Education and Social Mobility among Scheduled Castes: A Case Study of Aligarh City

Abstract:
The present study examines the patterns of education and its consequent effects on social mobility of the scheduled castes living in Aligarh City. The study is specifically concerned with the Jatavs who constitute an important sub-caste of the Scheduled Castes. The Scheduled castes are one of the most socially and economically backward sections of the Indian society, and in the caste structure it occupy the lowest rank, while a large number of sub-castes fall under this large blanket term, the Chamar, Dhobi and Harijans are generally most talked about sub-castes. These sub-caste groups are associated with the menial type of occupations such as scavenging, leather work, removing dead cattle from the village etc. These occupations are hereditary and for the upper caste groups they constitute the polluting groups.

Dr. B.R Ambedkar used to call them as "Untouchables". The backwardness and miserable condition of the scheduled castes is due to the ancient institution of the caste system. In India, the Hindu society is divided into four primary Varna which are the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. These Varna are divided into innumerable sub castes. The lowest in the Varna
hierarchy was Shudra and the lowest in the caste hierarchy are the Untouchables. According to T. K Oomen the traditional social organization of Hindu society was divided into five categories and most of the scheduled castes were designated as Panchamars, those of fifth order. They were ranked below the four Varnas of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Manu prescribed them residence outside the village and these of the shrouds of corps as their clothing, broken pots for meal, iron for ornaments, dogs and donkeys for their wealth. In the contemporary India scheduled castes known as Dalits. According to the manifesto of the Dalit Panther - Members of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Neo - Buddhist the working people the landless and poor peasants, women and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion are called Dalits.

Codes of Manu prohibited education for the children of scheduled castes. In Manusmiriti it was categorically mentioned that the untouchables should not hear the sacred hymns. They were not allowed to use descent cultural language but they required to use crude language as a result they remained illiterate, ignorant and backward for centuries.
The British administration founded a modern system of education which opened its doors to all castes and communities in India. Many British exponents of modern education like Macaulay, David Hari, Duncan, Maharaja Saijee Rao Gayakwaad, Gopal Krishna Gokhley etc, and so many others advocated the universal modern education which includes the feeling “Education of all”.

In this context Srinivas stated in his major work on caste and social change in India, that the rate of mobility increased during the British rule as cities offered new vistas for education and employment. It is generally assumed that Industrialization, Urbanization weaken the demarcation of purity and pollution which is the basic concept of Hinduism. Western education has resulted in the spread of liberal democratic and secular ideology among the Indian intelligentsia. The advent of universal adult suffrage abolished the distinction between high and low as far as voting rights were concerned.

The education which was meant to broaden the mind, to sharpen the process of logical thinking, to provide knowledge and skill to an individual to bring him/her to a level that would lead to a gainful, creative and satisfying life, opened the door for the development of scheduled caste communities.

Social mobility provides avenues for development of the scheduled castes. Social mobility is in itself a change which leads to the transformation of the downtrodden communities. In modern India scheduled caste people through
rational thinking, scientific outlook, and hard labor try to acquire higher social status and regulate social changes.

In the light of the above description the present research study is aimed at examining analyzing pattern of mobility among scheduled caste.

The researcher has gone through vast review of literature and found that a large number of studies have been undertaken on the topic of mobility and its various aspects as follows:

**Empirical studies and theoretical studies.**

These studies were conducted specially after partition of India and the pioneering efforts and contributions of Professor M.N Srinivas inspired both foreigners and Indian scholars to study mobility in the caste hierarchy. Such studies were conducted by Cohen, Bailey, Beteille, Hardgrave, Zelliot and others.

It must be pointed out that all the studies referenced in the study did not necessarily deal with the variables Education and Income and their effect on mobility. The studies conducted by Cohn, Bailey, André Beteille are basically general in nature.

Studies using different variables to analyze the different mobility patterns were conducted by various sociologists such as Andre Beteille, Anil Bhatt, Lynch,

The Jatavs of Aligarh form an interesting group which the present researcher has targeted for the present study. A Sociological study of education and its impact on pattern of social mobility among scheduled caste in general and Jatav in particular form the main body of the thesis.

The objectives of the study are given below:

1. what changes has taken place in the social and economic conditions of the Jatavs? How have these changes affected their relationship with other castes, especially the higher caste group?

2. what are the factors responsible for upliftment or deterioration of the Jatav community?

3. what are the salient features of the Jatavs of the Aligarh city?

4. To highlight their religious practices.

5. To understand the attitudes of Jatav community towards privatization of education reservation policy of the government conversion of Jatavs to other religions, TV's programs, education and employment of women.

The study also aims to find out the level of politicization pattern of integration and isolation with regard to Jatavs and to other castes.
Because of the unique position of Aligarh city, the large Jatav population residing in this city, Aligarh has been selected for the purpose of the present study. The sample for the present research study was confined to the Jatav community, and a purposive sample was selected from the following localities, which are predominantly Jatav areas.

Naurangabad chhawani, Ambedkar nagar colony, Achal tank, Nai Basti, Khair Road, and Kothi Lank Ram. Naurangabad chhawani and Ambedkar colony represent the largest majority of Jatavs.

For the purpose of the study, fourteen respondents were selected through purposive sampling, which is well suited for conducting case studies.

The criteria for sample selection were based on level of education and income. All selected respondents were educated up to high school level or above with a minimum income Rs. 5000 per month.

Income and education have been used as independent variables.

The data collection was made through primary and secondary sources. The primary data collection was based on information obtained from the fourteen case studies. A Semi-structured interview scheduled was prepared and used as the main tool for primary information. Intensive fieldwork was
conducted in the selected areas, and case studies were conducted in the homes or office of the respondent(s) during the field work to give an insight into the standard of living, and other important social aspects, like occupational structure, group relationship and the like, non-participants observation were made by the researchers.

For the purpose of the present study, fourteen respondents were selected through the purposive sampling technique. Five hypotheses were developed to give a general direction to the study. The hypotheses were as follows:

1. Changes in occupation from traditional 'defiling' occupation to a 'clean' occupation is an important agent of social mobility.

2. Educational achievements lead to better chances of obtaining better occupational positions and hence help in upwards mobility of the Jatavs.

3. With political participation exposure to mass media, scientific outlook, new technologies, urbanization and Sanskritization enhance social mobility.

4. In spite of giving up their traditional occupation of tanning, the upper castes hold the Jatavs in contempt and do not like to associate with them socially.

5. Conversion to Buddhism has enhanced status of the Jatavs in the caste hierarchy.
All the hypotheses were partially supported by the data.
Hypothesis (1) was supported partially. Those Jatavs, who had given up their traditional occupations, felt that they had improved their status in society. This is a debatable point, for they had not, in reality been accepted as members of an upper caste. Their mobility was restricted to economic gains only, and they enjoyed respectability from their compatriots as well as from their colleagues at work.

Hypothesis (2) was also partially supported. The selected respondents were educated at least up to class ten. Almost all of them had secured government jobs barring a few who were employed privately. But all respondents did not become socially mobile. That is, they did not ascend the ladder of the caste hierarchy.

Hypothesis (3) was not really supported by the data. Only very few respondents participated actively in politics and their participation in mass media was limited to television news. Not many of them read newspapers. Apart from this, almost all of them seemed to have 'de-sanskritised by giving up their belief in the gotra system. Instead, they were more interested in western styles of life and through mass media communication imbibed these western values. It appears that while
they became more acceptable to a particular 'class' of people who were westernized, they did not gain access to high caste positions.

Hypothesis (4) was almost fully supported by the results of the data. Almost all the respondents felt that even though they had given up their traditional defiling occupation of leather work, the upper castes continued to hold them in contempt. They however, clarified that at their place of work they had cordial relationships with their upper caste colleagues, but at the social level, they were rarely invited to their homes and almost never to their religious melas.

Hypothesis (5) was not supported by the data. Many of the respondents had converted to Buddhism but this did not affect their status in the caste hierarchy. Instead, they were called neo-Buddhists and they were then again set apart from the 'real and original' Buddhists. Even conversion to Christianity did not elevate their caste status, as convertee has followed their Jatav traditions and formed endogamous groups. Marriage alliances with upper castes were not forthcoming.

Apart from the above stated hypotheses, the researcher examined each variables of education and income in detail and the findings are given below:
The fourteen case studies of Jatav respondents show that several changes have taken place in Jatav community of Aligarh city. The important Changes are that only few people indulge themselves into the leather business. People of this community are now pursuing different non traditional clean occupations. Jatavs have become conscious about keeping their houses clean. They have left celebrations of unnecessary festivals such as Naag-panchmi etc. They have left superstitious. Several changes have appeared in the marriage practices which they have also shortened and many customs, rituals have been abandoned. Their forefathers paid attention to gotra but the coming up third generation members show no regard to the importance of gotra.

It is observed that the highly educated Jatav persons that also belong to higher professions form an exclusive class and attempt to move upwards in the society through various means they are developing their contacts with upper castes elite section.

It is observed that majority of the respondents inter-dine with persons of other castes but they do not attend their melas, as they are not invited. Some respondents feel that they are the members of Indian society and not of the Hindu society which is based on caste and caste system which supports untouchability. Persons who belong to high salaried professions are making contact with other castes.
They have given up many irrelevant customs and traditions and they also do not celebrate festivals of lesser importance. Most of them do not worship due to lack of time and interest while respondents' wives and daughters followed all proceedings of worship, observed fast. The male respondents do not go to the temple most of them teach moral and scientific education for their children /grand children. It is also observed that some of the respondents have faith in Lord Buddha but they considered themselves as Hindu. They are following Buddhism in their own way.

Some of them read Buddhist epics. Majority of the respondents favored reservation policy, only few advocated discontinuation of reservation policy. Government employment, reservation supports them and enhances their position in the society. The respondents made similar statements regarding conversion to another religion, they felt that this cannot solve the problem of Jatavs community and they should not go for it and face the problems. However, it is observed that majority of the respondents support conversion of faith towards the Buddhism. They were of the opinion that it is to right way to get rid of exploitation of dominant upper castes. Almost all respondents said that untouchability is still prevalent in the minds of higher castes. Few of them states that it exists not in rural areas instead of urban areas. various factors of social mobility viz education, reservation, democracy, sound economic position,
secular values, consciousness towards political sphere, replacement of occupation, hard labor, consciousness to raise his socio-economic status, political power, are responsible for the progress of the Jatav community.

On the other hand poverty, illiteracy, gambling, alcoholism, nature of Gulami, bad maternal care, lack of education background, disorganisation, lack of determination, dowry, ignorance, lack of unity, unemployment are the various factors that help in the deteriorate the Jatav community.

It is also found that majority of the respondent castes their vote in favor of B.S.P. on the other hand only fewer of them supports B.J.P. Mostly businessman advocated the B.J.P.

They are fully conscious of the provisions for protection of scheduled castes and laws for removal of untouchability. They have taken interest in the local parties.

Majority of them do not favor privatization of education, fewer of them and especially older people said that T.V programs are destroying our children. Younger generations learned fashion trends from T.V and ideal thoughts of serials that give useful messages are neglected by us.

The study showed that Dr B.R Ambedkar is the role model of the majority of them. All respondents have positive attitude about higher education and employment for women.
In a nutshell it is argued about Jatav community of Aligarh city that after Independence people of Jatav community have tried to achieve sound economic and social positions in the society through various means and reservation of government employment, political power etc supports to them.

In this process people of the Jatav community have shifted their emphasis from Sanskritization to competition for entering into high prestigious professions such as I.A.S, P.C.S. engineers, doctors and tried to gain political power.

They have been following westernization in the social life. Younger generations have been intimating the western dress patterns, housing furniture, language, behavior pattern etc. some of the families those have enough consciousness are going ahead in education occupying high status and up to date his life style and in participating in the local policies and politics. The interaction with the higher caste in increasing higher education and better economic conditions bring prestige to them.

It is concluded that education and social mobility affect the downtrodden community. It is found that three major classes have emerged in the Jatav community. Elite section is also arises among these three classes who devoted to progress of the exploited people. The Elite section is also maintaining healthy relations with upper castes. Fewer people favored discontinuation of reservation
policy, leather occupation considered as profitable one as other occupation. Untouchability still exists in society and affects the cultural and social life of the people. Jatavs are more inclined to westernization, globalization and trying to gain power prestige through every possible means. It is necessary here to state that Dr B.R Ambedkar is the role model of the vast majority of the Jatavs of Aligarh and cast their votes in favor of B.S.P and wish that Uttar Pradesh chief minister should be a scheduled caste woman.

Revise the summary with revised thesis.