

## Status of Scheduled Caste Women in Higher Education of Karnataka: Micro Analysis

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### Abstract

*The social deprivation of scheduled caste women revealed that these women had to shoulder as a burden, the women belonging to this segment had to bear the brunt as they became victims of double discrimination- as part of caste inequity on the one hand and as part of gender inequity on the other. Their position in the society and within the family made them the worst victims of a social system which relegated them to complete insignificance. It is no wonder that, the Scheduled Caste women in India today occupy a position in the ladder of littermates only a shade better than their Scheduled Tribe counterpart- a segment which also shares similar discrimination though emanating from a different socio-historical context. Scheduled caste women constitute 16.3 per cent in the total population. Scheduled caste women in India are targeted for violence and discrimination not just because of their gender, but also on the basis of their caste, community, religious affiliation and other factors. The present study is made in Gulbarga city and totally 160 scheduled caste girls pursuing higher education in different colleges of higher education were surveyed. Gulbarga city is located in Hyderabad-Karnataka backward region of Karnataka State. Questionnaire was used to collect the primary data and the collected primary data is analyzed. Education is powerful tool of women empowerment.*

**Key Words:** Scheduled Caste, Higher Education, Religious affiliation, Social deprivation, Discrimination

### 1.1 Introduction

Article 246 of the constitution of India has entrusted the state with the responsibility of promoting the economic and educational interest of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. Despite constitutional provisions and sustained efforts at the national and the state level to improve the conditions of the scheduled castes and to bring all round improvements in their living and working conditions, they are still characterized by below poverty line, low income occupations such as agricultural labourers, bonded labourers, dependence on subsistence farming, poor assets, high rate of unemployment and gripped in many civil and social disabilities, low level of literacy, miserable living and poor working conditions etc.

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also on the basis of their caste, community, religious affiliation and other factors. The social deprivation of scheduled caste women revealed that these women had to shoulder as a burden, the women belonging to this segment had to bear the brunt as they became victims of double discrimination- as part of caste inequity on the one hand and as part of gender inequity on the other. Their position in the society and within the family made them the worst victims of a social system which relegated them to complete insignificance. It is no wonder that, the Scheduled Caste women in India today occupy a position in the ladder of littermates only a shade better than their Scheduled Tribe counterpart- a segment which also shares similar discrimination though emanating from a different socio-historical context.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The important objectives of the paper as follows

- ❖ To know about gender equality in families of scheduled caste women and in society;
- ❖ To study whether scheduled caste women are facing discrimination in their college and departments and
- ❖ To analyze the status and respect gained by scheduled caste women in society.

### 1.3 Methodology and Scope

The present study is made in Gulbarga city and totally 160 scheduled caste girls pursuing higher education in different colleges of higher education were surveyed. Gulbarga city is located in Hyderabad-Karnataka backward region of Karnataka State. Questionnaire was used to collect the primary data and the collected primary data is analyzed and discussed as under.

## 2. Results and Discussion

This paper discuss with the socio-educational aspects of the respondents in Kalaburgi city.

### 2. 1. Age-wise distribution of Respondents

Age is an important factor which decides the level of knowledge of the respondents. It has been already been discussed that about 160 respondents were provided the information for the present study. The age-wise distribution of the respondents is shown as under:

**Table-01:Age-wise Distribution of Respondents**

Sl. No.	Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 21 Years	26	16.25
2	22 to 25 Years	107	66.87
3	26 to 30 Years	23	14.37
4	Above 30 Years	04	2.50
	Total	160	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

It is noted from the above study that majority of the scheduled caste women that is about 107 (66.87%) belongs to the age group of 22 to 25 years, followed by about 26 (16.25%) of the respondents belongs to the age group of below 21 years, about 23 (14.37%) of the respondents stated that they have age group of 26 to 30 years and the remaining only 04 (2.50%) of the respondents have above 30 years of age.

## 2.2 Level of Education

The term higher education implies 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 shown in the table:

**Table-02: Level of Education**

Level of Education	Respondents	Percentage
Post-Graduate	109	68.12
Research	51	31.87
Total	160	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

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.

## 2.3. Areas of Specialization

Area of Specialization here refers to the subject disciplines, in which the scheduled caste women are studying. The specialization subjects are categorized into broad groupings such as Medical, Engineering & Technology, Science, Humanities and Social Science. The following table shows the area of subject discipline, in which the respondents are studying:

**Table-03: Areas of Specialization**

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Medicine	20	12.50
Engineering & Technology	37	23.12
Science	24	15.00
Social Sciences	51	31.87
Humanities	28	17.50
Others	--	--
Total	160	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

The study covered about 20 (12.50%) of the students pursuing their higher education in Medical Sciences, about 37 (23.12%) of the students are studying in Engineering and Technology, about 24 (15.00%) of the students are studying in Science, about 51 (31.87%) of the

students are studying in Social Sciences and about 28 (17.50%) of the students are studying in Humanities.

#### 2.4 . Level of Discrimination

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-04: Favour over Male Members in the Family**

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	113	70.62
No	47	29.37
Total	160	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

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%) agreed that there is preference to the male members in their families.

#### 2.5. Ill-treatment in the College and Department

Scheduled Caste people are suffering in the society due to the untouchability. Even though the governments framed policies and plans to remove the untouchability in the society, many of the people practice the same. For this purpose, in many places there is ill-treatment of people belonging to the scheduled caste. It was asked to the respondents, whether they are getting ill-treatment in the college or department in which they are studying. The collected data is presented in the following table:

**Table-05: Level of maltreatment in the College and Department**

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	43	26.87
No	117	73.12
Total	160	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

It is surprising to note that about 43 (26.87%) of the respondents agreed that they are getting ill-treatment in the college and department and the remaining major portion that is 117 (73.12%) of the respondents did not face any of such ill-treatment in the college and department.

#### 2.6. 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-06: Women are getting smaller Opportunities**

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	89	55.62
No	71	44.38
Total	160	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

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.

### 2.7. 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	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	137	85.62
No	23	14.37
Total	160	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

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

### 2.8. Level of Status, Respect and Satisfaction

Status, respect and satisfaction constitutes essential pre-requisite for any individual in the society. It is noted that level of status, respect and satisfaction shows the recognition of individual in the society. As such, it was asked to the respondents, regarding their status, respect and satisfaction in their college and department. The collected information is shown in the following table.

**Table-08: Level of Status, Respect and Satisfaction**

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
To the Full Extent	56	35.00
To a Greater Extent	75	46.87
Not at All	29	18.12
Total	160	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

The above table revealed that 75 (46.87%) of the respondents expressed that they are having status, respect and satisfaction to a greater extent, followed by about 56 (35.00%) of the respondents stated that they are having status, respect to the full extent and the remaining 29 (18.12%) of the respondents expressed that they do not have status, respect and satisfaction.

## 2.9. Kinds of Assistance getting from Government Schemes

It is noted from the above table that 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-09: Kinds of Assistance getting from Government Schemes**

Particulars	Respondents	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	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

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.

## 2.10. Government Programme improve the status of SC in General and SC Women in Particular

As already discussed, for the development of Scheduled Caste people in general and Scheduled Caste women in particular, both the Central and State Governments are providing concessions, assistance and facilities for their education. It was asked to the respondents, whether the status of Scheduled Caste people in general and Scheduled Caste Women in

particular is improved due to these policies of the government. The following table presented the information collected from the respondents.

**Table-10: Due to Government Policies the status of SC people in general  
And SC women in particular is improved**

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	119	74.37
No	41	25.62
Total	160	100.0

**Source:** Primary data

It is emphasized from the above table that majority that is 119 (74.37%) of the respondents agreed that due to the government policies the status of scheduled caste women is improved, whereas only 41 (25.62%) of the respondents did not agree to the same.

### 3. Conclusion

Education is powerful tool of women empowerment and it is proved by the present study. It is noted that scheduled caste women are getting equality in all the aspects. But, it is essential to increase awareness among the scheduled castes on gender equality as many of the SC female students have remarked that the male members are preferred in education. The efforts of Government are appreciated in increasing education of scheduled caste women. In spite of their problems, scheduled caste women have realized the significance of higher education and as such, it is essential to know whether highly educated scheduled caste women have gained in equality in society. In this respect, present study is made to analyze the same in Gulbarga city.

### References

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