

A Sociological Study of Scheduled Caste Girls in Degree Colleges: A Sample Survey in Kalaburagi City

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Abstract: *Scheduled castes are discriminated and treated unequal in the society since immemorial days due to their castes. Girls of scheduled castes are discriminated doubly due to their caste and gender. As such, for their development, there is necessity of higher education. The scheduled caste girls are getting graduation in different subject disciplines. Hence, a survey of 160 scheduled caste girl students was made in Kalaburagi city to assess the social and educational aspects. Questionnaire was used to collect primary data. It is highlighted from the study that the social status of Scheduled caste girls is increasing, but compared to boys, scheduled caste girls are getting lesser opportunities in higher education and employment.*

I. Introduction:

In Karnataka, the Scheduled Castes (SCs) form a sizeable part of the state's population. Not all SCs are former untouchables. Some of the castes and sub-castes, classified as 'Scheduled Castes' during the 1970s and 1980s, were non-untouchables who did, however, have a history of deprivation. Scheduled Castes are known by different names in different parts of the state and comprise many sub-castes and communities. At present, there are about 101 sub-castes that have been recognized as Scheduled Castes in Karnataka. The majority of these castes are small in number. While the Scheduled Castes are the largest single group in Karnataka, they are also the weakest in terms of political, economic, social and cultural resources.

Education and literacy levels are considered to be decisive among the various determinants of quality of life of people and of social development. Awareness with respect to health and hygiene maintenance, better avenues of livelihood, etc. follow from the degree of literacy and education. The level of literacy and education among the Scheduled Caste in Karnataka has been increasing over the years. According to 1981 Census, the literacy rate among Scheduled Caste in Karnataka was 27.62 percent. It increased to 38.06 percent in 1991. For the state in general, the literacy rate for these respective years was 46.21 percent and 56.04 percent. According to 2001 Census, the average literacy rate for all the people in general in the state has been reported to be 67.04 percent. For Scheduled Caste, the literacy rate improved substantially to 52.90 percent. So the number of illiterates among the Scheduled Caste has become less than 50 percent (Planning Commission, 2007).

Scheduled caste girls and women are one of the largest socially segregated groups anywhere in the world, and make up 2% of the world's total population. Scheduled Caste women are discriminated against three times over: they are poor, they are women, and they belonged to scheduled castes. Scheduled caste women constitute half of the 200 million Scheduled caste population and 16.3 of the total Indian female population. The traditional taboos are the same for scheduled caste men and women. However, scheduled caste women have to deal with them more often. Scheduled caste women are discriminated against not only by people of higher castes, but also within their own communities. Men are dominant in Scheduled castes. SC women also have less power within the scheduled caste movement itself. Women are active in large numbers in the movement but most leadership positions in the organizations, local bodies and associations have until now been held by men.

The social deprivation of scheduled caste women revealed that these women had to shoulder as a burden, the women belonging to this segment had to bear the brunt as they became a victim of double discrimination- as part of caste inequity on the one hand and as part of gender inequity on the other. Their position in the society and within the family made them the worst victims of a social system which relegated them to complete insignificance. Higher education is regarded means to develop the scheduled caste girls to get rid from the discrimination and inequality in the society. Hence, more and more scheduled caste girls are participating in higher education now. The present study is made to know the social and educational status of scheduled caste girls studying in degree colleges in Kalaburagi city.

Objectives:

The present study is made:

1. To know about the attitudes of scheduled caste girls on higher education;
2. To assess the inequality of scheduled caste girls in higher education;
3. To know whether the scheduled caste girls are getting higher status and respect due to higher education; and

4. To study the ideas of higher education among scheduled caste girls in Kalaburagi city.

II. Scope and Methodology:

The scheduled caste girls are studying in different subject disciplines, such as science, technology, medicine, humanities and social sciences. As such, questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from the scheduled caste girls studying in post-graduation and research degrees in different subject disciplines. It is not possible to collect primary data from all the scheduled caste girls studying in all degree colleges and hence, a sample survey of total 160 girls was made. To collect the primary data, the author visited two Government Degree colleges, one Government Aided College and one Private College in Kalaburagi city. The collected primary data is analyzed and discussed as under.

III. Analysis and Discussion:

1. Age-wise distribution of Respondents:

Age is an important factor which decides the level of knowledge of the respondents. It was already been discussed that about 160 respondents were provided the information for the present study. The age-wise distribution of the respondents is shown as under:

Table No. 1. Age-wise distribution of Respondents

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below 18 Years	04	2.5
18 to 20 Years	98	61.2
21 to 25 Years	58	36.2
Above 25 Years	--	--
Total	160	100

It is noted from the above study that majority of the scheduled caste girls that is about 98 (61.2%) belongs to the age group of 18 to 20 years, followed by 58 (36.2%) of the respondents belongs to the age between 21 to 25 years, and the remaining 04 (2.5%) of the respondents have less than 18 years of age.

2. Area of Specialization:

Area of Specialization here refers to the subject disciplines, in which the scheduled caste girls are studying. The specialization subjects are categorized into broad groupings such as Science and Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences. The following table shows the area of subject discipline, in which the respondents are studying:

Table No. 2. Area of Specialization

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Science & Technology	62	38.7
Humanities & Languages	15	9.4
Social Sciences	83	51.9
Total	160	100

The area of specialization of the scheduled caste female students revealed that, 62 (38.7%) are studying in science and technological subjects, 15 (9.4%) are studying in humanities and languages and 83 (51.9%) are studying in social science subjects.

3. Favour over Male Members in the Family:

Gender discrimination is a social problem. Even though the females in the family educated, there are still families, where a kind of favour or preference is given to the male members of the family. Hence, information was collected from the respondents whether in their families there is preference given only to male members in the family and presented as under:

Table No. 3. Favour over Male Members in the Family

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	113	70.62
No	47	29.37
Total	160	100

It is noted from the above table that about 47 (29.37%) stated that there is no preference or favour over male members in the family and the majority of the respondents that is 113 (70.62%) are agreed that there is preference to the male members in their families.

4. Need of Higher Education for Women:

The scheduled caste girls are pursuing higher education as they are studying in degree courses. It was also asked to them that to mention the reasons, as to why the women needed higher education. The collected information is shown in the following table:

Table No. 4. Need of Higher Education for Women

Particular	Frequency	Percentage
To get Employment	43	26.87
To get Knowledge	22	13.75
To undertake Productive Work	12	7.50
To play significant role in family and society	10	6.25
All of the Above	73	45.62
Total	160	100

It is noted from the above table that 43 (26.87%) of the respondents stated that to get employment there is need of higher education, about 22 (13.75%) of the respondents stated that to get knowledge, there is need of higher education, to undertake productive work there is need of higher education for women as stated by 10 (6.25%) of the respondents and it is noted that about 73 (45.62%) of the respondents stated that for all of these reasons the women needs higher education.

5. Women are getting Lesser Opportunities:

It is noted that women are getting lesser opportunities compared to men in the society, with regard to employment, education, social customs, etc. Hence, it was asked to the respondents according to them whether women are getting lesser opportunities. The collected data is presented in the following table.

Table No. 5. Women are getting lesser Opportunities

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	89	55.62
No	71	44.38
Total	160	100

It is noted from the above table that about 89 (55.62%) of the respondents expressed that the women are getting lesser opportunities compared to men and the remaining 71 (44.38%) of the respondents stated that women are getting opportunities at par with men.

6. Facing discrimination in the Society:

Scheduled caste girls are facing many problems in the society. Due to the scheduled caste, the women are being discriminated in the society. Of course, the government policies are providing facilities to the scheduled caste, but still in society scheduled caste women are being discriminated. There is need to know about the opinions of the scheduled caste women on being whether they are being discriminated. The collected opinions of the scheduled caste women studying in higher education are shown as under:

Table No. 6. Facing discrimination in the Society

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	137	85.62
No	23	14.37
Total	160	100

It is observed from the above table that about 137 (85.62%) of the respondents agreed that the women are being facing discrimination in the society and the remaining only 23 (14.37%) of the respondents do not agreed to the same.

7. Choice of the Present Career in Education:

There are many reasons to choose a career or profession in education. They include good employment opportunities, popularity, status, good earning, accidental choice, etc. The reasons for choosing the present education or profession by the scheduled caste girls covered under the present study are shown in the following table.

Table No. 7. Choice of the Present Career in Education

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
To earn more Money & Wealth	23	14.37
For the Welfare of the Society	19	11.87
To get good job and employment	62	38.75
Due to Parents' wish	32	20.00
Accidentally Joined	24	15.00
Any Other	--	--
Total	160	100

It is clear from the above table that about 62 (38.75%) of the respondents joined the present education to get good job and employment, followed by 32 (20.00%) of the respondents stated that due to the parents' wish they joined the present career, about 24 (15.00%) of the respondents stated that they joined the present career accidentally, as they were having no alternative, about 23 (14.37%) of the respondents stated that they chosen the career to earn more money and wealth and the remaining only 19 (11.87%) of the respondents agreed that for the welfare of the society, they have chosen the present career.

8. Kinds of Assistance getting from Government Schemes:

It is noted from the above table that all the scheduled caste women students are aware about the government assistance and facilities given to them. Further, there is need to know about the benefits that are availed by these students from these schemes. The following table provided the information:

Table No. 8. Kinds of Assistance getting from Government Schemes

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly/Yearly Scholarships	137	85.62
Reservation in Admission to Education	124	77.50
Merit Scholarships	27	16.87
Free Hostel and Boarding	88	55.00
Free Books and Study Materials	94	58.75
Tuition Fee Concession	145	90.62
Educational Loans from Government Schemes	21	13.12
Any Other	--	--
Total	160	100

It is noted that all the respondents are getting more than one kind of assistance provided by the government. The table revealed that 145 (90.92%) of the respondents are getting tuition fee concession, followed by 137 (85.62%) of the respondents are getting monthly/yearly scholarships, about 124 (77.50%) of the respondents are getting reservation in admission to their higher education courses, about 94 (58.75%) of the respondents are getting free books and study materials, about 88 (55.00%) of the respondents are staying in free hostels and free boarding, only about 27 (16.87%) of the respondents are also getting Merit scholarship and about 21 (13.12%) of the respondents have borrowed educational loans from different government schemes.

9. Due to Government Policies the status of Scheduled Castes in General and Scheduled Caste Girls in Particular Improved:

As already discussed, for the development of Scheduled Caste people in general and Scheduled Caste women in particular, both the Central and State Governments are providing concessions, assistance and facilities for their education. It was asked to the respondents, whether the status of Scheduled Caste people in general and Scheduled Caste Women in particular is improved due to these policies of the government. The following table presented the information collected from the respondents.

Table No. 11. Due to Government Policies the Status of Scheduled Castes in General and Scheduled Caste Girls in particular is improved

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	119	74.37
No	41	25.62
Total	160	100

It is emphasized from the above table that majority that is 119 (74.37%) of the respondents agreed that due to the government policies the status of scheduled caste girls is improved, whereas only 41 (25.62%) of the respondents do not agreed to the same.

11. Scheduled Caste Girls gets Status and Respect, if she is educated:

Education empowers and develops the people. As such it was asked to the scheduled caste girls studying in higher education, whether the scheduled caste girls gets Status and Respect, if they are educated. The following table shows the responses collected.

Table No. 12. Scheduled Caste Girls gets Status and Respect, if she is educated

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	113	70.62
No	47	29.37
Total	160	100

The above table revealed that 113 (70.62%) of the respondents agreed that the scheduled caste girls gets Status and Respect in the society, if she is educated, whereas only 47 (29.37%) of the respondents does not agree to the same.

IV. Conclusion:

The present study is an attempt to study the social and educational aspects of the scheduled caste girl students studying in graduate colleges in Kalaburagi city. The study revealed that they are getting discrimination in their families over the male members. All the scheduled caste female students covered under the present study agreed that the women need higher education. But it is noted that even though the women are educated, they feel they are getting lesser opportunities in the society and facing discrimination in the society. The study revealed that all the respondents are aware about the government schemes and policies to protect the interests of the scheduled caste in general and scheduled caste girls in particular. Further, majority of these respondents are getting more and more kinds of assistance from the government. All of the scheduled caste female students covered under the present study approved and satisfied with all the government schemes and policies for the development of scheduled caste female students.

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