Demographic and Educational Status of Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh: A Study of West Godavari and Visakhapatnam Districts

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Abstract

Caste system in India is not a new phenomenon, the root of which can be found in the traditional society. Our constitution has offered some social, economic and political safe guards to the depressed sections of the society. In this study, an attempt has been made to examine the demographic and educational status of 400 Scheduled Castes households from Visakhapatnam and West Godavari Districts in Andhra Pradesh. In the case of sex ratio, Visakhapatnam has 973 females for thousand males and West Godavari has 1016 females for thousand males. The child marriages are prevalent in West Godavari than in Visakhapatnam District. In the case of literacy, the illiterate head of the households are more in West Godavari than in Visakhapatnam. Primary schools are located very near to the respondent's houses in Visakhapatnam District where as in the case of West Godavari district the primary schools were located with in 0.5 Kms to the households. And majority of the sample households are consuming about 2400 calories per head per day in both the districts.

Key Words: Scheduled castes; Sex ratio; Depressed sections; Educational status; Literacy; Primary schools.

The caste system is based on the underlying principle that each caste has a fixed hereditary occupation by birth. Occupations under the caste system are compulsory and endogenous, resulting in exclusion of one's caste from carrying out the occupations that "belong" to another caste. Scheduled Caste (SCs/Dalits) have traditionally been prohibited from engaging in certain types of jobs, such as food production, and forced to undertake jobs that are considered impure, such as leather work and manual scavenging. There is a de facto prohibition on inter-caste marriage and where inter-caste relationships are attempted violent community action occurs. The caste system is further sub-divided into sub-castes of a hierarchical order. The caste system continues to exist, while the dominant castes wish to uphold their power and dominance. Part of the explanation lies in the fact that caste hierarchy and caste consciousnesses have been socially internalized through centuries. It is not only the dominant powers, but also the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) themselves that maintain their subordination and self-suppression through acquired learning and socialization.

Scheduled Caste (Dalits) are a diverse group, yet easily identifiable through their name, place of origin and residence, occupation, father's occupation, educational institution, clothing, and accent. Although subject to similar forms of discrimination across South Asia, the situation of Scheduled Castes (Dalits) in caste-affected countries and within regions and states differ for historical and political reasons. Scheduled Castes (Dalits) live spread out across the countries, in the rural areas in segregated habitations yet close to the dominant caste villages.

In India, caste-based discrimination and the practice of "untouchability" are prohibited by the Constitution (1950), and a series of special legislative measures have been enacted in the

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80s and 90s for the prevention of atrocities against Scheduled Castes (Dalits). A vast number of special statutory bodies have been set up and a range of policy and budgetary measures have been put in place. In spite of this model legislation, violence and atrocities against Dalit are rampant and on the increase, effectively with impunity for perpetrators. Reservation policies for "Scheduled Caste (Dalits)/Scheduled Tribes (Adiwasis)" in education, employment in the public sector and political representation are in force, but effectiveness in implementation is yet to be fully ensured.

Scheduled Castes (Dalits) experience an exceptionally high dependence on manual wage labour for their source of income due to restriction in access to fixed capital assets, low level of skill due to restrictive access to education and high unemployment, underemployment and low wage rates due to discrimination in the labour market. Research indicates that in the post-liberalisation period (1999-2000), 35 per cent of Scheduled Castes (Dalits) in India were living below the poverty line, as compared with 21 per cent among the non-SCs/STs.

Methodology

The Study is conducted in the scheduled caste areas of Visakhapatnam and West Godavari Districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Data Sources

Data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. To present district profiles secondary data have been collected from Hand Book of Statistics of Visakhapatnam and West Godavari districts, being published annually by Chief Planning Officer. The reference year being 2009. Census Report 2001 published by the Government of India has also been used to present the picture of population data for both the districts.

The primary data have been collected with a well designed questionnaire which contained demographic and educational status of the sample respondents. The questionnaire includes both closed and open ended questions to capture the awareness of the respondents and the problems and required solutions from them.

Sampling Technique – Multistage Random Sampling

Under this method, the random selection was made of primary, intermediate and final (or the ultimate) units from a given population or stratum. There were several stages in which the sampling process was carried out. To begin with the first stage units of Visakhapatnam and West Godavari Districts were selected purposively. Then, a sample of second stage units viz Mandals one each from Visakhapatnam and West Godavari Districts were selected.

A sample of 400 households was selected for the study. A multi-stage random sampling technique was employed to select the sample households. In the first stage, as already noted two districts viz., Visakhapatnam and West Godavari of Andhra Pradesh have purposively been selected for the study. Then, purposively two Mandals were selected, one each from them viz., Sabbavaram from Visakhapatnam district and Chagallu from West Godavari district. In the third stage, two villages from each Mandal were selected. In Visakhapatnam District, the two villages were Aripaka and Asakapalli. In West Godavari District, the two villages were Chagallu and Nandigampadu. In the fourth stage, Sample of the Scheduled caste households in the sample villages were interviewed with a pre-prepared schedule.

This Paper is addresses to study the background characteristics of the SCs in the study area. Demographic and Educational Status of the sample respondents are described in detail.

Demographic Features

Gender-wise classification of the head of the household in Visakhapatnam and West

Table 1: Gender wise Classification of the Head of the Households

Sl.No	District	Male	Female	Total
1	Visakhapatnam	177 (88.5)	23 (11.5)	200 (100.0)
2	West Godavari	180 (90.0)	20 (10.0)	200 (100.0)
	Total	357 (89.5)	43 (10.75)	400 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

Godavari districts are presented in Table 1. From the Table, it could be found that 88.5 per cent of the head of the households are males in Visakhapatnam and 90.0 per cent of the head of the households are males in West Godavari. In the overall sample respondents 89.25 per cent of the head of the households are males. This clearly indicates and strongly supported the 'patriarchal system' in the Indian society even today.

Table 2 explains the age wise classification of the sample heads of the households to simplify the explanation age is taken in ranges which are fixed arbitrarily. In Visakhapatnam, a majority (46.5) of the heads are in the age group of 36-50 years followed by 60 years or more. In West Godavari, as of Visakhapatnam, a majority of the heads are in the age group of 36-50 years, followed by the age group of 26-

35 years. It is quiet disheartening to see that there is no head of the household in 60+ year age group. With regard to the overall sample, a majority of the heads of households are in the 36-50 years age group, followed by 26-35 years.

Table 3 explains the classification of the sample households based on the size of family. In Visakhapatnam, 56 per cent of the sample households are in the family size of 4-5, followed by 2-3 (31%). In West Godavari, 55 per cent of them are in the family size of 4-5 followed by 2-3 (36.5%). With regard to the overall sample, 55.5 per cent of them are in the family size sample of 4-5 followed by 33.75 per cent in 2-3 persons.

Table 4 explains the sex ratio of the sample population. In Visakhapatnam, the total sample population is 730, in it, 370 (50.70%) are males and 360 (49.30%) are females. In West Godavari, the total sample population is 770, in it 382 (49.61%) are males and 388 (50.39%) are females. With regard to the overall sample of 1500, as many as 752 (50.13%) are male and 748 (49.87%) are female. With regard to sex ratio, Visakhapatnam has 973 females for thousand males and West Godavari has 1016 females for thousand males respectively. With regard to the total sample, there are 994

Table 2: Age wise Classification of the Head of the Households

Sl.No	District	20-25	26-35	36-50	51-60	60+	Total
1	Visakhapatnam	5 (2.5)	40 (20.0)	93 (46.5)	20 (10.0)	42 (21.0)	200 (100.0)
2	West Godavari	11 (5.5)	67 (33.5)	107 (53.5)	15 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	200 (100.0)
	Total	16 (4.0)	107 (26.75)	200 (50.0)	35 (8.75)	42 (10.5)	400 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

Table 3: Distribution of the Sample Households based on the Size of their Family

Sl.No	District	1	2 - 3	4 - 5	6 - 8	Total
1	Visakhapatnam	14 (7.1)	62 (31.0)	112 (56.0)	12 (6.0)	200 (100.0)
2	West Godavari	3 (1.5)	73 (36.5)	110 (55.0)	14 (7.0)	200 (100.0)
	Total	17 (4.25)	135 (33.75)	222 (55.5)	26 (6.5)	400 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

Table 4: Sex Ratio of the Sample Population

Sl. No	District	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio
1	Visakhapatnam	370 (50.70)	360 (49.30)	730 (100.00)	973
2	West Godavari	382 (49.61)	388 (50.39)	770 (100.00)	1016
	Total	752 (50.13)	748 (49.87)	1500 (100.00)	994

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

Table 5: Age wise Classification of the Sample Population

Sl. No	Gender	< 14 Years age Group			15-35 Age Group			36-58 Age Group			59+ Age Group			TOTAL		
		VSKP*	WG*	Total	VSKP*	WG*	Total	VSKP*	WG*	Total	VSKP*	WG*	Total	VSKP*	WG*	Total
1	Male	73 (48.99)	93 (46.5)	166 (47.56)	161 (50.63)	186 (48.31)	347 (49.36)	98 (49.25)	100 (55.56)	198 (52.24)	38 (59.38)	3 (60.00)	41 (59.42)	370 (50.69)	382 (49.61)	752 (50.13)
2	Female	76 (51.01)	107 (53.5)	183 (52.44)	157 (49.37)	199 (51.69)	356 (50.64)	101 (50.75)	80 (44.44)	181 (47.76)	26 (40.62)	2 (40.00)	28 (40.58)	360 (49.31)	388 (50.39)	748 (49.87)
	Total	149 (100.00)	200 (100.00)	349 (100.00)	318 (100.00)	385 (100.00)	703 (100.00)	199 (100.00)	180 (100.00)	379 (100.00)	64 (100.00)	5 (100.00)	69 (100.00)	730 (100.00)	770 (100.00)	1500 (100.00)
3	Sex Ratio	1041	1150	1102	975	1070	1026	1030	800	914	684	667	683	973	1016	994

*VSKP- Visakhapatnam District, WG- West Godavari District.
Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

females for thousand males.

Table 5 explains the age specific and gender specific classification of the sample population for the sake of easier interpretation. Age is taken as ranges: less than 14 years (<14), 15 to 35 years, 35-58 years and 59 + years respectively. With regard to <14 years age group, in Visakhapatnam district sample total population (149), 49 per cent are males and the remaining are females. In West Godavari district sample total population of (200) 46.5 per cent are males and the remaining 53.5 per cent are females. As of total sample of 349, 166 are male and the remaining are female. With regard to sex ratio of this age group, Visakhapatnam district sample has 1041 females for thousand males and West Godavari sample has 1150 females. As a whole there are 1102 females for thousand males. With regard to the sample population in the 15-35 years age group, in Visakhapatnam district sample, out of the population of 318, 50.63 per cent are males and 49.37 per cent are females. In West Godavari district sample, out of the population of 385, 48.31 per cent are males and 51.69 per cent are females. In the total sample population of 703, 347 are males and 356 are females. With regard to the sex ratio of this age group, Visakhapatnam

district sample has 975 females for thousand males and in West Godavari district sample has 1010 females for 1000 males and in the overall sample, there are 1026 females for 1000 males. With regard to the sample population in the 36-58 years age group, in Visakhapatnam district sample out of the population of 199, 98 (49.25%) are males and the remaining are females. In the West Godavari district sample, out of the population of 180, 100 (55.56%) are males and the remaining are females. In the total sample population of 379, 198 are males and the remaining are females. With regard to the sex ratio of the sample population in this age group, Visakhapatnam district has 1030 females for thousand males and West Godavari district has 800 females for 1000 males and in the overall sample, there are 914 females for thousand males. With regard to the sample population in 59+ age group, in the Visakhapatnam district sample out of the population of 64, 59.38 per cent are males and the remaining are females. In the West Godavari district sample, out of the population of 5, 60 per cent are males and remaining are females.

Marital status of the sample population explained in Table 6. With regard to

Table 6: Marital Status of the Sample Population

Sl. No	District	Married	Unmarried	Divorced	Widow	Total
1	Visakhapatnam	227 (39.07)	303 (52.15)	8 (1.38)	43 (7.40)	581 (100.00)
2	West Godavari	283 (49.65)	232 (40.70)	15 (2.63)	40 (7.02)	570 (100.00)
	Total	510 (44.31)	535 (46.38)	23 (2.00)	83 (7.21)	1151 (100.00)

Note: 1) <14 years population are excluded.
2) Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

Table 7: Age at Marriage of the Sample Households
(Women in reproductive age are considered)

Sl.No	District	Below 15	16-18	19-20	21-45	NA*	Total
1	Visakhapatnam	1 (0.5)	73 (36.5)	45 (22.5)	37 (18.5)	44 (22.0)	200 (100.00)
2	West Godavari	30 (15.0)	77 (38.5)	60 (30.0)	21 (10.5)	12 (6.0)	200 (100.00)
	Total	31 (7.75)	150 (37.5)	105 (26.3)	58 (14.5)	56 (14.0)	400 (100.00)

*NA – Not Applicable to Women who were aged more than 45 years.
Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

Table 8: Age at First Conception for the women in the Reproductive age

Sl.No	District	Below 18	19-20	21-45	NA*	Total
1	Visakhapatnam	47 (23.5)	58 (29.0)	51 (25.5)	44 (22.0)	200 (100.00)
2	West Godavari	59 (29.5)	60 (30.0)	69 (34.5)	12 (6.0)	200 (100.00)
3	Total	106 (26.5)	118 (29.5)	120 (30.0)	56 (14.0)	400 (100.00)

*NA – Not Applicable to Women who were aged more than 45 years
Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

Visakhapatnam district sample, 52.15 per cent are unmarried followed by 39.07 per cent who are married, and followed by widows (7.40%). With regard to West Godavari district sample, 49.65 per cent are married followed by 40.70 per cent and 7.02 per cent are widowed. With regard to the total population, 46.38 per cent are unmarried followed by 44.31 per cent who are married and 7.21 per cent are widowed.

Table 7 describes the age at marriage of women sample respondents in Visakhapatnam and West Godavari districts. In Visakhapatnam 36.5 percentage of women got married during 16-18 years followed by 19-20 age groups (22.5%). In West Godavari district 38.5 per cent of the women got married in the age group of 16-18, followed by 19-20 (30.00%). Out of the total population also the

same situation existed. Thus, women in the age group of 16-18 reported that their marriages were performed. It is distressing to note that child marriages are predominant in West Godavari (15%) though a single instance was reported in Visakhapatnam.

Age at first conception in Visakhapatnam and West Godavari districts are displayed in Table 8. In Visakhapatnam district 29 per cent of women are having highest conception in the age group 21-45 followed by 19-20 age group (25.5%). In West Godavari district highest age at first conception has been noticed in the age group of 21-45 (34.5%) followed by 19-20 age group (30.00%). Out of the total sample women population of 400, highest age at first conception is noticed in 21-45 age group (30.00%) followed by 19-20 age group (29.5%).

Table 9: Classification of the Head of the Household on the base of their Level of Education

Sl.No	District	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Illiterate	Total	Literacy
1	Visakhapatnam	19 (9.50)	55 (27.50)	15 (7.50)	111 (55.50)	200 (100.00)	44.5
2	West Godavari	30 (15.00)	23 (11.50)	9 (4.50)	138 (69.00)	200 (100.00)	31.0
	Total	49 (12.25)	78 (19.50)	24 (6.00)	249 (62.25)	400 (100.00)	37.75

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

Table 10: Level of Education wise Classification of the Sample Population

Sl.No	District	Visakhapatnam	West Godavari	Total
Illiterate				
1	Male	97 (42.36)	132 (57.64)	229 (45.26)
2	Female	138 (49.82)	139 (50.18)	277 (54.74)
3	Total	235 (46.44)	271 (53.56)	506 (100.00)
Primary				
1	Male	62 (45.93)	73 (50.07)	135 (48.39)
2	Female	60 (41.67)	84 (58.33)	144 (51.61)
3	Total	122 (43.73)	157 (56.27)	279 (100.00)
Secondary				
1	Male	129 (57.59)	95 (42.41)	224 (54.11)
2	Female	101 (53.16)	89 (46.84)	190 (45.89)
3	Total	230 (55.56)	184 (44.44)	414 (100.00)
Higher				
1	Male	61 (51.70)	57 (48.30)	118 (59.30)
2	Female	37 (45.68)	44 (54.32)	81 (40.70)
3	Total	98 (49.25)	101 (50.75)	199 (100.00)
Total				
1	Male	349 (49.53)	357 (50.57)	706 (100.00)
2	Female	336 (48.56)	356 (51.44)	692 (100.00)
3	Total	685 (49.00)	713 (51.00)	1398 (100.00)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective total

Educational Status

Table 9 explains the level of education wise classification of the sample heads of the households. For the sake of explanation level of education is divided into three categories indicating group of classes. They are primary (1-5th), secondary (6-10th) and higher (more than 10th). Those who cannot read and write are treated as illiterates. In the Visakhapatnam district, 44.5 per cent of the heads of the households are literates. In the literate heads, a majority had only secondary level of education. In the West Godavari district, 69 per cent of heads of the households are illiterates suggesting that illiterate heads are more in West Godavari district compared to Visakhapatnam. With regard to the overall sample, 62.25 per cent are illiterates.

A classification by level education of the sample population is displayed in Table 10. For this purpose, populations above 5 years of age were only considered. For the sake of easier interpretation levels of education were taken into four categories – 1) Illiterate – those who cannot read and write, 2) Primary – Nursery to 5th standard, 3) Secondary – 6th to 10th standard and 4) Higher – more than 10th along technical qualifications like ITI, Polytechnic and Engineering. With regard to Visakhapatnam district sample, as many as 235 were illiterates, 122 were in the primary level of education, 230 were in the secondary level of education and the remaining 98 had higher level of education. With regard to West Godavari district sample, 271 were illiterates, 157 had primary level of education, 184 had secondary level of education and the remaining 101 had higher levels of education. With regard to the total sample, 506 were illiterates, 279 had primary, 414 had secondary level of

Table 11: Literacy Rates for the Sample Population

Sl.No	District	Male	Female	Total
1	Visakhapatnam	72.20	58.93	65.69
2	West Godavari	63.02	60.95	62.00
	Total	67.56	59.97	63.80

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages.

Table 12: Distribution of the sample households related to school going children (6-11 Years)

Sl.No	District	Yes		
		Male	Female	Total
1	Visakhapatnam	20 (44.44)	25 (55.56)	45 (35.16)
2	West Godavari	45 (54.22)	38 (45.78)	83 (64.84)
	Total	65 (50.78)	63 (49.22)	128 (100.00)

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate their percentages with their respective totals.

education and 199 had higher levels of education.

Table 11 explains the literacy rates of the sample population; it is calculated sex wise also. The total literacy rate of Visakhapatnam district sample is 65.69 per cent and in it, male literacy rate is 72.2 per cent and female literacy rate is 58.93 per cent. The total literacy rate of West Godavari district sample is 62 per cent and in it, male literacy rate is 63.02 per cent and female literacy rate is 60.95 per cent. With regard to total sample literacy rate, it is 63.8 per cent and male literacy rate is 67.56 per cent and female literacy rate is 59.97 per cent.

Table 12 explains the child education of Visakhapatnam and West Godavari districts. Out of the total 45 children in Visakhapatnam district sample, 44.44 per cent are males and 55.56 per cent are females. In West Godavari district sample, 54.22 per cent are males and remaining 45.78 per cent are females. Out of the total sample population, 50.78 per cent are males and 49.22 per cent are females. In Visakhapatnam district female child literates are more than males and in West Godavari and Total sample population male child literates are more than females.

Table 13 explains the classification of the sample households based on the distance (in kms) they have to cover to reach primary school, high school and government junior college. With regard to Visakhapatnam district sample, primary schools are very near to their houses, high schools are very near for 100 households and the remaining 100 households have to travel 3 kms to reach a government

Table 13: Distance to Primary Schools, High School and Govt. Junior College (in kms)

Sl. No	District	Primary School		Higher Secondary school			Govt. College		
		Very near	0.5 km	Very Near	1km	3km	2km	3km	5km
1	Visakhapatnam	200	0	100	0	100	0	100	100
2	West Godavari	0	200	0	0	200	100	0	100
	Total	200	200	100	0	300	100	100	200

Note: Figures are in absolute numbers

high school and with regard to government junior college – 100 households have to travel 3 kms and the remaining 100 households had to travel 5 kms to reach a government junior college for higher education. With regard to West Godavari district sample, primary schools are 0.5 kms far from their houses, and high schools are at 3 kms distance and government junior college at 2 kms distance for 100 households and 5 kms for the remaining 100 households

Conclusions

In this Paper the demographic and educational facilities are examined in the study area. As far as the demographic characteristics of the sample population is considered in the West Godavari district male headed households are higher than those in Visakhapatnam. Regarding the household' family size, families which have number of members households equal in both districts and large family sized households is higher in West Godavari district. West Godavari district has higher sex ratio compared to Visakhapatnam district. For age wise classification of the sample households revealed that number of children working in various activities is higher in West Godavari district compared to Visakhapatnam district. The mean age at marriage with respect to girls who are under the age of 18 years is found to be higher in West Godavari district, so that it is also higher when compared to Visakhapatnam district in the case of age at first conception.

In terms of total literacy Visakhapatnam

district is recorded higher literacy while West Godavari district is noticed higher literacy in the case of child literacy. In the case of Visakhapatnam district primary schools are located very near to the respondent's houses where as in the case of West Godavari district the primary schools were established with in 0.5 Kms to the households.

In both districts a majority of the sample households are consuming more than 2400 calories per head. This indicates that as per a Planning Commission's (1979) Study on poverty, a majority of the sample households in both districts are found to be above poverty line.

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