Research Paper

Socio-Economic Status of Dalits in India- A Study

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Abstract

The socioeconomic empowerment of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in India has been a persistent concern, rooted in historical marginalization and discrimination. This paper presents the complex interplay of socio-economic phenomena that shape the lives of the Scheduled Castes community. While progress has been made toward addressing overt discrimination, disparities in education, healthcare, employment, and economic resources persist. Through historical contexts, policy interventions, and contemporary challenges, patterns that shape the socio-economic trajectory of Scheduled Castes are discerned. One promising avenue for empowerment is land ownership, symbolizing economic stability and social status. Historically, SCs faced land deprivation, perpetuating cycles of poverty. Initiatives like the "Empowering SCs through Land Ownership Scheme" strive to rectify this by providing access to land ownership. The analysis underscores the importance of education as a vehicle for upward mobility and highlights the need for accessible healthcare services.

Keywords: Scheduled Castes, Social, Economic, Poverty and Population

1. INTRODUCTION

The Dalit is derived from the Sanskrit language where it is used both as noun and adjective. As a noun, Dalit stands for all three genders: Masculine, Feminine, and Neuter. It has as its root dal, which means to split open, to crack, etc. When used as a noun or adjective, it means burst, split, broken down-trodden, scattered, crushed, destroyed, etc. In other words, Dalits are people who are broken, crushed, and torn apart. They are extremely poor and lowly. The term Dalit can be used for any oppressed group or people who are marginalized and dehumanized. Over 200 million people are Dalits, also known as untouchables or outcasts. The socioeconomic empowerment of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in India has been a persistent concern, rooted in historical marginalization and discrimination. This analysis delves into the complex interplay of socio-economic phenomena that shape the lives of the SC community. While progress has been made toward addressing overt discrimination, disparities in education, healthcare, employment, and economic resources persist. Through historical contexts, policy interventions, and contemporary challenges, patterns that shape the socio-economic trajectory of SCs are discerned. One promising avenue for empowerment is land ownership, symbolizing economic stability and social status. Historically, SCs faced land deprivation, perpetuating cycles of poverty. Initiatives like the "Empowering SCs through Land Ownership Scheme" strive to rectify this by providing access to land ownership. The analysis underscores the importance of education as a vehicle for upward mobility and highlights the need for accessible healthcare services. It explores the challenges SCs face in securing better job opportunities and emphasizes the role of self-help groups in improving livelihoods. Ultimately, this study contributes to a nuanced discourse on social equity, policy impact, and the journey toward an inclusive society.

Table 1.1: Percentage of SC Population as per Census 2001 and 2011

S. No	State/UT	Scheduled Caste	
		2001	2011
01	West Bengal	26.9	27.5
02	Uttar Pradesh	23.4	23.0
03	Uttarakhand	19.9	21.3
04	Tripura	17.2	16.1
05	Tamil Nadu	23.8	25.5
06	Sikkim	5.0	4.4
07	Rajasthan	17.9	18.5
08	Punjab	33.0	37.5
09	Odisha	17.2	17.8
10	Nagaland	….	….
11	Mizoram	0.0	0.1
12	Meghalaya	0.4	0.5
13	Manipur	1.3	2.7
14	Maharashtra	10.9	12.2
15	Madhya Pradesh	15.6	15.7
16	Kerala	10.8	10.4
17	Karnataka	18.4	20.0
18	Jharkhand	12.4	12.6
19	Jammu & Kashmir	8.3	8.2
20	Himachal Pradesh	25.6	26.0
21	Haryana	21.4	22.5
22	Gujarat	6.9	6.6
23	Goa	1.6	1.7
24	Chhattisgarh	11.4	12.8
25	Bihar	16.4	16.6
26	Assam	6.7	6.8
27	Arunchal	0.4	---
28	Andhra Pradesh	18.4	19.2
	Union Territories		
30	Andoman& Nicobar	…..	……
31	Chandigarh	16.0	17.2
31	D & N Haveli	1.7	0.7
32	Daman and Diu	2.9	3.6
33	Delhi	19.9	19.6
34	Lakshadweep	…..	…..
35	Puducherry	27.2	27.9
	All India	17.9	18.5

Census: 2011

As per the data from the above table the highest percentage of Scheduled population in the states like Punjab 37.5 percent, west Bengal 27.5 percent, Himachal Pradesh 26 percent while the lowest percentage of Scheduled castes in the states of Mizoram 0.1 percent, Meghalaya 0.5 percent and Goa 1.7 percent.

Table 1.2: Population and Decadal Growth Rate of Scheduled Castes

Census	Population		Decadal Growth rate	
	Total	SC	Total	SC
1981	5238.66	912.05	….	…..
1991	6286.91	1123.43	20.01	23.18
2001	7410.00	1330.11	17.86	18.40
2011	8330.80	1538.50	17.64	15.70

Census: 2011

As per the data from the above table the population of Scheduled castes and decadal growth increases, it shows 912.05 according to the census of 1981 which increases 1537.50 according to the census of 2011.

Socio-economic Conditions of Scheduled Castes in India.
Socioeconomic conditions of Scheduled castes are very poor as compared to the general population of India. The Scheduled castes faced issues and challenges for their basic needs even though they were discriminated against based on caste. A total of thirty-one states and union territories in India are home to the country's Scheduled Castes. The government has made various policies for Scheduled Castes to improve their living conditions and fulfill their basic needs.

Literacy Rate of Scheduled Castes
Education is one of the basic rights of every individual. To improve the literacy rate of individuals in terms of human development, the quality of education accessible to its populace. In the constitution of India, the Right to education is one of the basic rights of every individual.

Table 1.3: Percentage of Literacy Rate of Scheduled Castes

Indicator	2001		2011	
	SC's	Overall	SC's	Overall
Rural	51.2	58.7	62.8	67.8
Urban	68.1	79.9	76.2	84.1
Total	54.7	64.8	66.1	73.0

Sources: Census 2011

As per the data from the above table, according to the census of 2001, the literacy rate of Scheduled castes is 54.7 percent while the literacy rate of the general population is 64.8 percent. According to the census 2011, the literacy rate of Scheduled castes is 66.1 percent while the literacy rate of the general population is 73.0 percent. It shows that the literacy rate of Scheduled castes is as low as that of the general population. The literacy rate of Scheduled Castes has improved from 54.7 percent in 2001 to 66.1 percent in 2011, but it remains below that of the general population.

Scheduled Castes people living below the poverty line in India
Scheduled Castes in India are the most vulnerable group. Over a very long time the social system ascribed to the Dalit group not only low in social system-ascribed occupations but also low in social ordering as well as very low productivity. Social and economic backwardness derived from their long-time habitation in isolated areas.

Table 1.4: Scheduled Castes living below the Poverty Line

S.NO	Indicator	Total Population			Scheduled Castes		
		Population	Poverty Rate	People Below the Poverty Line	Population	Poverty Rate	People Below the Poverty Line
1	Rural	1210854977	21.92	265419411	201378086	29.4	59205157
2	Urban	377302411	13.7	51690430	47527524	21.7	10313472
3	Total	1210854977	21.92	265419411	201378086	29.4	59205157

Census: 2011

As per the data from the above table, the scheduled castes people who live below the poverty line are 29.4 percent while as in the general population, it shows 21.92 percent. It indicates that the majority of the scheduled castes population are living below the poverty line.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study mainly depends upon both types of data primary and secondary data. The secondary data have been collected through various sources such as reports of the government of India, Research reports, research books, Research Journals, Census reports, magazines, and related research work, etc. The necessary primary data regarding the measurement of socioeconomic development it collected through the questionnaire method.

For this study researcher purposefully selected the Auriya district of Utter Pradesh because of the second highest population of Scheduled castes in the Auriya district.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Occupational Status

Occupation is one of the main indicators of the socio-economic status of every community. To fulfil the basic needs every individual should have good social and economic status. Therefore, occupation is one of the main important characteristics.

Table 1.5: Distribution of Respondents according to their Occupation

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Agriculture	14	28%
Skill Labour	15	30%
Service	3	6%
Business	3	6%
Household Work	15	30%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Study

As per the data from the above table, it shows the occupation of respondents. From the above data, 30 percent of the respondents have household work occupations, 28 percent of the respondents have an agriculture occupation, while only 6 percent of RESPONDENTS responded that they have a business and service occupation. It shows that the majority of the respondents depend on agriculture and household work.

Distribution of Households by the cultivation of other's land

The Scheduled castes population who does have not their land or less land, which is not sufficient to fulfill the basic needs of family members for one year, may have cultivated other's land to support the family.

Table 1.5: Distribution of Households by the cultivation of other land

Cultivation of Other's Land	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	35	70%
No	15	30%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Study

As per the data from above out of the total respondents, 70 percent of the respondents responded that they do not have their land or less land while only 30 percent of respondents responded that they have their land. It shows that the majority of the respondents responded that they do not have their land which is not sufficient to feed the family members.

Annual Income and Expenditure

Annual income is very necessary for people to develop their economic growth. The total income has been derived from those different sources and has been calculated in terms of money. There wasn't any significant income source to them other than that of labor, on the other hand, income sources are seen as nominal as well.

Table 1.6: Annual Income of Household

Annual Income in 1000	Respondents	Percentage
10,000-20,0000	19	38%
20,000-30,000	12	24%
30,000-40,0000	9	18%
40,000-50,000	6	12%
Above 50,000	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Study

As per the data from the above table out of the total respondents 38 percent respondents responded that their annual income ranges from 10 thousand to 20 thousand, 24 percent of respondents responded that their annual income ranges from 20 thousand to 30 thousand, 18 percent of respondents responded that their annual income ranges from 40 thousand to 50 thousand, while as only 8 percent of respondents responded that their annual income above 50 thousand. it shows that the majority of the respondents responded that their annual income ranges from 10 to 30 thousand.

Education Status

Education is one of the basic needs of every people, education plays an important role in the dignity and prosperity of a person, a community as well as a nation. Education is a single indicator, which depicts the real image of several of any community or nation.

Table 1.7: Educational Status of Respondents

Educational Status	Respondents	Percentage
Primary	19	38%
Secondary	15	30%
Graduate	8	16%
Post Graduate	4	8%
Above Post Graduate	4	8%
Total	50	100%

As per the data from the above table out of the total respondents, 38 percent of respondents responded that they studied up to the primary level, 30 percent of respondents responded that they studied up to the Secondary level and only 8 percent of respondents responded that they are studied up to Postgraduate level while as only 8 percent, respondents responded that are studies above post-graduation. It shows that the majority of the respondents studied up to the secondary level.

Housing Condition

Having one's own house is a basic condition. Most of the surveyed households own their houses. However, the type of roof and number of rooms differ.

Table 1.8: Housing Conditions of Households

Housing Condition	Respondents	Percentage
Stone Wall	26	52%
Huts/Small Huts	14	28%
Modern Concrete	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey

As per the data from the above table out of the total respondents, 52 percent of respondents responded that they have stone wall houses 28 percent of respondents responded that they have Huts/ Small huts while only 20 percent of respondents responded that they have modern concrete houses. it shows that the majority of respondents have stone wall houses.

4. CONCLUSION

Dalits are entitled to constitutional safeguards, reservation benefits welfare benefits, and welfare opportunities. They are also fully entitled to certain rights and privileges, which were denied to them in the past on the ground of the caste system and practice of untouchability. Both central and state governments, through social welfare departments, formulated various programs and schemes for the upliftment of schedule castes and schedule tribes especially for their integrated development since 1956. To encourage the members of the Dalits and to develop them economically, governments have launched various programs such as Housing schemes, training programs, self-

employment schemes, land acquisition schemes, financial assistance schemes, etc.

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