

Research Paper :

Awareness of scheduled caste women about provision and rights targeted at them

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Accepted : February, 2010

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ABSTRACT

Data was collected from 300 scheduled caste women of six villages from Hisar district. Findings revealed that most of the women were neither aware that atrocities against scheduled caste is a crime nor about, punishment to offenders, relief provided by the govt. and their rights. Maximum respondents were aware about the scholarships provided by the government and availed benefits of scholarships in school for fees and books, but did not avail benefits for higher education and job reservation.

Key words : Scheduled caste women, Atrocities, Problems, Awareness

The term caste was used by the British who wanted to rule India efficiently, made lists of Indian communities. They used two terms to describe Indian communities :Castes and Tribes. These lists were used later on by the Indian governments to create lists of communities who were entitled for positive discrimination. The lower classes were listed in three categories. The first category is called Scheduled Castes, the second category as Scheduled Tribes and the third category is called Other Backward Classes. Scheduled Castes include in it communities who were untouchable and suffered from many social restrictions. They were not allowed temple to worship with others, nor water from the same sources. Person of higher castes would not interact with them. Sometimes in villages or in the cities there are violent clashes which are connected to caste tensions. Sometimes the high castes strike the lower castes who dare to uplift their status. Sometimes the lower caste gets back on the higher castes.

The caste identity in India has become a subject of political, social and legal interpretation. Along with the central government, the state governments of India follow a positive discrimination policy based on the population of each state. In many cases the legal system is involved to decide if a certain person is entitled for positive discrimination.

The Haryana Government is fully committed to promote the welfare of scheduled castes and backward classes by implementing various schemes for their socio-economic and educational upliftment. However, full

benefit by the beneficiaries cannot be availed unless people are aware about these schemes. Therefore, present study was conducted to find out the awareness and utilization of various provision and rights by SC families targeted at them.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Hisar District of Haryana state. From Hisar District, six villages having predominately large number of scheduled caste population were selected randomly. From each selected village, fifty SC women were selected randomly, thus making a total sample of 300 women. The data were collected personally through self-structured pre-tested interview schedule. An inventory of various schemes and provisions was developed after consulting literature and experts. Responses were taken as Yes and No as per their awareness or utilization of rights/ schemes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from the present study are presented below:

Awareness of women about provision and rights of scheduled caste population:

As the data reveal, the awareness of SC women about provision and rights given by the government for SC families (Table 1). It is clear from the table that only forty per cent of respondents were aware that untouchability and atrocities towards SC is a crime while

Table 1: Awareness of women about provision and rights of Scheduled Caste population (N=300)

Sr.No.	Statements	Yes	No
1.	Do you know that Untouchability and Atrocities towards SC is a crime :	120 (40.0)	180 (60.0)
2.	Do you know what is covered under atrocities against SC and ST?		
	To force to drink or eat any inedible or obnoxious substance.	85 (28.3)	215 (71.7)
	To cause injury, insult or annoyance by dumping excreta, waste matter, carcasses or any other obnoxious substance in his premises or neighbourhood.	115 (38.3)	185 (61.7)
	Wrongfully occupies or cultivates any land owned by, or allotted to, or notified by any competent authority to be allotted to him transferred.	92 (30.7)	208 (69.3)
	Forces or causes to leave his house, village or other place of residence.	96 (32.0)	204 (68.0)
	Forces or intimidates not to vote or to vote a particular candidate or to vote in a manner other than that provided by law.	76 (25.3)	224 (74.7)
	Intentionally insults or intimidates with intent to humiliate any place with in public view.	98 (32.7)	202 (67.3)
	To assaults or uses force to any woman with intent to dishonour or outrage her modesty.	116 (39.0)	184 (61.0)
	Wrongfully dispossesses from his land or premises or interferes with the enjoyment of his rights over any land, premises or water.	78 (26.0)	222 (74.0)
	To prohibit taking water from common well/water source/enter temple/public place of worship/ community centre etc.	72 (24.0)	228 (76.0)
3.	What is required to be done in case any untouchability and atrocities practice is noticed?		
	The affected person may file a First Information Report (FIR) in the Police Station per provision under Sections 3 to 7 of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989.	118 (39.3)	182 (60.7)
4.	What is the punishment provided for offenders :		
	Imprisonment for a term of six months (minimum).	30 (10.0)	270 (90.0)
	Five years imprisonment and with fine (maximum).	30 (10.0)	270 (90.0)
5.	Do you know what relief is provided to a affected person :		
	Murder of earning member- Rs. 2 lakhs.	56 (18.7)	244 (81.3)
	Murder of non – earning member – Rs. 1 lakh.	26 (8.7)	274 (91.3)
	100% incapacitation – Rs.1 lakh.	34 (11.3)	266 (88.7)
	Sexual exploitation of a woman – Rs.50,000/.	22 (7.3)	278 (92.7)
6.	What are National Overseas Scholarships for SCs and STs Candidates?		
	Students belonging to backward classes in Haryana Government schools get Rs. 75 per month as attendance prize, along with a stipend of Rs. 100.	97 (32.3)	203 (67.7)
	Free school bags to SC students by Haryana Govt.	234 (78.0)	66 (22.0)
	Scholarship scheme for 'single girl child', students in schools.	96 (32.0)	204 (68.0)
	Govt. provided a complete set of text books during their study period in every class.	260 (87.0)	40 (13.0)
	"State Meritorious Incentive Scheme' and "Under Graduate Girls Scholarship Scheme (+2 Level).	83 (27.7)	217 (72.3)
	A bicycle provided to SC girl students in Govt. Colleges who secured 50 per cent marks or above in 10+2.	165 (55.0)	135 (45.0)
	Reservation in different jobs	180 (60.0)	120 (40.0)
	Housing Scheme for Scheduled Castes and De-notified Tribes	187 (62.3)	113 (37.7)
	Indira Gandhi Priya Darshni Vivah Shagun Yojana.	145 (48.3)	155 (51.7)
	Incentives to SCs in the shape of diet and sports kit per student who participates.	43 (14.3)	257 (85.7)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

60 per cent respondents were not aware about it.

Regarding 'What is covered under atrocities against SC and ST?', 39 per cent were aware about atrocity as a crime viz., 'To assault or force any woman with intent to dishonour or outrage her modesty' followed by 'to cause injury, insult or annoyance by dumping excreta, waste matter, carcasses or any other obnoxious substance in

his premises or neighbourhood' (38.3%), 'intentionally insults or intimidates with intent to humiliate any place within public view' (32.7%), 'forces or causes to leave his house, village or other place of residence' (32%), 'Wrongfully dispossesses from his land or premises or interferes with the enjoyment of his rights over any land, premises or water' (30.7%), 'to force to drink or eat any

inedible or obnoxious substance’ (28.3%). Minimum no. of respondents were aware about atrocities such as ‘forces or intimidates not to vote or to vote a particular candidate or to vote in a manner other than that provided by law’ (25.3%) and ‘To take water from common well/ water source/enter to temple/public place of worship/ community centre etc.’ (24%).

As regards filing FIR against atrocity or untouchability, only 39 per cent respondents were aware that they can report in nearby police station under protection of Civil Right Act.

Regarding punishment provided for offenders only ten per cent women were aware about the ‘minimum imprisonment for six months’ and ‘maximum imprisonment for 5 years with fine’.

Further, regarding relief provided to an affected person, majority of respondents (81-92%) were not aware about it, whereas, only 18 per cent respondents aware about the relief provided at the murder of earning member of a family, while very few were aware about other reliefs.

As far as awareness about scholarships for SC and ST candidates, maximum no. of respondents (87% and 78%, respectively) were aware about the ‘Complete set of books during the study period’ and ‘Free school bags’ given by the Haryana govt. followed by ‘Housing Scheme for Scheduled Castes and De-notified Tribes’ (62.3%), ‘Reservation in different jobs’ (60%), ‘A bicycle provided to SC girl students in Govt. Colleges who secured 50 per cent marks or above in 10+2’ (55%), ‘Indra Gandhi Priya Darshni Vivah Shagun Yojna’ (48.3%). ‘Scholarship

scheme for ‘single girl child’, students in schools and ‘Students belonging to backward classes in Haryana government schools get Rs 75 per month as attendance prize, along with a stipend of Rs 100’ (32%) respondents, ‘State Meritorious Incentive Scheme’ and ‘Under Graduate Girls Scholarship Scheme (+2 Level)’ (27.7%). However, few respondents were aware about ‘Incentives for diet and sports kit’ (14.3%).

Benefits availed by Scheduled Caste women provided by the Government :

Table 2 shows benefits availed by SC women provided by the Government. Regarding school fees, books scholarships etc. maximum benefit was availed by Shahpur respondents (94%) whereas in aggregate 85.7 per cent respondents availed these benefits.

Regarding reservation, hostel facility etc. in higher education, in aggregate majority of respondents (91%) did not avail. Village wise data showed that respondents of Kharkhara availed maximum benefit (16%), followed by Mangali (12%), Gabipur (10%), Shahpur (8%), Balawas (6%) while only two per cent respondents from Ludas availed this benefit.

As regards job reservation, ninety two per cent respondents did not avail any reservation quota whereas only 8 per cent respondents availed these benefits. Village wise, maximum respondents from Mangali (16%) availed reservation in job, followed by Shahpur (12%), Kharkhara (8%), Gabipur and Balawas (4%, each) and minimum respondents of Ludas (2%) availed reservation quota for

Table 2: Benefits availed by scheduled caste women provided by the Government (N=300)

Sr. No.	Govt. benefits	Ludas		Shahpur		Mangali		Balawas		Gabipur		Kharkhara		Total respondents	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	School fees, books, scholarship etc.	42 (84.0)	8 (16.0)	47 (94.0)	3 (6.0)	44 (88.0)	6 (12.0)	43 (86.0)	7 (14.0)	40 (80.0)	10 (20.0)	41 (82.0)	9 (18.0)	257 (85.7)	43 (14.3)
2.	Higher education- Reservation, Hostel facility etc.	1 (2.0)	49 (98.0)	4 (8.0)	46 (92.0)	6 (12.0)	44 (88.0)	3 (6.0)	47 (94.0)	5 (10.0)	45 (90.0)	8 (16.0)	42 (84.0)	27 (9.0)	273 (91.0)
3.	Job- reservation, quota etc.	1 (2.0)	48 (96.0)	6 (12.0)	44 (88.0)	8 (16.0)	42 (84.0)	2 (4.0)	48 (96.0)	2 (4.0)	49 (98.0)	4 (8.0)	46 (92.0)	23 (7.7)	277 (92.3)
4.	Welfare schemes – loan, subsidy housing etc.	17 (34.0)	33 (66.0)	13 (26.0)	37 (74.0)	8 (16.0)	42 (84.0)	3 (6.0)	47 (94.0)	8 (16.0)	42 (84.0)	6 (12.0)	44 (88.0)	55 (18.3)	245 (81.7)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

different jobs.

Regarding welfare schemes such as loan, subsidy etc., out of six villages' maximum respondents from Ludas (34%) availed benefits followed by Shahpur (26%), Mangali and Gabipur (16%, each), Kharkhara (12%) and minimum respondents (6%) from Balawas availed these benefits. In aggregate only 18 per cent respondents' availed loan and subsidy, while 82 per cent respondents did not avail any welfare scheme.

It is clear from (Fig. 1) that maximum number of respondents availed benefits of scholarships in school for fees and books followed by welfare schemes. Majority did not avail benefits for higher education and job reservation. It may be due to lack of knowledge.

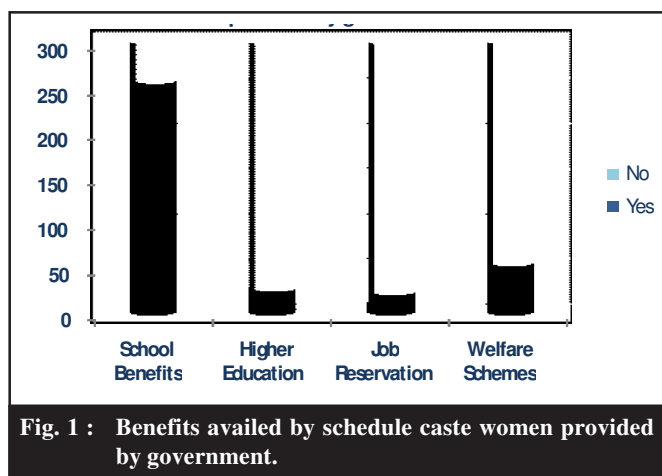


Fig. 1 : Benefits availed by schedule caste women provided by government.

Conclusion:

Findings revealed that most of the women were neither aware that atrocities against SC is a crime nor about punishment to offenders and relief provided by the government. They did not even know that not allowing to fetch water from the common well and worship in a temple is included in atrocities and they can file FIR against offenders who prohibit them to do so. Sundaram

(2000) and Jain (2005) also reported that the crimes and atrocities against SCs and STs, particularly SC women are alarming. The number of crimes against SCs and STs were 38,927 in 1994 and 36,413 in 1996. The crimes committed include rape, murder, arson and kidnapping and abduction. Under two special legislations, mobile courts/ special courts, special squads were set up and special officers were appointed to deal with crimes against SCs and STs. Further, majority were aware about the scholarships provided by the government and findings of present study revealed that though 85 % of SC families had availed educational benefits but majority of them did not avail higher education (91%), job reservation (92.3%) and welfare schemes (81.7%). This may be because of lack of awareness about these schemes or their poor economic status might have restricted them to go for higher education and jobs.

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