

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF SCHEDULED CASTES-A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY**

**Shashikumara K.N.**

Research Scholar, Department of P.G. Studies and Research in Sociology, Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta, Shivamogga District, Karnataka, INDIA, PIN - 577 451, e-mail: shashikns1993@gmail.com.

**Dr. Anjanappa B.H.**

Professor, Department of P.G. Studies and Research in Sociology, Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta, Shivamogga District, Karnataka, INDIA, PIN - 577 451, e-mail: anjanappa.soc@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

Scheduled castes are the last strata of the Indian social strata. It is tragic that the social strata have divided the hierarchy not by individual talent and achievements. But the wide spread hues and caste system in India that is there are no chances for social mobility in the strata system divided by castes. We can see that the social mobility in Indian society continues through the tradition of caste system. The present study aims to study the social life of scheduled castes and to analyze the economic status of scheduled castes.

Present study includes ten (10) taluks in Tumakuru district of the state of Karnataka with 30 respondents in each taluk and a total of 300 respondents from all the taluks of the district using simple random sampling method. The current study reveals the socio-economic status of scheduled castes is not yet fully developed.

**Keywords :** Socio-Economic Conditions, Agricultural Land, Awareness, Scheduled Castes.

### **Introduction**

India is a rural country with 68% of its population still living in rural areas. Generally, caste based social structure can be found in every village that is through the caste hierarchy that the families of the villages settle first. It is understood that "The social inequality arises from the social strata" (Anand Sirohi, 2012). The social status, power and wealth of the villages is also distributed accordingly in this way when all the power and resources in the villages are unequally allocated. Different communities will develop in an unequal manner. Scheduled castes are considered to be an ineffective component of Indian social structure. Scheduled caste is the lowest in the caste hierarchy and their problems are different from those of other castes.

Their progress in the social, cultural, economic, political and other spheres is still unequal. The social restrictions imposed on scheduled castes, centuries ago can be seen even after independence. This means that social discrimination and economic inequality have created strong ownership of the scheduled castes. Economic inequality has emerged as a distinct result of social inequality. Inequality is reinforced by social stratification in Indian society. Scheduled castes are still unable escape this form of social discrimination.

India is a rural country and the main economic source of land is in rural areas. But “Fair and equitable land sharing can be seen as not in his agrarian based system” (Chandrashekar Ramenahally, 2012). That means that land is allocated first by caste hierarchy, they have come out of the land because the Shudras cannot own land in the caste hierarchy, they only have to serve the Trivarnas land control and exercise of power in rural India implies social exclusion. Landlessness is a better indicator of poverty than caste and literacy in India.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To study the social life of scheduled castes.
- To analyze the economic status of scheduled castes.

### **Review of Literature**

Selvanathan (1989) studied on *Position of Scheduled Caste*. The author conducted a study in Tamil Nadu to find out about the socio-economic status of scheduled castes. Scheduled castes have a low share of total land holdings and still hold low socio-economic status. Social and economic position in the societies are purely related to each other. Who even owns most of the land in most rural areas of India is superior in social status also the economic status of those who are high in the social status is higher. Both are interconnected elements in rural areas. The sources of both of these is land which means that the size of the land holdings plays an important role in rural areas.

Dipankar Gupta (1991) worked on *Social Stratification*. In the present study, the author shows an unequal difference between different communities in societies. This distinction not only socially, but also unevenly stratified society, economic, political, cultural and religious. Every human society is composed of distinctive and hierarchical with organized principles. The root of this inequality is the racial and caste system we have. These are divided in society into different types and continuing the process of persecuting those at the top of the strata. As a result, inequality is still widespread in all areas of Indian society. This means that all status of those under the strata system is at the bottom will those at the top are doing well in all areas.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The statement of the problem of the present study is “Socio-Economic Conditions of Scheduled Castes-A Sociological Study”.

## Research Methodology and Techniques

For the present study, field survey has been carried out by using scientific techniques for the data collection. Qualitative and quantitative information was collected. Information was collected by the respondents with the help of mentors, experts and pre-tested and finally the perfect interview schedule was used to gather needed information for the present research.

## Study Area and Sample

For the present study, ten taluks from Tumakuru district was selected to collect information to supplement the research. From each taluk, the sample size was 1 hobli and 2 villages among the SCs, where the SC population is high. 300 respondents were selected from 20 villages for the study. Simple random sampling method was adopted for the study.

## Sources of Data Collection

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of information. Primary data has been gathered through field survey by using well structured Interview Schedule from the respondents. The secondary sources of data have been gathered from published Books, Journal Articles, Periodicals, Reports, Theses, Volumes, Websites (E-source) and others.

## Data Analysis

The research methods, techniques and research data from various sources are analyzed in a qualitative and quantitative manner using codification, revision, classification, indication and analyzing the information in a sociological framework using adequate statistical tools.

### Profile relating to change in informants social status

| Change                         | Frequency                | Percentage        |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Is the change                  | 112                      | 37.33             |
| Not much as change             | 188                      | 62.67             |
| Total                          | 300                      | 100.00            |
| <b>If Yes, the reasons</b>     | <b>Frequency (n=112)</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| Modern education               | 109                      | 97.32             |
| Awareness of stupidity         | 88                       | 78.58             |
| Mass media                     | 94                       | 83.92             |
| Rational attitude              | 69                       | 61.60             |
| Others                         | 23                       | 20.53             |
| <b>If No, the reasons</b>      | <b>Frequency (n=188)</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| Continuation of old traditions | 139                      | 73.94             |
| Caste system                   | 183                      | 97.34             |

|                           |    |       |
|---------------------------|----|-------|
| Inferiority in themselves | 91 | 48.40 |
| Others                    | 36 | 19.14 |

The above table reveals the detailed profile relating to change in informants social status. Of the total population 37.33 per cent of them stated that the change in social status, while 62.67 per cent of them stated that change was not significant which shows that there is little change in the social status of the informants. The reason for the change is that the villages are close to most cities. Similarly, for those who continue to see social change 97.32 per cent of the respondents said that the change was due to modern education, 78.58 per cent of them said that it is to a sense of the current educational system and mass media have been instrumental in bringing about change. Similarly, when looking at the reasons, for not changing, 73.44 per cent said that continuation of old traditions, 97.34 per cent as caste system, 48.40 per cent of them replied inferiority in themselves and 19.14 per cent said as other social illiteracy. This shows that caste system is still a decisive factor for social status in villages.

#### Type of House

| Type of House | No. of Respondents | Percentage    |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Hut           | 06                 | 02.00         |
| Shop          | 64                 | 21.33         |
| Tailed House  | 83                 | 27.67         |
| Sheet House   | 104                | 34.67         |
| RCC           | 43                 | 14.33         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>300</b>         | <b>100.00</b> |

Statistical data in the above table shows that, out of 300 respondents interviewed, 2 per cent of the respondents are having huts, 21.33 per cent are having shops, 27.67 per cent are having tailed houses, 34.67 per cent are having sheet houses and 14.33 per cent are living in RCC houses in the study area. The current study reveals that, a huge portion i.e., 34.67 per cent are living in sheet houses in the region. The houses they own are not even worthy to live. Due to the roofs of the house being dilapidated, rain water is pouring in and soil dust is falling day by day. One of the main reasons for their lack of affordable housing is that they are not financially viable.

#### Occupation of the Respondents

| Occupation           | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Government Employees | 14                 | 04.67      |
| Private Employees    | 31                 | 10.33      |
| Agriculturists       | 83                 | 27.67      |

|              |            |               |
|--------------|------------|---------------|
| Labourers    | 172        | 57.33         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>300</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

Above table reveals that, of the respondents interviewed, 4.67 per cent are government employees, 10.33 per cent are private employees, 27.67 per cent are engaged in agriculture and 57.33 per cent are labourers. It was noticed from the present study that, most of the respondents 57.33 per cent are labourers as they do not have land to farm and some have very small land holdings and are unable to manage the income they earn from this land.

#### **Details of Family Loan of the Respondents**

| <b>Loan</b>            | <b>No. of Respondents</b>         | <b>Percentage</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Having Loan            | 277                               | 92.33             |
| Not having Loan        | 23                                | 07.67             |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>300</b>                        | <b>100.00</b>     |
| <b>Sources of Loan</b> | <b>No. of Respondents (n=277)</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| Banks                  | 98                                | 35.37             |
| Money Lenders          | 151                               | 54.51             |
| Self Help Groups       | 256                               | 92.41             |
| Agriculture Department | 84                                | 30.42             |
| Co-operative Banks     | 179                               | 64.62             |
| Others                 | 38                                | 13.71             |

Data obtained from the field survey in the above Table shows information about sources of family loan of the respondents. Out of 300 respondents interviewed, 92.33 per cent the families are getting loan and remaining only 7.67 per cent the families are not getting loan from others. If families are in loan the sources for loan amount is 35.37 per cent of the respondents are getting loan from Banks, 54.51 per cent are from Money Lenders, 92.41 per cent are from Self Help Groups, 30.42 per cent are from Agriculture Department, 64.62 per cent are from Co-operative Banks and 13.71 per cent are getting loan amount from others like relatives, friends. Study proved that, large proportion of the families are getting loan, 92.41 per cent are getting loan from Self Help Groups, their families are less working and their dependents are more. Therefore, the head of the family borrow money from loan because his earnings are not sufficient for family maintenance.

#### **Findings of the Study**

1. Caste played a crucial role in attaining other status in the study area. When it comes to social status, 62.67 per cent have not changed. Even in villages, social status has been seen as normal. Thus, the respondents are in the lower ranks of the caste hierarchy and the social status is less pronounced.
2. The study proved that, large proportion of the families are getting loan, 92.41 per cent are getting loan from Self Help Groups, their families are less working and their dependents are more. Therefore, the head of the family borrow money from loan because his earnings are not sufficient for family maintenance.
3. The current study reveals that, a huge portion i.e., 34.67 per cent are living in sheet houses in the region. The houses they own are not even worthy to live. Due to the roofs of the house being dilapidated, rain water is pouring in and soil dust is falling day by day. One of the main reasons for their lack of affordable housing is that they are not financially viable.
4. It was noticed from the present study that, most of the respondents 57.33 per cent are labourers as they do not have land to farm and some have very small land holdings and are unable to manage the income they earn from this land.

### **Suggestions**

1. Awareness about ignorance of caste is to be changed in social status, to be informed about the claim and acts as their protection.
2. Respondents are living in sheet houses, government should increase their home building grant and able to build a wall equipped houses.
3. Majority of the respondents are labourers, so they should be given professional job training and supplied equipment through subsidies.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the socio-economic status of Scheduled Castes seems to be underdeveloped. In a system of caste based societies, such as India, inequality must be given equal opportunities and equal status for all. They should be empowered economically to have these equal opportunities at the rural level. Upon economic empowerment, social, political, cultural and so on will be able to bring about change in a number of positions.

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