



"Scheduled Castes: Social And Gender Inequality

KEYWORDS

Scheduled Castes, Inequality, Gender.

Mr. M.S. Shinde

Asso. Prof. & Head, Dept. of Sociology, Chh. Shivaji College, Satara, Maharashtra

ABSTRACT *Economic growth with social justice is the major objective of planning process and rural development in India. After Independence, no doubt, we have made remarkable progress in the field of science and technology. As the issue of development of weaker sections especially the Scheduled Castes, we have made significant progress but the desirable out-come is still far away from the reality. In India the disparity between gender literacy is lower and this is also true within the castes. This paper is intended to examine education, health, government jobs, basic amenities like housing, drinking water, electricity, etc, based on secondary data. The prime motive of the study is to SC women are institutional problems of SCs including hour is to remodel or redesign our institutional arrangements through a radical structural change with emphasis on equity and equality of women as par with men in all spheres of social life. The study also highlights the areas of deprivation which need urgent attention of the government and policy maker towards the present situation. The implementation of various developmental schemes turns to lead stability and bring the weaker sections into main stream of the society.*

1. Introduction

Modernization has presented new challenges for the realization of the goal of women's equality and gender impact has been evaluated systematically. Indian society is recognized by its diversity and in terms of religion, caste, region and language. This kind of diversity gives rise to population with very different kinds of family backgrounds and demographic characteristics. Caste is a rigid system of occupationally specialized, interdependent groups. It is the fundamentally social institution in India. The castes are mostly and strongly endogamous. In the modern period it has been severely criticized by both Indian and foreign observers. Some educated people tell non-Indians that caste has been abolished and no one pays attention to caste system anymore, but statements do not reflect the reality. The caste has been undergone significant change since independence of India. Although scheduled castes are in a minority, they constitute about 16.2 % of the total population in India (Census of India, 2001). This trend reflects in the social and cultural trends and degrees of gender inequality in India. One key factor for the implementation of laws and policies, to address discrimination, economic disadvantage, and violence against women at the community level is the largely patriarchal structure that governs the community and household on a large in India.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was an architect of the Indian constitution. The scheduled castes are those castes, which have been in future be specified in list an accordance with Article, 341(1), of our constitution. The people of these castes are considered outcastes and categorized as untouchables. They remain at the bottom of social hierarchy and have been socially deprived, discriminated and exploited by the upper castes. The scheduled castes are residing predominantly in the rural areas or out-skirt of the villages. The main purpose in incorporating developmental provisions was to change the traditional social structure of our society based upon socio-economic and political inequalities. Gender-empowerment has become a catch word without much achievement. However, the reservation of one third of elected posts for women in the local bodies on the basis of 73rd and 74th amendments to the constitution has shown a difference. As per issue of development of weaker sections especially the scheduled castes, we have also progressed significantly but the outcome is not within the reach of reality.

2. Methodology:

The present paper is based on the secondary sources of data from census 2001, along with reports of the Planning Commission, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, National Family Health Survey-.Employment Review, Economic Survey.

3. Objectives:

- 1) To study the social inequalities in Scheduled Castes.
- 2) To review the basic amenities of the Scheduled Castes.
- 3) To observe the education, health, job opportunities etc., of the Scheduled Castes.
- 4) To give suggestions for improvement of conditions of Scheduled Castes.

4. The parameters for the indication of inequalities in the society

I. Education:

Education is an important avenue for upgrading the economic and social conditions of the scheduled castes and it plays a very important role in bringing them into the main stream of society. Educationally India is under developed country than other countries in the world. The literacy rate of scheduled castes increased from 10.27% in 1961 to 45.20% in 2001 showing increase of 34.9% in the last forty years. (Census of India 1961 & 2001) In other words, around 55% of SC population is still deprived from the basic and essential factors of human development. The female literacy rate was 23.76% in 1991 and 41.10% in 2001 it reveals 17.34% increase in the ten years. (Census 1991 & 2001) It shows that around 59% of SC females are illiterate, which need to be reduced urgently and bring them with general category. In India, female illiteracy is higher than male illiteracy in general category and same illiteracy rate is in the Scheduled Castes.

II. Health:

'Health for all' is the aim of government. Health status is multi-dimensional in nature and difficult to measure precisely. In India, the poverty line is defined as an income sufficient to buy food providing 2400 calories (rural) and 2100 calories (urban), plus 20% of that amount for other basic needs. It is captured through a range of indicators such as mortality institutional deliveries and life expectancy at birth is widely used to measure health status of population. In the year 2002, National Health Policy indicates policy structure which reduces these inequalities and allows the disadvantaged sections of the society. Infant mortality means the probability of dying of infant before the first birthday. The rate of infant mortality is higher in case of SCs (66.4%) than the national mortality rate (57%). The total percentage of women who use public/private health services for delivering their babies is 38.8%. In case of institutional deliveries among the scheduled caste nearly 77% women gave birth to their children at home. (National Family Health Survey-III India, 2005-06) Discrimination against girls and women is widespread in India in all communities. The dowry system means that girls are a financial burden, whereas boys are viewed as a source of income and prosperity.

III. Representation in Government Services:

Representation in government job has been mainly possible due to the protective discrimination policy of the government of India. The reservation in the jobs has been provided, which facilitates entry into the paid services. Although the educational and employment achievements in SCs have not been up to the expectations, these have contributed to their socio-economic development to a significant extent. In the year 1991 (9.09 %) posts were filled and there was an improvement in the year 2001 (11.42 %) but there is still a significant gap of over 4 % between prescribed quotas. The representation of SCs in category 'C' and particularly class 'D' is in excess, such as in 'C' category in the year 1991 (15.65 %) and in 2001 (16.25 %), and in class 'D' in year 1991 (21.24 %) and in 2001 (17.89 %) (DOP&T, Govt., of India, 2005-06). It clearly shows that lower grade jobs which generally are not accepted by the general caste people due to social prestige.

IV. Housing:

Housing is one of the basic needs of the human beings for the survival. It provides significant economic security and dignity in society. There are two important housing schemes such as 'The Indira Awaas Yojana', 'Valmiki Ambedkar Awaas Yojana', respectively for the economically weaker section of the society. The Indira Awaas Yojana provides construction for up gradation of below poverty line (BPL) rural households belonging to the SCs and 'Valmiki Ambedkar Awaas Yojana' for urban and slum areas. According to the 2001 census, it is estimated that about 10 lakh homeless are added every year. In the year 2001, (42.8 %) in the rural SCs had their own shelters, and around (58 %) were homeless. In the 2008-09, under the 'Indira Awaas Yojana', an amount of Rs. 5645.77 crores have been allocated to the States with a target of construction of 21.27 lakh houses. (MoF, Gol, 2009) It is clear that majority of the scheduled caste people do not have a permanent roof over their head to live in and are deprived off the human needs of adequate shelter.

V. Drinking Water/Sanitation:

Drinking water and sanitation are the most essential factors for safe and healthy life. The water supply and sanitation schemes are planned, designed and executed by State/Boards/ Local Bodies/ with State Plan Funds. In case of SCs households 20.9 % in rural and 48.5 % in the urban areas have drinking water facilities within their premises. Around 58.2 % SCs households get the drinking water outside their premises, and 21 % rural SCs households have to go away from their houses to collect drinking water. (Census of India 2001) Sanitation is a cornerstone of public health. It is estimated that around 40 % of the world's population lacks access to toilets, (UNESCO, 2008). As far as our country is concerned, only 23.7 % of SCs households have latrine facility within their own premises. The scheduled castes population has latrine facilities below the national average of 36.4%.

VI. Electricity:

In our country around 55.8 % of households have access to electricity. There is access to electricity in the term of general category and SCs households 61.4 % and 44.5 % respectively in the year 2001. The SCs householders are still deprived in the term of access to electricity in comparison to the general caste households. It is unfortunate that more than 21% scheduled castes villages have still no access of the electricity facility (Planning Commission 2005).

5. Concluding Remarks:

Every individual of the country has a right to be literate and to contribute in the development of country. The Government

should play an active role in making more and more people literate irrespective of caste and religion. The realization of the constitution of India is that the socially, economically and educationally backward castes cannot compete with the others without the initial push given by the State. Some special provisions, such as fundamental rights have been incorporated in the Constitution to provide justice and equal opportunities to them. Education, job opportunities, housing, occupation and health are pre-vital factors of development of the society. The present state of the SCs on the above indicators shows more literacy gap than other castes and infant mortality, pre-natal and post natal mortality are much higher among the SCs. Nearly 77 % SCs women have forced to give birth to their children at home due to acute poverty. The representation of SCs in government jobs in top classes is very less than their stipulated share of 15.5 %. It is unfortunate that still more than 21 % SCs villages have not received the electricity. Drinking water is essential for good health and survival of the individuals, but only 27 % of SCs have drinking water sources within their premises, and 20 % have water outside their premises. The sanitation facilities are indicating fact that only 23.7 % SCs have latrine at their premises. The majority SCs people do not have a permanent house to live. It is a matter of fact that more than one-third people of SCs are living below poverty line. There are main indicators of prosperity such as housing, food, clothing, shelter, education, drinking water, electricity and sanitation. So the attention should be paid to fill-up the basic needs of the human beings and for that urgent attention must be paid by the government and policy makers to bring them into the main stream of society.

6. Suggestions:

Education is a significant tool for human development. For the development of scheduled castes there is need to start new elementary schools, programmes like 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' for qualitative education. Pre-metric-scholarships, Post-metric scholarships, Rajeev Gandhi fellowship should be started for their financial assistance. 'Kasturba Gandhi Balika Schools' should be opened for girl's education.

The government should reorient the employment strategies and also focus on creating employment opportunities in the non-farming and household industry sectors. There is need to impart skills including vocational training for the new trades.

The Health and Family Welfare should take care on health issues in those areas where the literacy rate of SCs girls is below 30 %. There is greater need of awareness among SCs women regarding pre-natal, anti-natal, post-natal care. The role of NGOs can be decisive in the generation of awareness among the masses in rural areas.

Housing is one of the basic needs of human beings. The government existing policies and programmes are said to be adequate, but there is urgent need to make them more realistic. The corporate sectors can play an important role in providing housing to the poor by the efforts of the government.

There is need to educate the scheduled castes people about the importance of hygiene, safe drinking water and sanitation facilities. The local self government and NGOs can be involved in this process of awareness generation to make it mass campaign. The schemes for socio-economic upliftment of sanitation workers/scavengers and their dependent's needs to be popularized. There is an urgent need to bring adequate changes in the policy framework to help those who need it badly. The special recruitment drive to fill up the backlog of SC vacancies should be initiated by the government to provide adequate representation in the government jobs.

REFERENCE

1. Dr. A. R. Desai (1998). Introduction to Rural Sociology in India. | 2. Dr.Sukhadeo Thorat (2007).Economic Exclusion and poverty in Asia. | 3. Census of India (2001). Govt. Of India, New-Delhi. | 4. Report of National Family Health Survey III (28). Govt. of India. | 5. Economic Survey, (2005-06).Govt.of India. | 6. Five Year Plan (9th, and 10th).Planning Commission Report, Govt. of India. | 7. Annual Report (2003-04).Ministry of social justice and empowerment, Govt. of India. | 8. Darshan Singh, 'Development of Scheduled Castes in India'. Journal of Rural Development, Vol, No (4) NIRD. Hyderabad. (2009) | 9. www.censusindia. gov.in | 10. Employment Review, Ministry of Lab our and employment, Gol, 2008. | 11.V.Subramanyam, K.Sekhar(2010) Social Exclusion, Integration and Inclusive Policies, Rawat Publication, Jaipur | 12. Dr. J.R.Kamble (1979) Rise and Awakening of Depressed Classes in India, National Publishing House, Darya Ganj, New Delhi. |