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STATUS OF SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN IN SOLAPUR DISTRICT



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ABSTRACT

The present paper examines issues related to the Scheduled Caste women view socio-economic problems of Solapur District. India is the second most populous county according for over 16 % of the total population of the world. The total population of the county was 361 million in 1951 it rose to 1027 million in, 2001. The rapid growth of population may be appreciated from the fact that a less population of women. The female population is low as compeer to male population, the population distribution is does not unique in term of their distribution, culture, religious and

castersum. Any assessment of the status of women has to start from the social framework, social structures, cultural norms and value systems that influence social expectations regarding the behaviour of both men and women and determine women's roles and their position in society. A society is composed of many institutions and most important of them are the system of decent, family and kinship, marriage and religious traditions. They provide the ideology and moral basis for men and women about their rights and duties and their status and role. Equality of opportunities to the disadvantage of these groups. It also examined the demerits of caste attached to the present scheduled castes in general and scheduled caste women in particular. The scheduled caste women are disadvantaged by their caste and gender and as such they are subject to exploitation and discrimination by their family members, by their caste people and by forward castes. The female feticide, illiteracy, gender inequality, different types of violence, dowry, child marriage, etc are few of the problems faced by scheduled caste women in present society. A part from, this paper to study the

socio economic status of the Scheduled Caste women in Solapur District.

KEYWORDS :Socio – economic, educational, Health status of Scheduled Caste Women, Female- male ratio.

INTRODUCTION:

Women form about half of the population of the country, but their situation has been grim. For centuries, they have been deliberately denied opportunities of growth in the name of religion and socio-cultural practices. Before independence, women were prey to many abhorrent customs, traditional rigidities and vices due to which their status in the society touched its nadir and their situation was all round bleak. They were victims of widespread illiteracy, segregation in the dark and dingy rooms in the name of purdah, forced child marriage, indeterminable widowhood, rigidity of fidelity and opposition to remarriage of widows turning many of them into prostitutes, polygamy, female infanticide, violence and force to follow Sati, and the complete denial of individuality.

The religious traditions and social institutions have a deep bearing on the role and status of women. A multitude of derogatory attributes have been ascribed to Hindu women by the writers of the Smiritis. Like the Shudras, she is forbidden to study the Vedas or perform any sacrifices. According to Manu, "In childhood a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead, to her sons. A woman must never be independent.". She is viewed solely as mother and wife and never as a woman or a person, and these roles were idealized. Practices like giving away of daughters in marriage and the importance attached to sons for maintaining the continuity of the line have strengthened the patrilineal social structure of Hinduism. A widow is regarded as inauspicious. She cannot participate in social-religious ceremonies. Re-marriage was not permitted for high caste widows. But the Hindu male is not subject to such restrictions.

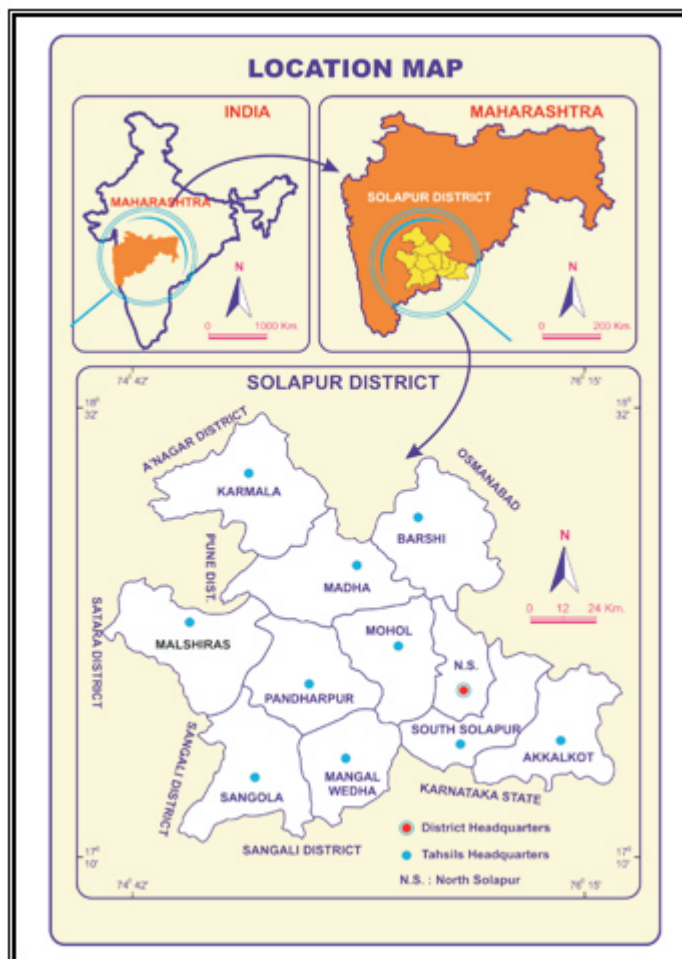
OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the study is to examine the real situation of Scheduled Caste women to move in the direction of development. Further, the study intends to

- 1) To study their educational and health & Economic situation in Solapur District.
- 2) Examine the socio-economic problems of the Scheduled Caste women in our society.
- 3) Find out the female- male ratio.

STUDY REGION:-

The district of solapur is one of the most important districts of the Maharashtra state both in terms of area and population. It lies, entirely in the Bhima basin and located in between, 17^o10' North to 18^o32' latitudes and 74^o42' East to 76^o15' East longitudes. The total geographical area of the solapur district is 14895 square kilometers with a population of 4317756 according to 2011 census. The area under study constitutes 4.88% area and 4.51% population of Maharashtra state. The district entirely lies in drought prone area of Maharashtra state. The region is divided into four seasons of cold, hot, monsoon and post monsoon. The yearly temperature ranges between 10^o to 44^o C. The annual average rainfall is 667.10mm.



DATA BASE & METHODOLOGY:-

The present study is based on the primary and secondary sources. The secondary data was collected from various offices like district health office, Municipal Corporation office, district census report and statistical department of Solapur district. The primary data have been collected from field survey and the data has been processed and presented with help of cartographic technique and analyzed accordingly.

STATUS OF SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN IN THE SOCIETY:

In Indian society, the Scheduled Caste woman is not treated as a human being. Both economically and socially, these women are marginalized. They are helpless beings and their life is cheap and unimportant in this caste society. They are the victims of caste, class and sex. For the majority of women in India, the greatest problem is that of survival. Poverty, dowry murders, widow burning, female infanticide have assumed new dimensions with modernization and technological advancement. The rural Scheduled Caste women face more atrocities from the upper caste men and women. In this society they have no safety and security. Any time the upper caste men can use them the way they like. Untouchability is forgotten here, if an upper caste man wants, he can to rape a poor, pale, weak, unhealthy, dark, voiceless Scheduled Caste woman. There is no end in India for the sexual violence against Scheduled Caste women. In Solapur District it is quite common for land lords to rape Scheduled Caste women. In Orissa in 1995, within 8 months, 330 rape cases against Scheduled Caste

STATUS OF SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN IN SOLAPUR DISTRICT

women were registered. Near Chennai, 18 women of the Scheduled Caste community who belong to Pacheti village were raped by Forest Officers. In each and every state we have this kind of incidents frequently. This is the status of Scheduled Caste women in our society. She is looked down upon in our society because she is a woman. She is looked down upon because she belongs to lower caste and she is also looked down upon because she belongs an economically lower class. Thus the Scheduled Caste woman is 'thrice alienated'. In our society she does all kinds of labour. Even in the occupational sphere she is decimated. All 4th class jobs are assigned to her. She is paid very low wages. And so she is very backward and marginalized at all levels in our society.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS:

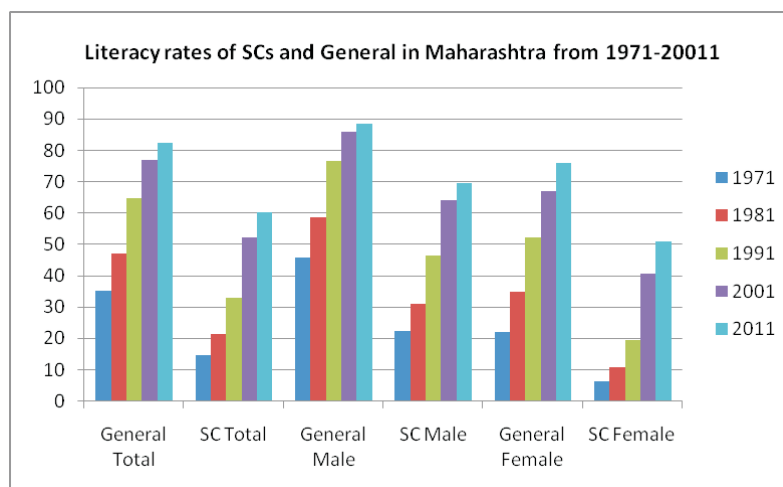
As per the educational survey by the Government of Maharashtra in 2011 the literacy rate among Scheduled Caste women 51.08 per cent. Scheduled Caste women study up to primary level and normally drop out of middle school. Education is the means of realizing one's life desires which help to develop one's personality and qualifies one in improving one's status in all respects. This has direct association to the socio-economic and political status of women.

Literacy rates of Scheduled Caste and General in Maharashtra from 1971-2011

Year	General Total	SC Total	General Male	SC Male	General Female	SC Female
1971	35.1	14.67	45.96	22.36	21.97	6.44
1981	47.18	21.38	58.79	31.12	34.79	10.93
1991	64.87	33.10	76.56	46.60	52.32	19.60
2001	76.9	52.32	86.0	64.00	67.0	40.64
2011	82.34	60.35	88.38	69.61	75.87	51.08

Source: District Census handbook Solapur

The table shows that the literacy rates of General and Scheduled Caste in Maharashtra illustrates that the Scheduled Castes literacy rates are always lower than the general literacy rates from 1971 to 2011. Further, even among Scheduled Castes, female literacy rates are lower when compared to male literacy rates. The gap between male female literacy rates in Scheduled Castes in 2011 is 18.53 %. Thus, the literacy rates of Scheduled Caste women are at the bottom and it did not exceed 51.08 % in 2011.

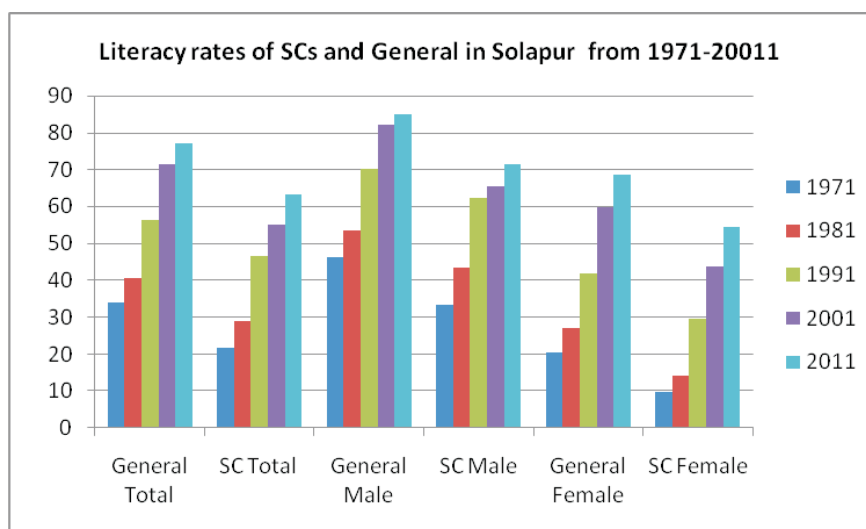


Literacy Rates of Scheduled Caste and General in Solapur District from 1971-2011

Year	General Total	SC Total	General Male	SC Male	General Female	SC Female
1971	33.90	21.63	46.40	33.39	20.49	9.86
1981	40.68	28.86	53.61	43.57	26.96	14.14
1991	56.39	46.52	70.08	62.30	41.73	29.66
2001	71.3	54.92	82.0	65.58	59.8	43.64
2011	77.02	63.10	85.03	71.39	68.55	54.44

Source: District Census handbook Solapur

The table shows that the The literacy rates of general and SC's from 1971 to 2011. The literacy rates of Scheduled Castes are always lower than the general literacy rates. Further, even among Scheduled Castes, female literacy rates are lower when compared to male literacy rates. In 1991 and 2001 the difference between SC female and SC male is more than 20 per cent. Thus, the literacy rates of Scheduled Caste women are at the bottom and it did not exceed 54.44 per cent in 2011. It is due to lack of education that Scheduled Caste women are not able to come out of their poverty and marginalized situation. Being not educated and trained properly, they cannot go for a good or white collar job and they can't make entry into the organized sector. So their economic status remains low. Since they cannot earn a good amount of money, they cannot afford to live in good houses, they cannot wear good clothes and they cannot look after their health. Being illiterate they are not aware of their own rights and their own life-situation. It is because they are uneducated and innocent and ignorant that upper caste people can easily exploit them and oppress them. Due to lack of education there is no knowledge of health among them. They do not care about their health. They do all kinds of menial work, and they do work which is hazardous for their health. So, education is the main feature which helps a person to develop a good personality.



HEALTH STATUS:

The gender inequality is prevalent in all societies including Maharashtra. Owing to the phenomenon of gender based inequalities, women tend to fare quite badly when compared to men with in the same families. Consequently, they are deprived of education and opportunities to develop

their talents. They are also denied in more basic and elementary areas of nutrition, health and survival. This is reflected in demographic features of high female mortality rate and low Female-Male Ratio (FMR). Though medical evidence shows that given similar care, women tend to have lower age specific mortality rates than men. Still,

FMR is less than unity in many third in India including Maharashtra. This phenomenon has been explained by Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze in terms of 'missing women'. This concept District the denial of birth to female fetus as a result of preference for male child. They further, District that there are many millions of 'missing women in India'. Moreover, juvenile FMR is more adverse to girl child. The data in regard to Scheduled Castes FMR (Females per 1000 Males) has been presented in following table

Female- Male Ratio (Females for 1000 Males)

Period	Female Male Ratio in Solapur	Female Male Ratio for Scheduled Caste in Solapur
1971	933	949
1981	942	953
1991	934	936
2001	944	950
2011	938	954

Source: Source: District Census handbook Solapur

The table shows that the Female – Male Ratio for clearly indicates that Female – Male Ratio show a continuous declining trend till 1971 and later on a small rise to 933. The data pertaining to Female – Male Ratio for scheduled castes though indicate a declining trend; it is relatively higher than general Female – Male Ratio till 1971 and 2011 later on it became less when compared to general Female – Male Ratio. A. K. Sen and Jean Dre'ze (1995) opine that higher levels of poverty tend to go with higher Female- Male Ratio. Therefore, higher Female – Male Ratio can be seen in Scheduled Castes. In 1981 and 1991, the Female – Male Ratio for Scheduled Castes tend was declined faster than the national average. This is due to the cultural impact of upper castes and upper classes on scheduled castes. A. K. Sen says that the sharp decline of Female – Male Ratio among Scheduled Castes may be a manifestation of the economic progress of growth and poverty reduction rather than being directly related to caste as such.

**Female – Male Ratio of Total Population and Scheduled Caste Population
in Solapur District from 1961-2011**

Year	Total Population			Scheduled Castes			% of SC Population to Total Population
	Male	Female	Sex ratio	Male	Female	Sex ratio	
1971	1165847	1087913	933	164582	155750	946	14.21
1981	1344147	1265997	942	191587	181496	947	14.29
1991	1670516	1560541	934	256999	240914	937	15.41
2001	1989623	1859920	935	297283	280840	945	15.02
2011	2227852	2089904	932	331960	317785	957	15.05

Source: Source: District Census handbook Solapur

The table shows that the clearly indicates that the Female – Male Ratio shows a continuous declining trend till 2001 in general and Scheduled Caste in particular and later on a small rise in 2011, it is 945 in general and 957 in SC's. It is relatively higher than the national average. The data pertaining to FMR for Scheduled Castes through indicating a declining trend till 2001 and later on a small rise to 957 in 2011. The Female – Male Ratio for Scheduled Castes in 2011, it is relatively higher than the District Female – Male Ratio. As mentioned earlier, Scheduled Caste women eat only the left-over's after serving their husbands and children. It is unless to speak of nutritious food, in the light of acute poverty. These women, who grow food for others, have to fill their stomachs with water! This is really the pathetic condition of Scheduled Caste women. Since these women don't eat well, they also can't feed their children properly. Malnutrition among Scheduled Caste children is a common problem. If they get ill they can't afford medicines. Money-minded doctors and medical practitioners do not provide medical help to people with insufficient money. They demand high fees which these people cannot afford. Even at work place there is no such benefit as medical allowance, or medical leave for them, because most of the Scheduled Caste women work in unorganized sector. Unless these women work, they can't feed the family and they can't run the family.

ECONOMIC STATUS OF SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN

Scheduled Caste women are estimated to contribute eighty per cent of social labour to strengthen the Indian economy. There is no restriction on Scheduled Caste women going out to work. They are free to performs jobs which is normally kept off from upper caste women, i.e., menial, filthy and unwelcome. Scheduled Caste s are poor and live below poverty line. So to feed the family, the Scheduled Caste woman has to go out and work. But her sphere of work is very limited. Though she does hard work, she will not earn much because the work she still does is only what Manu has ordained. Scheduled Caste s live in huts. Scheduled Caste women wear patched clothes. Even in the 21st century Scheduled Caste s live on the outskirts of the village. They live in dirty areas, where there are no facilities for drainage, toilets, washing or drinking water and so on. They don't have enough food to eat. Though they are poor to keep up tradition, they spend so much money on the occasions of marriage and rituals and festivals. It is a caste issue and if they don't spend they may be labeled as anti-social. For this, they have borrow money from the landlords on high interest and it is hard for them to repay the principle

amount and so they work as bonded labourers, and their children automatically taking their as place a servant, when they die. In 1991 70% of the total SC households were landless or near landless (owning less than one acre). This increased to 75% in 2000. In 1991, 13% of the rural SC households were landless. However, in 2000 this saw a decline and was 10%. As per the Agricultural Census of 1995-96, the bottom 61.6% of operational holdings accounted for only 17.2% of the total operated land area. As against this, the top 7.3% of operational holdings accounted for 40.1% of the total operated area. This gives an Indian Streams Research Journal indication of land concentration in the hands of a few. The information regard to population living below poverty line in India general and Scheduled Caste 1993-94 and 2003-2004 have been presented in following Table

Population living Below Poverty Line in Maharashtra - SC (1993-94 and 2004-05)

Category	1993-94		209-10		(% Points) Decrease (1993-94 to 2004-2005)	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
All	37.4	34.9	29.06	32.8	(-) 7.8	(-) 2.1
SCs	56.1	52.7	44.8	42.8	(-) 11.3	(-) 9.9
GAP	10.81	17.08	8.50	14.20	(-) 2.31	(-) 2.78

Note: * Include SC Population

Source: Perspective Planning Division, Planning Commission, New Delhi

Due to the lack of access to fixed sources of income and high incidence of wage labour associated with high rate of under- employment and low wages, SC households are often faced with low incomes and high incidence of poverty. In 2004- 05, about 44.8 % of SC persons were BPL in rural areas as compared to only 29.06 % for others (non SC/ ST). In urban areas the gap was slightly larger; 42.8 % of SC households were BPL compared to 32.8 among other households. The variation in poverty ratio across household types or occupational groups is striking. In 1993-94, the incidence of poverty was about 60 % among agricultural labour followed by 41.44 % among non- agricultural labour.

CONCLUSION:

Women constitute the family which leads the society and nation. The socio-economic development of women is necessary for overall economic development of any society of the country. Almost in every socio-economic indicator shows that the position of scheduled caste families is awful. In many cases, their plight is getting worst day by day. Let us have a look at some of the major indicators. The 19th and 20th centuries saw great social reformers like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Sri Narayan Guru, Jyothiba Phule, Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy Naickar and others. These social reform movements have undergone many struggles against the caste system, caste oppression and untouchability in many ways. The independence of India has given many safeguards for Scheduled Caste s. In Indian caste system create many problems in the name of caste discrimination. In the case of Scheduled Caste women who are facing many hardships in day to day life. Scheduled Caste women status is not getting improved in Indian society. The government should provide all the facilities like Education, Economic, Employment, Health etc. The government implemented properly the SC, ST sub-plan in various states in India as well as Government of Solapur District.

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