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**RURAL DALIT FEMALE STUDENTS AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL
AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS – A STUDY IN KALABURAGI
(GULBARGA).**



Nirmala Shantkumar

Ph.D Scholar, Department of History, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga. Karnataka.

Short Profile

Nirmala Shantkumar is a Ph.D Scholar at Department of History in Gulbarga University, Gulbarga. Karnataka.

Co - Author Details :

Indumati P Patil

Associate Professor in History and Research Guide, Government College Gulbarga.



ABSTRACT:

The present study focuses on Scheduled Caste (SC) female students in higher education and focuses mainly on their socio-economic background. It is much difficult to draw the social and educational status of women including untouchability throughout Indian history till the dawn of the independence on the canvas of a limited space and to analyze the Socio-economic background of the SC female

students in higher education. The area of the study is confined to Kalaburagi (Gulbarga) town. The interview size for the study consists of 250 students drawn on the basis of simple random technique. The sample size was fixed in view of time and the availability of other resources. The major tool of collection of primary data has been the interview scheduled. The primary data collected from the students was supplemented by relevant secondary data. The data showed that majority (98.80) of students are distributed in the younger or middle age group, only a small 1.20 percent is in the older age group. Out of 250 respondents, the overwhelming majority (97.20) is unmarried and only a negligible 2.80 percent are married. 234 (93.60%) respondents out of 250 belong to nuclear type families and a small 6.40 percent to extended families. Majority (60.40%) preferred Kannada as the

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medium of instructions for the present course. While more than one third (39.60%) preferred English. This study is primarily exploratory in nature. As such it cannot make claims about the relevance of its findings. But the prime motive of the study is to find whether SC women have institutional problems to remodel or redesign our institutional arrangements.

KEYWORDS

Scheduled Caste, Female Students, Higher education, Socio-economic status, Educational benefits.

INTRODUCTION :

The present study focuses on rural scheduled caste female students in higher Education and its major focus is on socio-economic background. It is indeed difficult to point the social and educational status of women including untouchable throughout Indian history till the dawn of the independence on the canvas of a limited space. The word female is derived from the old French word 'femelle' and Latin word 'femella' meaning a girl and its diminutive of femina means women. Female share half the world's population. They perform two-thirds of the world's work.

More distressing and dismal was the picture of the educational status of untouchable women. In general, neither they had access to indigenous schooling nor modern schooling introduced by the British of the three important agencies which spread modern education in India the British government especially made no efforts till the end of 19th century to make a provision for the education of the untouchables in fact, it strictly followed the policy of neutrality in respect of social and religious matter. Least they incur the wrath of the Hindu orthodoxy that strongly resisted all progressive social measures including the promotion of education among untouchables.

Rural scheduled caste female students suffer from two great disadvantages, namely stigmatized caste status and subordinated and dependent sex status. Apart from these, they also suffer from innumerable socio-economic and cultural disabilities imposed upon them by the institutional arrangements like their family, the caste, the religion etc., Overcoming all these odds, a small section of SC female students enter into the domain of higher education. In fact, their educational problems and prospects constitute the major core of the present study.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY.

The scope of present study is to focus on rural scheduled caste female students in higher Education and its major focus is on their problems and prospects. By terms, higher Education is meant university education imparted through university or its colleges or colleges affiliated to it.

The female students in the present study have been drawn from diversified courses of higher education such as B.A., B.Sc., B.Com., B.Ed., M.Ed., B.E., M.M.B.S., M.A., M.Sc, L.L.B., B.B.M and B.B.A the SC female students constitute a minority as compared to their male counterparts in higher education. Nevertheless, they constitute a select stratum or elite stratum of the SC student's population in general. The major objective of the present study has been to explore their educational problems, prospects and possibilities.

The significance of the study.

Largely the present study falls within the domain of sociology in general and the sub-fields of sociology of education and sociology of contemporary women history. In fact, the SC women cannot be studied in isolation from the rest of women as a class or as a social category, for they are inseparable part of the latter. However, they suffered more disabilities and disadvantages compared to general mass of women through time and space in the social history of India. The study has practical significance for the administrators, policy makers and planners, feminists, educationists, NGO's and social activists involved in the educational development of SC women especially higher education. As this study is concerned with educational problems and prospects of SC women in higher education, its outcome will help the policy maker's administrators and planners to revise the existing policies and programmes and to draw guideline for future action.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.

The aims of the present study were,

- 1.To analyzed the Socio-Economic background of the rural scheduled caste female students in higher education with special reference to demographic and status characteristics such as age, marital status, caste, education, parental education, occupation and income
- 2.To study of the whole environment of the students in terms of type their house, facilities available in them and material possessions including paraphernalia and gadgets etc., size and type of family, native place, mother tongue, etc.
- 3.To analyse the socio-economic background of the students.

METHODOLOGY

The present study consists of rural scheduled caste female students studying in graduate and post-graduate courses of liberal Arts, Science and Commerce, management courses like B.B.M and M.B.A, engineering courses like B.E, Educational courses like B.Ed and M.Ed and professional courses like L.L.B and M.B.B.S. The area of the study has been confined Government and private colleges in (Kalaburagi) Gulbarga town. The sample size of 250 students was selected. The major tool of collection of primary data has been the interview Scheduled. The primary data collected from the students were supplemented by relevant secondary data.

SOCIO- ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE STUDENTS.

The present study is devoted to the analysis of socio-economic background of the study. The word 'background' in the present study consists of three settings, namely the demographic, the social and the economic. The demographic setting refers to such factors as age and marital status while caste, religion type and size of family, number of sibling's education of the respondents, their parents and grandparents and their siblings etc., come under social settings. Further occupation and income status of parents, siblings, their housing conditions and material possessions etc., come into the domain of

the economic setting. Apart from these, attempts are made to study the nativity, mother tongue, present stay of the respondents and their religion in this study.

All these factors are in fact separate and independent, but in reality they are closely related with each another and cumulatively exert influence on the educational attainment of the sample population. Thus the understanding of the socioeconomic background of the students is a prerequisite for understanding the problems the students faced, the prospects the students perceived and the possibilities they possessed in higher education.

Table: 1
Course wise distribution of the respondents

S.No	Name of Course	Respondents	Percentage
1	B.A	93	37.2
2	B.Sc	12	4.8
3	B.Com	11	4.4
4.	B.Ed	34	13.6
5	M.Ed	03	1.2
6	B.E	46	18.4
7	M.B.B.S	10	4.00
8	M.A., M.Sc	18	7.2
9	L.L.B	12	4.2
10	B.B.M	10	4.00
11	M.B.A	01	0.4
	Total	250	100

For analytical purpose of the study, the above courses are classified into two categories namely 1) general and conventional courses and 2) professional courses. General and liberal courses include B.A., B.Sc., B.Com., M.A., M.Sc., and M.Com. While professional courses are B.E., M.B.B.S., B.Ed., M.Ed., L.L.B., B.B.M., and M.B.A. Thus table 1 above shows that majority of the respondents i.e., 134 (53.6%) had general and conventional degrees while 116 (46.4%) had professional degrees.

AGE OF RESPONDENTS.

Throughout human history age being a biological trait has been socially recognized as one of the important indicators of social status. It is the factor on the basis of which various stages of individual's life are differentiated for maturity, education, occupation, marriage, parenthood, etc, it also plays a vital role in the determination of attitudes and lifestyle. In a traditional and patriarchal society like India, age is a significant factor especially in the life of a girl in a selected variety of life situations such as, puberty, marriage, fertility, conception and delivery etc.

Table: 2
Age composition of the respondents

No	Age Composition	Respondents	Percentage
1	18-21 years	180	72.00
2	22-25 years	67	26.80
3	26-29 years and above	3	1.20
	Total	250	100.00

It can be seen from table, 2 that the preponderant majority (98.80%) of students are distributed in the younger or middle age group only a small portion of respondents i.e., 3 (1.20 percent) was in the older age group, the proportion of younger age group of students (72.00%) is relatively higher followed by middle age (26.80%) and older age (1.20%) groups.

Marital status.

Historically marriage is a social institution based on religious sanction. It is through marriage family comes existence and continues to exist. It is a part of the family. In fact, it is a preparation for and supplement to the family. Through marriage an individual acquires the source of personal gratification coupled with new social obligation and responsibilities.

Table: 3
Marital status of the respondents

S. No	Marital Status	Respondents	Percentage
1	Married	7	2.80
2	Unmarried	243	97.20
	Total	250	100.00

From table, 3 it can be seen from diagram that out of 250 respondents, the overwhelming majority (97.20) is unmarried and only a negligible 2.80 percent are a married. This analysis indeed reflects the fact the social practice of early marriage which was one rampant among the SCs is slowly on the wane among the educated SCs.

Sub-caste distribution.

The SC population in Karnataka, its district wise distribution and numerical strength of the individual castes clubbed under the generic term, 'Scheduled Caste' with special reference to Kalaburagi (Gulbarga) District where the area of study has been confined to Kalaburagi town. The Scheduled castes are further divided into numerous sub-castes, but for proper analysis major sub-castes like Holeya/Chaluvadi, Madiga, Lambani/Banjara, Bovi, Koreya/Korer and Dombara are selected for the present study.

Table: 4
Caste distribution of the respondents

S. No.	Castes	Respondents	Percentage
1	Holeya	68	27.2
2	Madiga	57	22.8
3	Lambani/Banjara	42	16.8
4	Bhovi	37	14.8
5	Koreya/korer/korava	34	13.6
6	Dombara	12	4.8
	Total	250	100

Table, 4 reveals that majority of the respondents 27.7% belonged to Holeya sub-caste group. 22.8% of the respondents were belonging to Madiga sub-caste group. 16.8% of the respondents are belonging to Lambani / Banjara caste group. 14.8% of the respondents belonged to Bhovi sub-caste group. 13.6% of the respondents are belonging to Koreya/Korava sub-caste group and only 4.8% of the respondents belonged to Dombara sub-caste group.

Type of Family.

There has been fast and rapid social change in the family patterns across India due to the forces of modernization at work of the different types of family patrilineal, matrilineal, partrilocal, matrilineal, monogamous, polygamous, and extended and nuclear families are most conspicuous in the contemporary Indian scenario. In fact, these two types of families are also relevant for the present study. A line of distinction between these two types of family is noteworthy here. The extended family type is associated with agrarian peasant societies while the nuclear family is the characteristic of modern industrial societies.

Table: 5
Distribution of the respondents by types of family

S. No	Type of Family	Respondents	Percentage
1	Nuclear Family	234	93.60
2	Extended family	16	6.40
	Total	250	100.00

The above table indicates that 234 (93.60%) respondents out of 250 belong to nuclear type families and a small 6.40 percent to extended families. The foregoing analysis clearly shows that nuclear families are more numerous in the sample than those of the extended type (Table, 5).

Mother Tongue.

Table: 6
Mother tongues of the respondents

S. No	Languages	Respondents	Percentage
1	Kannada	211	84.40
2	Telugu	20	8.00
3	Tamil	3	1.20
4	Lambani	16	6.40
	Total	250	100

It can be observed from Table, 6 that for the overwhelming majority (84.40%) of the respondents Kannada is the mother tongue. Only 8 percent of the students stated that their mother tongue is Telugu. Only 6.40 percent of the respondents state Lambani (Gormati) as their mother tongue. Only for 3 (1.20) of the students Tamil is the mother tongue.

Educational level of Parents.

Information on educational level is available only for 233 father and 244 mothers and the rest gave no information.

Table. 7
Parents' educational levels

		Educational levels				
S. No.	Parents	Illiterates	Low education	Middle school education	High school education and above	Total
1	Father	66 (28.33)	62 (26.61)	57 (24.46)	48 (20.60)	233
2	Mother	112 (45.90)	63 (25.82)	57 (23.36)	12 (4.92)	244

It can be observed from Table 7 above that out of 233 fathers of the respondents, 28.33 percent were illiterates; 26.61 percent were low educated; 24.46 percent were educated till middle school and 20.60 percent were high school educated. Of the 244 mothers of the respondents, as many as 45.90 percent were illiterates; 25.82 percent were low educated; 23.36 percent were educated till middle school and only a small 4.92 are high educated.

Table: 8
Fathers' Occupations

S. No	Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
1	Government Employ	07	2.88
2	Agriculture	118	47.20
3	Private Employ	52	20.80
4	Self Employ	61	24.40
5	Daily wages	12	4.80
	Total	250	100

It is clear from the above table that the majority of fathers 47.20 percent belong to Agriculture. 24.40 percent of fathers belong to self employed category, 20.80 percent of fathers belong to private employ category, 4.80 percent of fathers belong to daily wages and only 2.88 percent of fathers were government employees.

Types of House.

House/home is one of the fundamental needs of human beings. It provides not only shelter and security but also fulfils one's psychological, economical and status needs. In fact, it mirrors the economic status and living standard of people. Owning a house by a SC is definitely a symbol of status and prestige given his poor material existence.

Table: 9 Types of houses

S. No.	Types of House	Respondents	Percentage
1	Pucca house RCC Building	60	24
2	Semi-pucca house -brick wall with cement plaster	159	63.6
3	Kaccha House-thatched houses	31	12.4
	Total	250	100

The above Table.9 reveals that a majority of (63.6%) of the respondents mentioned semi Pucca House followed by quite a considerable percentage (24%) from pucca house such as RCC buildings and only 12.4% of the respondents in the simple kacha houses such thatched houses or huts table 9.

From the above tables it is relevant that,

- 1.A small number of respondents expressed their desire to become self employed. It is from this point of view the government should create more forms of opportunity for the self employment of SC women for their development and employment.
- 2.The study reconfirms the inter caste disparity in the utilization of educational benefits. It is therefore, necessary to identify the course for extreme backwardness among certain scheduled castes in education and initiate action to induce them so as to utilize educational benefits.
- 3.The practice of endogamy as one of the feature the caste system has seriously affected the selection of mates. It is evident from the fact that the preponderant majority in our study preferred marry within their sub-castes. Hence the government should take steps to mitigate this problem.
- 4.The scheduled caste female students facing ill treatment based on gender bias is found in the study to

a small extent. This problem has to be tackled by bringing about suitable change in the attitudinal frame of teachers administrators and other involved the spread of education for the benefit of disadvantaged children at different levels of learning.

5.The urban bias inherent in our educational system is seriously affecting the education of the disadvantage children, particularly girls in rural areas. Thus there is an imperative need on the part of government to get this bias removed through concrete action.

CONCLUSION.

This study is basically exploratory in nature. As such it cannot make tall claims about the relevance of its findings. But the prime motive of the study is to SC women are institutional problems of the SCs including how is to remodel or redesign our institutional arrangements through a radical structural change with emphasis on equity and equality of women as par with men in all spheres of social life. Moreover, the insights emerging from the study point to the need for further research in the area. They could also be useful to the planners and policy makers to evolve new strategies for the educational development SC women.

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