially, my intention was to have face-to-face interviews with one activist at a time. This arrangement proved to be impossible to accomplish, therefore most of the interviews were conducted with two or more activists present at the interview session. There were also different scenarios. Sometimes, when I had scheduled time for an interview with the respondents and had prepared myself for the interview sessions, the respondents did not have time to participate and I had to cancel the interview. Another scenario was that the activists at ActionAid and Jan Sahas already had prepared interview sessions and power-point
presentations of the Garima Abhiyan when I arrived at their offices. I was often told with short notice that I had to hold my interview at that very moment. Therefore, the interview situations were sometimes difficult to control and I had to be prepared for an interview at any time and anywhere. Many times I had prepared an interview situation that became something else entirely. On one hand, my interviews differed significantly from each other. On the other hand, the material I received was significantly wider and covered a much broader spectrum than I had expected.

Due to the different interview situations, the data collection can be divided into three different types of data. The first interviews were phone interviews, which the ActionAid Head Office in Delhi had organized for me. These interviews were made during my first week in India and are primarily used for comparison and background material. The phone interviews consisted of 22 questions about the Garima Abhyian (See appendix). As mentioned, these interviews were made at a very early stage of the field study when I had not yet had time to get a complete picture of the campaign. Due to a poor phone wire it was impossible to ask the respondent all questions and to transcribe every answer. Therefore, only a few phone interviews are used in the results. These phone interviews are complemented with interview discussions with the Programme Manager Smita Khanijow at the ActionAid Delhi Head Office. The second type of data is the observations (See 4.1.3). After participating in the hamlet\(^5\) observations and visiting the Jan Sahas Office, I was able to localise four major stages of the organisational structure. These stages are presented in the Analysis 5.2 and became the basis for my follow up interviews with my informants at the ActionAid Bhopal Office. This can also be seen as the third part of the data collection.

As a researcher I am able to gain experience throughout the investigation and all the time discover new dimensions of the research subject. Since my interviews didn’t turn out as I had expected, I had to decide if I should change my interview approach during the following interview sessions. A change would mean that comparable interviews would be impossible. The alternative to a change was, as Kvale discusses, to avoid taking advantage of the new received information (2009:18). I decided to catch the kairos of the situation and accept spontaneous interview situations.

Because of the special interview situations, were the respondents usually chose the place for the interviews, it sometimes took place in very noisy environments. This resulted

\(^5\) A hamlet is a small cluster outside the village where most of the manual scavenging Dalits lives.
sometimes in bad quality recordings, which made the transcriptions complicated. By first listening through the recorded interviews with Svensson and then discussing and interpreting what has emerged in the interviews, I was able to make notes of what was unclear during the interviews. The parts that I felt were important and that I had not fully understood, I could discuss with Svensson or sometimes ask my respondents at ActionAid Bhopal Office at a later occasion. The interviews were not transcribed in their entirety. Only carefully selected components were transcribed.

4.1.3 Observations

The observations were necessary to create an overall picture of the culture and the prevailing doxa. In the book *Methods in Communication Studies* (Metoder i kommunikationsvetenskap, 2006) Larsåke Larsson discusses the qualitative interview and he emphasizes the importance of a thorough knowledge of the subject to be studied (2010:72). In my case, this was important because I come from a different culture and from a doxa that differs significantly from the doxa that exist in the villages.

During my research we spent a lot of time visiting different hamlets in Mandsaur and Dewas in Madhya Pradesh. These visits were a very good opportunity to make field notes and to observe how the Campaign works in practice. We spent approximately two hours at every hamlet and the visits consisted of one hour of interviewing the Dalits and one hour of observing the environment when the people in the hamlet showed us around and gave us chai to drink. I participated in six visits of hamlets in different villages. The visited hamlets were Dhariakheri, Kaita, Mahagarh, Parda, Bhoranza and Siddigganj and are all located in Madhya Pradesh.

The hamlet interviews, which were performed by my colleague Anna-Carin Svensson in cooperation with her interpreter, were not part of my study but they gave me an invaluable opportunity to observe how the campaign works in progress and to discuss the Garima Abhiyan phenomena with Svensson and her interpreter.

The hamlet observations and the discussions with Svensson and our interpreter helped to create an overall picture of the campaign and formulate more specific questions to the following interviews at the ActionAid Bhopal office.

4.2 Ethical considerations

When performing a Minor Field Study of this kind, it is important to consider some ethical rules. According to the Swedish Research Council rules and guidelines for research within humanities and social sciences (Vetenskapsrådets forskningsetiska principer inom
humanistisk- samhällsvetenskaplig forskning) the basic individual protection requirement may be translated into four broad main requirements for research. These requirements are information requirement, the requirement of consent, confidentiality obligations and use requirement (2012).

In this study all respondents and research participants were informed about who I were, what the field study was about, why I was doing it and where it would be available after the field study was completed. Possible questions from the respondents’ were also answered. Furthermore, the respondents and the research participants were informed about their role in the study and the conditions for their participation, including the right to withdraw their participation and cancel the interview at any time. Before each interview, the respondents and research participants were asked whether they agreed that the interview was recorded. It is important to be aware of what is considered to be ethically sensitive can vary from society to society and from person to person. Moreover, all respondents and research participants were given the option to be anonymous in the study.

Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann says that writing an interview is associated with ethical problems since interviews can treat sensitive subjects (2000:203). Therefore it can be of importance to protect the confidentiality of the respondent and the persons and organisations mentioned in the interview. However, none of the respondents’ wanted to be anonymous in this study. To keep the study as transparent as possible, I will meet the participants' wish to be named.

4.3 Reliability and Validity

In interpretive research, it is important to emphasize the thesis validity and reliability. Validity measures what is relevant in this context. In other words, validity answers to the question if the survey is valid and if it really measures what it is supposed to measure. In other words, validity answers to the question if the survey is valid and if it really measures what I want it to measure. The choice of data collection and sampling methodology and approach during interviews, observation, analysis and interpretation was based on the thesis purpose and theory questions.

Something that may have had a negative impact on reliability is that my informants had various positions at ActionAid and Jan Sahas. Some worked more directly at field level while others’ work was focused on a more national and international level. All informants come from different backgrounds and different castes. Some of the activists are even themselves brought up with mothers and sisters who practiced manual scavenging. This was obviously an
influence on the response I received during my interviews when different respondents gave different answers to certain questions, e.g. concerning the Garima campaign's origins and focus areas. I have been aware of this situation when analysing the answers and I have also looked upon it as a good opportunity to have as varied sample as possible of informants to get a high validity and reliability.

According to Kvale (1997), it is important for the study's validity to constantly revise and question the material you have received. Combining interviews with field observations raised the validity of the thesis markedly. During the field study, I also had great help from my colleague Anna-Carin Svensson when we examined the same campaign, but from different perspectives. Our cooperation allowed us to examine, question and discuss the campaign from both points of view, which was very important for the validity of the thesis.

When Kvale discusses research results and reliability, he means how well the used survey method is reliable (1997). During every interview session, we were always two, and helped each other to take notes when one of us led the interview. The fact that we attended each other’s interview sessions helped us to look upon our material from different angles. Another positive aspect is that the investigation of Garima Abhiyan from different perspectives has contributed to several interesting discussions and quality reviews.

Everything that was said during the interview was recorded, which meant that my full focus could be on the interview.

Additionally, I think it is sufficient to state that our participation in the observations as two white women was a very special and different situation for the Dalits to take part in and I am aware of that this might have affected them to act in a more structural way during the interviews than they would have done without our presence. Hence, it is important to state that the observations in my case were mostly used for comparison and background material. In other words, the comments of the Dalit women in the hamlets were not part of my study.

4.4 Limitations

Because of the extent of the Garima campaign and the limited time I have had in the field, I had to make several major limitations. It is important to mention that the Garima Abhiyan not only focus on women. The campaign focuses on all people involved in the campaign and the activists are working with the Garima Abhiyan at several levels. These levels include everything from grassroots activities, Public Hearings at the district level to the international level. It is important to state that the focus in this thesis is not on how the campaign is
working on a national or international level. The main focus is on the district level, namely, how the campaign works, step by step, to liberate women through empowerment strategies.

ActionAid supports NGO’s across India working with the Garima Abhiyan. Depending on which state in India that is mentioned, the manual scavenging practice is different. Pilot programs of the Garima Abhiyan have also been launched in other states of India. These states are Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. In Maharashtra manual scavenging is performed by the Dalit men in the household due to social order that the women should not do any work outside the home. However, 98% of the manual scavengers in India are Dalit women (Jan Sahas, 2012). Additionally, there are not only Hindu Dalits who are entrapped by the oppressive tradition of manual scavenging. The Muslim Dalits, known as the “Helas”, receive no benefits from policies and schemes designed to address discrimination against Hindu Dalits (Valmikis). In this study I have chosen to primarily focus on Dalit Hindu women that are engaged in this practice in Madhya Pradesh. A too broad focus would be difficult to manage and also give an incoherent appearance to the reader of this study. It would also be complicated to compare the situation of men and women according to India’s patriarchal doxa and practice.

The Dalit women who left the manual scavenging practice will become members of Garima empowerment group, and this membership means that even those are designated as activists in the campaign. To limit this thesis, I have chosen to focus only on the activists who work with the Garima Abhiyan at ActionAid and Jan Sahas, not on liberated Dalit women.

The reason why I have chosen to name my informants and other people working with the Garima Abhiyan as activists is that they term themselves this way and want to be designated as activists. In other words, when activists are mentioned in this thesis it stand for those people working at ActionAid or Jan Sahas and thus are involved in the Garima campaigns structure and implementation.

Even though ActionAid and Jan Sahas are working with eradication of the caste discrimination, the caste system affects their work within the organisations due to the different background and castes among the activists. However, I have chosen not to include the activists’ own caste, life situation and background, when presenting the informants in the thesis. This decision is made of ethical reasons and because this perspective would be irrelevant for the aim of my study.

Since English is not mine, nor the respondent’s first language, I am aware of the fact that we may not have understood each other correctly all the time. Even though my respondents at
ActionAid and Jan Sahas spoke almost fluent English there may have been some misunderstanding due to their Indian accents and my Scandinavian accent.

Finally, the reason why I have chosen to focus my study on the campaign in Madhya Pradesh is because the Garima Campaign was launched for the first time in this district. Moreover, the Garima Abhiyan has been very successful in liberating women in this district.

4.5 Presentation of Respondents in Interviews
All of the respondents are involved with the Garima Abhiyan.

Smita Khanijow, Programme Manager, ActionAid Delhi Head Office
Ashif Shaikh, activist at Jan Sahas, Dewas
Narendra Sharma, Programme Manager at ActionAid India, Bhopal
Sarika Sinha, Regional Manager, ActionAid India, Madhya Pradesh
Preem Ranjan, Programme Manager, ActionAid, Rajasthan

In addition to these respondents, I have also discussed the Garima Abhiyan with the following persons: ActionAid Bhopal activist Nitesh Mishra, Jan Sahas activist Sanjay Dumane and Swati Kaithwas, Programme Officer, ActionAid India, Bhopal

5. Results and analysis

In this section, I will first present a background where all main stages in the Garima Campaign are presented with comments from activists at Jan Sahas. This presentation gives a broad picture of the organisational structure of the Garima Abhiyan and helps the reader to understand the following presented and analysed stage. In order to connect to the purpose of this study the second part in this section is the analysis named 5.2 Analysis – The women liberation stages of the Garima Abhiyan. The women liberation stages in the campaign are presented with comments from the activists from Jan Sahas, ActionAid Bhopal, ActionAid New Delhi and with the Programme Manager Preem Ranjan from ActionAid in Rajasthan. The analysis studies how the Garima Abhiyan manage to get women out of the manual scavenging practice and how they work to promote critical thinking and empowerment within these oppressed women. The analysis also looks at how the Garima Abhiyan affected power relations from an intersectional perspective. The analysis focuses on the women liberation stage. See 4.4 Limitations.
In this chapter, it has been of importance to use quotes from the informants to demonstrate how the activists describe the organisational structure with their own words. All main stages follow with a short introduction and analysis.

5.1 A broad picture of the Garima Abhiyan organisational structure

There are three important components of the Garima Abhiyan programme:

- Identification
- Liberation
- Rehabilitation

The first step in the campaigns structure is the Identification stage. It is about finding all people working with a practice that the Government says does not exist any more.

It is very difficult to identify these people because the Government, departments, media and commission – all these people say that manual scavenging practice does not exist in India. In our last 10 year experience we successfully established this issue in India: The manual scavenging practice exists! Ashif

It is a very complex situation, were the Government’s laws say one thing and their actions another. If information leaks that the Dalits are still forced to perform manual scavenging, the official picture of India will be adversely affected. According to the activists, this is a very important stage to highlight and establish that the issue of manual scavenging still exist even though the Government claims that it does not. Sarika Sinha explains the complex situation like this:

The law came in 1993 and says that everyone that has dry toilets will be put in jail, but Government itself also has dry toilets, so who to put in jail?

Narendra Sharma continues saying that the Indian Government is flexing its muscles in its own way, which shows what power the Indian Government actually has.

Ashif Shaikh describes how the identification stage has effect on the Government:

Today the Garima Abhiyan successfully has located the issues of the manual scavengers in India, which has lead to the Government has started many programs for the manual scavengers rehabilitation and eradication.
Identifying these Dalits who still are bound to the traditional task of manual scavenging helps to inform the Government about the prevalence of this custom and demands them to fulfil their responsibility according to the law.

The next stage is the Liberation stage, which can be seen as an empowerment strategy stage. As Carlberg says, the women are given voices and the issue is attacked from a bottom-up perspective. This stage is divided into four categories (read more about these categories in 5.2.1 - 5.2.4). The last stage is the Rehabilitation stage. According to the activists, the Garima Abhiyan doesn’t primarily focus on the rehabilitation issue. The campaign primarily focuses on liberation, which stands for equality, honour and dignity.

The goal with the campaign is to reach dignity in the village. The goal is also to make the women believe that this occupation is under the rules of castes. Preem

Therefore, the Garima Abhiyan has challenged the concept that manual scavenging is a form of work that can not be abolished through technical sanitizing or economic interventions. This means that replacing the “work” of manual scavenging with some alternative forms of livelihood does not address the profound system of inequality that locks manual scavengers into humiliating subordination. Instead, the Garima Abhiyan approaches the labour of manual scavenging as a symptom of a deeper social problem. The Garima Abhiyan focuses on empowering women forced to be manual scavengers. In other words, the activists approach can be seen as a rhetoric approach, were the actual meaning of the words are more important and make bigger differences than a certain amount of money given by the Government. The activists hold that the people of the community would not leave the detestable task even after taking the benefits from the schemes. The practice cannot be abolished without making the women sensitive to the issue of human dignity and honour. Most of the schemes designed by the Government are confined only to economic programmes without incorporating the concept of human dignity and honour. The activists approach the manual scavenging issue from a more intersectional view and they are aware of the fact that various classification categories never appear separately (Mattson, 2011).

Many different aspects play an important role when understanding why the Dalit women at the beginning do not want to leave the practice. An important aspect is social. Economic help will not solve the problem with untouchability unless the untouchability is eliminated at grass-root level. Despite the existing legislation, which is supposed to protect against the practice it is not enforced strictly and Dalits are forced to continue the practice.
Largely people think manual scavenging is their occupation, so we will provide some money to the manual scavengers for the rehabilitation, but as the Garima Abhiyan ideology, this is not good for the manual scavengers. If the women are given 10,000 rupees to stop the practice, the women will not stop the manual scavenging practice. The women will say: ‘Everybody comes to my home and give me some money for stopping this practice, so why stop this practice, then people will not give me money.’

Ashif

Today students coming from communities of untouchable Dalit families are provided scholarships\(^6\) from the Government. If mothers of these students decide to quit the manual scavenging practice – the Government (The Hindu, 2012) will withdraw the scholarships. Therefore, this is not only an economic aspect of the manual scavenging rehabilitation programme. Many issues have an important role in keeping the untouchable Dalits untouchable. Even though the rehabilitation is not in the Garima Abhiyan’s main focus, the activists fight for the Government – instead of withdrawing the scholarships- to put in a provision that the children of the families who have left the practice would be given a double amount as scholarship. Another aspect from an intersectional view is political. Though, the Dalits have been given an entry to political process through quotations\(^7\) the community is still are engaged in the practice of disposal of human faeces.

The schemes intended for this community must be monitored and evaluated by forming committees at the national, state and the district level and then should be redesigned in the light of the findings of these committees. The women of the community – both, who are still engaged in performing the task as well as those who have given it up– and the organisations working with them should be involved actively in this process. Ashif

\(^6\) Government of India introduced a 'Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers' (SRMS) from January 2007, with the objective to rehabilitate remaining Manual Scavengers and their dependents in a time-bound money (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2012).

http://socialjustice.nic.in/scavengers.php

\(^7\) Already in the constitution of India in 1950 the reservations system was introduced. This reservations system reserved a certain number of seats for Dalits in political assemblies, in government agencies and public institutions for education. The reservation system gives the Dalits opportunities to participate in various social fields.
5.2 Analysis – The women liberation stages of the Garima Abhiyan

In the following section the women liberation stages are presented and analysed. These stages are the most important parts when developing critical thinking among the Dalit women.

5.2.1 Emphasis on ending the practice

The Garima Abhiyan’s overall statement according to the activists is that manual scavenging is not a form of employment - it is slavery. Their main focus lays on ending the practice of manual scavenging even though manual scavenging only is one of many loathsome and lowly compulsory tasks performed by Dalits. Preem Ranjan, Regional Manager at the ActionAid Rajasthan Office describes the first stage in the liberation process as follows:

Garima means dignity in English and that is the basis premise of this campaign. We have this caste-based occupation in India and these people who are called untouchable. So largely, ActionAid and Rajasthan office included, we do that we oppose this structural occupation. That is how we are working with these people to make them aware that this is under politics of caste, which is no more valid. It is up to these community members to take up a challenge to come out of this unclean occupation.

This stage can be seen as the first major stage in the Garima Campaign when talking to Dalit women in the communities and making them reflect over their situation. What is very important in this stage is that the activists focus mainly on the argument that the Dalit women need to leave this practice. Compared with the Governmental line, this is a totally different and radical approach. This “reflect stage” is the first stage in the empowerment process and is strongly related to Paulo Freire’s pedagogy method with conscientização as its first step in the liberating process. According to the activists at ActionAid the “reflect method” is a internationally known programme making oppressed people aware. Preem continues describing the reflect method as follows:

Firstly, Reflect in the Garima Abhiyan is about make the women understand basically the portal of oppression, secondly, is about making the women understand how they can come out of it, and third how the can support in social actions to came out of it. Preem

A winning concept in the Garima Abhiyan implementing strategy is that the campaign focuses on the same argument all the time, that manual scavenging is not an occupation:
Everybody thinks this is their employment, their occupation, but the Garima Abhiyan says it is not an occupation, its human slavery – an inhuman practice, forced by the caste system of India. *Ashif*

Smita, at ActionAid Delhi Office, explains that the very title of the campaign, Garima Abhiyan, is very provoking. She continues explaining the importance of why the campaign is called Garima as follows:

It could have been called a manual scavenging campaign, so why was it called the Garima campaign? It was called Garima campaign because you are calling out for dignity when you say: No, I want self-respect. It makes much more impact! *Smita*

According to the activists, this process can last for many years. It is a giant step for the Dalit women from not even to think of leaving the practice to actually imagine what it would be like if they were to leave the manual scavenging practice. This stage demands that the women are involved in the interaction with the activists and that they can handle the pressure from their men and relatives. Of course, this pressure differs from community to community. In some of the communities all people thought it was a good thing if the women stopped this practice, but in some communities the women encountered resistance (See also Svensson, 2012).

To understand why the Dalit women at the beginning don’t want to leave the practice can be difficult if you look at this issue from a Western perspective. Manual scavenging women have few opportunities to seek other employment than manual scavenging. The village settings prevent these women from seeking other forms of employment were they can get wages. When the women stop coming to households cleaning dry toilets, they get excluded from society even more and it is painful for these women to see their family starve when their only source of income is withdrawn. One Dalit woman named Bati Bai in Uttar Pradesh engaged in the manual scavenging practice said “If I did not work how would I feed my family?”. Therefore, this stage is not only about persuading women to leave the practice. To understand the empowerment process, in this case, Maslows hierarchy pyramid plays a significant role (Jerlang, 2005). Needs, such as eating, drinking, sleeping and thereby having a basic sense of security, are basic needs that must be fulfilled before entering the next step according to Maslow. A Dalit woman who first faces discrimination and then has to worry about her family’s survival does not have the energy to bother about words such as dignity, honour and pride. So, how does the campaign overcome these basic needs? The Garima Abhiyan strategy is to primarily focus on reaching out to younger women and their children.
because younger people in the community are usually more open to change. (You can read more about how the children as motivators are used in this empowerment strategy under 5.1.3). It is about planting a seed in women’s minds that will grow. The activists from Jan Sahas visit the hamlets and the communities several times to implement the message about why they should leave this practice. It is not an overstatement when saying that the activists’ use provoking rhetorical methods when working with the Garima Abhiyan. Questions used to provoke reactions among the scavengers. 1. Do you do this work voluntarily? 2. How much do you earn? 3. Why are all manual scavengers Valmikis and Helas? 4. What are the caste politics that underlie your role? 5. Why do “higher” caste people get education, respect and well paid jobs while we continue to collect and dispose of their excreta, carrying it on our heads? 6. Why do we continue to pass this jagiri (tradition) from one generation to the next? (Jan Sahas, 2011). The young women and the children lead discussions with their family and create with the activists a situation in the Dalits lives that demands reflection and critical thinking. Preem Ranjan emphasizes some sentences used by the activists when they are trying to convince Dalit women to quit the practice:

It’s a question of dignity. You have been compelled to this due to caste politics. So you need to leave. **Preem**

### 5.2.2 Empowering manual scavengers

This stage focuses even more on empowering manual scavengers to give up the practice by appealing to their honour and dignity. The activists can be seen as the first people that really are interested in the Dalit women’s lives. It is impossible to not look upon it at the activists’ as some kind of saviours. When advocating that they should leave the practice they also highlight the atrocities and everyday discrimination the women and their families have to face.

As a manual scavenger you face everyday social exclusion, discrimination and atrocities and their children also face this atrocities in the school campus. So the women realises; this is not an issue of the employments money, this is the issue of dignity and equality. **Ashif**

In this stage the activists are talking about the importance of content and confidence. This stage is truly influenced by the empowerment strategy. Like Carlberg says, the empowerment strategy strengthens the individuals’ self-esteem and gives better chances in taking
responsibility. If the first stage is more about informing the women and giving them the knowledge, this stage is about strengthening the women. In comparison with Friedmann’s theory about empowerment, this can be seen as stages were the women are given the opportunity to reflect about what Friedmann calls human flourishing. In other words making them contemplate how their lives would be without this discrimination and how it would be if they were allowed to live a decent life. Sarika describes how Dr B R Ambedkar’s view on the reflect process has inspired her in her life and work with the Garima Abhiyan:

Dr. Baba Ambedkar says if you make a slave understand the reasons why she is a slave, being assured that she is going to break the chuckles. I have really believed in this. **Sarika**

Like Friedmann points out, alternative development is always specific to the people whose future is in question. The activists use provocation to cause ruckus among the Dalits and the rest of the community. When the Dalit women are empowered they also dare to question a former ingrained doxa.

Sarika Sinha says that the Garima Abhiyan work with two main components to empower the Dalit women:

We have two components. One is about content. Because lot of your confident and personality comes from the content. If you are able to understand the issue then you are able to talk about it. The second part is personality development. Were a lot into theatre, to get the person to open up. **Sarika**

To make the women more relaxed and aware about their situation, theatre is used as a strategy to make oppressed people open up. This strategy links to Kenneth Burkes thoughts of the dramatic form as one of the most common ways for us to interpret events (King, 2009:167). According to Andrew King, Burke believed that the dramatic form helps us discover meaning in our environment. Burke alleged that the dramatic form is embedded in the structure of our minds and therefore much bigger than a theatrical performance (Ibid.). The dramatic form help us to understand and handle events and occurrences around us – and too see things from a different perspective. At the same time when the Dalit women are discussing dignity under relaxed conditions and theatrical performances something happens – they start to reflect on their situation.
5.2.3 Children as motivators

In this stage the campaign appeals to the children of manual scavengers to make them advocate for justice from elders who resist change. In a rhetorical view this is a typical pathos argument, which directly addresses the receivers’ feelings. Like Ashif says, this type of argument is very powerful.

We promote the children from the community to convince their mothers to please stop this practice: ‘If you carry human excreta, all children will discriminate me, so why are you doing this job?’ This is a very powerful strategy. Ashif

Jens Elmelund-Kjeldsen discusses in his book *Retorik idag - Introduktion till modern retorikteori* (Rhetoric today - Introduction to modern rhetoric theory) how emotional arguments can help people create new attitudes, beliefs and values (2008:348). Children's pathos argument connects the Dalit women with very important and tangible feelings. The emotions that are activated when children explain what kind of atrocities they are exposed to due to manual scavenging function as an eye-opener for their mothers. Because of this, the women come in to contact with concrete things, such as moral issues.

Furthermore, adults form attitudes when they are facing a new situation. In this case the children contribute to strengthening the message from the activists to Dalit women. In addition, the children also enhance already established attitudes among the parents as a way to further strengthen the activists’ message.

5.2.4 Motivating the women to motivate others in their community

A powerful empowerment strategy within the Garima Abhiyan is that the campaign motivates the liberated women to motivate other women, a powerful village strategy. In other words, the Garima Abhiyan works to mobilize the village. The mobilization is about activists going from one village to another, informing the villagers of why they should abandon the manual scavenging practice and raise their voices for its complete abolition.

Our strategy is to mobilize the women, liberated women, and make them go to different villages and states to motivate other women to stop the practice. Sarika

The Garima Abhiyan firmly holds that the practice can’t be buried once and for all until the initiative comes from the community itself. Hence, the campaign has focused more on working with the community, starting with motivating liberated women to motivate others.
When the Dalit women decide to quit the practice, the Garima Abhiyan mobilize the liberated manual scavenging women to form democratic community based organisations that challenge all forms of discrimination. These community-based organisations give support to manual scavengers for their livelihood, education and other things and are equipped with information and capacity-building resources to access broader networks. The manual scavengers and others in the community are educated about constitutionally derived rights and laws against manual scavenging and discrimination. In this stage the campaign is becoming the women’s own campaign and the Garima Abhiyan supports campaigns led by former manual scavengers.

We call it a leadership discourse, getting people, a few of manual scavengers, people from different tribal groups. They come and sit with us and we talk about them with the ideology, we talk about how the history and how the evolution of caste came. How this full concept of gender base and equality came. I think they are very sharp. Very sharp. They understand it far more deeply. They have gone through that experience. Sarika

Sarika continues explaining why it is so important that the women encourage other women:

If I, or someone from a different village, country or state will go and say to this women to stop this practice, the women will say ‘why should I listen to you, you don’t live in this village or you are not a manual scavenger.’ So we motivate liberated women to go to other women and say I stopped this work due to dignity, so you will also stop. If you stop this work, your children will go to school with dignity, join some other agriculture work. Sarika

This strategy is very effective. The ethos of the former manual scavengers are affecting and encouraging other manual scavengers to quit the practice. When convincing other women, the ethos of the Dalit women, who have quit manual scavenging, is in this case much stronger than the ethos of the activists from Jan Sahas or ActionAid. Narendra Sharma agrees with Sarika adding the importance of making the campaign the women’s own campaign. In this stage the top-down approach changes when the power is given to the Dalit women. This strategy, according to activists at ActionAid and Jan Sahas, has contributed to rapid results when implementing the campaign in the hamlets and villages.

The importance of Dalit women encouraging other women can also be linked to Freire’s pedagogy plan. He discussed the importance of empowerment as a personal thing, the active process of collecting and cultivating experiences and the importance of responsibility (1970:68). When the women themselves are convinced and liberated, they start to feel a
responsibility to deal with their and other Dalit women’s situation, since the women themselves have been manual scavengers and have experienced the discrimination and abuse that comes with the job of manual latrine cleaner. Thus they can be convincingly persuading other women to stop. These liberated Dalit women may together be able to liberate more manual scavengers and in the long run maybe change the situation of themselves as Dalits. Therefore, this may be seen as a personal thing that the Dalit women together can solve. In this case, the Garima Abhiyan gives the Dalit women a higher ethos, which means that this task also comes with responsibility, which also is a part of Freire’s pedagogy plan. As Freire states, liberation of vulnerable people must be their own work. In other words, the will to dare to change an ingrained doxa must come from the liberated Dalit women themselves.

One consequence of empowered Dalit women is that the role of a Dalit woman is challenged. As Calman says there is a psychological effect among the empowered and liberated women. By creating several strong women in leading positions results in the creation of role models among the Dalits and the other women in the hamlet are given other women to look up to. These Dalit women in leading positions in the Garima Abhiyan are given a higher ethos. A new picture of a Dalit woman is created, new role models who break the norms and expectations. Strong women who dare to question power structures. The fact that women should be quiet and calm is also questioned.

We don’t want a group of followers. And we don’t want a single leader in every group. We want to see many leaders. In Garima we don’t have any external leaders. It’s these women who are the leaders. Sarika

If we look at this from a feminist perspective, it is interesting to see how the campaign works to make the oppression visible. As the women are strengthened, several power relations between men and women are changed. In generations these Dalit women have been convinced about their low status but with the Garima Abhiyan they are given a refuge where they can be strengthened and feel the joy of strengthening others. These women who have never been allowed to visit the villages or to take part in public space are suddenly given power. In addition, the public space has long been a man’s privilege, now the Dalit women show that they dare to take space in this area. Even for women who are not Dalits, this is something innovative. Just by appearing in the villages the Dalit women are questioning those people who say that latrine cleaners do not exist. The campaign can also be said to contribute to make the Dalit women do something "unwomanly" as to be seen, heard and take place without do not apologizing for it.
When the liberated women are mobilized, the Garima Abhiyan organises a rally were the women parade together through the village with banners in a symbolic gesture to show their liberation. During these rallies the Dalit women sing and scream out their liberation to show the villagers that they won’t do manual scavenging any more. This is a huge step for the Dalit women. Except these rallies the Garima Abhiyan hold public events where women burn their baskets and demolish dry latrines. The campaign also resists untouchability by insisting on open entry to tea shops, barber shops and temples for the Dalits. When the women are mobilized they take the campaign in their own hands and are becoming activists themselves. One of the activists at the ActionAid office in Bhopal, Sarika, says with proudness in her voice:

They did a rally on their own. We didn’t tell them to. Some of the women have become very influenced leaders in their own way. Sarika

The liberated and mobilized Dalit women become role models and opens up for a new way to be a woman.

6. Discussion

This chapter discusses the results of the analysis in a wider sense. The results are reviewed in the context of the theoretical perspectives of the thesis. At the end of the chapter, I also suggest further research in this area.

6.1 Choice of words is significant

To develop critical thinking among a group of people, who have been oppressed with no rights to express themselves for over a thousand years demands not only one, but many different strategies. An important part of the Garima Abhiyan, which very much includes rhetoric, is how they make use of key words with strong emotional significance to convey meaning. The word Garima or Dignity is used to generate interest and involvement in the campaign. The expression dignity creates strong emotions and helps develop critical thinking, which in turn helps the Dalit women discover why manual scavenging is wrong. Another interesting point of view, which became evident in the analysis, is how Garima Abhiyan actively chooses not to call manual scavenging a profession.

Throughout the campaign, all activists at ActionAid and Jan Sahas emphasizes that manual scavenging is slavery and an inhuman practice forced by the caste system of India. By
reformulating the intrinsic importance of the entrenched concept of manual scavenging, the Garima Abhiyan contributes to a reframing. The rhetorical strategy reframing is all about changing the way people look at things and try to find alternative ways of viewing situations. This is necessary as the general image among the villagers is that manual scavenging is a tradition-bound profession of the Dalits. In other words, something positive, that Dalit women should be grateful for doing. Constantly repeating a word, in this case dignity, is an effective rhetorical strategy to attract attention, provide new perspectives and build community cohesion, which leads to both empowerment and critical thinking of the oppressed individuals. The word dignity not only creates attention for Dalits, but also among the villagers and the rest of the population in India where many see Dalits and dignity as each others antithesis.

6.2 Different actors at different levels
Already at the beginning of the field stay, I discovered that the Garima Abhiyan structure was much more complex than I initially believed. Early on, I found that the campaign is working at different levels and that the actors have different roles at every step in the campaign. As I studied the liberation stage of the Dalit women, I found that the campaign undergoes a transformation. From the beginning, when the activists from Jan Sahas and Action Aid inform the Dalit women that they have to quit manual scavenging, the campaign is the activists’ campaign in which activists are actors with a top-down perspective. Then, when the women and the rest of the village decide to stop manual scavenging, the women themselves become part of the campaign and a new actor perspective begins. The campaign is changing in the sense that the campaign becomes the Dalit women's own campaign as they continue to drive further by organizing yatras\(^8\) and holding demonstrations in the villages. This alters the perspective and the campaign adopts a bottom up perspective. Meanwhile, the campaign continues to work on other levels with other actors doing actions such as working with the Garima Abhiyan on national level. As Elmelund-Kjeldsen states, different actors do have different rhetorical tasks, making it especially important to see how different actors interact. Furthermore, Elmelund-Kjeldsen states in *Retoriske omstændigheder*, that different actors and structures create duality that arises by virtue of one another (58:2008). In the case of Garima Abhiyan, activists from Jan Sahas and ActionAid work as informers who bring knowledge,

\(^8\) A Yatra is a foot march for eradication of manual scavenging organized by Garima Abhiyan.
training and grant support. The campaign would not have become so successful as it is without the support and without the training the Dalits received from the activists.

In the liberation process, the children of the Dalits also work as actors in the campaign to persuade and motivate women to quit manual scavenging. Garima Abhiyan educates Dalit women in becoming influential rhetors and thus gives them a path into a citizenship, which is an opportunity to take part and be a part of society. These influential Dalit women, who then take over the campaign and make it their own personal struggle is a good example which is supported by Carlberg's thinking on how empowerment works as a mental process of strengthening self-esteem and giving the oppressed voices. Also Freire's theories about how the liberation from oppression must come as a force from the oppressed themselves fit well into the structure of the Garima campaign. Without Dalit women's continuing struggle for Garima Abhiyan, much of the work of activists would be in vain, or at least not nearly as successful.

6.3 Dalit women are given voices – a rhetorical phenomenon with intersectional base

Storm-Villadsen’s opinions on the designation of citizens as a rhetorical phenomenon are very interesting in terms of the Garima Abhiyan. Dalit women, who have been working as manual scavengers, can be seen as one of the most oppressed groups in India. Garima Abhiyan gives them an opportunity to take advantage of their civil rights such as visits to tea shops, temples and barber shops. When the liberated women organise yatras and demonstrations, the minds of the Dalit women are changed. Consequently, the suppressed mechanisms become visible to people in the villages. Through demonstrations in the village streets, Dalit women can for the first time use their rights, their citizenship and their voices to win influence in society. They use rhetoric as a medium both through symbolic gestures and exclamations when expressing their rights in society.

India, with its deep-rooted male domination in society and the Dalit women’s limited rights to express themselves has naturally led to Dalit women being placed outside society. The activists from Jan Sahas and ActionAid often use a controversial and provocative rhetoric when talking to manual scavengers. This approach has succeeded in making the Dalit women reflect on their situation. But the main thing is not happening right there, but when women are together organizing meetings in which they socialize, plan new yatras and discuss situations of discrimination in the village. According to activists, ActionAid and JanSahas, these are the empowerment groups where the real strength lies.
It is common that the women discuss events where someone in the village has been discriminated. After the women quit manual scavenging and joined the Garima Abhiyan they have been given the courage to report violence and instances of discrimination to the police. Now it is also far more likely that the police take the case seriously. According to the activist at ActionAid and Jan Sahas it is in these empowerment groups where the real strength lies. In the empowerment groups ideas are transformed into action and critical thinking gets the chance to germinate and grow. This finds support in Calmans theory of ”psychological power of those involved” where the empowerment strategy not only works as an outward change but as an individual change among oppressed people. As the analysis showed, the Dalit women become role models for other women and for their children. The fact that women are made aware they are also given opportunities to understand how they can influence their situation. As Mattson states, critical thinking contributes to make us more sensitive to how we participate in the construction of power structures. Mattson’s approach provides further proof that knowledge is power.

It is important to emphasize that the Garima campaign has come a long way, but small steps will take a very long time. The women who ten years ago quitted manual scavenging, some of them started to work on something else, others relied on the husband's income. But this makes it not less interesting. With a western approach it might be seen as a small progression but for the Dalits and India it is a very important step that ultimately affects their entire lives.

6.4 Conclusions and further research

To be able to take part in the Garima Abhiyan has been a real eye-opener. As mentioned earlier, I realized once I was on location in India, that the Garima Abhiyan was much more extensive than I first thought and that it was possible to investigate the campaign from several angles and levels. The activists at Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan-National Campaign for Dignity and Eradication of Manual Scavenging are regularly working with advocating the eradication of manual scavenging and to strengthen the Dalits on state, national and international level. Activists from Jan Sahas and ActionAid and liberated Dalit women are participating in National Public Hearings, which are public meetings with the main purpose to obtain public testimony or comments.

Regarding further research, I see several possibilities in this area. It would be interesting to see how Garima Abhiyan is affected by these National Public Hearings, in which they participate and look into the Dalit women's efforts in these meetings from a rhetorical
What happens rhetorically during these public hearings? What arguments are used and what impact do these arguments have? It would also be interesting to continue along Storm-Villadsens thoughts on why some groups succeed in winning support for their views and opinions, while others run a losing battle to be heard.

However, it is important to dare to criticize the campaign. Several Indians I met during my MFS were very averse to how well the campaign actually works. Those living in villages do not consider themselves having a better life than the Dalits who have quit the practice of manual scavenging. Instead, they see the attention that Dalits get from Garima Abhiyan as something negative. I think it would be interesting from a research point of view to closely examine how Garima Abhiyan works to address this problem. In other words, how and why the rhetoric is an important factor when it comes to influencing public attitudes.

As I highlighted in paragraph 2.9 Gender inequality in India today; the discrimination against Dalit women is not just about the atrocities they are subjected to by society but also about the discrimination they suffer in their homes. My suggestion would be to look at the campaign from both a gender- and rhetorical perspective, which also is highly topical when Garima Abhiyan since 2010 decided to start looking at the campaign from a gender perspective. For example, how is the campaign managing the gender discrimination and how much impact has the gender argumentation on the families of the Dalit women?

Although Garima Abhiyan work with a specific situation in India, it is not impossible to apply the obtained results in my study to other cultural and social contexts. Rhetorical theory is a useful tool with which to investigate and critically examine campaigns dealing with human rights. This study has demonstrated many examples of action as rhetorical means where relationships and critical thinking are created in joint activities. This study has demonstrated that Western theories can be successfully applied to a campaign in Madhya Pradesh in India.

The Garima campaign primarily affects the small community. However, small initiatives like the Garima campaign can affect the way Indians look upon caste discrimination, which in turn can change an ingrained doxa.

During my MFS in India, I visited many cities and villages. When Indians asked what I was investigating during my stay I told them about Garima Abhiyan. The majority I asked had no idea what manual scavenging was all about and most of the young people and adults from the higher caste did not even know what Dalits is. Therefore, I consider it important to continue investigating and researching Garima Abhiyan - both to disseminate knowledge but also to keep the debate alive.
9. References


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**Electronic sources**


10. Appendix

Interview guide

1. Name, occupation?

2. When did you decide to join the Garima Abhiyan?

3. Tell me, with your own words, what the Garima Abhiyan is all about.

4. Can you describe how you have participated in the work with the campaign?

5. What is the first thing that happens in a hamlet when the Garima campaign arrives?

6. Could you tell me about how the campaign is organized step by step?

7. Could you describe a highlight achievement in the campaign?

8. Has the Garima campaign had any major setbacks (backfire)?

9. How does the Garima Abhiyan work with empowerment?

10. What is women’s empowerment to you?

11. In what ways does the campaign change the Dalit women’s lives?

12. Do you think it is important for women to organize themselves? If so, why?

13. What needs to change in the society in order to improve Dalit women’s situation even more?

14. I have heard that some Dalit women, who have quit manual scavenging, are active in the Garima campaign. Is that correct? How are the Dalit women, who still works with
manual scavenging affected by their involvement in the campaign?

15. I have read about how the villagers sometimes told them that if the Dalits were giving up their traditional occupation then they shouldn’t take water from their tube wells. Is there much problem with the villagers?

16. Does the Dalit women’s husbands fear their women’s participation in the campaign? How do they react?

17. I have read about the ActionAid educational methods called reflect. A method that encourage the participants to analyse, discuss and express their opinions. How is the method used in the Garima campaign?

18. What is the origin of the reflect method?

19. How does the campaign enhance Dalit women’s organisational skills, ability to stand up for themselves and take initiative?

20. I have read about that the Garima campaign also perceiving the practice as a gender issue and have tried to evolve strategies for addressing it. Is that correct? If yes, can you tell me more about it?

21. How are those Dalit women who abandon the practice provided with assured social, economic and political rehabilitation?

22. What are your beliefs and hopes for the future regarding the development of women’s empowerment?