

Development and Empowerment of Dalits in Tamil Nadu – An Economic Perspectives

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Abstract

The Dalits in India manifest the most backward and unprivileged division in the community. The current work has explained how the SCs are held back in terms of the different human development pointers. They remain at the lowest level of social pointers, like health and education, and their exploitation with respect to economical, social and psychological levels happens in all walks of their life. The government of India, being aware of this, has taken up different encouraging action and constitutional measures for their progress. The different regulations and actions followed have witnessed a positive result in different fields and have improved the status of this unprivileged section. However, the different provisions, at times, tends to be unreal that they experience hurdle in availing these provisions owing to lack of knowledge and at times, owing to social limits like caste or class. In this background, this research paper gives more importance to analyze the development and empowerment of Dalits in Tamil Nadu in Economic Perspectives. Therefore, this research paper highlights the core aspects of developmental measures adopted by both Central and State Governments in India. In this aspects this research is highly relevant to the modern context.

Keywords: Dalits in India, Most Backward, Deprived Section in the Society, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, Constitutional Safeguards, Empowerment of Dalits, 73rd Constitution Amendment, Human Development and Social Boundaries.

Introduction

In the year 2020, the Indian population has been estimated at 1,380,004,385 persons during the middle of the year as per UN release. Indian population is equivalent to 17.7 Per cent of the population worldwide. India holds the second rank in the group of countries (and dependencies) by population. In India, the population density is 464 per Km². India is considered the biggest democratic country in the world and it comes second in terms of population among all the countries of the world. Since Education is the most important form of capital for human as well as national development, the educational development of Scheduled Caste people is clearly identified by the Government of India as a priority area of governmental intervention.

In spite of the special attention and the constitutional provisions, the progress of Scheduled Caste people in education is far from satisfactory in India. In fact, the literacy rate of Scheduled Caste population in India is 66.10 percent only as per 2011 census, whereas the literacy rate of the total population is 73.0. This clearly indicates the poor literacy status of Scheduled Caste people in the country. Thus more attention must be paid for their educational development. Research in this area is most essential to promote desired development. Hence, the present study pays attention to the educational and economic empowerment of Dalits in Tamil Nadu.

Statement of Problem

The objective of the work is to provide an exact, updated, and ground-level perspective on Dalits, which depend on power and to what degree caste-based discrimination and omission operate in Government programmes being implemented in the villages all over India.

India's National Commission for Scheduled Castes treats officially using Dalit to be a label as "unconstitutional" since modern legislation opts for Scheduled Castes; but, few sources state that Dalit has extended far more number of communities rather than the official terminology of Scheduled Castes and is at times considered for referring to all of the suppressed people in India. Scheduled Castes communities are present all over India, eventhough their concentration is the most in four states; and they is not a single language or religion common to them, they constitute 16.6 per cent of the population of India, as per the 2011 Census of India. Identical communities can be seen all through the rest of South Asia, in Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and form a section of the global Indian distribution.

Objectives of the Article

1. To analyze the socio-economic, educational and political status of the respondents in the study area.
2. To study the development among Dalits as consequence of education in terms of sources of income and life patterns, and
3. To suggest suitable measures for the development of Dalits in the study area.

Methodology

The methodological strength of this research is based on the organized method of Data collection and analysis. This article depends on descriptive and diagnostic analysis. The current article is written purely on the basis of secondary data. The area selected for this study is Tamil Nadu. Has wide range of income and employment opportunities. The goals put forward in this article had pushed the researcher to search for the data. It is an analytical study and therefore, collecting data was necessary as the article was primarily dependent on secondary data. The researcher gathered necessary information for this study keeping the above stated objectives in mind, and the relevant information was collected by using specific tools and methods. The calculation were performed manually, and the results were maintained with care and they were comprehended correctly, considering the goals of the work, this research paper has been penned down in crystal clear language and easy understanding.

Importance of this Research Paper

Dalits in Tamil Nadu do not appear to have received the empowerment like their counterparts living in other areas of India since their numbers and regions of concentration are less and also they also have divisions among themselves. Both Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes comprise nearly 20 per cent of the population in Tamil Nadu as per 2011 census. The 2011 census reports that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes constitute nearly 16.6 per cent and 8.6 per cent correspondingly, of the total Indian population. The Dalit population in several villages are Tamil Nadu are comparatively lesser than the other communities, and the latter typically make up to getting the upper hand.

Having greater than 12,500 village panchayats all over Tamil Nadu, the state can simply be considered to microcosmically represent India. In India, the concept of distribution of powers to people residing in the villages is not a novelty. The 73rd constitution amendment for the constitution of panchayats was passed in December 1992. Panchayats were provided with the powers to establish cottage and small scale industries, which includes food processing industries, rural housing, provisioning drinking water, establishing libraries, primary and secondary schools in addition to the poverty alleviation programmes, Taking on small irrigation projects, maintenance of community assets and implementation of health care facilities such as primary health care centres and hospitals. The Tamil Nadu Panchyati Raj Act passed in 1994 gives them with identical powers. However, some Dalit panchayat heads male or female practically do not feel charged to make use of them. In this background this research paper is timely and socially relevant one and need of the hour.

Description of Dalits

Before delving into the details with the other references, the definition of untouchables or Dalits provided in the census report 1911 has to be seen. Upto 1935 there was no term to use, like scheduled caste to denote any category of people. However, terms like sudra castes, 'Ahluts', 'Depressed Communities', 'Backward Classes', 'Lower Castes', etc., were in vogue for these were used to refer to those categories of people in the Indian society who were socially economically, politically and educationally so backward and far behind the other high castes people that they used to do only menial jobs live in most poor conditions and untouchable groups. The Articles 341 and 342 of the Indian constitution provide that the president of India will notify the lists of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes by an ordinance of public notification.

Constitutional Safeguards for Scheduled Castes

- Article 46 states that the state shall encourage with special care for the educational and economic interests of the weaker segments of the people, and especially, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes and shall safeguard them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- Article 16 (4) enables the states to make any provision or reservation in the employment under the state in favour of the classes including Scheduled castes given that in the view of the state such are not sufficiently represented on the series.
- Article 41 states, the state shall within the limits of economic carpentry and development make immediate provision for protecting the right to education.

In spite of the major provisions in the Indian constitution for the development of the downtrodden communities a large population of children of the SC community is unable to get the benefits of its education even after 50 years of independent.

Dalits Population Distribution in India

The overall population of Scheduled Castes in India according to the 2011 census was more than 20 crores. They comprise 16.6 per cent of the overall population of the nation. These states in terms of this proportion in descending order are: Punjab (31.94 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (25.19 per cent), West Bengal (23.51 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (20.70 per cent), Haryana (20.17 per cent), and Tamil Nadu (20.01 per cent), In terms of percent in absolute number, Uttar Pradesh had 20.5 percent Scheduled Caste population, followed by West Bengal (10.7 per cent), Bihar (8.22 per cent), Tamil Nadu (7.16 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (6.89 per cent), Maharashtra (6.5 per cent), Rajasthan (6.06 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (5.63 per cent), Karnataka (5.20 per cent), Punjab (4.39 per cent), Orissa (3.56 per cent) and remaining states hold rest of percentage. Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal together account for one third of Scheduled Caste population of India. The population of Scheduled Castes (SCs) grew by 20.8 per cent in between the period 2001-2011. The details of population of India are stated in table-1.

Table 1: The Details of Population of India, 2001 – 2011

Indication	Absolute		Percentage		Growth rate (2001-11)
	2001	2011	2001	2011	
General Total Population	1,02,86,10,328	1,21,05,69,573	100.0	100.0	17.7
Rural	74,23,02,537	83,34,63,448	100.0	100.0	12.3
Urban	28,63,07,791	37,71,06,125	100.0	100.0	31.8
SCs Total Population	16,66,35,700	20,13,78,086	16.2	16.6	20.8
Rural	13,30,10,878	15,38,50,562	17.9	18.5	15.7
Urban	3,36,24,822	4,75,27,524	11.7	12.6	41.3

Source: Primary Census Abstract 2011, Census of India.

The data shown in table-1 clearly observed that dalits constitute 25.2 per cent of the overall Indian population, but their power over the national resources is quite meagre. Nearly 50 per cent of the dalits population lives below the poverty Line, and a major number of them are not educated. Close to 70 per cent of all Dalits reside in rural regions, and more than 90 per cent are engaged in the agricultural sector in the form of unskilled or daily labourers. A majority of them are involved in manual, unskilled labour jobs in urban regions. With these facts provided, it is shocking to note that just 5 per cent of the working dalits population has really got the benefits provisioned by the Indian Reservation Law. They accepted that when the Government of India,& poverty alleviation programs are helpful to the Dalits, the government has no provisions for their thorough monitoring and several have never been implemented too.

Tamil Nadu is one among the extremely poor states in India. Therefore, the SCs are obviously the poorest of the poor compared to the population on an overall. In Tamil Nadu, a greatest percentage of the Scheduled Castes live in South India. They hold very less land or no land at all. Close to 75 per cent of the SCs mostly rely on agriculture for their living. The Scheduled Castes form 20 percent of the overall state population.

The table-2, refer the percentage of the Scheduled Castes of the overall population in Tamil Nadu State is higher than the corresponding figure for India. Actually, among all the states in India, Tamil Nadu Stands fifth in the percentage of Scheduled Castes, the first three places being held by Punjab (31.9), Himachal Pradesh (25.2), West Bengal (23.5), Haryana (20.2), and Tamil Nadu (20.00).

In this state, the identification of SCs are done into 76 kinds as per clause (1) of Article 341 of the constitution of India. It can be clearly found from the table-3, demonstrates that a major number of SCs are living in Vilupuram district with population 810931 (6.8 percent) followed by Kancheepuram 721989 (6.1 percent), Vellore 714054 (6 percent), Cuddalore 634479 (5.4 percent), Coimbatore 630675 (5.3 percent) Thiruvallur 600858 (5.1 percent) and Chennai 598110 (5 percent) districts respectively.

Table 2: Percentage of Scheduled Caste Population Tamil Nadu 1931 - 2011

Year	Description of State	Terminology used to describe the Scheduled Caste	Composition (i.e. Percentage of the Scheduled
1931	Madras Presidency including Ganjan etc.,	Depressed Classes	15.5
1941	Madras Presidency after Ganjan etc. went away to Orissa,	Scheduled Classes	16.4
1951	Madras before partitioning to Andhra	Scheduled Classes	15.0
1961	Madras after the States Reorganisation	Scheduled Classes	18.0
1971	Tamil Nadu	Scheduled Classes	17.76
1981	Tamil Nadu	Scheduled Classes	18.35
1991	Tamil Nadu	Scheduled Classes	-
2001	Tamil Nadu	Scheduled Classes	19.00
2011	Tamil Nadu	Scheduled Classes	20.00

Source: Statistical Hand book of Tamil Nadu 2015.

The details of district wise SCs Population in Tamil Nadu as per 2011 census is given in table -3.

Table 3: District Wise Distribution of SCs Population in Tamil Nadu, 2011

S. No.	Name of District	Total SC Population (in number)	SCs Population (in percent)	Male (in number)	Female (in number)	Sex Ratio SCs	Literacy rate (in percent)
1	Villupuram	1015716	7.03	510869	504847	988	71.9
2	Kancheepuram	948081	6.57	474264	473817	999	84.5
3	Vellore	860221	5.96	424677	435544	1026	79.2
4	Thiruvallur	821646	5.69	410526	411120	1001	84.0
5	Chennai	779667	5.40	389001	390666	1004	90.2
6	Cuddalore	763944	5.29	383943	380001	990	78.0
7	Salem	580512	4.02	294062	286450	974	72.9
8	Tirunelveli	569714	3.95	279570	290144	1038	82.5
9	Tiruvannamalai	565329	3.92	282615	282714	1000	74.2
10	Coimbatore	535911	3.71	266960	268951	1007	84.0
11	Nagapattinam	509767	3.53	252332	257435	1020	83.6
12	Trichirapalli	466561	3.23	230790	235771	1022	83.2
13	Thanjavur	455062	3.15	225859	229203	1015	82.6
14	Dindugul	452376	3.13	225573	226803	1005	76.3
15	Thiruvarur	430927	2.98	214717	216210	1007	82.9
16	Madurai	408976	2.83	205098	203878	994	83.5
17	Virudhunagar	399831	2.77	198704	201127	1012	80.2
18	Tiruppur	395876	2.74	196907	198969	1010	78.7
19	Erode	369483	2.56	184408	185075	1004	72.6
20	Thoothukudi	347895	2.41	172663	175232	1015	86.2
21	Namakkal	345392	2.39	173973	171419	985	74.6
22	Pudukottai	284804	1.97	141428	143376	1014	77.2
23	Krishnagiri	267386	1.85	135474	131912	974	71.5
24	Theni	258200	1.79	129900	128300	988	77.3
25	Ramanathapuram	249008	1.72	125015	123993	992	80.7
26	Dharmapuri	245392	1.70	124706	120686	968	68.5
27	The Nilgiris	235878	1.63	115917	119961	1035	85.2
28	Sivagangai	227746	1.58	113599	114147	1005	79.9
29	Karur	221385	1.53	108809	112576	1035	75.6
30	Ariyalur	176230	1.22	88076	88154	1001	71.3
31	Perambalur	175280	1.21	87440	87840	1005	74.3
32	Kanniyakumari	74249	0.51	36817	37432	1017	91.7
Total		14438445	100	7204692	7233753	-	-

Source: Census of India, 2011, Government of India, New Delhi.

Table 4: Population of the First five SC Groups in Tamil Nadu, 1961 - 2011

S. No.	SC groups	Population of first five SC groups					
		1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
1	Parayan	3,417,264 (56.32)	4,235,576 (57.89)	4,696,736 (63.23)	66,12,033 (61.72)	7,272,651 (61.33)	90,72,368 (62.80)
2	Pallan	1,22,546 (20.22)	1,480,731 (20.24)	1,104,644 (14.87)	20,32,734 (18.97)	2,344,965 (19.77)	24,55,587 (17.01)
3	Chakkiliyan	957,337 (15.78)	12,46,169 (17.03)	1,302,336 (17.53)	16,78,496 (15.66)	1,812,087 (15.28)	20,81,759 (14.42)
4	Kuravan	78,470 (1.29)	76,642 (1.04)	71,065 (0.95)	86,460 (0.80)	103,975 (0.87)	1,40,754 (0.97)
5	Valluvan	72,527 (1.20)	66,744 (0.91)	67,081 (0.90)	73,187 (0.68)	72,724 (0.61)	92,256 (0.64)
Total (in percent)		84.81	97.11	97.48	97.83	97.86	95.87

Source: Various issues of Census of India reports from 1961 to 2011, Government of India, New Delhi.

The details of Scheduled Castes population of the first five Scheduled Caste groups in last five census from 1961 to 2011 are provided in table-4. The information provided in the table-5, clearly stated that the first five Scheduled Caste groups form 95.87 percent of the overall SC population in Tamil Nadu as per 2011 census. The 2011 census states that the overall SC population of Tamil Nadu is 1,44,38,445 (20.0 percent) and they are referred as Dalits in Tamil Nadu.

Literacy in Tamil Nadu

The School education format in Tamil Nadu depicts four levels such as Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary. At the operational level, significant differences are observed in the patterns of schooling across the various Indian states, at the elementary level. Literacy forms the key to socio economic growth and it is regarded to be significant measure for human progress. The literacy rate of India rose to 74.04 percent in 2011 from 12 percent when the British period ended in 1947. Presently, India has the highest illiterate population worldwide and the nation's literacy rate is much below world average of 84%. As per the 2011 census, it is found that 2001– 2011 had seen a decade literacy growth of 9.2 percent, which is less than the earlier decade. Tamil Nadu is one among the states with the highest number of literates in India. The state's performance was considerably well in terms of literacy rise during the decade 2001 – 2011. The 2011 Census states that the Literacy rate in Tamil Nadu has seen an upward surge and is 80.09 percent according to the 2011 population census. The detail of SCs & STs literacy rate is given in table -5.

Table 5: SCs & STs Literacy Rate, 2011

Category	Literacy rate	
	Tamil Nadu	All India average
SC Male	75.6 %	73%
SC Female	58.7%	52.1%
SC Total	66.6%	62.8%
ST Male	55.8%	70.7%
ST Female	39.2%	52.1%
ST Total	48.8%	61.6%

Source: Primary Census Abstract for Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes 2011, Census of India.

Educational Problems of Dalits

The children belong to Dalit castes are made to sit separately and even drink water from separate pitchers in some areas in India. In some areas of Tamil Nadu the Dalits students were forced by the non-Dalits to leave the institution. Those who remained in spite of the harassment were severely beaten resulting in loss of life.

In some parts of India, dalits were forced to polish the shoes of non-Dalits. Education progress reduced the household size does not hold good, educational advancement is not on proper lines since it lacks skilled, technical and professional education. In spite of the grant of educational concession, many households are required to spend on education. The majority of the Dalits were not sending their Children to school due to several factors prevailing in some parts of India even today. Economic Paucity was their main obstacle they wanted especially their elder daughter's to stay at home to take care of younger ones while they were away at work. They were poor and hence could not send their children well dressed every day. Insistence upon production of certificate from previous schools and of certificate were not produced, the children were not admitted. When children refused to go to school then cried their parents and did not pursue the matter further. Due to the low level of economic Conditions, the children's were not going to schools. The poor economic background is the most important reason to drop out in Dalits. Students were not able to understand what was being taught and therefore they left the course. Student took up a job in most cases a low paid one as soon as it was available otherwise there was lack of concentration on studies. But the above mentioned facts are not applicable to the study area because Vellore District is one among the most progressive and leading district in Tamil Nadu.

Conclusion

After 50 years of independence, scheduled castes are undergoing changes in all socio-economic, educational, cultural and political fields both in rural and urban regions of India. Different constitutional amendments have provided rights to scheduled castes. This way, education has evolved to be the only ray of hope for the deprived to develop their socio-economic status.

The study points that majority of the Dalits have benefited from Government policies and they are politically mobilized. Even today, the traditional occupation of them is playing key role among Dalits and close association exists between traditional occupation and present status of Dalits in the study regio. The respondents told that separate reservation policy in education and employment would not affect Dalits unity. Until the Governments reformulate the policy measures for the development of Dalits the gains of the welfare measures will not reach the targeted groups and it will not help to uplift the respondents in the study area. But, to make considerable progress in improving the human development status of Scheduled Castes, developmental organizations should go on exploring diverse levels of dividends and seek national social equality in India.

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