Chapter VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
In the preceding chapters, attempts have been made to examine the status of the Scheduled Castes in terms of education, occupation and political status including their socio-economic conditions. The summary of the each chapter given at the end covers only those crucial aspects, which were in accordance with the scope and objectives of the study. However, the salient features of the trends emerging out of these chapters are summarized in this chapter.

Indian population can be grouped into four categories: Scheduled Castes (SC) or Dalits, Scheduled Tribes (ST) or Adivasis, Other Backward Classes (OBC), and Others. The caste system in its entirety constitutes a status hierarchy with the Brahmins at the pinnacle and the Scheduled Castes or so-called untouchables at the base. Scheduled Castes are persons of discrete sets of low castes who are excluded from social, cultural, religious, and other conventions of an elaborate hierarchical Indian caste system. They are in a condition of being marginalized and deprived of basic rights on account of their birth into low status social groups. Thus the Scheduled Castes are characterized by a low, in fact, the lowest, social status in the caste hierarchy, as well as by low socio-economic conditions. These strata had, on account of their low social and ritual status, been subject to a variety of disabilities. As a consequence, these castes have remained socially, economically and educationally backward.

The Scheduled Castes were said to be carried with them the stigma of their low and impure birth. The caste system was said to be founded on the concept of ‘purity and pollution’. As the very positions in the caste hierarchy are based on the ideas of ‘purity and pollution’, the caste at the top have greater ‘purity’ in that their food, dress and occupation are regarded as more pure than those of other castes. Castes at the bottom are regarded as
'impure' and their food, occupations, clothes, customs and myths are regarded as either inferior or impure. Economically completely dependent on the superior castes and much exploited by them, educationally backward, socially degraded and treated with contempt, deliberately deprived of the higher religious and cultural values of the Hindu society, all the Scheduled Castes were attributed with varying degrees of ritual impurity. Close contact with them was polluting; hence they were untouchables.

On account of the restrictions listed above the Scheduled Castes were placed low in social hierarchy and suffered from disabilities and discrimination. These disabilities can be categorized as (a). occupational disabilities; (b). educational disabilities; (c). social, cultural and religious disabilities and (d). political disabilities.

**Occupational disabilities**

The nature of ones occupation has a direct reference to one’s status. The social status of an individual is affected and even determined by the nature of occupation from which he derived his livelihood. The Scheduled Castes were known for their long association with so-called impure, unclean, degrading, socially looked down and least preferred occupations. Many Untouchables followed the hereditary occupations such as scavenging, carcass recovery and flaying and hide tanning, leatherwork, drum beating and grave digging. These occupations that was associated with the Untouchables with permanent ritual pollution, barred social intercourse between them and higher caste Hindus, in the framework of traditional Indian society. Besides these traditional occupations, they are also involved in ‘clean’ occupations with a majority of them being agricultural labourers.

Looking into occupations of the Scheduled Castes it can be said that the Scheduled Castes were economically poor and generally were dependent on agricultural labour and other low-income occupations besides their caste occupation. In fact, the greatest majority of
Scheduled Caste occupational force is engaged in agricultural labour in rural areas. Besides this all the primary leather workers, scavengers, and who deal with carcass recovery and flaying were almost the Scheduled Castes. In urban areas, a large proportion of cart pullers, hamalis, and the like manual workers and other unorganized non-agricultural wages labourers and civic sanitation workers belong to the Scheduled Castes.

Educational disabilities

The Scheduled Castes also suffered from educational disabilities for centuries. Historically they had been most uneducated and illiterate group. The mass illiteracy among the Scheduled Castes was in turn was due to the social and religious sanctions imposed on them. The sacred books, Brihaspathi and Manusmrithi have prohibited any attempt on the part of Sudras, leave alone Scheduled Castes, to recite Hindu religious slokas and if they ventured to do so, the smrithi ordained that the tongue of such person be cut off.

Besides the religious and social sanctions imposed on the Scheduled Castes against taking up formal education the poverty among the Scheduled Castes is the main obstacle for them to take up formal education. In addition to this ignorance of use of education feeling that education is not useful, adverse economic conditions, absent of educational facilities in rural areas, lack of knowledge of educational facilities and traditional apathy towards education, home environment were other reasons of educational backwardness among Scheduled Castes. Moreover for the Scheduled Castes it was felt that children were assets to their families. The older children in the family by helping the mother in domestic chores and looking after the younger siblings make it possible for her to remain in labour market. Apart from their indirect economic contribution a substantial portion of them were wage earners in their own rights. With all these reasons the Scheduled Castes have remained educationally backward.
Socio Cultural and Religious Disabilities

Untouchability was the major social disability of the Scheduled Castes. Hindu society insisted on the segregation of untouchables and would not allow them to live inside their own areas. The caste Hindus public appearance and behaviour is contrary to their true intentions and feelings. The caste Hindus discriminates the Untouchables. Scheduled Castes’ social identity was highlighted by the fact that they were generally required to live at a distance from the main village settlement. Residential segregation was somewhat strictly enforced. Thus, most of them lived in the outskirts of the villages and slums in the towns, in Kutch houses that were made of mud and thatched roof. The life of these sections of people had been miserable and unhygienic. The environment of these people was in no way conducive to the achievement of better standards.

The services of barbers, water carriers, washer men, tailors who serve caste Hindus were denied to them. They were debarred from using all public conveniences, roads, vehicles, ferries, wells, schools, restaurants and teashops. They were not allowed to enter the houses of caste Hindus and for that matter was not allowed to enter the streets where higher castes live.

In traditional Hindu society there were legal and ritual sanctions which prevented the lower castes from imitating the life-styles of the upper castes. Apart from this, there are certain elements in the life-style of the Hindus which are perhaps ranked even lower in the traditional Hindu scheme of values. Foremost among these are the ones which pertain to their diet. Different items of food and drink are graded carefully in Sanskritic Hinduism, and in any given region the social rank of a caste is closely related to the food habits of its members. In general, meat-eating is ranked rather low, Harijans not only eat meat, but particular kinds of meat which are held to be especially clean. Those among them who eat
beef are assigned the lowest social rank. Thus, the practices such as meat eating and in particular beef and carrion eating, consumption of alcohol, use of shamans and animal sacrifices, the practice of divorce and remarriages of windows and a less lineally and age status oriented family structure tend to distinguish low status groups such as Untouchables.

Their dress pattern was also different from those of clean castes. The male Scheduled Castes used only loincloth and females in some part of the country were not allowed to cover their breasts. Gold ornaments were prohibited to them and at the same time they could not afford. The religious disabilities took the form that they were debarred from Hindu temples and places of worship, from the celebrations of feasts, offerings and sacrifices. At all times, the Brahmin priesthood has endeavoured to keep them segregated, not only from Hindu society, but from the Hindu religion and the Hindu ceremonial; they were not allowed to hear, much less study the Vedas; they must not enter the temples; they must carry on all ceremonies without using the mantras and no Brahmin would carry out any domestic ceremony for them.

**Political disabilities**

Caste has been most important locus of power in traditional India. The power structure in such a society is characterized as tradition oriented and ascriptive. A largely feudal society emphasized, the rule of elders and tradition, and the dominance of higher castes. In such society power is generally linked with economic religious factors besides education. Brahmins held power in Indian society for a long time because of the importance given to the ritual status and knowledge in the past. Later the economically dominant castes wrested power from Brahmins. This was made possible because of the shift in the importance from the ritual status and knowledge to number land holdings and economic power.
The Scheduled Castes had absolutely no access to power in the past not only because of the absence of any of the factors that contributed for political participation which the caste Hindus had, but also due to their low social status and economic dependence on the caste Hindus. For reasons such as illiteracy and ignorance, traditional values and customs, lack of hopes and aspirations, the Scheduled Castes have generally accepted the lowest rank tagged on to them with many social disabilities.

Caste associations play a vital role in political campaigns and are important for backward castes and classes as they strive for the betterment of the group. It serves the common interests of the groups. It is particularly so in case of Scheduled Castes. But in the past there was no room for entertaining caste associations among Scheduled Castes. They had neither the required capacity nor the courage to do so. Therefore practically no caste association was found, in the earlier times, among the Scheduled Castes.

In the earlier times, the Scheduled Castes had no access absolutely to power due to their low status and economic dependence on Hindus. There was no representation for Scheduled Castes in the village councils in the traditional political set-up. The Scheduled Castes had little voice in decision-making and in fact disputes among them were being settled by upper castes. As observed by the earlier studies, Scheduled castes still remain in the periphery of power.

As a consequence of all these disabilities, Scheduled castes suffered oppression at the hands of the upper castes for centuries, their socio-economic condition was extremely depressed, they were educationally backward and they lacked political skills to hold their own against the upper caste leadership of the country.

After India attained independence the plight of the Scheduled Castes was the primary concern of the social reformers and planners and their efforts shaped into a formidable action.
Independent India’s commitment to equality, socialism and welfare led to the launching of multi pronged welfare measures for the development of the Scheduled Castes who constitute a formidable section of the population in the country. The planners of Independent India visualized social change among the Scheduled Castes by bringing about social mobility among them.

Constitutional protection was provided to the Scheduled Castes to undo the social injustice and all forms of exploitation and to bring them into the main stream of development. The Indian Constitution has provided a Section for the abolition of untouchability and the Union as well as the State governments has taken legislative measures to enforce this section. Apart from this, every effort has been made to promote the educational and economic interests of these sections of society. They are offered big fee concessions and stipends to help them to carry on their academic pursuits. In the occupational field, special privileges by way of reservation of seats are granted to enable them to attain respectable status in society. Thus, not only has judicial discrimination been constitutionally abolished, but special privileges have also been given under the Constitution to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Caste people to enable them to bridge the gulf which in the past separated them from the advanced sections of the society. The post-independence period has not brought any socio-economic and political change in the life of the Scheduled Castes. Equality cannot be achieved if we treat the strong and the week, the rich and the poor, the ignorant and the intelligent on the same footing.

Ambekdar oscillated between the promotion of the Untouchables in Hindu society or in the Indian nation as a whole. The strategy of a break that could take the form of a separate electorate or of a separate Dalit party and/or of conversion outside Hinduism is to improve the status of scheduled castes. He searched for solutions, explored strategies and in doing so
set the Dalits on the path of an arduous emancipation. When he advocated equality, he referred to equality in the economic, political and social spheres. It was Ambedkar who championed the cause of humanitarianism and tried to minimize the distance between two individuals. His contribution to uplift Scheduled Castes was realistic and lasting. He was largely responsible for creating reserved positions for untouchables in the civil service, legislatures and higher education. His major contribution was to have emphasized the importance of action from below that political organisation was indispensable to securing justice and basic human rights.

The ideas of Ambedkar were still very much relevant today and none can ignore his contributions to the socio-economic development of Indian society. Ambedkar worked for ensuring a classless, casteless and divisionless society and fostering unity amidst diversity. In order to attain the change among the Scheduled Castes, new norms are being evolved and new processes are being initiated for enabling to reach these norms. The Scheduled Castes as a group has not only to shed their inferiority but also to gear up themselves to adapt to the new order. They have to give up their old traditional occupations and life styles, come out of their shell and learn new skills and ways of life. This requires a great deal of change, both in their personal life, family ethos and group life. The problems of adjustment are thus entirely new and intricate.

In spite of the earnest efforts made by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the consequent efforts of the Central and State Governments to uplift the Scheduled Castes, the status of the Scheduled Castes remained as it was. Yet, there are certain views of Dr. B.R, Ambedkar to be implemented for the emancipation of the Scheduled Castes in particular and the amelioration of the weaker sections in general. Thus the dreams of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar are still far from being realized. Despite including several provisions in the Constitution to
protect the rights of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, the dream of Dr. Ambedkar to convert India into an egalitarian society as was thought by Buddha, who believed in the three principles, namely, liberty, equality and brotherhood, is yet to be anticipated.

**Need for the study**

The traditional Indian society has remained for ages, as hierarchically frozen and segmented into differentially ranked caste groups on the notions of purity and pollutions. Thus the Indian caste system based on the notion of purity and pollution believed that the Scheduled Castes were impure and polluted. As a result they were forced to live outside the village/town proper and suffered from discrimination in all walks of life. Scheduled castes are lagging behind occupationally, educationally and politically. They also suffered from socio-economic and cultural disabilities.

It is an accepted fact that after the Independence, a small number of persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes have benefited from the ‘protective discrimination’ regarding education, employment in government departments, and politics. These persons are placed in different and probably better socio-economic positions like the persons of other castes. There are also men in the lower castes who have either been upwardly mobile earlier, or are upwardly mobile now, or getting equipped for upward mobility in the foreseeable future. Further, it is our impression that as certain amount of changes occur in the socio-economic conditions of the well-to-do persons of the Scheduled Castes, they are developing in a new interaction pattern with the other Scheduled and non-scheduled castes people of similar position. The constitutional measures help them to achieve higher status in the class structure, but they do not guarantee any improvement in their caste status. The members of the new middle class might have achieved certain social status in the class – structure due to
changes in their social, economic, occupational and interaction positions. It is, however, still unclear whether it affects their status in the caste hierarchy. It is, thus, important to examine the changes in their socio-economic, education, occupation and political awareness status.

After more than 60 years of independence, it is pertinent to ask what has been the impact of the policies of the government on the socio-economic conditions of those belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Even the present Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, has accepted that even after 60 years of the promulgation of the Indian Constitution, legal protection and State support, there is still very considerable social discrimination against Dalits in many parts of the Country. There have been a considerable number of empirical studies on the Scheduled Castes in India since independence. Apart from such studies, many social scientists have elaborately analyzed the changing status of scheduled castes in India. However, most of these studies are either based on secondary data or localized when some primary data have been collected. Each of these covered some limited aspects of development in a certain region. No comprehensive study based on primary data and covering multiple aspects of improved status has been undertaken so far. The earlier studies reveal that the pace of change is rapid in urban areas whereas the change is slow or absent in rural areas. In view of the above, the overall aim of the present study is to examine the present status of the Scheduled Castes in the rural and urban areas of the Andhra Pradesh in terms of education, occupation and social status in Andhra Pradesh.

Importance of the Study

The entire humanity has entered the new millennium with sea changes in the various aspects of life. These changes mainly pertain to the techno-scientific and psycho-social areas of human culture in the era of globalization, economic liberalization and free market economy on one side of the coin. On the other side of the coin, Scheduled Castes in India are
still living with lower level of socio-economic conditions, lower level of literacy, lower sex ratio and poor conditions of housing as compared to State and National averages. Both the Central and State governments have implemented policies directed at the socio-economic empowerment of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (STs). But the status of the Scheduled Castes has not changed hitherto. They are the weakest in terms of political, economic, social and cultural resources.

When a man remains throughout his life in the same occupational, economic and political status, his behaviour inevitably becomes very rigid and non-flexible. On this account, the behaviour of the people of the same status approaches uniformity, while that of people in different social positions becomes widely divergent. A quite different picture is given by the behaviour of the members of a mobile society. A great versatility and plasticity of human behaviour is a natural result of social mobility.

Human development, as a concept, will have value or significance until the human development levels of disadvantaged people, particularly of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are raised to the levels of those of the dominant classes. The present study in this direction has studied the status of the Scheduled Castes. The suggestions made by the study if implemented will surely ensure Scheduled Castes to enjoy equal rights and equal access to goods and services in the society and to attain overall development on par with dominant castes.

**Objectives of the Study**

In pursuit of the aim of the study, the following are the objectives of the study –

1. To analyze the efforts made by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and the government to improve the status of the Scheduled Castes
2. To examine the socio-economic characteristics of the sample respondents.

3. To examine the intergenerational disparities in educational attainment of the Scheduled Castes in the rural and urban areas of Andhra Pradesh.

4. To analyze the intergenerational changes in the occupation among the Scheduled Castes in the rural and urban areas of Andhra Pradesh.

5. To examine the change in social status of the scheduled castes in the rural and urban areas of Andhra Pradesh.

6. To suggest measures to improve the overall status of the Scheduled Castes.

**Methodology**

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The main sources of secondary data are books, journals, articles, various publications of Census of India, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, internet and so on. Besides these, various reports and documents of various scholars both published as well as unpublished have been utilized.

**Selection of the Sample**

There are 23 districts in Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh is divided into three regions, viz., Coastal Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana. The scheduled caste population is spread all over Andhra Pradesh. From each region, one district is selected and 120 samples were taken by representing the rural and urban areas from each district. From Coastal Andhra region, Guntur district, from Rayalaseema region, Chittoor district and from the Telangana region, Khammam district are selected for the present study. Therefore as a whole 360 samples were collected by using simple random sampling technique.

Both primary and secondary data was used for the study. Various reports from the Planning Commission, Scheduled Caste Development Corporation, Ministry of Social Justice
and Empowerment, Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation, other
government reports, books, journals, articles, newspapers and internet were used for the
purpose of secondary data. For collecting the primary data, a questionnaire was framed. The
collected primary data is processed through Computer using SPSS (Statistical Package for
Social Sciences) Software. Simple arithmetic calculations like percentages were used for the
processing of data. To assess statistical significance between the variables, Chi-square test
was applied. Substantial part of the thesis is based on tabular analysis. In the analysis of
data, education, occupation, political participation and social status have been identified as
variables.

**Statistical analysis of the Data**

The important variables were formulated and the relevant data collected from the field
were coded and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. Cross
tables were drawn for analyzing the data. Suitable and appropriate statistical tools such
as percentages were used. Test of significance of the data was carried out using Chi-square
test.

**Major Findings of the Study**

Majority of the respondents of the present study belong to Mala and Mala related
communities (51.4 per cent), followed by Madiga and Madiga related communities (38.6 per
cent) and Adi Andhra and other communities (10 per cent).

There are young as well as aged respondents in present study. Majority of the
respondents belong to 30-40 years age group. At the next level, majority belongs to 40-50
years. However, there are few respondents belong to above 50 years of age. More than half
of the rural area respondents belong to 30-40 years age group, followed by nearly one third of
the urban area respondents. About one third of the both rural area and urban area respondents are falling in the age group of 40-50 years.

In the present study, about 89 per cent of the sample respondents are male and the rest 11 per cent of the respondents are females.

Out of the total sample of 360, nearly 98 per cent of the respondents are Hindus and the rest 2 per cent that belong to urban area are Christians.

Regarding educational status of the respondents, it is found that nearly 57 per cent of the respondents are literates and the remaining 43 per cent of the respondents are illiterates. Area-wise, it is revealed that about half of the rural area respondents are literates, while about three fifths of the urban area respondents are literates.

An analysis of educational level of the respondents reveals that among literate respondents, highest proportion of the respondents had studied upto primary education. At the next level, majority had studied only upto upper primary, followed by a low percentage of the respondents Secondary education, Degree and above. A few of the respondents had studied Professional Courses. None of the rural area respondents had studied upto Degree. A comparative analysis of the educational status of rural scheduled caste respondents and urban scheduled caste respondents indicates that the urban respondents are in a better position than the rural respondents, except in case of professional degree.

Occupational structure of the sample respondents indicate that nearly two thirds of the respondents were engaged as Labourers, followed by a few of the respondents either as private employees or as farmers or as petty businessman. Area-wise analysis reveals that majority of the rural respondents were engaged as agricultural labourers, whereas, about 72 per cent of the urban area respondents were engaged in as labourers.
With regard to size of the family of the sample respondents, it is found that about 37 per cent of respondents had five family members, followed by 30 per cent, who had more than five family members, around 22 per cent, who had four family members, 10 per cent, who had three family members and one per cent, who had two family members. Majority of the rural area respondents had household size of five, while majority of the urban area respondents had family size of more than five.

With regard to type of family of the respondents, it is observed that nearly three fifths of the respondents are living in nuclear families and the rest are living in joint families. It is interesting to note that majority of the rural area respondents are living in nuclear families, while majority of the urban area respondents are living in joint families.

Regarding landholding by the sample respondents, it is found that about 17 per cent of the respondents are landless. Landless are more in urban areas. Among those, who have land, majority of the respondents have only one acre of land; one fourth of the respondents have two acres of land; and a few had above 3 acres of land.

Regarding ownership of the house, it is found that almost four fifths of the respondents had own houses. Comparatively, more number of rural area respondents are living in own houses, followed by two thirds of the urban area respondents.

As regards residential accommodation of the respondents, it is found from the study high proportion of the sample respondents were living in pucca houses. A few of the respondents are living in either Kutchha houses or semi pucca houses or in tiled roof. The proportion of respondents living in pucca houses was higher in rural areas than the urban areas.

It is found from the study that most of the sample Scheduled Castes’ houses had
portrayed the picture of Dr. Ambedkar’s in the rooms.

The study shows that nearly half of the respondents’ houses have two rooms, while around one third of respondent’s houses have single room. Majority of the rural area respondents’ houses had two rooms, while majority of the urban area respondents’ houses had single room.

It is observed from the study that only nearly one third of the respondents had separate room for kitchen. Only one tenth of the rural area respondents had separate room for kitchen, while half of the urban area respondents had separate room for kitchen.

Regarding electricity facility, it is evident that largest percentage of the respondents’ houses had been electrified and only 6 per cent of the respondents’ houses that belong to urban area had not electrified.

With regard to availability of drinking water, it is obvious from the study that two thirds of the respondents had the drinking water facility, while only one third of the respondents did not have drinking water facility at house premises. It is worthwhile to note that nearly two thirds of the urban area respondents did not have drinking water facility at house premises.

As regards toilet facility, it is found from the study that more than half of the respondents had toilet facility within the house. A few of the respondents are utilizing public toilet and a significant percentage of the respondents preferred open field. This depicts the poor sanitation conditions of the Scheduled Castes. The results are almost the same in both rural and urban areas.

Regarding annual income of the respondents, the study shows that half of the respondents had income above Rs.50,000/-, followed by around 39 per cent in between
Rs.25,000/- and Rs.50,000/-, while only 7.8 per cent and 3.3 per cent of respondents had income in between Rs.10,000/- to Rs.25,000/- and below Rs.10,000/- respectively. It clearly depicts the income disparity among the Scheduled Castes. Majority of the urban area respondents’ annual income fall above Rs.50,000/-, while majority of the rural area respondents’ annual income ranges from Rs.25,000/- to Rs.50,000/-. With regard to annual expenditure of the sample respondents, it is inferred from the study that majority of the respondents’ family annual expenditure is above Rs.20,000/-. Among the respondents, whose family annual expenditure ranges from Rs.10,000/- and Rs.20,000/-, rural area respondents are more. As against this, among the respondents, who family annual expenditure is above Rs.20,000/-, urban area respondents are more.

An analysis of savings habit of the respondents reveal that nearly one third of the respondents only had savings habit, which depicts the poor savings habit of Scheduled Castes. This may be due to their poor economic conditions. Comparatively, majority of the urban respondents had the savings habit. Of the respondents, who had savings habit, nearly four fifths belongs to urban area, while only one fifth belongs to rural area. Among the respondents, who had savings habit, majority saves below Rs.20,000/-. Most of these respondents belong to either employees or petty businessmen.

A perusal of debt conditions of the sample respondents reveals that nearly half of the respondents had debt. More than two thirds of the urban area respondents had debt, followed by only one third of the rural area respondents. As stated earlier, urban respondents of the present study are living in poor economic conditions compared to rural area respondents. Among those respondents, who have debt, nearly four fifths of the respondents reported that the debt is own. Only one fifth of the respondents reported that debt is inherited. Among rural area respondents, more or less half of the respondents reported that their debt is
inherited. In case of urban area respondents, it is found that largest percentage of the respondents had reported that debt is own.

Regarding amount of debt, it is evident from the study that among the respondents, who had debt, majority had debt amount of below Rs.5,000/-. Majority of the rural area respondents had that much of debt, whereas majority of the urban area respondents had more than that amount. A significant percentage of the urban area respondents had debt amount of above Rs.10,000/-, while only a lower percentage of the rural area respondents had that much of debt.

With regard to purpose of debt, it is evident from the study that majority of the respondents had borrowed for non-productive purposes, i.e., for domestic purposes. At the next level, majority of the respondents borrowed for agricultural purposes. Among the rural area respondents, who had debt, majority had borrowed for agricultural purposes. At the next level, majority of the rural area respondents had borrowed for meeting domestic expenses. Among urban area respondents, largest percentage of the respondents reported that they had borrowed for meeting domestic expenses.

With regard to source of debt, it is found that majority of the respondents had borrowed from non-institutional sources like moneylenders, friends, etc. In case of rural area respondents, it is observed that majority had borrowed from both institutional and non-institutional sources. At the next level, it is found that nearly one third of the respondents had borrowed from institutional source. A little percentage had borrowed from non-institutional source. In case of urban area respondents, it is found that more than two thirds of the respondents had borrowed from non-institutional source.

With regard to plans to clear off debts, it is found that majority of the respondents wish to clear off their debt by way of income from occupation. This percentage is more in
case of urban area respondents than rural area respondents. A little percentage of the respondents reported that they clear off the debt by working under the Lenders. This percentage is more in case of rural area respondents than urban area respondents. A few of the respondents of the both rural and urban area reported that they clear off the debt by selling their properties.

Regarding educational level of the father, it was evident from the study that more than three fifths of the fathers of the respondents are illiterates. Among literates, highest proportion had studied upto primary education. A few of the respondents had studied above the primary education. Out of 360, only 4 had studied Degree and above. More number of illiterates are in the urban area at the time of the generation of the fathers of the respondents. This is contrast to the present generation wherein more number of literates are in urban areas. High illiteracy rate among the fathers of the respondents may be a reason of the educational backwardness of the Scheduled Castes children.

With respect to educational status of the mother of the respondent, it was found from the study that more than four fifths of the respondents’ mothers were illiterates, which shows the highest levels of female illiteracy in the past days. Low literacy rate of the mothers of the Scheduled Castes respondents may be one of the major reasons of their low educational status.

With respect to educational status of the respondents’ wives reveals that majority are illiterates and the rest are literates. Majority of the literate respondents had studied upto primary education (22 per cent). Comparatively, among illiterates, majority belongs to rural area.

An analysis of comparison of educational level of the respondent’s father and the respondent reveals that there is some improvement in the literacy status in the respondent’s
generation. It is inferred from the study that majority of the respondents’ fathers, i.e., 65.6 are illiterates, while only 43.3 per cent of the respondents are illiterates. In case of rural areas, it is observed that illiterate respondents’ fathers constitute 60 per cent. As against this nearly 49 per cent of the respondents of the rural area are illiterates. It is observed in case of urban area respondents that 71 per cent of the respondents’ fathers are illiterates, while only nearly 38 per cent of the respondents are illiterates. In the present study, as most of the fathers of the respondents were not educated well, the respondents of the study also were not educated highly. The data further shows that with the increase in fathers’ educational level, the level of illiteracy among the respondents declined and their level of education raised. Area-wise, it is observed that higher the educational status of the respondents’ fathers, higher the educational status of the respondents but with exception of a considerable percentage of the respondents in the rural areas. In case of urban areas also, the same is observed but with exception of low percentage of the respondents comparatively.

A perusal of reasons for drop out from the studies by the respondent reveals that they dropped from their studies due to financial problems, domestic problems, social discrimination, lack of support from the family background, lack of interest on education and other reasons such as necessity of working with the father. Majority of the respondents reported financial problems on the whole as well as area-wise.

Regarding awareness of the educational facilities to the respondent, it is found from the study that majority of the respondent’s fathers had no awareness about the educational facilities, while majority of the respondents had awareness about the educational facilities. The same trend is observed area-wise also.

With respect to the relationship between the place of residence and their awareness regarding educational facilities, it is delineated from the study that majority of the urban
respondents had awareness about the educational facilities irrespective of their place of residence. As against this, majority of the rural area respondents, who are residing within the Village and only half of the rural area respondents, who are residing outside the village, had awareness regarding educational facilities.

With regard to desired education for the children, it is found from the study that majority of the respondents are aspiring to educate their children upto PG/Professional Courses. More than half of the urban area respondents aspire to educate their children upto PG/Professional Courses, while 46 per cent of the rural area respondents are aspiring so. However, comparatively, it is apparent from the study that urban area respondents desire higher educational level. This may be due to variations in the awareness levels in the rural and urban areas. Meanwhile, it is also clear that among the respondents, who does not aspire to educate their children, urban area respondents are more. This may be due to poverty faced by the urban respondents.

An examination of the relationship between the literacy status of the respondents and desired education for the children, it is found that huge percentage of the literate respondents desire to educate their Children PG/Professional Courses (70.6 per cent), while only one third of the illiterate respondents are aspiring so. It is further noticed that nearly one fourth of the illiterate respondents desire to educate their Children upto Degree.

Regarding relationship between the literacy status of the respondents and desired education for the children area-wise, it is noticed from the study that majority of the illiterate respondents in the rural area respondents wish to educate their children upto S.S.C. only, while majority of the literate rural area respondents wish to educate their children upto PG/Professional Courses. The same is observed in the case of urban area also. This indicates that literate respondents can only educate their children highly. Further, low educational
status of the scheduled caste parents hampers the education of their children rapidly.

In the present study, 15 per cent of the respondents are not aspiring to educate their children due to financial problems, domestic problems, lack of support from the family, lack of awareness about reservations and other reasons. Majority stated that in order to meet the family expenses, they made their children to work. The same is observed in the earlier paragraph regarding reasons for drop out of studies by the children. Now, the respondent is also wishing to drop out the studies of their children due to financial problems. The same problem is continued in the generation of the respondent also.

With respect to change in the occupational status of the respondents, there is no change in the occupational status of the respondents compared to their father generation. Majority of the respondents at the both the generations are labourers. Only a few of the respondents are Government employees. However, number of government employees are increased in the respondent generation, compared to his father generation.

An examination of the impact of the father occupation on the son (respondent) occupation reveals that there is deterioration in the occupational status of the respondents compared to their father occupation. Majority of the respondents perpetuated the occupation of the father in the case of Labour occupation. In the case of the farmer occupation, rather than inheriting the occupation of the father, the respondents remained as Labourers, which is low occupation compared to their father’s occupation. The same is the situation in the case of the government employees. The results of the present study are in contrast to the general view that higher the status of the father, the smaller the proportion of sons in the lower occupational grades, and the lower the status of the father, the smaller the proportion of sons in the higher occupational grades. In the present study, it is not proved in the case of most of the respondents. The same trend is observed in the urban area also. The rural area also
shows the similar results with exception of the government employees.

A view of the opinions of the respondents on whether he is doing better job compared to his father points out that highest percentage of the respondents reported that they are doing the same job. Even some of the respondents reported that they are doing lower jobs compared to their fathers. Only 30 per cent of the respondents reported that they were doing better jobs compared to their father.

The study reveals that nearly two thirds of the respondents are not desired to succeed their occupation to their children. Only about one third of the respondents are desiring to succeed their occupation to their children.

As regards opinion of the respondents on their economic status, it is divulged from the study that majority of the respondents are living in lower economic status. It is inferred from the study that majority of the both rural and urban area respondents are living in low economic status. However, comparatively, urban area respondents are in very low economic status compared to rural area respondents.

With regard to opinion of the respondents on whether his economic status is better off compared to his father, it is found from the study that more than half of the respondents felt that their economic status is not improved. It can be inferred from the study that majority of the Scheduled Castes’ economic status is not improved inspite of the various efforts of the Government. A significant percentage of the respondents reported that improvement is only to some extent. Compared to urban area respondents, more number of rural area respondents felt that their economic status is improved to some extent.

Regarding place of residence of the respondents, the study reveals that largest percentage of the respondents were living within the Village/town, while majority of the
respondent’s fathers had lived outside the Village/town. Further, it is observed that at the
time of the respondents’ fathers’ generation, majority of the urban area respondents had lived
within the town, while majority of the rural area respondents had lived outside the Village.
But at the time of the respondent, majority of the both rural and urban area respondents are
living within the Village/town. Thus, this is also one of the positive steps towards improving
their social status. Thus, social status of the urban area respondents is better when compared
to the rural area respondents though the urban area respondents are economically poor than
the rural area respondents.

Regarding improvement in the social status of the respondents, it is depicted from the
study that about 94 per cent of the respondents felt that there is an improvement in their
social status compared to their father generation. The results are also same in the rural and
urban areas also.

With regard to discrimination at the workplace, it is found from the study that only 19
per cent of the respondents reported that they are facing discrimination at the work place.
Area-wise, it is observed that nearly one third of the rural area respondents reported that they
are facing discrimination at the work place, while only around 6 per cent of the urban area
respondents reported the same. This depicts the existences of caste system evils still in the
rural areas.

Regarding source of drinking water in the two generations, it is found that 86 per cent
of the respondents reported that it is common, while nearly 58 per cent of the respondents’
fathers reported that source of drinking water is common on par with other castes.

An assessment of change in political awareness status from father to son generation
reveals that there is a perceptible change in the political awareness between these two
generations. This change is more in the case of urban areas.
With regard to participation of the respondents in the political activities, it is found that there is no significant improvement in the political status of the scheduled castes from father generation to the present son generation. They are still not actively participating in any of the political activities of the various parties. Only a few among them are participating. Although the majority of the respondents aware of the politics, they aren’t actively participating as they didn’t get due consideration as majority of the political parties are under the headship of the dominant castes.

An analysis of the opinions of the respondents on the present system of political reservations, it is found that entire respondents reported that existing system of political reservations are not gainful to the Scheduled Castes in view of the following facts. In the existing system of political reservations, Scheduled Castes are not in a position to exercise their power due to domination and interference of the higher castes. Further, as majority of the elected are higher castes, it results in powerlessness to the Scheduled Castes. Furthermore, election tickets are giving to the dummy candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes by the political parties facilitating domination of the upper castes as these dummy candidates don’t know anything and will act according to the will of the upper castes, who deny the development of the Scheduled Castes, since they are under the umbrella of their Party. Further, there is no cooperation from the persons at the next level in hierarchy including bureaucrats in the administration to the Scheduled Castes elected person. The results are more or less showed the similar trend in the rural as well as urban areas. However, among the respondents, who reported that higher authorities are not cooperating, urban area respondents are more.

An analysis of suggestions of the respondents to improve their status reveals that their status will be improved in their opinion by a political system, where Scheduled Castes have
real power, by providing employment, by providing government without interview test, by distribution of useful land, by reservations in the private sector and or by separate State. It is evident from the study that more than half of the respondents opined that they want a political system, wherein Scheduled Castes have real power. Thus, they are feeling that there is no use to the Scheduled Castes because of the present political reservations.

With the present political reservation at all levels including village panchayats, Scheduled Castes have not been able to produce honest and sincere leaders for the cause of Scheduled Castes. Who were elected under the present reservation system are the puppets and remained as dummy candidates under the clutches of the upper caste people.

It is found during the informal talks with the respondents that the Scheduled Caste leaders and elected representatives in the existing political parties are more responsible and liable to the party to which they represent and less responsible to the community they belong. The political mobility of the Scheduled Castes is patronized by the political parties.

Suggestions

The theme of the study is mainly to examine the status of the Scheduled Castes in terms of education, occupation, economic, social and political statuses. Hence, the study gives the suggestions for the development of these five attributes.

To develop education

1. Concrete efforts should be taken to promote education in the rural areas as it is found from the study that comparatively more number of children are acquiring education in urban areas than in rural areas.
2. Steps should be initiated to make it mandatory that each and every private school should be registered and recognized by the government thereby facilitating the reservations and free education to the Scheduled Castes as school education was considered as a vital stage in the entire education process.

3. The policy of protective discrimination will be successful only when the incumbents aware about the facilities provided. It is found from the study that Scheduled Castes are not aware of the various facilities provided to them. Hence, it is suggested that mass awareness programmes should be started. Various programmes/schemes designed for the Scheduled Castes should be broadcasted in the Television Channels in view of the high impact of the electronic media on the people.

4. Qualitative education should be provided to the Scheduled Castes beginning with elementary school up to higher level as this could serve as sound base for empowerment of these people. Programmes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan should be implemented on priority basis in those SC areas where the literacy gap is on higher side between national and the SC literacy rate.

5. The Government should initiate steps immediately to launch a new programme that will facilitate compulsory and free education to all the Scheduled Castes children up to 10 + 2 level in the residential pattern. At the next level, for the UG, PG, M.Phil. and Ph.D. Courses besides Professional Courses, Fellowships like presently implementing Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship should be sanctioned to the entire students, as it was found from the study that only very tiny percentage of the students were coming to this educational level.

6. Proper nutritional food should be supplied to the Scheduled Castes students’ hostels as nutritional food intake has greater impact upon the intelligent quotient levels
including co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, which helps to develop Scheduled Caste students’ innate abilities and potentialities.

7. Special training should be given to school teachers for handling the Scheduled Caste students with special care and affection. Moreover, only those teachers, who hail from the Scheduled Castes, only be posted to the Schools located in the Scheduled Castes areas as these teachers know the depriving conditions of these castes and hence will act accordingly.

8. Adult literacy programmes should also need to be strengthened as the study finds that higher the education of the parents higher the education of the children.

For the development of occupational and economic status

1. The government should formulate a new policy so as to uplift the socio-economic level of the Scheduled Castes and to provide employment especially in the rural areas. The new policy would be nationalizing the lands at the first stage. Later, irrespective of caste, these lands have to be distributed to the group of farmers on co-operative basis enabling co-operative farming for which necessary inputs and implements would be provided by the government, and in turn pool their products which will ensure them a fair price.

2. It is found from the study that largest percentage of the respondents in the rural areas were engaged as agricultural labourers. Agricultural labourer occupation is a seasonal occupation and doesn’t provide employment throughout the year. Further, changing economic growth, landholding fragmentation pattern and mechanisation of farming have made these people lesser employed especially at the place of their habitation. Therefore, it is suggested that the government should reorient the employment
strategy to absorb the growing labour force by creating more job opportunities and a
growth strategy focusing on the primary sector, which can sustain and absorb the
increasing employment needs.

3. Rural non-farm sector should be developed by establishing the agro-industries and
other household industries in the government sector in order to provide employment
to the Scheduled Castes in the rural areas. Meanwhile, the government should take
steps to impart skills including vocational training in the traditional and new trades to
the Scheduled Castes. The government should devise special skill development
courses for the target groups, keeping in view the market viability and their traditional
skill base. This will encourage them to undertake entrepreneurship, self-employment
and other income generation activities so as to move away from agricultural wage
earnings.

4. The government should initiate steps to create Cooperative societies for the Scheduled
Castes by providing financial assistance to enable them to operate auto rickshaws,
taxi, Lorries and buses.

5. Scheduled Caste Christians should also be given Scheduled Caste status as the social
disabilities are one and the same to the both Scheduled Caste Christians and
Scheduled Caste non-Christians.

**For the development of social status**

1. Necessary efforts should be made throughout the length and breadth of the country to
develop and inculcate the population of the country to get rid of the caste system and
to come out of the notion of the caste system, as the caste system is based on Hindu
sacred books by which upper castes exploited the lower castes for their economic
gains in the name of caste and still now caste card plays prominent role in the Indian politics resulting in underdevelopment of the weaker sections especially scheduled castes, whose vote bank is higher.

2. Inter-caste marriages and inter-dining should be encouraged so that the barriers of the caste system will be reduced drastically and also the authority of such Hindu sacred books must be abandoned.

3. Necessary steps should be taken to open a Fair Price Shops (FPS) which work under the Public Distribution System (PDS) exclusively for the Scheduled Castes in their areas in each and every Village relaxing certain eligibility provisions, which make these castes, not eligible to open FPS. This will surely reduce the dependence of these castes upon other castes and will facilitate in improving their social status.

4. When the government provides free houses for the Scheduled Castes, they should not be in separate Scheduled Castes' colonies as this would only further the caste rifts. It also must be ensured that persons who already own houses are not entitled to this benefit as it rises the ire of other communities who are homeless.

5. Progressive minded Collectors should be appointed to violence prone districts. By this process government could avoid the criticism that the Collector was acting with bias or prejudice. Collectors and Superintendents of Police should be entrusted with the responsibility of keeping the government informed about the developments during the caste clashes, including the grievances of the people.

6. The practice of providing public utility facilities such as drinking water pipes, overhead tanks, latrines to the areas where the majority community people live should be discontinued as this leads to a lot of friction and denial of rights to the minority
communities throughout the country. The supply of these facilities should be broad based so that people from one community will not have to depend on the generosity of the other community.

7. The present implementation machinery of the various Acts protecting the Scheduled Castes should be revamped and the operation of the Acts should be brought under a separate pyramidal hierarchy similar to that of the regular police department should be created for enforcing these Acts, comprising men and women of rectitude and proven rectitude.

8. It is suggested to the Scheduled Caste population in general and Scheduled Castes students in particular that they should mix with the other Castes and do friendship with them.

Political Status

1. Separate State should be formed especially for the Scheduled Castes to uplift them from their socio-economic, occupational, educational and political disabilities.

2. If the formation of the separate State for the Scheduled Castes is not possible, necessary steps should be initiated to abrogate the present constitutional political reservations, otherwise known as Poona pact and to restore separate electorates for the overall development of the Scheduled Castes.

3. It is found during the informal talks with the respondents that the Scheduled Caste leaders and elected representatives in the existing political parties are more responsible and liable to the party to which they represent and less responsible to the community they belong. The political mobility of the Scheduled Castes is patronized by the political parties. Hence, there is ever need to emerge a new political party
under the leadership of the Scheduled Castes, comprising members from all the weaker sections, to cater to all their needs for their overall development on par with other communities.

The findings suggest that even after 60 years of independence the socio-economic status of the Scheduled Castes remained unacceptably low. It is hoped that these findings and suggestions will induce accelerated attempts to improve the condition of these communities.

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