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SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION:

Education has a marked influence on the future of an individual; hence education is often called the key to bright future. An individual who has acquired higher education will also have higher occupational aspirations. In Indian history, we find that the upper castes have benefited with the help of education, but lower castes and tribes lagged behind socially, economically, culturally because they were denied the benefits of education until recently. The Scheduled Tribes are tribes notified under Article 342 of the Constitution, which makes special provision for 'tribes, tribal communities, parts of, or groups within which the President may so notify'. There is no definition of a tribe in the Constitution but one may distinguish some characteristics that are generally accepted: self-identification, language, distinctive social and cultural organization, economic underdevelopment, geographic location and initially, isolation, which has been steadily, and in some cases, traumatically, eroded. Many tribes still live in hilly and/or forested areas, somewhat remote from settlements.

At the higher level of education there is specialization of education, which enables one to enter a profession of his liking. Hence his desire is fulfilled in both education and occupation. In the past the responsibility of a government was mostly the maintenance of law and order and defending the country from external.

Today however a government is responsible for discharging many welfare activities for the people, particularly for those who have remained backward and poor on account of denial of equal opportunities in the past, such as the scheduled tribes and tribes in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The educational gap between the scheduled tribes and the rest of society is still very wide and the rate of improvement is very slow. Due to lack of proper guidance the scheduled tribe students are attending schools at a later age.

Chitnis (1979) and Premi (1984) hold that instead of providing equal opportunity to all, the present system of education is creating new inequalities. The available data show that only a small proportion of scheduled tribes and scheduled tribe students have been able to reap major benefits of higher education and modern education. It is because education among them is still a problem.

In this context Naik, D.J. (1969) opined that “Expansion of education among scheduled tribes has made them conscious of their rights and has made them secure better status in the society. Education has played an important role in the all-round development of the scheduled tribe people”.

Chakrawarty and Singrole (1988) is of the opinion that “The socio-economic development of scheduled tribes is closely linked with their educational advancement, more so in today’s changing world in which education plays an increasing role in everyday life apart from equipping a person with necessary skills for more effective participation in different spheres of economic activity”.

Chand (1985) compared various Naga tribal students in relation to their self perception, socio-economic status and allied aspects. It was found that the boys belonging to Angami and Sema tribes were significantly different from the girls of same tribe in self perception. The girls belonging to the three different tribes were found similar on self perception. The vocational choice of girls belonging to those three tribes was not found to differ significantly from one another. Likewise the educational aspirations of the boys were also found to be similar.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is concerned with rural scheduled tribe students in higher Education and its major focus is on their problems and prospects. By the terms, higher Education is meant university education imparted through university of its colleges or colleges affiliated to it. The ST students in the present study have been drawn from diversified course of higher education such as B.A., B.Sc., B.Com., BBM., ,BBA., B.Ed., M.Ed., B.E.,

M.M,B.S., M.A., M.Sc, and L.L.B., in fact the ST students constitute a minority as compared to their male counterparts in higher education. Nevertheless, they constitute a select stratum or elite stratum of the ST student's population in general.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Scheduled Tribes are tribes notified under Article 342 of the Constitution, which makes special provision for 'tribes, tribal communities, parts of, or groups within which the President may so notify'. There is no definition of a tribe in the Constitution but one may distinguish some characteristics that are generally accepted: self-identification, language, distinctive social and cultural organization, economic underdevelopment, geographic location and initially, isolation, which has been steadily, and in some cases, traumatically, eroded.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the socio economic conditions of Scheduled Tribe students in gulbarga District.
2. To explore their educational problems, prospects and possibilities among scheduled tribes.
3. It is an attempt to understand the relation between higher education and changes among scheduled tribes.

METHODOLOGY

The present study consists of rural scheduled tribes 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 to Gulbarga District. The sample size of 100 students was 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 have been supplemented by relevant secondary data and secondary data collected from various government reports.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The present study is devoted to the analysis of socio-economic background of the study. The word 'background' used in the present study consists of three settings, namely the demographic, the social and the economic. The demographic setting refers to such characteristics 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., and 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, we shall make attempts to study the nativity, mother tongue, present stay of the respondents and their religion in this study.

For analytical purpose of the study, the above courses are classified into two categories namely 1) general and liberal 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.

AGE:

Age being a biological trait has been socially recognized as one of the important indicators of social status. It is visible and indisputable factor on the basis of which various stages of individual's life are differentiated for education, occupation, marriage, parenthood, maturity, old age et, it also plays a vital role in the determination of attitudes and lifestyle.

Table 1: Age composition of the respondents

Age Composition	Respondents	Percentage
Younger age group (18- 21years)	72	72.00
Middle age group (22- 25 years)	26	26.00
Oder age group (26-29years and above)	02	02.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Primary data

Above table, 1 explained that the preponderant majority (72.00) of students are distributed in the younger or middle age group only a small 1.20 percent is in the older age group the mean age of the sample is 20.67 years in the total sample, the proportion of younger age group of students (72.00) is relatively higher followed by middle age (26.00) and older age (02.00%) groups.

MARITAL STATUS:

Marriage is a social institution based on religious sanction. It is status conferring device. It is through marriage family comes existence and continues to exist. This marriage is a part of the family. In fact, it is a preparation for and supplement to the family. Through marriage on individual acquires the source of personal gratification coupled with new social obligation and responsibilities (Table, 2).

Table 2: Marital Status of Respondents

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Married	12	12.00
Un Married	88	88.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Primary data

It can be seen from diagram that out of 100 respondents, the overwhelming majority (88.00) is unmarried and only a negligible 12.00 percent are a married. This analysis indeed reflects the fact the social practice of early marriage which was one rampant among the STs is slowly on the wane among the educated STs.

FAMILY TYPE

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, matriloca, 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 3: Distribution of the respondents by types of family

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Nuclear Family	60	60.00
Joint family	40	40.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Primary data

The above diagram indicates that 60 (60.00%) respondents out of 100 belong to nuclear type families and only 40.00 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, 3).

Table: 4. Mother tongues of the respondents

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Kannda	82	82.00
Telugu	10	10.00
Other	08	08.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Primary data

It can be observed from Table, 4 that for the overwhelming majority (82.00%) of the respondents Kannada is the mother tongue. Only 10 percent of the students stated that their mother tongue is Telugu. Interesting 08.00 percent of the respondents state other language is their mother tongue.

PARENTS EDUCATIONAL LEVELS:

Information is available only for 64 father and 26 mothers and the rest come under no information category. Hence, the sample of father is 64 and mother is 26.

Table: 5. Parents educational levels

Parents	Illiterates	Medium education	Low education	High education	Total
Father	12 (18.75)	18 (28.12)	24 (37.5)	10 (15.62)	64
Mother	08 (30.76)	10 (38.46)	04 (15.38)	04 (15.38)	26

Source: Primary data

It can be observed from Table, 5 that out of 64 father of the respondents, 18.75 per cent are illiterates; 37.5 percent are low educated; 28.12percent are medium educated and 15.62 percent are high educated. Of the 26

mothers of the respondents, as many as 30.76 percent are illiterates; 15.38 percent are low educated; 38.46 percent are medium educated and 15.38 are high educated.

HOUSING CONDITIONS AND MATERIAL POSSESSIONS:

Housing is one of the fundamental needs of people. 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 ST is definitely a symbol of status and prestige given his poor material existence (Table, 8).

TYPES OF HOUSE

It could be seen from Table.10 that a majority of (60.0%) of the respondents mentioned Pucca House followed by quite a considerable percentage (60) from puuca house such as RCC buildings and only 12.0% of the respondents in the sample mentioned kacha houses such thatched houses or huts table 8.

Table 8: Types of houses

Income	Respondents	Percentage
Pucca House –RCC Building	60	60.00
Semi-Pucca House - brick wall with cement plaster	18	18.00
Kacha House-Thatched houses	12	12.00
Total	100	100.00

Source: Primary data

FINDINGS OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

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 structure of opportunity for the self employment of ST students 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 tribes 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 tribe 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:

Thus higher education is necessary for upward mobility. It plays an important role as a powerful instrument of economic and social changes. It makes significant contribution in raising the quality of life of people. It is through higher education that the all-round progress of weaker sections of the society is possible. Thus the study shows that most of the respondents maintain their educational expenditure with the help of scholarship amount is not sufficient to meet all their expenditures. 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 ST students are institutional problems of the STs including how to remodel or redesign our institutional arrangements through a radical structural change with emphasis on equity and equality of girls education 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 Scheduled tribe students.

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