



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF DALIT IN INDIA

### KEYWORDS

Scheduled Castes, Dalit, Caste, Social Condition.

**Dr.P.Srithar**

Head, PG & Research Department of Commerce,  
NMSSVN College, Madurai.

**N.Bairavi, M.Com., Ph.D Scholar**

NMSSVN College, Madurai.

**G.Mariselvam, M.Com. Ph.D Scholar**

NMSSVN College, Madurai.

### ABSTRACT

*In India, as per 2011 census people belonging to various scheduled castes recorded nearly 20.14 crore which is 16.6 percent of total population. The 2001 census recorded 16.66 crore. But they are positioned at the bottom of the Indian caste society. Less than 10% of Dalit households can afford safe drinking water, electricity and toilets, which is indicative of their terrible social condition. Dalits were paid lower wages than other workers. They were also subjected to much longer working hours, delayed wages, verbal and even physical abuse. The socio-economic status of Dalits has to be improved. They have to be given equal recognition in the society.*

### INTRODUCTION

According to the Hindu caste hierarchy, there are four castes namely the Brahmins (priestly caste), the Kshatriya (warriors), the Vaishyas (traders) and the Shudras (menial task workers). Below this four-tier caste ladder there is another rung of peoples, who are called the untouchables (Dalit). There are many sub-castes within the Dalit Community. They are positioned at the bottom of the Indian caste society. The main occupation of Dalit people are leather works, Sweeping, Cobbling, Agriculture works and manual scavenging. The dominant social orders of the "touchables" are violating the most basic goal of society to guarantee security & happiness for people known as Dalit. The lack of access to education is a problem for the Dalit community. Many Dalit families living in rural areas are unable to send their children to school because of geographical or financial constraints. Among the untouchables, the status of women is further eroded and closely linked to the concept of purity.

### SOCIAL STATUS OF DALIT IN INDIA

In India, as per 2011 census people belonging to various scheduled castes recorded nearly 20.14 crore which is 16.6 percent of total population. The 2001 census recorded 16.66 crore.

Half of the country's Dalit population is recorded in four states viz., Uttarpradesh stands first with 20.5 percent of the total Scheduled Castes population followed by West Bengal with 10.7 percent says the data released by Union Census Directorate record. Bihar with 8.2 percent and Tamilnadu with 7.2 percent come third and fourth. There are around 9.79 crore women among the total Dalit population, and the sex ratio shows out to 946 females per 1000 males.

Less than 10% of Dalit households can afford safe drinking water, electricity and toilets, which is indicative of their terrible social condition. Moreover, Dalits are daily victims of the worst crimes and atrocities. The vast majority of these crimes remain unreported due to omnipresent fear, and those that are reported are often ignored by police or end up languishing in the backlogged court system.

#### 2.1 Scheduled Castes population in India 2001& 2011

S. No	Indicator	Scheduled Castes Population(in Million)		Variation(%)
		2001	2011	
1.	Persons	166.6	201.4	+20.8

2.	Males	86.1	8.44	103.5	8.55	+20.3
3.	Females	80.5	7.89	97.9	8.09	+21.5

Source: Census India 2011

The Dalit population showed a decadal growth of 20.8 percent whereas India's population grew 17.7 percent during the same period.

#### Literacy Level of Scheduled Castes in India

Literacy level is important indicators of socioeconomic infrastructural development. Economic growth is related to degree of literacy. According to Indian census, 'A person who can both read and write with understanding in any language is to be taken as literate'. Education is one of the important needs of life. A low degree of literacy is an obstacle to economic growth. Literacy is related to religion and caste. Proportion of literates is lower among the people belongs to Scheduled Caste and Tribes. The main reason for lower proportion of literates among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes is that they were deprived of educational facilities for generations. Male literacy rates are significantly higher than that female over the study period.

The literacy level indicates that a wide male-female disparity and differ over time to time.

#### 2.2 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Literates in India 2001 and 2011

S.No	Indicator	Total Population		Scheduled Castes	
		2001	2011	2001	2011
1.	Persons	560687797	763498517	75318285	113759907
2.	Males	336533716	434683779	47432887	66476908
3.	Females	224154081	328814738	27885398	47282999

Source: Primary Census Abstract for Total population, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 2011

The data shows that although the numbers are improving, scheduled castes, who comprise 16.6% of the population, and scheduled tribes, who make up 8.6% of the population, have lower literacy rates than the Indian average. The literacy rate for female is 57% for SC women, while the numbers are slightly higher for men. The high literacy rate among the male population attribute to the male participate in economically gainful activities. The female literacy level has little functional value.

### Work Participation of Scheduled Castes in India

Work participation rate denotes the percentage of total workers i.e., total main and marginal workers to the total population in an area. Occupation is a very significant socio-economic attributes of population. It exerts significant influence on social, cultural and economic characteristics of any region.

#### 2.3 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Work Participation in India 2001 and 2011

S.No	Indicator	Total Population		Scheduled Castes	
		2001	2011	2001	2011
1.	Persons	402234724	481743311	67332884	82304605
2.	Males	275014476	331865930	43658975	54619798
3.	Females	127220248	149877381	23673909	27684807

Source: Primary Census Abstract for Total population, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 2011

Women form an integral part of the Indian workforce. The proportion of Scheduled castes male workers is comparatively higher than the proportion of Scheduled castes female workers indicating a low economic status of women in their society.

The females are generally engaged in household domestic works or other unorganized sector of economy and therefore, they are not included in the working population by the census of India. A very negligible percent are engaged in non-agricultural activities.

#### Scheduled Castes people living below poverty line in India 2011.

The social groups most vulnerable to poverty have been identified to be the scheduled caste households. Over long periods, the social system ascribed occupations to Dalit group which were not only low in social ordering but were also characterised by very low productivity. Consequently, this group remained at the lowest end of the economic hierarchy as well. Their social and economic backwardness was derived from their long time habitation in geographically isolated areas with difficult terrain and practicing shifting cultivation. Dalits are the most-underprivileged sections of population and the easiest marker of poverty. In 2004-05, more than half the SC population in rural areas was below the poverty line.

#### 2.4 Scheduled Castes people living below poverty line in India 2011.

S.No	Indicator	Total Population			Scheduled Castes		
		Population	Poverty Rate	People below Poverty line	Population	Poverty Rate	People below Poverty
1	Total	1210854977	21.92%	265419411	201378086	29.4	59205157
2	Rural	833552566	25.7	214223009	153850562	31.5	48462927
3	Urban	377302411	13.7	51690430	47527524	21.7	10313472

Source: Census India 2011

### CONCLUSION

The inhumane and illegal practice of untouchability is still commonplace in contemporary India. In the name of untouchability, dalits face nearly 140 forms of work and descent-based discrimination by the dominant Castes Dalits were not allowed to non- Dalit homes and they denied eating together. Restrictions on temple entry by Dalits are highly in Uttarpradesh and Karnataka. Dalits were paid lower wages than other workers. They were also subjected to much longer working hours, delayed wages, verbal and even physical abuse notable in Bihar and Punjab. The socio- economic status of Dalits has to be improved. They have to be given equal

recognition in the society.

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