

Education and Social Change Among Scheduled Castes

Pradeep Kumar
Hemleta Saini
R. K. Saini

Abstract

Social change through education among Scheduled Castes is very widely discussed and studied phenomenon all over the country. The Indian State is providing special educational opportunities for the SCs. Despite many studies there is scope for further studies on education among Scheduled Castes and consequential social change as some other consequent processes are also going on fast. The present study has focused the impact of education on social life patterns of Scheduled Castes. This study is proposed urban and rural settings in Western Uttar Pradesh. Empirical data have been collected by using observation, interview, personal records. The present study suggests some important indications in the content of education and social change. Findings suggest that first and the second generation lag behind in education due to lack of financial resources and confinement of education to higher castes but the third generation is educated which thus constitutes a positive effect on their social and economic life.

Social change through education among Scheduled Castes is very widely discussed and studied phenomenon all over the country. The effect of education in changing status identities among the Scheduled Castes, specially their engagement in secular occupations as a result of growing modern education and rise in social position which are very much observable in the present times. Many social scientists highlight that the Scheduled Castes are gaining education and that plays an important role in achieving higher status and thus social change is observable. The Indian State is providing special educational opportunities for the SCs. Despite many studies there is scope for further studies on education among Scheduled Castes and consequential social change as some other consequent processes are also going on fast. The present paper has focused on the following specific objectives: to find out the extent of the increase in education among them over a period of time and the impact of education on social life patterns of Scheduled Castes and to analyze change in their inter-caste relations e.g. untouchability and commensality etc.

For the purpose of present study an urban setting i.e. a Moholla namely Shergarhi situated near Shastri Nagar of Meerut city in western Uttar Pradesh and a rural setting (a village), situated at about 10 km. from the city, namely Hasanpur Qadim have been taken up. They have shown progress in economic, occupational, political and educational fields. Here also the SCs have shown some change in their social position. Thus, the both areas has numerically preponderant of SCs. From

Pradeep Kumar is Principal, D. A. V. P. G. College, Budhana, Muzaffar Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, India
Hemleta Saini is Assistant Professor, Govt. P. G. College, Ram Nagar, Uttarakhand, India
R. K. Saini is Assistant Professor, Govt. P. G. College, Ram Nagar, Uttarakhand, India

the selected at the first stage some cases have been identified who have shown social, occupational, educational and political change in the region. At the second stage, 100 families from each setting have been selected for the study. Empirical data have been collected by using observation, interview, personal records and secondary records. Secondary records have been consulted from the local, Block and District head quarters and other government's records. Quasi participant observation method has been used for collecting first hand data. Data from 200 households in the rural and urban area have been collected by using interview guide/ schedule. On the basis of the analysis of the facts from 200 heads of households, we arrive at the following findings. The findings have been grouped into different sections related to the different objectives as proposed.

Development of Education among Scheduled Castes

1. All of the respondents of rural area and urban area are aware about the existing educational facilities.
2. The large segment (59) is aware about educational facilities through teacher and school-college authorities. The urban proportion (38%) is larger than the rural proportion (21%).
3. The large segment (94) is using educational facilities at medium level in which proportion of urban respondents is slightly larger (52%) than the rural proportion (42%).
4. The large segment (156) is giving equal educational opportunities to girls, in which proportion of urban respondents is slightly larger (84%) than the rural proportion (72%).
5. The large segment (61) is saying that poverty is major cause of not going to school and dropout among SCs students in which proportion of rural respondents is slightly larger (32%) than the urban proportion (29%).
6. The large segment (149) constitutes of their father being illiterate in which proportion of rural respondents is slightly larger (78%) than the urban proportion (71%) and majority of respondents (71) are educated up to intermediate in which proportion of rural respondents (38%) is slightly larger than the urban proportion (33%).
7. The large segment (86) considered reservation and education to be the factors of economic upliftment in which proportion of rural respondent is slightly larger (47%) than the urban proportion (39%).

Changes in Social Life of Scheduled Castes

A number of changes have been observed in social life of Scheduled castes under study.

1. A large majority (86%) feels that commensality with higher castes has increased in which proportion of urban respondents is slightly larger (89%) than the rural respondents (83%).
2. A large segment (106) feels that commensality with lower castes has decreased in which proportion of rural respondents is slightly larger (64%) than the urban proportion (42%).
3. In the present generation 73 percent of the respondents' friends have higher castes whereas this proportion was 18.5 percent in the past generation and it is slightly larger in urban area (22) than in the rural area (15). Thus, the facts indicate that friendship with higher castes has increased manifold (18.5% to 73%) over the two generations.
4. In the present generation, 51 percent of the respondents feel that higher castes members accept food and tea willingly at their residence whereas this proportion was 3 percent in

the past generation and nil in rural area and 6% in urban area. Thus, the facts show that instance of higher castes members accepting food and tea willingly at their residence has increased manifolds (3% to 51%) over the two generations and caste superiority sense apparently is felt very less among the higher caste people where taking food and tea are concerned.

5. In the present generation, 64 percent of the respondents have visited the higher castes' house regularly whereas this proportion was 10.5 percent in the past generation and it is slightly larger in urban area (16) than in the rural area (5). Thus, the facts show that habit of visiting to the higher castes' house regularly has increased for magnetize change (10.5% to 64%) over the two generations.
6. In the present generation, 51 percent of the respondents said that higher castes visit the Scheduled Castes' house regularly whereas this proportion was 3 percent in the past generation and nil in rural area while 6% in urban area. Thus, the facts show that higher castes visiting of the Scheduled Castes' house regularly has become multiplied (3% to 51%) over the two generations.
7. In the present generation, 74 percent of the respondents inter-dine with the persons of higher castes whereas this proportion was 13 percent in the past generation and it is slightly larger in urban area (18) than in the rural area (8). Thus, the facts show that inter-dining with the persons of higher castes has increased manifold (13% to 74%) over the two generations.
8. In the present generation, 78 percent of the respondents have always been treated equally by high castes on the basis of same educational qualification and it is slightly larger in urban area (84) than in the rural area (72) whereas this proportion was nil in the past generation. Thus, the facts show that Scheduled Castes observe on an equal footing with the higher castes members having the same educational qualifications has increased in manifold (0% to 78%) over the two generations.
9. In the present generation, 58 percent of the respondents have considered education as the factor of betterment in their social status whereas this proportion was 45 in the past generation and it is slightly larger in rural area (46) than in the urban area (44). Thus, the facts show that education as the factor of betterment in their social status has increased manifold (45% to 58%) over the two generations.
10. In the present generation, 87.5 percent of the respondents have been consulted for selection of mates for marriage and it is slightly larger in urban area (92) than in the rural area (83) whereas this proportion was 8 percent in the past generation and nil in rural area while 16% in urban area. Thus, the facts show that in consulted of selection of mates for marriage has increased more than ten times (8% to 87.5%) over the two generation.
11. In the past generation, 74 percent of the respondents had been married at the age of up to 18 whereas this percentage is 12 in the past generation and it is slightly larger in rural area (16) than in the urban area (8). In the present generation, 35.5 percent of the respondents have married at the age of 22-24 whereas this proportion was 9% in the past generation and it is slightly larger in urban area (11) than in the rural area (7). Thus, the fact shows that

the present generation perhaps knowing the drawbacks of early marriage, have preferred 22-24 age at marriage (35.5%) in comparison to earlier generation (9%). Early marriage proportion has been decreased (74% to 12%) over the two generations.

12. In the present generation, 92.5 percent of the respondents have favourable attitude of family planning whereas this proportion was 27.5 percent in the past generation and it is slightly larger in urban area (32) than in the rural area (23). Thus, the facts show that favourable attitude of family planning has increased manifold (27.5% to 92.5%) over the two generations.
13. In the past generation, 96 percent of the respondents had more than 4 children in their family whereas this proportion was 15.5 in the past generation and it is slightly larger in rural area (17) than in the urban area (14). In the present generation, 88 percent of the respondents have 1 or 2 children in their family whereas this proportion was nil in the past generation. Thus, the facts show that the present generation knew the drawbacks of large family and they have preferred 1-2 children (0% to 88%). Above four children proportion has decreased (96% to 15.5%) over the two generations.
14. In the present generation, 66 percent of the respondents prefer to have male child whereas this proportion was 94.5 in the past generation and it is slightly larger in rural area (100) than in the urban area (89). Thus, the facts show that attitude for preference to male child has decreased (94.5% to 66%) over the two generations.
15. In the present generation, 88 percent of the respondents don't favour the inter-caste marriage whereas this proportion was cent percent. Thus, the facts show that attitude for inter-caste marriage has increased manifold (0% to 22%) over the two generations.
16. In the present generation, 52 percent of the respondents accept the increase of integration of Scheduled Castes and other through inter-caste marriage whereas this proportion was nil. Thus, the facts show that integration through inter-caste marriage between Scheduled Castes has increased manifold (0% to 52%) over the two generations.
17. In the present generation, 21 percent of the respondents' friends and relatives got married outside the caste whereas this proportion was 2 in the past generation and nil in rural area and 4% in urban area. Thus, the facts show that friends and relatives married outside the caste has increased manifold (2% to 21%) over the two generations.
18. In the present generation, 69.5 percent of respondents consider advantages of education for help to get a job and it is slightly larger in urban area (72) than in rural area (67) whereas this proportion was 63 percent in the past generation and it is slightly larger in urban area (65) than in rural area (61). Thus, the facts show that advantages of education for help to get a job has increased (63% to 69.5%) over the two generations.
19. In the present generation, 20.5 percent of the respondents perform the rituals of upper castes whereas this proportion was nil in the past generation. Thus, the facts show that attitude to perform traditional deities has decreased (92.5% to 63.5%) over the two generations.

Conclusion

The study shows that most of the head of household are males, middle aged, married and

more nuclear and middle sized families have middle level education are in government services and private works, having respectable income with the neighborhoods standards.

Education in the present generation has improved to a large extent from the past generation. They are aware of educational facilities through formal and informal means; using those up to some extent, as a whole girl are also making use. Largely commensality with higher castes has increased but with lower castes (Valmiki) has decreased, having friendship with higher castes, higher castes members accept food and tea at the residence of SCs. SCs visit the higher castes house regularly and higher castes also visit them. Inter-dining with the persons of higher castes in social function, equal footing is also seen with the higher castes members having the same educational qualification, education acts as an important factor for betterment in their social status, consultation of youngsters in the selection of mates has increased, the age of marriage has increased, largely favorable attitude towards family planning, 1 or 2 children in their family as a norm, preference to male child has decreased, inter-caste marriage increased up-to some extent, some friends or relatives married outside the caste, education helps to get a job. Rituals performance like that of upper castes has increased up-to some extent.

The empirical evidence suggests some important indications in the content of education and social change. Findings suggest that first and the second generation lag behind in education due to lack of financial resources and confinement of education to higher castes but the third generation is educated which thus constitutes a positive effect on their social and economic life. Change in social life such as equal treatment with high caste members, regular visits and inter-dining with high castes has also been seen. Education has also minimized the disabilities like untouchability, inter-caste marriages are also been preferred now. They also show favourable attitude towards family planning.

C. Parvathamma (1984) finds that education is one of the important variables with the help of which social change could be achieved. P.N. Pandey (1988) has found that influence of education in social mobility and changing status identities among the Scheduled Castes, specially their rise in social hierarchy and social position mobilization and engagement in secular occupation as a result of growing more education. N.J. Usha Rao (1983:164-179) has found that the role of education as a catalyst or agent of social change has been well recognized education is said to determine the level of aspirations technology, productivity efficiency etc. which constitute some of the basic factors in the process of development. A.R. Kamat (1981) examined that the improvement in the educational progress of the Scheduled Castes after the introduction of special educational concessions to them. M.S.A. Rao (1972) considers that education helps in promoting values and achieving new goals. It widely recognized that formal education plays a vital role in social mobility, both horizontal and vertical. M.S. Showeb (1986:19) states that in India education is considered as the most important media for social change. In support of these, the present study has also raised that education has played the most important role for their socio-economic development of Scheduled Castes in the both selected area.

The study identified certain factors contributing to social change of Scheduled Castes namely education, changing inter-castes relation, change in the attitude and in the level of awareness.

Education, modern occupation and the welfare schemes of the government are contributing a lot towards changing the socio-economic attitude and the life style of the Scheduled Castes. Therefore, this study has been limited only in a small setting. Therefore, findings are indication of changes further generalization is required at wider level.

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