

SCHEDULED CASTE GIRLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract:

Are weaker sections and most depressed classes since thousands of years in India. Scheduled caste women are also most backward sections as they belong to lower castes and subjugated gender. The Government has formulated many of the welfare schemes for the education of scheduled caste girls. The present study is made to look into the social and educational conditions of scheduled caste girls studying in PG and research courses at Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi. For this purpose, total 160 scheduled caste girl students were surveyed and collected primary data revealed that scheduled caste girls are aware about significance of higher education for girls and as such, they have higher professional aims and ambitions. Still, as suggested by many of the respondents there is need for increased reservation for scheduled caste girls in employment.

Key words: Girl, weaker sections, backward, untouchability

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Introduction:

In Karnataka, the Scheduled Castes (SCs) form a sizeable part of the state's population. Not all SCs are former untouchables. Some of the castes and sub-castes, classified as 'Scheduled Castes' during the 1970s and 1980s, were non-untouchables who did, however, have a history of deprivation. Scheduled Castes in Karnataka present a complex and mixed story of development. Their literacy, health and nutritional status and overall living condition as such have been improving considerably. Yet, they show poorly in terms of other development indicators. Poor housing conditions, landlessness, child and girls' problems, social stigma of untouchability and such other social disabilities have made the Scheduled Caste people the victims of all forms of discrimination and deprivation- Caste, Class and Gender.

Of course, there are several schemes and programmes designed in the cause of the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes in Karnataka and India. Consequently, there is increase in female education among scheduled castes. The following table shown increase in literacy rates of women of different caste groups.

Table No. 1. Literacy Rates of SC/STs and Women in relation to
General Literacy :1971-2001: (In Percentages)

Category	1971	1981	1991	2001
General Literacy	39.5	54.4	62.7	73.5
Male	51.8	68.0	73.7	82.3
Female	26.9	40.4	51.3	64.6
Scheduled Castes	21.82	29.67	46.74	63.2
Male	32.2	40.65	58.36	73.4
Female	11.3	18.47	34.89	53.0
Scheduled Tribe	9.02	20.46	27.89	41.5
Male	13.3	26.71	35.25	50.2
Female	4.5	14.00	20.23	32.8

Sources: Census of India (Table-1 & 2), 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, Primary Census Abstracts

Still, many of the studies were already conducted revealed that, scheduled caste women are facing problems in education. Hence, the present study is made to study the problems of scheduled caste women in higher education.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study is made:

- ❖ To know gender inequality in the families of scheduled castes;
- ❖ To study the attitudes and needs of scheduled caste girls in higher education;
- ❖ To look into the aims of scheduled caste girls in future career and ambitions; and
- ❖ To find out the welfare schemes from which the scheduled caste girls have gained benefits for getting higher education.

Methodology and Limitations:

The present study is made in Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi, Gulbarga University has total 36 Post-Graduate and research departments and more than 3000 PG students and research scholars are getting higher education in different subject streams. The present study is made on the basis of sample survey of scheduled caste girls, who are studying at post-graduate and research courses. Totally 160 female students belonged to scheduled caste were surveyed with questionnaire and the collected primary data is analyzed and discussed as under.

Analysis and Discussion:

1. Level of Education:

The term higher education implies that the Post-Graduate Degree and Research Degrees such as M. Phil and Ph D courses. The present study is a questionnaire survey of the scheduled caste girl students studying in different courses. The level of education of the respondents is presented in the following table:

Table No. 2. Level of Education

Sl. No.	Level of Education	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Post-Graduate	109	68.12

2	Research	51	31.87
	Total	160	100

The above table revealed that about 109 (68.12%) of the scheduled caste women are studying in Post-Graduate Courses and the remaining 51 (31.87%) are studying in Research courses such as M. Phil and Ph. D in different subject disciplines.

2. Marital Status

Of course, the majority of the students studying in higher education and research are unmarried and only few are married. For the purpose of the present study, the marital status of the scheduled caste women studying in different courses is presented in the following table:

Table No. 3. Marital Status

Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Unmarried	122	76.25
Married	38	23.75
Total	160	100

The above table made it clear that about 122 (76.25%) of the respondents covered under the study are unmarried and the remaining 38 (23.75%) of the respondents are married.

3. Favour over Male Members in the Family:

Gender discrimination is a social problem. Even though the females in the family educated, there are still families, where a kind of favour or preference is given to the male members of the family. Hence, information was collected from the respondents whether in their families there is preference given only to male members in the family and presented as under:

Table No. 4. Favour over Male Members in the Family

Particulars	Number of Respondens	Percentage
Yes	113	70.62
No	47	29.37
Total	160	100

It is noted from the above table that about 47 (29.37%) stated that there is no preference or favour over male members in the family and the majority of the respondents that is 113 (70.62%) are agreed that there is preference to the male members in their families.

4. Need of Higher Education for Women:

All the respondents covered under the present study are studying in post-graduation and research courses; they think that women needs higher education. It was also asked to them that to mention the reasons, as to why the women needed higher education. The collected information is shown in the following table:

Table No. 5. Need of Higher Education for Women

Particular	Frequency	Percentage
To get Employment	43	26.87
To get Knowledge	22	13.75
To undertake Productive Work	12	7.50
To play significant role in family and society	10	6.25
All of the Above	73	45.62
Total	160	100

It is noted from the above table that 43 (26.87%) of the respondents stated that to get employment there is need of higher education, about 22 (13.75%) of the respondents stated that to get knowledge, there is need of higher education, to undertake productive work there is need of higher education for women as stated by 10 (6.25%) of the respondents and it is noted that

about 73 (45.62%) of the respondents stated that for all of these reasons the women needs higher education.

5. Women are getting lesser opportunities:

It is noted that women are getting lesser opportunities compared to men in the society, with regard to employment, education, social customs, etc. Hence, it was asked to the respondents according to them whether women are getting lesser opportunities. The collected data is presented in the following table.

Table No. 6. Women are getting lesser Opportunities

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	89	55.62
No	71	44.38
Total	160	100

It is noted from the above table that about 89 (55.62%) of the respondents expressed that the women are getting lesser opportunities compared to men and the remaining 71 (44.38%) of the respondents stated that women are getting opportunities at par with men.

6. Facing discrimination in the Society:

Being dalit women, scheduled caste women are facing many problems in the society. Due to the scheduled caste the women are being discriminated in the society. Of course, the government policies are providing facilities to the scheduled caste, but still in society scheduled caste women are being discriminated. There is need to know about the opinions of the scheduled caste women on being whether they are being discriminated. The collected opinions of the scheduled caste women studying in higher education are shown as under:

Table No. 7. Facing discrimination in the Society

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	137	85.62
No	23	14.37
Total	160	100

It is observed from the above table that about 137 (85.62%) of the respondents agreed that the women are being facing discrimination in the society and the remaining only 23 (14.37%) of the respondents do not agreed to the same.

7. Choice of the Present Career in Education:

There are many reasons to choose a career or profession in education. They include good employment opportunities, popularity, status, good earning, accidental choice, etc. The reasons for choosing the present education or profession by the scheduled caste women covered under the present study are shown in the following table.

Table No. 8. Choice of the Present Career in Education

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
To earn more Money & Wealth	23	14.37
For the Welfare of the Society	19	11.87
To get good job and employment	62	38.75
Due to Parents' wish	32	20.00
Accidentally Joined	24	15.00
Any Other	--	--
Total	160	100

It is clear from the above table that about 62 (38.75%) of the respondents joined the present education to get good job and employment, followed by 32 (20.00%) of the respondents stated that due to the parents' wish they joined the present career, about 24 (15.00%) of the respondents stated that they joined the present career accidentally, as they were having no alternative, about 23 (14.37%) of the respondents stated that they chosen the career to earn more money and wealth and the remaining only 19 (11.87%) of the respondents agreed that for the welfare of the society, they have chosen the present career.

8. Monthly Income:

Income of the family decides the economic power of the family. It indirectly decides the social status possessed by the family of the respondents. The monthly income of the family of the respondents covered under the present study is shown in the following table.

Table No. 9. Monthly Income

Particular	Frequency	Percentage
Up to Rs. 5000	36	22.50
Rs. 5001 to Rs. 10000	48	30.00
Rs. 10001 to Rs. 20000	51	31.87
Rs. 20001 to Rs. 40000	19	11.87
Above Rs. 40000	06	3.75
Total	160	100

It is noted from the above table that of the total 160 (100%) respondents covered under the present study, about 51 (31.87%) of the respondents stated that their family income is between Rs. 10001 to Rs. 20000, followed by 48 (30.00%) of the respondents expressed that their family income is between Rs. 5001 to Rs. 10000, about 36 (22.50%) of the respondents stated that their family income is up to Rs. 5000, about 19 (11.87%) of the respondents stated that their family income is between Rs. 20001 to Rs. 40000 and the remaining only 06 (3.75%) of the respondents stated that their family income is above Rs. 40000 per month.

10. Kinds of Assistance getting from Government Schemes:

All the scheduled caste women students are aware about the government assistance and facilities given to them. Further, there is need to know about the benefits that are availed by these students from these schemes. The following table provided the information:

Table No. 11. Kinds of Assistance getting from Government Schemes

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly/Yearly Scholarships	137	85.62

Reservation in Admission to Education	124	77.50
Merit Scholarships	27	16.87
Free Hostel and Boarding	88	55.00
Free Books and Study Materials	94	58.75
Tuition Fee Concession	145	90.62
Educational Loans from Government Schemes	21	13.12
Any Other	--	--
Total	160	100

It is noted that all the respondents are getting more than one kind of assistance provided by the government. The table revealed that 145 (90.92%) of the respondents are getting tuition fee concession, followed by 137 (85.62%) of the respondents are getting monthly/yearly scholarships, about 124 (77.50%) of the respondents are getting reservation in admission to their higher education courses, about 94 (58.75%) of the respondents are getting free books and study materials, about 88 (55.00%) of the respondents are staying in free hostels and free boarding, only about 27 (16.87%) of the respondents are also getting Merit scholarship and about 21 (13.12%) of the respondents have borrowed educational loans from different government schemes.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion it is concluded that all the Scheduled Caste girls covered under the present study agreed that the women need higher education. But it is noted that even though the women are educated, they feel they are getting lesser opportunities in the society and facing discrimination in the society. The study revealed that all the respondents are aware about the government schemes and policies to protect the interests of the Scheduled Caste people in general and Scheduled Caste women in particular. Further, majority of these respondents are getting more and more kinds of assistance from the government. All of the Scheduled Caste women students covered under the present study approved and satisfied with all the government

schemes and policies for the development of SC Women students. It is suggested to provide more employment opportunities to scheduled caste women.

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