

Social Inclusion of Scheduled Caste Women (A Study on Social Inclusion of Scheduled Caste Women Through Protective Discrimination in Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh)

M. Kalpana Krishnaiah*

R.V.K. Naidu**

ABSTRACT

Social exclusion manifests itself in the persistent lack of an individual's access to functioning as compared to other members of society and we model it as being in a state of deprivation over time. The Scheduled Castes were excluded from the main stream society, suffered stigma and discrimination, lived in poverty and remained marginalized group. The women among Scheduled castes suffered twin disadvantages, one because of their caste and the other because of their gender. Its almost 60 years since the Protective Discrimination was provided, and about three generations have reaped the fruits of it. How did it help Scheduled Caste Women? Was there social inclusion of Scheduled Caste women, the hitherto socially excluded? Did the Scheduled Caste Women in Andhra Pradesh benefit from Protective Discrimination as means of social inclusion? The study tries to find answers to these questions.

Key words: Social Exclusion, Deprivation, Equity.

INTRODUCTION

In every society there are in some form or the other, status-groups based on power, privileges and prestige. (Maclver and Page, 1983) The formation of higher and lower status and inequality in the distribution of power and privileges can be regarded as social stratification (Bottomore, T.B. 1978). The norms regarding social groups based on power, privileges and prestige, lead to formation of higher and lower status societal positions based on social inequality (Ghurye G.S. 1999). From the point of view of enjoying power and privileges were differently ranked groups having their respective status in society.

Those who have more power and privileges belong to higher social status and vice - versa.

The Caste system based on notions of purity and pollution believed that the Scheduled Castes were impure and branded them 'untouchables'. From this notion flowed all the disabilities and denials of not only economic rights, but also social, cultural and political rights to Scheduled Castes. The Scheduled Castes were excluded from mainstream society, suffered stigma and discrimination, lived in poverty and remained as marginalized group.

THE SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN EPITOME OF EXCLUSION

The women among the Scheduled Castes suffered twin disadvantages, one because of their caste and the other because of their gender. They were 'under privileged' among the 'under-privileged' and 'discriminated' among the 'discriminated'.

Author's Affiliation: *Research Scholar, **Professor, Department of Sociology, Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur, A.P.

Reprint's request: M. Kalpana Krishnaiah, , **Department of Sociology, Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur, A.P. E-mail: kalpanahari996@gmail.com, Mobile No: 09441950397

(Received on 26.11.2010, accepted on 30.01.2011)

The Scheduled Caste Women was essence and epitome of ignorance, illiteracy, poverty and pollution. She was an object of sexual pleasure for the higher castes from the time immemorial. The socio cultural religious and economic structure of the society made the Scheduled Castes completely subservient on the higher castes. The economic weakness of the Scheduled Castes was ruthlessly exploited by the higher castes, which took firm shape of sexually abusing the Scheduled Caste Women. As Desai (1993) puts it, the Scheduled Caste women were mere instruments to quench the sexual hunger of the dominant higher castes and so called untouchability of the Scheduled Caste women never came in the way of gratification of sex. In some parts of the country the orthodox Brahmins, after having sex with a Scheduled Caste women remained pure by discarding their old sacred thread for a new one with a purification bath (Deshpande, 1993).

The caste and gender of the Scheduled Caste Woman made her to perform certain menial tasks that were considered to be impure and defiling. She was to discharge duties such as disposal and human waste, looking after cleanliness at the times of birth, menstruation and death. Even today, many of the indigenous 'Dai' and 'Midwife' in the rural areas are Scheduled Castes only. In some parts of the country the Scheduled Castes women was 'Rudali' the professional mourner, specially summoned to weep and wail over the mortal remains of the higher caste person. Summing up, the Scheduled Caste woman in the past was a symbol of sex and a woman meant to perform menial jobs.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

Exclusion on the basis of race, religion, and ethnicity exists in all the societies under diverse social, economic, and political systems. Exclusion can manifest itself in economic, social, cultural and political spheres. Of different types of exclusion social and economic exclusion, adversely affect the normal life and play a vital negative role in

deciding the life chances and life opportunities of an individual and thereby that of a group.

Social exclusion, being a new concept, means disempowerment, social process and denial of equal opportunity to different social scientists. Gore (1997) defined social exclusion as "disempowerment at individual level and as structural obstacles at the social level which deny some groups access to resources associated with citizenship". According to Dr. K.F. Jalal, (1998) Social exclusion is the process "through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live." Bhalla and Lapeyre (1999) define social exclusion as a "process which causes individuals or groups, who are geographically resident in a society, not to participate in the normal activities of the citizens in that society". As explained by Lee and Murie, (1999) "Social exclusion can be seen as a process, which fully or partially excludes individuals or groups from social, economic and cultural networks and has been linked to the idea of citizenship. For Sukhadeo Thorat (2007) "Social exclusion is the denial of equal opportunities imposed by certain groups of society upon others which leads to inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society". As a concept, Social exclusion focuses on both the processes by which social and economic institutions exclude groups and the multidimensional nature of the adverse consequences experienced by those who are excluded.

Two defining characteristics of exclusion relevant here are, 1) the deprivation caused through exclusion (denial of equal opportunity) in multiple spheres -showing its multidimensionality. 2) The second feature of exclusion is that, it is embedded in the societal relations, and societal institutions - the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live (Arjan Hann 1997). Social exclusion has considerable impact on an individual's access to equal opportunity if social interactions occur between groups in power and their subordinates.

Social exclusion is mostly group-based in nature. The group focus thus recognized the importance of social relations in the analysis of poverty and inequality. (Mayra Buvinic 2005) In the case of group-based exclusion, the basis for exclusion is group identity and not the economic or productive characteristics of the specific individual. While exclusion does result in the denial of economic opportunities such as access to capital assets, development of skills, and education – the originating cause is not lack the income of productivity, or merit but rather the individual's group identity. It is quite clear that in so far as exclusion and discrimination involve the denial of access to resources, employment, education, and public services, they certainly impoverish the lives of excluded individuals. Economic theory also implies that such discrimination can hamper economic growth by reducing efficiency. Discrimination is thus a concern not only for equity but also for economic growth, and in this way it affects poverty both directly by adversely affecting the income distribution and indirectly by affecting economic growth. Economic and social forms of discrimination directly affect poverty and also exacerbate it indirectly by reducing growth. Discrimination can also lead to inter-group conflict by exacerbating existing inequality and contributing to its perpetuation from one generation to the next.

Social exclusion is a problem in several countries of Asia and this highlights the need for socially inclusive policies to redress exclusion and its effects. Thus, Social inclusion is quite opposite and anti thesis to social exclusion and is 'the development of capacity and opportunity to play a full role, not only in economic terms, but also in social, psychological and political terms. (EU Employment and Social Affairs Directorate)

The Scheduled Caste in India, who were the marginalized or excluded population of Indian society were provided Protective discrimination when India attained independence from colonial rule. Constitutional and legal safeguards were provided to Scheduled Castes to ameliorate and their pathetic socio economic condition and to ensure an egalitarian society.

Untouchability was made an offence. Protective Discrimination in the form of reservations and other welfare measures were provided, in a big way for the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes and integrate them into the main stream of the society. The efforts of the government have certainly resulted in positive change among the Scheduled Castes. However, there was noticeable difference in change that took place between urban and rural areas and men and women; more change being perceptible in urban areas and among men. This in turn has led to change of position and status of women, for the better, among the Scheduled Castes. From being an ignorant and illiterate woman, the Scheduled Caste Women, more so those from urban areas started taking up education and clean occupations. .

During the post-independent era, there have been significant changes in the outlook, orientation, views and behavior of women in the country following the International Year of Women-1975 and the decade that followed. In the contemporary society, not only their attitudes and values are changing but there has also been tangible change in their social position. The Scheduled Caste Women, in their way and pace underwent change but it was noted that some progress was certainly achieved in the urban areas but rural areas remained unaffected by any change in terms status of Scheduled Caste women. In view of this, the chairman of the committee and proposed to draw up a scheme to study the special problems faced by women of Scheduled Caste and make research based suggestions to remedy the situation. In his brief note on the status of the Scheduled Caste Women, the secretary drew the attention of the Committee on Educational, Economic, Social and Political Backwardness of Scheduled Caste Women in the country in both the urban and rural areas. He stressed the point that though most women in India were backward, the Scheduled Caste Women were backward among the backwards and therefore deserved special consideration not only to raise their status in their own communities but also to bring them socially on par with other women in all spheres of life.

Its almost 60 years since the Protective Discrimination was provided, and about three generations have reaped the fruits of it. How did it help Scheduled Caste Women? Was there social inclusion of Scheduled Caste women, the hitherto socially excluded? Did the Scheduled Caste Women in Andhra Pradesh benefit from Protective Discrimination as means of social inclusion? The study tries to find answers to these questions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper makes an attempt to investigate the status of Scheduled Caste Women who made use of Protective Discrimination in the spheres of education and employment to soar high into the orbit of socio-economic progress and process of their social inclusion into the main stream society.

METHOD OF STUDY

The paper is based on primary data collected from 250 Scheduled Caste women in Anantapur town of Andhra Pradesh who are employed in diverse occupations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. The majority of the Scheduled Caste women (89.6 per cent), who are in the age group of 25-55.
2. Among the respondents, 86.2 per cent of them have Graduation and above.
3. Most of the women 65.6 per cent are in service occupations, it is heartening to find 34.4 per cent respondents in supervisory, official and professional jobs.
4. 88.4 per cent of the respondents declared they did avail welfare inputs provided to them and could enter occupations soon after their education.

5. Most of the respondents, 64.2 per cent of the respondents felt they were not excluded but included into the main stream society

6. A majority of the respondents, amounting to almost 73.2 per cent considered protective discriminations as highly beneficial for them.

The inference that could be drawn here is that the majority of the employed Scheduled Caste women (89.6 per cent), who are in the age group of 25-55, are the ones who were the second generation of women born independence and got benefits of reservation in education and entered jobs relatively early in their lives and are now in jobs.

Scheduled Caste Women are not lagging behind in education. Majority of the respondents 86.2 have Graduation and above. These Scheduled Caste women who were born as second generation after independence, have taken to higher education mainly graduation and some to post graduation and professional education making use of the reservation and scaled better levels of education to enter into jobs.

Clerk and teacher were entry points jobs and we find as much a 50 per cent of the respondents in these jobs. Most of the women 65.6 per cent are in service occupations, it is heartening to find 34.4 per cent respondents in supervisory, official and professional jobs.

The respondents who belonged to Scheduled Castes were excluded from the social ground to which you feel your occupational and economic status entitles you to. The respondents felt that they were excluded from the social ground to which they feel their occupational and economic status entitles. Whereas, maximum i.e. 64.2 per cent of the respondents felt they were not excluded.

Economic disability is the main thing which concerns the Scheduled Castes in the district. One of the constitutional provisions is with regard to the reservation of jobs for Scheduled Caste in Governmental and public undertakings. But due to ignorance, illiteracy, poverty and official apathy these advantages are not fully made use of by them. The respondents were educated knew of certain

constitutional benefits extended to them by the government.

As far as our respondents are concerned, they were generally happy with the launching of welfare programmes. Whatever dissatisfaction is there is only politically motivated. Among the 88.4 per cent of the respondents declared they did avail welfare inputs provided to them while about 11.6 per cent said they did not avail these facilities because their parental income levels were high hence they could not avail themselves the facility of scholarship scheme, free education and free hostel.

Many studies have probed that the protective discrimination has worked for the positive development of Scheduled Caste in all spheres of life. The respondents in the study were asked to give their reaction about the protective discrimination. Answering this question they were asked to keep in mind reservations, financial assistance, and different privileges.

However, 27 per cent of the respondents did not consider the protective discriminate beneficial to the Scheduled Caste in the present form. Among the respondents 73.2 per cent are satisfied with the policies and programmes of the government that try to uplift the Scheduled Castes.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age (Footnotes)

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
Less than 25	17	6.8
26-35	82	32.8
35-45	105	42.0
45-55	37	14.8
55 & Above	9	3.6
Total	250	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by educational qualifications

Educational qualifications	Frequency	Percent
SSC	20	8.0
Intermediate	15	6.0
Degree	110	44.0
Post Graduate	88	35.2
Professional	17	6.8
Total	250	100.00

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	No of Respondents	Percentage
Clerical	100	40.0
Teaching	64	25.6
Supervisory	29	11.6
Officers	40	16.0
Professionals	17	6.8
Total	250	100.00

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents by feeling of social exclusion

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Feel Excluded	88	35.2
Do not feel excluded	162	64.8
Total	250	100.0

Table 5: Distribution of the respondent by the opinion on availing Government facilities

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Availed	221	88.4
Not, availed	29	11.6
Total	250	100.0

Table 6: Distribution of the respondents by their opinion on the programmes that government has launched for Scheduled Caste beneficial

Particulars	Frequency	Percent
I consider them very beneficial	77	30.8
I consider them fairly beneficial	106	42.4
I do not consider them fairly beneficial	44	17.6
I do not consider them beneficial	19	7.6
I cannot say	4	1.6
Total	250	100.0

CONCLUSION

Finally it can be concluded from the paper that Protective Discrimination has not only brought social change in the status of a doubly disadvantaged section like that of Scheduled Caste women but also in terms of education, employment, values, attitudes, abilities, aspirations and included them into the main stream society.

REVERENCE

- Bhalla, A. S. and Lapeyre, F. "Poverty and Exclusion in a Global World", Macmillan Press LTD; 1999
- Figueiredo, J.B., and Arjan de Haan, eds. Social Exclusion: An ILO Perspective. Geneva: International Labour Organization; 1998.
- De Haan, Arjan. Poverty and Social Exclusion: A Comparison of Debates on Deprivation. Working Paper No.2, Poverty Research Unit at Sussex. Brighton: University of Sussex, 1997.
- Silver, Hilary. Reconceptualizing Social Disadvantage: Three Paradigms of Social Exclusion. In Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses, edited by Gerry Rodgers, Charles Gore, and Jose Figueiredo. Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 1995.
- Lee, P. and Murie, A. "Literature review of social exclusion", Polity press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1999.
- Naidu, R.V.K.: 'Empowerment of Scheduled Caste', Kalpaz Publications, New Delhi, 2004; 10.
- Pandey, P.N. (ed): "Protective discrimination and social Upliftment among The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India- A Socio economic Profile. New Delhi: Upadyay, Anmol Publishers, 1999.

8. Trivedi, Harsdad, R. 'Scheduled Caste Women, Studies in Exploitation', New Delhi, Concept Publishing Co., 1977.
9. Bhai, Nirmala P.: 'Harijan Women in Independent India', New Delhi, B.R. Publishing House, 1986.
10. Jain P.C., Shashi Jain and Sudha Bhatnagar, 'Scheduled Caste Women', Jaipur, Rawat Publications, 1997.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

I want to renew/subscribe to international class journal "**Journal of Social Welfare and Management**" of Red Flower Publication Pvt. Ltd.

Subscription Rates: India: Institutional: Rs.5000, Individual: Rs.1000, Life membership (10 years only for individuals) Rs.5000. All other countries: \$200

Name and complete address (in capitals).....

.....

Please find enclosed my Demand Draft No.....dated.....
for ₹/USD.....in favour of **Red Flower Publication Pvt. Ltd.** payable at **Delhi**.

1. Advance payment required by Demand Draft payable to Red Flower Publication Pvt. Ltd. payable at Delhi.
2. Cancellation not allowed except for duplicate payment.
3. Agents allowed 10% discount.
4. Claim must be made within six months from issue date.

SEND REMITTANCE TO

Red Flower Publication Pvt. Ltd.

41/48, DSIDC, Pocket-II, Mayur Vihar Phase-I, Delhi - 110 091 (India)

Tel: 91-11-22754205, Fax: 91-11-22754205

E-mail: redflowerppl@vsnl.net, redflowerppl@gmail.com

Website: www.rfppl.com