

Abstract:-

Dalits were faced discriminated, exploited and suppressed due to their lower caste since centuries and Dalit movements were organized at the National and State level to emancipate Dalits by different leaders. After independence, Dalits were assured equal rights and privileges like reservations, etc. Hence, an attempt is made to study whether the Dalits were achieve social change and for this purpose, a survey of total 400 Dalits was made using interview schedule in Gulbarga district of Karnataka. The paper analyzed the role of Dalit organizations in change and development of Dalits in Gulbarga district

Keywords:

Dalit, Movement, Social Change

DALIT MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN GULBARGA DISTRICT



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INTRODUCTION

In the context of traditional Hindu society, Dalit status has often been historically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure, such as any involving leatherwork, butchering, or removal of rubbish, animal carcasses and waste. Dalits work as manual labourers cleaning streets, latrines and sewers. Engaging in these activities was considered to be polluting to the individual and this pollution was considered contagious. Hence, the Dalits were become neglected and alienated from the society.

The terms 'Dalits', 'Shudras', 'Scheduled Castes', 'Mlechhas', 'Chandals', etc are used synonymously to mean Dalits in India. Sociologically, the Dalits can be defined on the basis of three social characteristics (Vivek Kumar, 2009):

1. Their structural location in Indian society
2. Social exclusion they suffer in the society
3. Their unique construction of consciousness, which is anchored in their structural location and social exclusion.

Many of the philosophers and leaders such as Gautama Buddha, Basaveshwar, Mahatma Phule and Shahu Maharaja were organized movements for equality of all the castes. Dr. Ambedkar came on Dalit liberation horizon in 1920s with his testimonies in front of British Committees meant for suggesting ways and means for the Socio-economic development of Dalits. The Dalits had limited electoral rights during 1920-1937 because the electorate system was closely limited by the criteria of property and education (Cohen, 1992). Due to efforts of the leaders at national level, the Dalits are getting equal rights in all the social aspects, still there are reported cases of atrocities, untouchability, injustice, inequality, etc are problems faced by Dalits and to solve these conflicts, many of the organizations have continuously organizing movements.

In Karnataka, such movements were organized by Shyamsundar by through his 'Bhim Sena'. Later, the Karnataka State Dalit Sangharsh Samiti (KSDSS) was formed by Prof. Krishnappa. The KSDSS was divided due to many reasons and from 1996 onwards the KSDSS D. G. Sagar group and the KSDSS of M. Jayanna group maintained their identity.

Whenever there is violation of the equality and rights of Dalits in Karnataka, D.G. Sagar led KSDSS actively organizes movements so as to solve the problems faced by Dalits in Karnataka. As such, Dalits are getting their rights equally and to a greater extent, caste based stratification and discrimination has been considerably reduced. To assess the social change among Dalits as an impact of Dalit movements in Karnataka, the present study was made in Gulbarga district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study was made:

1. To find out whether the Dalits are aware on the movements organized for Dalit emancipation at the national level.
2. To know whether the Dalits have gained the benefits of the social welfare schemes for children's education, financial assistance for self-employment, etc.
3. To see whether there are changes in attitudes of forward castes towards the Dalits due to the equality gained by Dalits in Society.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS:

The present study is made in Gulbarga district and based on survey of 200 Dalits living in villages and 200 Dalits living in towns and Gulbarga city. Gulbarga district is headquarters of Hyderabad-Karnataka backward region. Interview was used to collect the primary data from the respondents. The collected primary data is analyzed and discussed in tables and percentages are calculated to find the differences. The study is limited to 400 Dalits living in Gulbarga district.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

The collected primary data is analyzed and discussed as under.

1. Knowledge about Dalit Movements:

Dalit movements were organized by many philosophers and thinkers such as Gautama Buddha, Basaveshwar, Dr. Ambedkar, Mahatma Phule, Babu Jagjivan Ram, etc in India. Though these leaders are known to almost all the Dalits, the movements organized by these leaders are not known to many of the Dalits. Hence, it was asked to the respondents that whether they know about the movements organized by these leaders and the collected information is tabulated as under.

Table No. 1. Knowledge about Dalit Movements

Particulars	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar	164	82.0	183	91.5	347	86.7
Babu Jagjivan Ram	52	26.0	65	32.5	117	29.2
Buddha, Basaveshwar, Shahu Maharaja & Phule	143	71.5	171	85.5	314	78.5
Any Other	15	7.5	21	10.5	36	9.0
Not Aware	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

It is noted from the above table that many of the respondents are aware about movements organized by more than one philosopher or leader. As stated by all the respondents on their awareness about the Dalit movements at the national level, majority, that is 347 (86.7%) are aware about the movements of Dr. Ambedkar, 117 (29.2%) are aware about the movements of Babu Jagjivan Ram, 314 (78.5%) are aware about the movements made by Gautama Buddha, Basaveshwar, Shahu Maharaja and Mahatma Phule and even 36 (9.0%) of all the respondents are aware about the movements organized by other leaders also. It is highlighted that Dr. Ambedkar, Dr. Jagjivan Ram, Gautama Buddha, Basaveshwar, Shahu Maharaja and Mahatma Phule are still remembered by Dalits due to their contributions for emancipation of Dalits.

2. Belief in Caste System:

Due to caste based inequality, discrimination and even untouchability, many Dalits do not believe in Hindu caste system. Further, as the Government is very particular about the development of the Dalits (SCs), caste is playing significant factor while getting the benefits from social welfare schemes. Due to welfare schemes, many of the Dalits feel proud of their castes and on the other hand, due to prevailing atrocities, social discrimination, etc, many Dalits feel inferior about their castes. In this way, both there are advantages and disadvantages from caste system. Hence, it was asked to the respondents on their belief towards caste system and the collected information is tabulated as under.

Table No. 2. Belief in Caste System

Particulars	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Caste Hierarchy based on Varna	13	6.5	07	3.5	20	5.0
Castes as Grouped by Government	78	39.0	142	71.0	220	55.0
Don't Believe in Caste System	52	26.0	31	15.5	83	20.7
Have Secular Attitude	57	28.5	20	10.0	77	19.2
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Among all the respondents surveyed, majority, that is 220 (55.0%) have belief on castes as grouped by the Government followed by, 83 (20.7%) do not believe in caste system, 77 (19.2%) of the respondents have secular attitudes and only 20 (5.0%) of all the respondents still believes in caste hierarchy based on Varna System. It shows that majority of the respondents have agreed on the castes grouped by the Government so as to provide equal opportunities for all the castes.

3. Benefits Got for Children's Education:

Government has formulated many of the welfare schemes for the education of Dalits. Many of the Dalit children are getting benefits from more than one or two schemes. The collected primary data on the benefits gained by Dalit children (children of respondents) is as under.

Table No. 3. Benefits Got for Children's Education

Particulars	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Lucky to Get Job, but Not Satisfactory	02	1.0	06	3.0	08	2.0
Lucky to Get Job compared to Forward Castes	08	4.0	33	16.5	41	10.2
Lucky to Get Financial Assistance for Business	56	28.0	24	12.0	80	20.0
Not Contented with Welfare Schemes from Govt.	71	35.5	43	21.5	114	28.5
Neither Got Good Job Nor Financial Assistance	63	31.5	94	47.0	157	39.2
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

It is noted from the above table that many of the respondents are getting benefits from more than one social welfare scheme for their children's education and as such, there are multiple responses in the above table. As stated by all the respondents, 264 (66.0%) have gained benefits of reservations in admissions and relaxation in marks, 245 (61.2%) have gained benefits from scholarships for their children's education, 260 (65.0%) have gained the benefits of free books, free uniforms, etc for their children's education, 10 (2.5%) have gained benefits from other schemes and 87 (21.7%) have not gained benefits from any of the schemes.

4. Lucky to Get Job and Financial Assistance for Business:

The Dalits were downtrodden since centuries in India and as such they were deprived from socio-economic status in society. Hence, to ameliorate their conditions, Government formulated many of the schemes and such schemes include reservations, financial assistance for starting business, etc. Now, many Dalits are getting benefits from these schemes and provisions and getting jobs and business opportunities. Such privileges are not available to forward castes now. As such, information was collected that whether the Dalits felt lucky in getting these benefits compared to forward castes and the collected information is presented in the following table.

Table No. 4. Lucky to Get Job and Financial Assistance for Business

Particulars	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Dalit Sangharsh Samiti	46	23.0	51	25.5	97	24.2
Karnataka Chalawadi Mahasabha	13	6.5	09	4.5	22	5.5
Madiga Dandora Horata Samiti	16	8.0	11	5.5	27	6.7
Akhil Bharat Banjara Sewa Sangha	07	3.5	22	11.0	29	7.2
Any Other	55	27.5	36	18.0	91	22.7
None	63	31.5	71	35.5	134	33.5
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Of all the respondents, only 08 (2.0%) have agreed that they are lucky to get job, but not satisfactory, 41 (10.2%) have remarked that they are lucky to get job compared to forward castes, 80 (20.0%) have felt that they are lucky to get financial assistance for their business, 114 (28.5%) of the respondents have felt that they are not contented with the welfare schemes from the government and 157 (39.2%) of the respondents have neither got good job nor financial assistance for their business. Hence, it is clear that, still there is need for more reservations in jobs for Dalits and more schemes of financial assistance for starting business.

5. Assistance Gained from Caste Based Organizations:

There are many organizations and associations, which help the Dalits in different ways such as protecting their interests, preventing atrocities, cooperative credit, fighting against caste based evils, etc. As such, many of the Dalits have gained different types of benefits from these organizations and associations. The assistance gained by the respondents from different caste based organizations is shown as under.

Table No. 5. Assistance Gained from Caste Based Organizations

Particulars	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Dalit Sangharsh Samiti	46	23.0	51	25.5	97	24.2
Karnataka Chalawadi Mahasabha	13	6.5	09	4.5	22	5.5
Madiga Dandora Horata Samiti	16	8.0	11	5.5	27	6.7
Akhil Bharat Banjara Sewa Sangha	07	3.5	22	11.0	29	7.2
Any Other	55	27.5	36	18.0	91	22.7
None	63	31.5	71	35.5	134	33.5
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

As stated by all the respondents, 97 (24.2%) have gained assistance from Dalit Sangharsh Samiti, 22 (5.5%) have gained assistance from Karnataka Chalawadi Mahasabha, 11 (5.5%) have gained assistance from Madiga Dandora Samiti, 29 (7.2%) have gained assistance from Akhil Bharat Banjara Sewa Sangha, 91 (22.7%) have gained assistance from other organizations and associations and 134 (33.5%) have not gained assistance from any other organizations and associations.

6. Attitudes of Forward Castes Towards Dalits:

Earlier, the Dalits were suppressed, alienated and depressed by forward castes due to caste hierarchy that was prevailed. After independence, Constitution of India assured equality for Dalits by many of its provisions and Governments passed legislations to ameliorate the conditions of Dalits. Consequently, Dalits are also well developed economically, but still social status is not prevailed for majority of the Dalits. Dalits have got equality by the Constitution and law. Due to the privileges got by Dalits, many of the forward castes are bitter towards Dalits and few of the forward castes are also given equal status for Dalits in society now. As such, it was asked to the respondents on the attitudes of forward castes towards Dalits and the collected information is tabulated as under.

Table No. 6. Attitudes of Forward Castes Towards Dalits

Particulars	Rural		Urban		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Cordial & Cooperative	28	14.0	43	21.5	71	17.7
Friendly & Social	74	37.0	115	57.5	189	47.2
Hostile & Suppression of SCs	92	46.0	35	17.5	127	31.7
Any Other	06	3.0	07	3.5	13	3.2
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Of all the respondents, 71 (17.7%) have agreed that there are cordial and cooperative relations of the forward castes with Dalits, 189 (47.2%) have felt that there is friendly and social relations of the forward castes towards Dalits, forward castes suppress Dalits due to hostility as stated by 127 (31.7%) of the respondents and 13 (3.2%) have stated the same in other ways. It is observed that in rural areas, still there is hostility, depression and suppression of Dalits by forward castes and in urban areas such attitudes of forward castes towards Dalits are changed.

SUGGESTIONS:

Following suggestions may be made from the present study.

1. Still there is less knowledge about social welfare schemes among Dalits especially in rural areas. Hence, it is suggested to increase awareness of Dalits regarding welfare schemes through mass media, NGOs, etc.
2. It is observed that Dalit communities are divided on the basis of their individual castes. It is suggested to all the communities and castes grouped under Scheduled Caste, to unite and organize, so as to curb social discrimination and gain equality.
3. It is essential on the part of the Government to increase welfare schemes and financial assistance, percentage of job reservations, etc, so that still more Dalits gain equality.

CONCLUSION:

It is observed from the survey that many of the Dalit organizations have identified with their own individual community and only few organizations like Dalit Sangharsh Samiti are struggling overall

development all Dalits irrespective of their individual communities. It is essential for Dalits to unite and organize themselves in caste group rather than identifying their individual communities or castes so as to organize movement for the welfare of all the Dalits. In rural areas, still the major population of Dalits is still backward and unaware about their rights and even discriminated and exploited till now. Dalits must have to get professional and higher education in different subject disciplines, so that they can achieve complete social change.

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