

Challenges and Prospects of Scheduled Caste People

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Abstract – No society is there, without the stratification, No society is there without the problem in the world. For example, Rome had plebeians problem, in Spartans “heltos’ problem, among the British “villains” problem, “ Egyptians ”slaves” problem, Americans ” Negroes” problem, Germans ”Jews” problem, like wise Hindus have the Harijans or the scheduled Caste people problem. The problems of slavery, serfdom ...disappeared but the problem of Harijans or the scheduled Caste people still continued in India. These people are refered by different names like”untouchables”,”Harijans” “Backword”, “Depressed” “Panchamas” Chandalas” etc. in India. But Mahatma Gandhiji addressed them as “Harijans” the people of the God. The term ‘Scheduled castes’(Political-legal sense) was used for the first time by the simon commission (1928) & under the Government of India Act of 1935, & ‘Scheduled castes’ in independent Indian Consttution. More than 1/6 of Indian population is suffering from a number of disabilities like social problems (lowest status in the hierarchy- as a superior-inferior, civic disabilities (means they are not allowed to use public places & facilities...), education facility, religious facility, no right of property ownership, political disabilitiesetc.

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INTRODUCTION

The main objectives of this paper is 1.To understand problems of scheduled caste 2.Try to know about the programmes for the welfare of scheduled caste people. A data is collected from observation method, informal interviews & also by secondary data like books , news papers , journals, internet etc. The scope of study related only to Indian Scheduled caste people. Government of India has been trying to bring this population to main stream by providing facilities like education, Employed Guaranty plan ,Indira Awas Yojan, Grameen Rojagar yojan, Ambedkar Housing plan, Mahatma ghandi National Rural Employment Guarantee schemas, Antyoday Plan ,Ration cardes, Low interest Bank loan plan, Strishaki women yojane, plan Ganga Welfare Programme...etc.

BELIEF IN UNTOUCHABILITY

Although rigidity in the practice of untouchability is somehow disappearing from the society, yet the majority of the respondents are not favourably inclined towards it. The respondents in the present study were asked whether they believe in untouchability or not? In response to this question, almost all the respondents said that they do not believe in untouchability. Thus, it shows that at the attitudinal level, the scheduled caste people do not believe in untouchability but in actual practice, it is observed that the untouchability is highly practised in

the study area. However, it has been observed that those respondents who are well educated, exposed to the outside world and are in Govt./Semi Govt, jobs, while outside their homes and villages do not believe in and practise untouchability but while at home, they are compelled by the social circumstances i.e. the societal norms to believe in untouchability. Thus, it can be said that in actual practice, the untouchability still exists in the village communities and people still commonly follow it.

SOCIAL DISTANCE BETWEEN HIGHER CASTES AND SCHEDULED CASTES

The reduction in social distance between the higher castes and scheduled castes is an important indicator of social mobility. Educational advancement, employment opportunities, participation in social and religious ceremonies, participation in socio-cultural activities, inter-personal interactions, inter-dinning inter-caste marriages, etc. play a significant role in reducing the social distance and bridging the gap between the higher and lower castes. In the present study, it has been found that a majority of the respondents (71.18 percent) have stated that despite some improvements in the socio-economic conditions of the scheduled caste, the social distance between scheduled castes and higher castes has remained almost the same as it was there in the past whereas 28.82 percent of the respondents pointed out that due

to the improvement in socio-economic conditions of the scheduled castes, the social distance 284 has decreased to some extent between them. This shows that the social distance between the higher and lower castes in different spheres still exists in the village communities.

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