JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL LAUREATES ACADEMY

www.rlaindia.org

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF CASTE ATTITUDES AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AMONG SCHEDULED CASTES IN THE GORAKHPUR REGION

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ABSTRACT

In Indian society, caste is still a major factor in determining how people feel about themselves, what they stand for, and how they may be involved, especially for vulnerable populations. Within the Gorakhpur region of Uttar Pradesh, this study looks at the attitudes and practices of social involvement among Scheduled Caste privileged persons toward caste. Main data for the study came from 260 people who were chosen using a purposive sample method. Results show that many people are proud of their caste identity and are in favor of egalitarian ideals like equality for all castes. Among those who belonged to social and caste-based organizations, the primary motivation was to provide a helping hand in the aftermath of atrocities, with rights advocacy and community empowerment closely behind.

Keywords: Attitudes, Social Participation, Inequality, Social Empowerment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the course of many centuries, the caste system has shaped many aspects of Indian culture, including social interactions, economic possibilities, political engagement, and cultural activities. Caste is a system of social stratification that has been in place since ancient times and has always dictated a person's occupational rank, social standing, and access to resources. Despite the fact that the Indian Constitution did away with untouchability and instituted anti-discrimination measures, caste still plays a role in people's thoughts, actions, and interactions, whether it's obvious or not. Studying caste attitudes and social participation among Scheduled Castes (SCs) is crucial for understanding social change and inclusive development because the SCs have endured social exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization for a long time, making them one of the many social groups impacted by caste hierarchy.

Social stigma, economic hardship, and limited access to education, land ownership, and public spaces have long been experienced by communities that belong to Scheduled Castes, also known as "untouchables" or "Depressed Classes." These communities make up a substantial portion of India's population. Many groups belonging to the Scheduled Castes still encounter discrimination and structural disadvantages that prevent them from fully participating in social, economic, and political life, even though there are constitutional protections, affirmative action measures, and other welfare programs in place. Both the dominant caste's views of SCs and the SCs' own internalized biases contribute to the perpetuation of these inequities, which manifest in material hardship.

When people talk about "caste attitudes," they're referring to their general views on social rank, inter-caste connections, and the hierarchy within and across castes. Institutions like families, schools, churches, community groups, and governments are profoundly impacted by these views in terms of how people engage with one another, what they accept, and what they reject. There is a two-pronged function for Scheduled Caste mindsets. One the one hand, the persistently discriminating attitudes of the ruling classes are a major obstacle to advancement and integration. Conversely, Scheduled Castes are seeing a shift in their internal views as a result of education, political mobilization, and social reform movements; this is reflected in their growing sense of self-awareness, rights, and dignity.

An important sign of social inclusion and empowerment is being actively involved in social activities. As a whole, it means people taking part in community and societal affairs on a social, cultural, economic, and political level. People are able to express themselves, have access to resources, and have an impact on decision-making when they engage in local governance, self-help groups, cooperatives, religious and cultural events, educational institutions, and civil society organizations. By increasing their visibility in society, their collective bargaining power, and their feeling of belonging within the larger social framework, Scheduled Castes experience empowerment via meaningful social involvement.

II.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chahal, Dinesh & Kumar, Raj. (2017) All children have the right to excellent health. When compared to other countries, India has the highest population of children. That a healthy body contains a healthy mind is an accurate statement. The road to success in many areas, including education, athletics, and others, begins with ensuring that children are healthy. Finding out how parents from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes feel about their children's health and care rights was the driving force for this research. Researchers in Jammu and Kashmir surveyed 60 parents—30 dads and 30 moms—from the rural Udhampur district. The research used a self-designed interview schedule. In order to address the health and care requirements of children from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled parents, the research aimed to determine their level of knowledge. For this study, the researcher employed a semi-structured interview schedule that she had developed herself. A straightforward percentage strategy was used for the analysis. The purpose of this qualitative research was to investigate parents' attitudes about comprehension. Most parents offered positive answers, suggesting they are aware of their rights as it pertains to their children's health and care, according to the study's results. Their outlook on children's health and care is optimistic and positive.

Karwal, Bawa. (2021) A common definition of social exclusion is the gradual and multi-faceted breaking of the "social bond" on both an individual and societal level. A person's self-esteem and capacity to accomplish their objectives are both diminished as a result of social exclusion, which hinders their ability to fully participate in a society's normatively mandated activities and denies them access to knowledge, resources, social interaction, and recognition. Discrimination in any

form, including social isolation, poses a danger to any community. Both causes and effects contribute to social isolation. In the context of India, the idea of exclusion is best understood through the lens of caste, the defining social category in Indian culture. Scheduled caste people have traditionally been barred from all parts of life in a highly stratified and hierarchical culture like India. It is crucial to comprehend the oppression that these people endure. No progress toward Ambedkar's ideal of a just India has been made in the seven decades after independence. One of the privileges that members of the scheduled castes have consistently been denied is access to education. Rohith Vemula's sad death highlights the relevance of caste identity in higher education institutions. Vemula was a (dalit) PhD student at Hyderabad Central University who committed himself after being oppressed by the institution's administration. In this research, I will try to explore social exclusion through the lens of caste in India, specifically looking at how students encounter discrimination in higher education institutions based on their caste identification and the "stigma" associated with it. From Erving Goffman's vantage point, the author will seek to comprehend stigma and its operationalization in everyday life.

Pagar, Pratibha & Yadav, Prakash. (2020) The notion of caste is based on values. Caste is usually a good indicator of one's social standing. In India's mixed society, caste is more significant than in capitalist and socialist countries. In a caste system, one's social, political, and economic standing are all heavily influenced by one's caste. There are still many caste-based problems in India today. Among the topics that have recently been discussed is the role of the private sector in employment. The private sector has always been resistant to political party agendas that called for employment reservations there. People belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have lower-level jobs in the private sector. The private sector employment of members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is the focus of this research. The working conditions for SC/STs were likewise the main emphasis. The research uncovered the knowledge of SC/STs on the provisions made available to them and addressed issues related to job participation. A look at the study area's Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes employees in the private sector reveals some interesting facts. Based on the results, certain recommendations are made to enhance the private sector's treatment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Sethuramalingam, V.. (2013) The information used to write this piece came from studies approved by New Delhi's University Grants Commission's Major Research Projects. "Problems and

Performance of Scheduled Tribe Elected Panchayat Presidents in Tamil Nadu" (2011–2013) and "Problems and Performance of Scheduled Caste Elected Women Panchayat Presidents in Tamil Nadu" (2007–2009) were both funded by the UGC, which the author is very grateful to. Women presidents of Tamil Nadu's village panchayats who belong to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes will have their socioeconomic and political backgrounds examined in this research. Additionally, their performance, the amount of support they got from different parts of society, their awareness of the duties and obligations of the village panchayat presidents, and their experiences with caste and gender discrimination have all been highlighted. Women from scheduled castes and tribes (n = 114) and scheduled castes and other scheduled communities (n = 53) in Tamil Nadu participated as elected panchayat presidents. Data collection was carried out using a self-administered interview schedule. The results reveal that scheduled caste and scheduled tribal groups are dominated by middle-aged women and those from nuclear households. Their educational background ranged from elementary school to middle school, and they worked as agricultural laborers and dropouts for the most part. The amount of backing each group receives is almost identical. Scheduled tribespeople endure more severe forms of caste discrimination, while female and male members of these groups face identical forms of gender discrimination. Last but not least, women panchayat presidents from scheduled castes had better performance ratings than those from scheduled tribes.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design.

Sources of Data

Primary data gathered through field surveys form the basis of the study. Publications like as books, journals, government documents, census records, and research papers on Scheduled Castes have served as secondary sources for this background material.

Sample Size

A total of 260 respondents were selected for the study consists of Scheduled Caste privileged

individuals residing in the Gorakhpur region.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents.

Tools of Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured interview schedule/questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The collected data were coded, classified, and tabulated. Statistical tools such as frequency and percentage were used for analysis and interpretation, wherever necessary.

IV.   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Caste of the Respondents

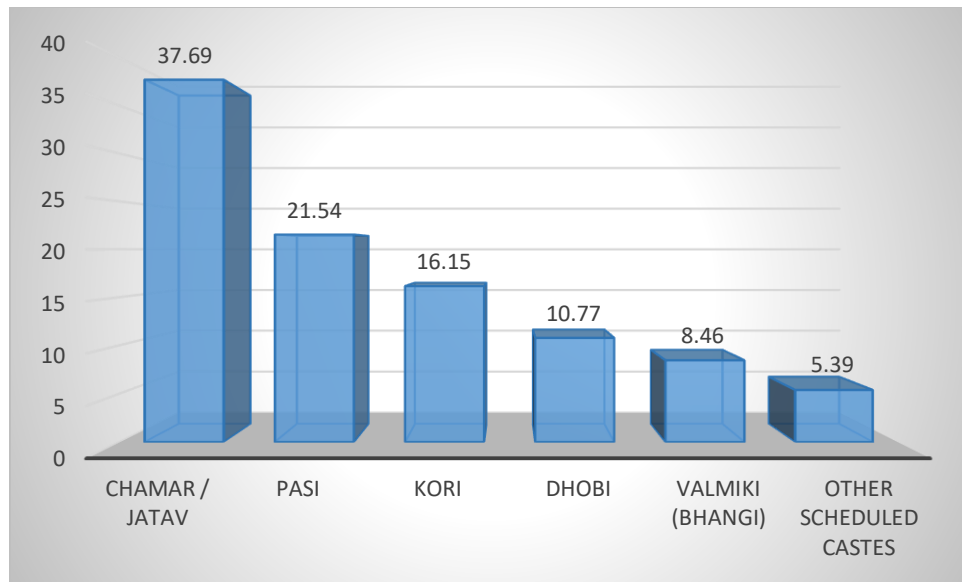| Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Chamar / Jatav	98	37.69
Pasi	56	21.54
Kori	42	16.15
Dhobi	28	10.77
Valmiki (Bhangi)	22	8.46
Other Scheduled Castes	14	5.39
Total	260	100.00

Figure 1: Caste of the Respondents

In the Gorakhpur region, the Chamar/Jatav group makes up the greatest share, accounting for 37.69 percent of the total respondents, according to the caste-wise distribution. Next on the list is the Pasi caste, which is represented by 21.54 percent of the region's Scheduled Caste privileged population. Of the total responders, 16.15% are from the Kori group and 10.77% are from the Dhobi community. Just under 8% of respondents are members of the Valmiki (Bhangi) caste, while 5.3% are members of other Scheduled Castes.

Table 2: Gender of the Respondents

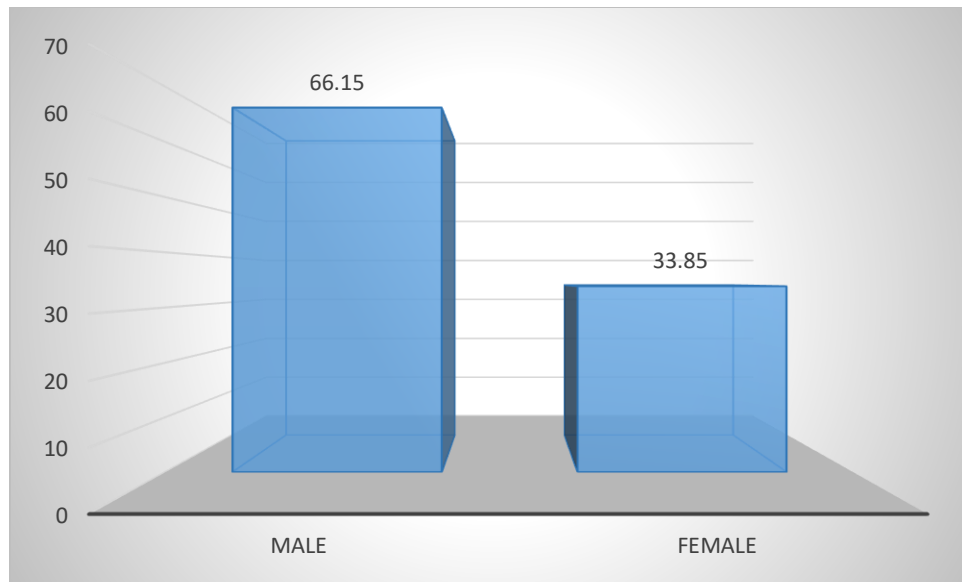| Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Male	172	66.15
Female	88	33.85
Total	260	100.00

Figure 2: Gender of the Respondents

The study's gender distribution is displayed in Table 2. It is clear that men make up the bulk of the sample, with 66.15 percent of the total and 33.85 percent of the females.

Table 3: Attitude of Respondents towards Caste

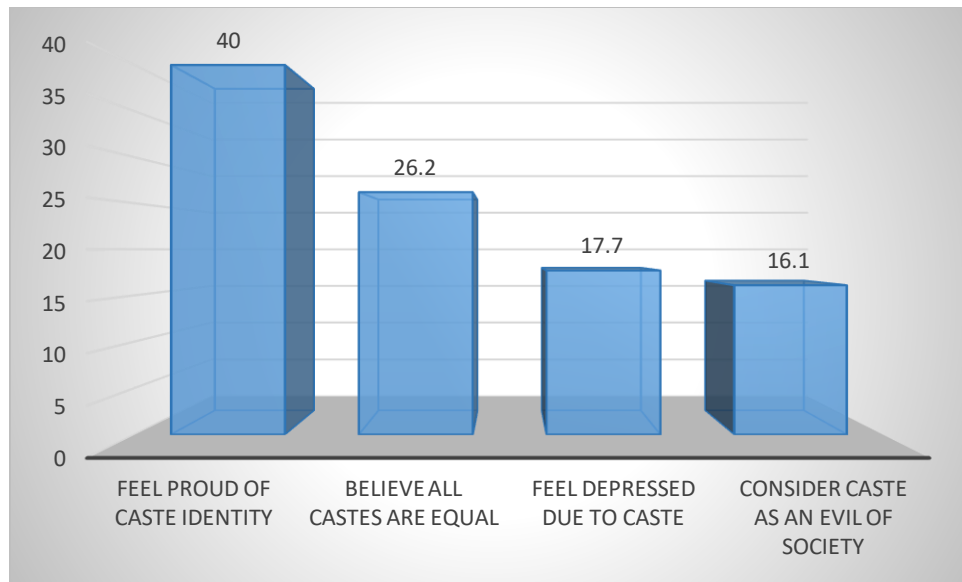| Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Feel Proud of Caste Identity	104	40.0
Believe All Castes are Equal	68	26.2
Feel Depressed due to Caste	46	17.7
Consider Caste as an Evil of Society	42	16.1
Total	260	100.00

Figure 3: Attitude of respondents towards Caste

The respondents' views on caste are shown in Table 3. According to the statistics, 40 percent of people who took the survey expressed pride in their caste identity. Next on the list is the 26.2% who think there is no difference between castes. To be sure, 17.7 percent of people who took the survey said that caste is a major contributor to their depression. Furthermore, 16.1% of people think caste is a social ill.

Table 4: Caste as an Obstacle in Social Life

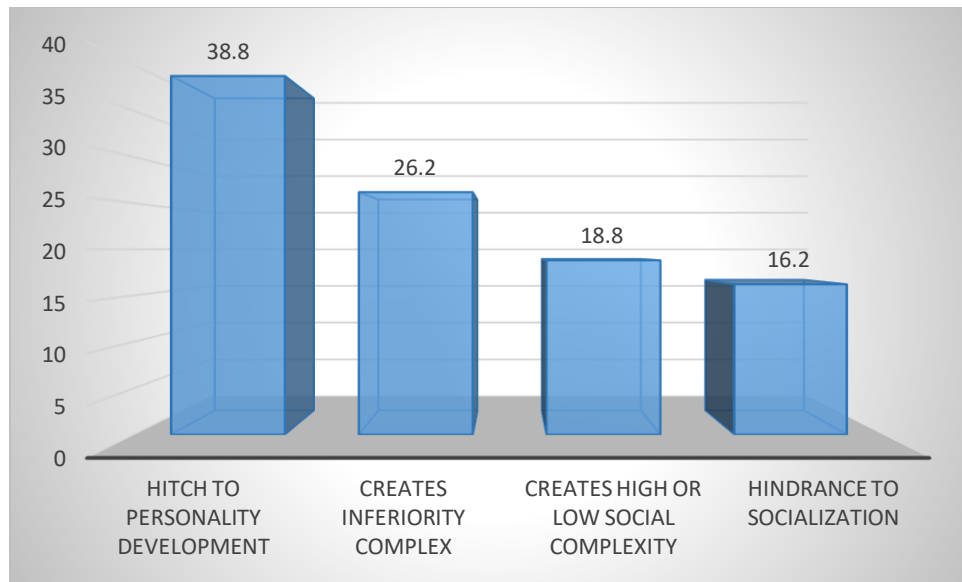| Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Hitch to Personality Development	101	38.8
Creates Inferiority Complex	68	26.2
Creates High or Low Social Complexity	49	18.8
Hindrance to Socialization	42	16.2
Total	260	100.00

Figure 4: Caste as an Obstacle in Social Life

The respondents' views on caste as a social barrier are shown in Table 4. Based on the results, 38.8% of people said that caste was an obstacle to their personal growth. After this, 26.2% of people said that caste makes them feel bad about themselves. In addition, 18.8% of people who took the survey said that caste makes society complicated or not complicated at all. Furthermore, 16.2% of people polled saw caste as an obstacle to interacting with others.

Table 5: Overcoming Caste-based Inequalities

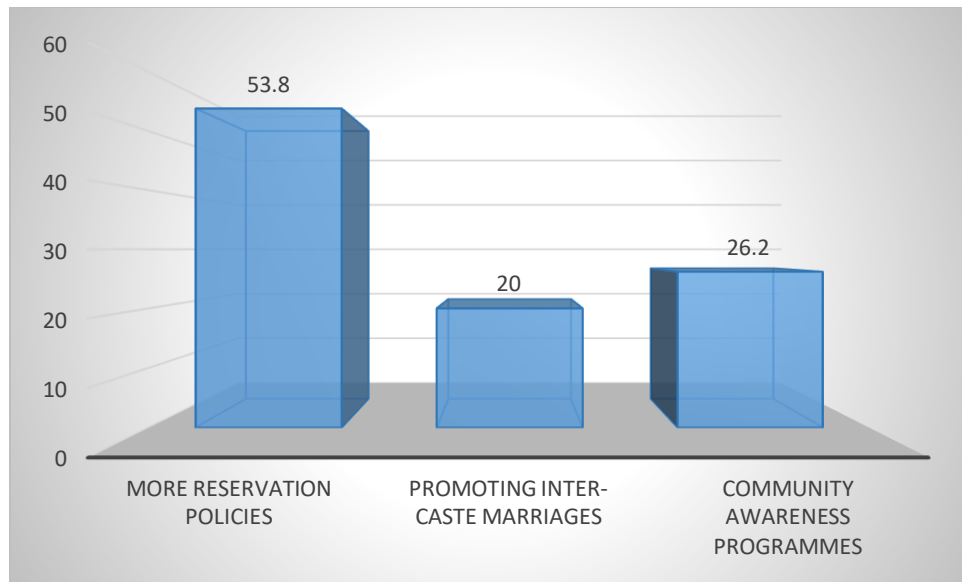| Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
More Reservation Policies	140	53.8
Promoting Inter-Caste Marriages	52	20.0
Community Awareness Programmes	68	26.2
Total	260	100.00

Figure 5: Overcoming Caste-based Inequalities

Table 5 shows how people felt about several ways to end inequality based on caste. According to the statistics, 53.8% of people who took the survey stressed the importance of implementing additional reservation regulations. Then, 26.2% of people who took the survey stressed the significance of community awareness initiatives. Furthermore, twenty percent of those who took the survey said that encouraging marriages between members of different castes would be a good way to break down social barriers and promote integration.

Table 6: Participation of Respondents in Associations

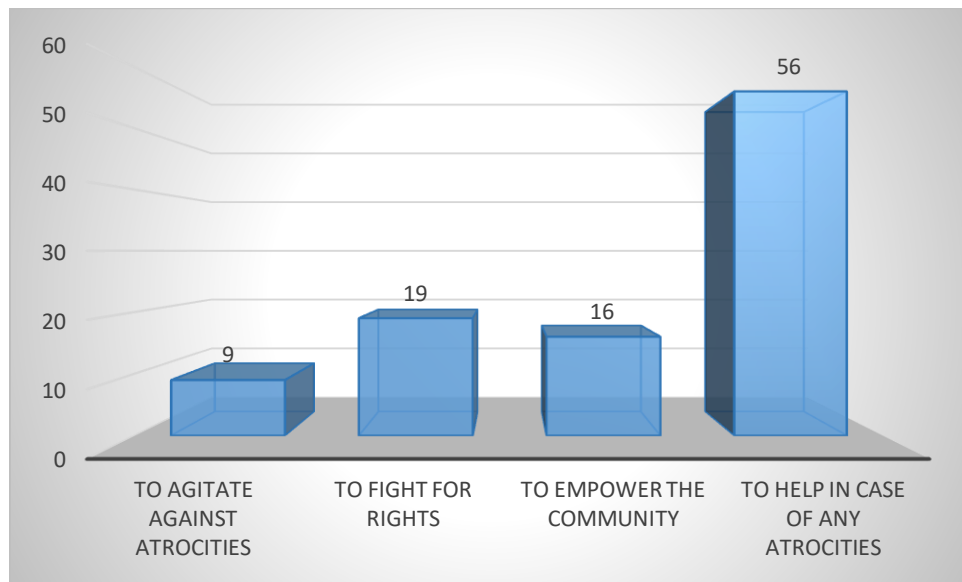| Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
To Agitate Against Atrocities	23	9.0
To Fight for Rights	49	19.0
To Empower the Community	42	16.0
To Help in Case of Any Atrocities	146	56.0
Total	260	100.00

Figure 6: Participation in Associations

Table 6 displays the respondents' association engagement and the reasons behind their involvement. According to the statistics, 56.0% of the people surveyed say they join groups mainly to provide aid in the aftermath of crimes. The next highest percentage of people who are actively fighting for rights is 19.0%. Furthermore, sixteen percent of people who took the survey do it to give back to their local community. Just 9.0% of people actively seek out groups to speak out against massacres.

V.   CONCLUSION

The widespread belief is that caste is a major social barrier that influences community connections, socialization, and the formation of individuals' personalities. Scheduled Caste affluent folks are still fighting back against these injustices by banding together in associations and doing things like helping victims of crimes and fighting for their rights. The persistent importance of social and structural measures in tackling caste-based inequality is demonstrated by the preference for reservation legislation and community awareness programs. Finally, although there has been some success in raising people's consciousness and getting them involved, ending caste-based inequalities will need long-term, concerted work on many fronts, including bolstering policies,

raising social awareness, and empowering grassroots organizations. For the Scheduled Castes in the Gorakhpur region to achieve social justice, equality, and dignity, it is essential to promote collective involvement and strengthen inclusive practices.

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