



DEVELOPMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTES-A STUDY IN DAVANAGERE DISTRICT

ANUSHA K

Research Scholar, Department of Development Studies, Kannada University, Hampi

Vidyaranya-583276

Abstract:

India is a developing country among many other world countries. Indeed there is every need for the research to survey the under developed areas in the district in depth socially, economically and politically of the deprived and dehumanized sections of people in the district.

India is a welfare state. It is a country having multi languages, races, castes and creeds and cultures. The struggle for independence of India lasted until 15th August, 1947. But the attaining of independence was not an end itself. The provisions of the constitution came into force on 26th January 1950. Fundamental rights are essential and guaranteed to protect the rights and liberties of the people. The fundamental rights are most essential for the attainment by the individual or for his full intellectual moral and spiritual status. Independence brought many promises and dreams for the people in India- the dreams of an egalitarian, just and democratic society in which men and women would have an equal voice. In practice, the reality is some what different. Many policies, plans and programmers are aimed at ensuring main streaming the weaker sections in all developmental processes. We are aware of the reality. The poor is becoming poorer and the rich is becoming richer.

The weaker sections particularly, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in rural areas and in urban areas are not in a position to receive the fruits of the policies which are designed for the upliftment of them due to some set backs or hurdles and or lacunas in the implementation part. The governments, even after a span of 60 years of independence have miserably failed to provide the minimum basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter to its people.

There is no sincerity it seems, on the part of the government to implement wholeheartedly or committed by the provisions of the constitution. Due to lack of educational facilities many people are remained as illiterates and due

to illiteracy, the rural people are unaware the economic policies and legal safeguards . As such, majority of the weaker section people in rural have remained under below poverty line (BPL). To alleviate or eradicate poverty, the government had been launching poverty alleviation programmers in all five year plans. But the results are not up to the mark and are dissatisfactory. If we observe the urban areas, the so-called civilized centers, majority of the people belonging to weaker sections are far from the facilities that are being provided by the municipalities. Every day in news papers, televisions and other media across the country, we have been witnessing the uproar of protests, dharna's, rallies, agitations by the weaker sections of the society against the government for want of basic needs or amenities like drinking water, sanitation, electricity and so on.

Key words: Caste, Government Development Programmers.

Introduction:

In India, caste system is a very old institution. We find references about the existence of castes even in Rig-Veda. The Ramayana, The Mahabharata and The Manu smriti make loud references about the caste system in India. It appears that the castes in India, in the past, performed very useful functions. We also find that, to begin with, there was no rigidity in the system. There was both occupational and caste mobility and a person could do every work of his liking, no matter whether that was performed by his ancestors or not. Placement in a caste was not decided by birth but by the qualities of a person. Thus caste was not hereditary. It was however, gradually that the whole system became rigid. In fact there were many causes responsible for that which favored growth and strengthening of the system.

Origin of Caste System : How the whole system originated in India as well as in other societies is not very clear. Some such theories might briefly be discussed as under.

Racial Theory: According to this theory, the origin of the caste can be traced back to the concept of racial superiority of some races over the others. Those races which considered themselves superior or bigger have started treating themselves a separate caste. They refuse to mix with people of the races branded by them as inferior. In India, e.g., the Aryans considered themselves as superior caste as compared with the inferior natives.

Political Theory: This theory makes us believe that caste system started due to political supremacy. These people who managed to become politically powerful, wanted to retain power with themselves as a result they refused to mix with others, so that their awe and authority was not reduced. They, thus became a separate caste as compared with other people whom they considered as the people to be ruled and thus an inferior caste.

Occupational Theory: Still few more thinkers believe that, occupation is the basis of the caste. According to them those who managed to have good, rewarding noble and such occupation which needed wisdom, etc., became a separate caste. They refused to mix with those people who were engaged in doing menial, unrewarding or dirty occupations. Thus Brahmins fall in the first and the shudras came in the last category, in Indian situation.

Religious Theory : Then comes religious theory which makes us that all the persons who believed in the same gods and goddesses came closer to each other and thus formed one caste. Thus the followers of same caste believed in the same type of religious customs, beliefs and rituals as well as traditions. Thus religion became the basis of caste.

Untouchability : The evil of untouchability has been under constant attack by the Hindu reformers through out the dark centuries of Indian social history. In the past, a number of social reformers worked for changing the condition of the untouchables but could not success owing to the hostile attitude of upper strata of Hindu society. The untouchables who were segregated had no civic, religious and political rights. It was now Ambedkar's aim to create those rights to prepare his people's heads, hearts and hands to secure their rights and to make them real men, real countrymen out of sixty million virtual slaves. Ambedkar called Untouchability —A mental twist which is very difficult to remove..

The term Untouchability :

Neither the Constitution nor the Protection of Civil Rights Act defines untouchability. The Oxford English Dictionary defines an untouchable as —a non-caste Hindu whom caste men may not touch. As the word untouchable is put in inverted commas, it is held that the word is to be understood in its historical sense and not in literal and grammatical sense, but the practice as it has developed historically in India is a product of the Hindu caste system according to which particular sections amongst the Hindu had been looked down upon as untouchables by other sections of the society. A literal construction of the term would include persons who are treated as untouchables either temporarily or other wise for various reasons, such as those suffering from infectious diseases or on account of social observance such as those that are associated with birth or death or on account boycott resulting from caste, or other disputes.

According to Gandhi, —untouchability means pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in a particular state of family. It is a phenomenon peculiar to Hinduism and has got no warrant in reasons or sastras. The term untouchability has been explained as disability arisen due to low caste.

It connotes the caste action or practice of non-touching of the members of the lowest caste Hindus. It means separation, segregation and isolation of such persons from the higher caste Hindus. It is to say discrimination segregation, disability, inequality, liability caused only by low caste birth.

The problem with the study:

Sakshi Human Rights watch (2000) in its study analyzed that education did not eradicate untouchability. Violations of Dalit Human Rights are different from other crimes. Changes in extreme visible practices of untouchability also signal the increasing assertiveness of the Dalith communities. Motivation among police at implementation and promoting the use of the SC/ST Act is largely lacking. In identifying possible factors

contributing to the police apathy and prejudice, one should consider the following: Further The majority of the police and revenue officials in Andhra Pradesh, as in other states in India, are from dominant caste backgrounds. They do not see atrocities and discrimination against Dalits as crimes.

Narayan Mishra (2001) in his study analyzed the Scheduled Caste people are much behind the people of other caste. He suggested that great effort and attention is required for improving their status by the government.

Roy and Gopal Iyer (2001) in their study revealed the impact of the watershed development programmed on Scheduled Castes in Punjab. They stated that forest dependent dalits were not included for share in any tangible benefits of watershed development and management programmes. They suggested that in order to ensure social equity, equal share should be given to all the Villagers including landless Dalits and artisans etc.

Rabindra Kumar (2002) in his study observed that the practice of untouchability among the Scheduled Castes and between the Scheduled Castes and the non-SCs has been abolished legally but it continued to be a practice as observed by the respondents at social occasions. He further observed that the occupational mobility and diversification of occasions are quite negligible among the Scheduled castes in spite of various developmental programmers for their upliftment.

Mamta Rajawat (2003) in his study observed that a number of very simple issues remain and are not attended even at the policy level in Government even though they may have far reaching implications of employment of members of the Scheduled castes. Further, the proportion of the Scheduled Castes in the population is highly variable from one region to another even within the same state.

Naidu (2004) in his study analyzed that the majority of the sample Scheduled castes are illiterates and among the literates, majority have minimal educational attainment. It is further stated that throughout all the three generations of the Scheduled Castes, illiteracy is high. He found that the status of the Scheduled Castes of his sample area is changing positively due to mutually complementary supportive forces like urbanization, economic development and progressive legislation.

Aroon Sharma (2004) in his study stated that there is a wide gap between the targets and achievements and the allocations and releases in the anti-poverty programmes meant for Scheduled Castes.

Ashok Kumar (2005) in his study found that economically the scheduled castes could not grow above the grass-roots politically. They have been faithful servants. They suffered all sorts of social discrimination and deprived of social justice.

Shashi Tharoor (2006) stated that independent India has witnessed the creation of privileged sections within formerly underprivileged groups, as the sons and daughters of rich and influential Scheduled caste leaders got ahead on the strength of their caste affiliation.

Kochar (2007) in his study observed that Scheduled castes have lower schooling levels than upper castes. Despite decades of government policies aimed at narrowing this gap, the gap has been persisting and increasing, particularly in rural areas.

Kannappan (2008) in his study found that indebtedness is one of the root causes of forced labour and bondage in view of the fact that 62 percent of the rural households and 47 per cent of the urban households among the scheduled castes are in debt as per the NSS data. Thus the extent of indebtedness is more pronounced among the scheduled castes than among the general population.

Darshan Singh (2009) analyzed the major factor responsible for the deprivation/poverty among the scheduled caste people is their improvident habits, thriftlessness and mismanagement, besides, their circumstances. He further stated that their conditions can be improved through inculcating in them individualistic and moralistic values of self-denial, temperance, forethought, thrift, sobriety and self-reliance.

All the above studies make a point clear that the backwardness of the people belong to scheduled castes is not only due to their illiteracy, poverty, landlessness but a deliberate oppression and exploitation of these outcaste people in the name of caste system by the dominant castes. Though the governments took up policies and schemes for the betterment of their condition it is only for the formal fulfillment of constitutional obligations, but not with real objectivity and motif. Hence, the allocated funds and schemes were not properly utilized and the status of the underdog has not been improved to the desired level. Many an occasion, it was proved that caste remained a strong barrier for their development.

Hence, in the view of the circumstances it is a pertaining question – (1) How the facts can be elicited which are responsible for the present plight of the scheduled castes inspite of various programmes.? (2) How various factors becoming hurdles for their development and what aspects can be shown as possible solutions for their betterment? So this study is aiming at the above dimensions to have a scientific, detailed and objective oriented study to show possible solutions to the problem

Need for the Study:

When we want to study the development of SC and ST weaker section people, there is every need for us to study the rural background of these people because these people are mostly leading their life in villages. Unless we know the village structure and socio-economic and political conditions of the people, one can not assess to measure the real rate of development, when compare to the others. The central and state governments are introducing so many welfare schemes for the development of these communities. The beneficiary selection and implementation of the scheme is vested in the heads of the Panchayats. Most of the welfare schemes introduced are only benefiting a fraction of the SC and STs. These weaker sections are dominated by the undue influence of the powerful sections. Further, funds earmarked for the welfare of weaker sections are often diverted to other sectors, or not utilized to the desired extent

In this backdrop, there is a need to study the prevalent scenario and to suggest to overcome the problems of the weaker sections and to utilize the funds meant for the weaker sections fully to them, so as to develop them socially and economically. Further, the theoretical and empirical literature, on the subject is quite vast. Still one finds it inadequate, in the sense of, that the research output has not gone into policy making to any significant level. The 73rd amendment of the constitution has brought several changes or developments in the field of political spheres with regard provision of reservation to woman in Municipalities in towns and Panchayats at Village level.

Importance of the study:

Caste, as we all know, in India is based on hierarchy endogamy and some commercial obstructions. The Scheduled Castes in India occupied the lowest rung of the society. They are economically poor, socially disadvantaged and politically deprived. The human life of a man entirely has entered into the new millennium with vast changes in various aspects of life. These changes are mainly pertaining to the techno-scientific and sociocultural areas of human life in the era of globalization, liberalization and privatization are on the one side. On the other side the Scheduled castes are living with lower levels of Socio-Economic Conditions, Low sex ratio, below literacy level and poor conditions, of housing when compared to state and national averages. The empowerment of Scheduled Castes with regard to socio economic conditions based on the implementation of the policies and schemes designed and directed by both the Central and State Governments. Despite all these efforts made by the governments, the development of Scheduled Castes has not changed up to the mark. As long as the occupational, economic and political position of a man remains same throughout his life the behaviour of him inevitably becomes too rigid and non-flexible, while that of people is different social positions become widely changed.

As a concept human development will have significance or value until the development levels of neglected people particularly of the Scheduled castes are raised to the levels of those of the advanced sections in the society. The present study in this direction has studied the development of scheduled castes. The findings or suggestions made by the study, if properly implemented, will surely ensure the scheduled castes in enjoying to equal rights and equal access to goods and services in the society and the overall development on par with dominant castes be attained.

Objectives of the study:

In pursuit of the aim of the study, the following are the objectives of the study.

- 1) To examine the socio-economic household environment profile of the sample respondents.
- 2) To examine awareness about the developmental programmers', their implementation and impact of the developmental programmers.

- 3) To examine the functioning of Village Panchayats with regard to drinking water, sanitation facilities in the locality of weaker sections and also their perceptions on Panchayats in regard with solving their problems.
- 4) To suggest measures for the development of the SC and STs and backward classes.
- 5) To examine the intergenerational disparities in educational attainment of the scheduled castes in the rural and urban areas of Davanagere district.

Methodology:

In the light of the above circumstances, the present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The secondary data is collected from books, journals, articles and various publications of census of India and directorate of economics and statistics, internet and so on. The primary data is collected with the help of a pre-tested questionnaire. 330 sample respondents are taken from scheduled castes for study. The Survey is conducted in three revenue divisions of District of Davanagere.

Result and discussion:

Sub Community of the Respondents

This aims at tracing the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the sample respondents. It is an established fact that the development of an individual is affected by many a factor: personal, social, economic and other respective individual factors like age, caste, education, occupation, etc. The access to education and employment is determined by the individual's socio-economic status. Development is generally viewed as achieved against the ascribed development which is a characteristic of traditional society. The social structure of India has been affected by modernization, though in nascent stage, and the significance of it is palpable at all levels.

The prevalence of backwardness of the Backward Classes and Scheduled castes is due to their socio-economic status, as suggested by many empirical studies. Thus the socio-economic background has an important role to play in the life of an individual. The Scheduled castes have been given many safeguards since independence in order to enable them reach the level of the advanced sections of the society. In spite of effecting many measures, the social and economic conditions of the scheduled castes have not improved to the expected level. In order to instill the desire for change, the socio-economic conditions, which are responsible for the growth of an individual, must be altered. Hence pertinent information was sought on these variables which have meaningful reference for the data and to have comparative analysis in the subsequent chapters. Out of the 330 individuals taken for study 165 respondents are from rural areas and the rest of 165 are from urban areas.

Age Composition of Respondents

Table 0.1 shows the distribution of the respondents by age. The lower age group, less than 30 years, is represented by 10.6 per cent. The respondents falling in the age group of above 50 years are represented only by 6 percent. The maximum concentration of the respondents is between 30 years and 50 years. It is observed from the table that more than two fifths of the sample respondents are falling in the 30-40 years age group and one third of the sample respondents belong to the 40-50 years age group.

Table – 0.1

Rural/ Urban		Age				Total
		Below 30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	Above 50years	
Rural	Count	10	85	65	5	165
	Row %	6%	51.5%	39.4%	3.1%	100%
	Column %	28.6 %	56.7%	52%	25%	50%
Urban	Count	25	65	60	15	165
	Row %	15.1%	39.4%	36.4%	9.1%	100%
	Column %	71.4%	43.3%	48%	75%	50%
Total	Count	35	150	125	20	330
	Row %	10.6%	45.5%	37.9%	6%	100%
	Column %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Data gathered Filed survey

Sex of the respondents:

Distribution of the respondents by sex is shown in table – 0.2 It is observed from the table that above 84.8 percent of the sample respondents are male and 15.2 per cent of the respondents are females. Therefore, majority of the sample respondents are male. Majority of the rural area respondents are males 87.9 percent, followed by around 81.8 per cent of the urban area respondents. Only 12.1 per cent of the rural area respondents are females, followed by 18.2 per cent of the urban area respondents.

Table – 0.2

Rural/ Urban		T Sex of the Respondents		Total
		Male	Female	
Rural	Count	145	20	165
	Row %	87.9 %	12.1%	100%
	Column %	51.8%	40%	50%
Urban	Count	135	30	165

	Row %	81.8%	18.2%	100%
	Column %	48.2%	60%	50%
	Count	280	50	330
	Row %	84.8%	15.2%	100%
	Column %	100%	100%	100%

Source: Data gathered Filed survey

Religion of the respondents :

Table – 0.3 shows the distribution of the respondents by religion. The respondents of the present study belong to Hindu religion and Christian religion. It is found from the study that the respondents of the present study, who are Christians, have not recorded as Christians officially though they are following Christianity. A perusal of the table reveals that out of the total sample of 330 as many as 295 are Hindus and 35 are Christians. It is found from the table that majority of the respondents belong to Hindu religion. The corresponding per centage for urban area respondents is 87.9. Out of 330 respondents, only 12.1 respondents belong to the urban areas are Christian religion in the present study.

Table – 0.3

Rural/ Urban		Religion of the respondents		Total
		Hindu	Christian	
Rural	Count	150	15	165
	Row %	90.9%	9.1%	100%
	Column %	50.8%	42.9 %	50%
Urban	Count	145	20	165
	Row %	87.9%	12.1%	100%
	Column %	49.2%	57.1%	50%
Total	Count	295	35	330
	Row %	89 %	11%	100%
	Column %	100%	100%	100%

Source: Data gathered Filed survey

Educational Development of the respondents:

The educational development of the sample respondents is given in Table – 0.4. It is found from the table that 59.1 per cent of the respondents are literates, while about 40.9 per cent of the respondents are illiterates. The percentage of literates in the present study is slightly higher than the State literacy percentage, i.e. 53.5 per cent as per 2001 census. However, this is lower than 60.5 per cent reported for the State population as a whole as per 2001 Census. It is further found that 42.4 percentage of the rural area respondents are illiterates. It is observed

from the above data that literacy percentage of the sample respondents is slightly more than the literacy percentage of the Scheduled Castes, but less than the State population as a whole.

Table – 0.4

Rural/Urban		Educational Development of the respondents		Total
		Illiterate	Literate	
Rural	Count	70	95	165
	Row %	42.4%	57.6%	100%
	Column %	51.9%	48.7%	50%
Urban	Count	65	100	165
	Row %	39.4%	60.6%	100%
	Column %	48.1%	51.3%	50%
Total	Count	135	195	330
	Row %	40.9 %	59.1 %	100%
	Column %	100%	100%	100%

Source: Data gathered Filed survey

Major Findings of the Study:

- There are young as well as aged respondents in present study. Majority of the respondents belong to 30-40 years age group. At the next level, majority belongs to 40-50 years. However, there are few respondents who belong to above 50 years of age. 32% of the rural area respondents belong to 30-40 years age group, followed by 39.4 of the urban area respondents. About one third of the both rural area and urban area respondents are falling in the age group of 40-50 years.
- Out of the total sample of 330 nearly 89 percent of the respondents are Hindus and the 11 % per cent that belongs to christians.
- Regarding educational development of the respondents, it is found that nearly 59% per cent of the respondents are literates and the remaining 41 per cent of the respondents are illiterates.
- An analysis of educational level of the respondents reveals that among literate respondents, highest proportion of the respondents had studied upto primary education. Majority of the respondents had studied only upto upper primary, followed by a low per centage of the respondents Secondary education, graduation and above. A few of the respondents had studied Professional Courses. 7.2 per cent of the rural area respondents had studied upto degree. The urban respondents are in a better position than the rural respondents, except in case of professional degree.

- Regarding educational development of the respondents wives, it is found that majority of the literate respondents had studied upto primary education which is 23 per cent. Comparatively, among illiterates, majority belongs to rural area.
- Regarding reasons for drop out from the studies by the respondents, it is found that they dropped from their studies due to financial problems, domestic problems, social discrimination, lack of support from the family background, lack of interest in education. Further it is found that the majority of the respondents reported financial problems for the backwardness in education.
- Regarding awareness of the educational facilities to the respondent, it is found that majority of the respondent's fathers had no awareness about the educational facilities, while majority of the respondents had awareness about the educational facilities. The same trend is observed area-wise also.
- With regard to the relationship between the place of residence and their awareness regarding educational facilities, it is observed that majority of the urban respondents had awareness about the educational facilities irrespective of their place of residence.
- Regarding change in political awareness from father to some generation. It is found that there is a perceptible change in the political awareness between these two generations. This change is more in the case of urban areas.
- Further more, the reasons for a little improvement or no improvement after availing the welfare schemes are sanctioning of programmes to those who are not in real need, the sanctioned amount is insufficient to meet the purpose and due to financial backwardness.
- Thus, the weaker section people in rural areas are unable to avail of the benefits from the Government delivery system and the dominant sections of the society are marginalizing them.
- The study is aimed at the socio-economic and political development of Scheduled Castes People in Guntur District. In our empirical study what we found is that these village republics have been the ruination of India. Caste system created customs such as Sati, the enforcement of widowhood for entire life, female infanticides and child marriages, preventing inter marriages, prohibition of widow marriage, expulsion or social boycott was one of the penalties a person had to suffer. The cancer of this system spread through the whole body of the Hindu Society

Suggestions:

Basing on the above findings the following suggestions are offered for the effective implementation of the developmental programmes in order to improve the socio-economic conditions of the weaker sections, particularly, SCs and STs.

1. There is a need to motivate the weaker sections for availing the welfare schemes and its impact on their standards.
2. Transparency in the selection of beneficiaries is needed for which mechanism has to be evolved to select the genuine and deserved people.

3. There is a need to create awareness about the developmental programmes among the weaker sections by giving wide publicity and canvassing door to door by involving degree college students, NGOs & employees working as lecturers in villages.
4. Mandal Officials should attend the Grama Sabha meetings and see that to solve the problems of the weaker sections.
5. Democratic decentralization of planning for poverty elevation should be adopted taking district as a unit
6. Development of skills of the people in various professions, occupations and enterprises should be taken up through training at different levels and this should be a continuous process. The organization engaged in this endeavour should be strengthened and made accountable. Follow-up action in the post training needs to be taken

Conclusion:

In poverty elevation programmes, special emphasis should be given to disadvantageously placed groups, such as, women, Daliths, Tribals, poorest of the poor, destitute, traditional migrants, physically challenged persons, children and all those depressed and deprived sections of the population. People living in Drought prone and flood-prone areas should be provided adequate relief and rehabilitation and sustainable livelihoods. Agricultural labour, small farmers, rural artisans should be targeted in the poverty elevation programmes. Special emphasis on decentralized planning, it is important to mainstream issues related to human development into academic curriculum at graduate and undergraduate levels

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