

## Role of Law in the Socio-Economic and Educational development about Dalit Women: A Study from Western U.P.

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### Abstract

In India the scheduled caste women is very backward in the society, the constitution of India guarantees equality before the law Article-14 and 17, enjoins the nation to make special provisions for advancement of socially, Economically and educationally backward classes Article 15(4), 16, 19, 23. It also empowers the nation to make provisions for reservation in appointment or posts in favour of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes Article 16(4). The constitution of India also states categorically that untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. Further, the nation is required to promote with special care the educational and economic interest of the Dalit sections in particular the exploitation of scheduled caste Article-46. Reservation the seats in democratic institutions Article-330 and Government services Article-335 is another measure of positive discrimination. It also empowers the national Government to established a scheduled caste commission to investigate into the conditions of the socially and educationally, economically backward classes, Article 340 and to specify the caste to be deemed as scheduled caste Article 341. Five year plans of India the objective has been on educational development and improvement of economic status.

### INTRODUCTION

Hindu society is traditionally divided in to four varna's Brahman, Kshyatriya, Vaishya and Sudra and with their future sub division into castes, the whole system is known as chaturvarna of society. The sudra consist of the lower insocial order. They are therefore called panchama or chandala,namsudra, Avarana, Antyaja etc. But in present century these people came to be known as unclean castes, untouches, depressed castes, protestant Hindu, non conformist Hindus scheduled castes and scheduled tribes both,Caste and sub caste play a vital role in the society within the ideal scheme of social values. Caste is the one major factors associated of traditional occupation. It is sanctioned by religion and direction by Brahman's in to society.But in the past violation of practice of any such traditional occupation used to cause punishment and subsequently severe harassment.

But the untouchables, who came in to being from mixed unions, were outside the varanaorganization and the low givers had no concern for them in specling their caste occupations and hence they had to take up occupations that involved dealing with dirty and unclean occupation or jobs, like seavenging, doing leather work, removing dead cattle from the rural area, removing human excreta and so on and so forth. They were, therefore, looked down upon as a profane group coming in contract with whom was defiling. As aresult they were to live in separatebasti, small cottages outside the village, ritual boundary and fulfilling their purposes themselves and conforming their relations to themselves only. In addition to the practice of unclean and polluting occupations, sustained maintenance of dirty and waste food habit that included consumption of beef, that too carcasses or even meant of many low grade creatures like snakes, monkey drama, drum bearting, honey bee and various insects by such groups reduced their status to such a low level in to society.

**Mahatma JyotiRaoPhule** used the term of Dalit to describe them as the most oppressed and broken victims of the caste ridden society.Though it is also believed that the term was first coined by **Dr. B.R.Ambedkar**. The term Dalit as understood by the Dalit, Panther's, Gail Amvedt,

indicates that the Dalit are those bearing the worst from atrocities, having no power to counter it and thus need to take the support of similar community of people such as scheduled caste, scheduled tribes backward classes, neo Buddhists, the working people. The landless and poor peasants, woman and all those who are exploited socially politically, economically.

**Mahatma Gandhi** advocated caste system as a functional of labour division, rather than as a system of social hierarchy based on unequal status. **Gandhi Ji** organized Harijan Sevak Sangha that devoted for the social upliftment of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes from various view points. Subsequently various religious place and temple entry movement were led by the social activist of the organization and in 1938, Madras legislative passed the removal of civil disabilities Act, which provided that no scheduled caste and scheduled tribes shall be deprived from social or public amenities.

**Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** was a neo Buddhist, also attempted to bring the Dalit's into the main front at par with the higher Hindus some movement for temple entry periods 1920 – 1930 but after 1930 he concentrated his attention on educational improvement of these people by which he thought that the actual goal of his movement could be achieved. In 1929 the British Government arranged three round Table conferences to discuss various issues. One of such issues was to discuss the problems relating to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. **Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar** was nominated as a representative of Dalit to all these conferences. He considered that there was no possibility by which he untouchables would be either assimilated with the Hindu community or be granted equal rights and development to those higher caste Hindus. But so in the second round table conference (August 1932) he demanded a separate electorate for such people but the members could not reach at any satisfactory solution of the problem. British Government announced their decision, What is known as “ Communal Award”. According to this , the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes were granted separate seats assigned to them for a period of twenty years in the provisional assemblies and they were given the right of double vote in which they could elect their own representative and were also entitled to vote for general constituencies.

### **INDIAN CONSTITUTION SAFEGUARDS OF DALIT'S**

After 1947, India was an Independent nation and it created new hopes for the untouchables. **Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar** became the Law Minister in the first central cabinet of freedom of India and such he adorned the seat chairmanship of the draft committee for the Indian constitution. He most important role and guided the 'Draft Constitution' until 26<sup>th</sup> November 1956 and enforced various Articles including Article 17, related to removal of 'untouchability' and thereby ensured same legal rights as in case of any other citizen in the country. But in 1955, Untouchability offence Act (OUA) was passed by Indian government against practice of Untouchability fixing penalties for infractions under the enforcement of religious disabilities, such as non-access to places of worship.

Thus after a long struggle by **Dr. Ambedkar** on the other the legal disabilities of the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes were removed and on equality of all before law was assured to them on par with the caste of Hindus But as the noble efforts of many social reformers as :**Jyotirao Phule, Rama Swami Periyar, Shauji Maharaj, Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram etc.** To bring the Dalit's politically and economically socially at par with the caste of Hindus through eradication of untouchability had been considerably unsuccessful over a long period, at the same time when Article- 17, was introduced the constitution of India also laid down a protective action plan “under Article 46”. Article 398 of the constitution empowers the president of India to appoint scheduled caste and Scheduled tribes, commission to study of the condition and crime on scheduled caste, scheduled tribes submit an annual report to the president of India. Similarly Article like 14, 15, 16, 19, 23, 330, 335, 337, 340, 341 etc, were formulated to protect and safeguards the common interest of the Dalit.

## **METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVE**

Purpose of the present study is intended to assess development by comparing, social, Economical, and educational back ground level of aspiration attitudes on and practice of different social issues, of two generations of Dalit women daughter and their mother's. Consequently, the condition of scheduled caste woman had changed and there is noticeable development in many areas such as occupation, educational and socio-cultural fields.

In case of Western Uttar Pradesh of Meerut Division viz-Meerut, Ghaziabad, MuzaffarNagar, Baghpat, GautamBuddahNagar , the major factors which contribute to social mobility of scheduled castes in general and their women in particular, are improvement in educational level, opportunities for modern occupation development of modern attitude towards social issues etc.

### **Objective:-**

The main objective of this study is

- (i). To find out whether there is social status change among the scheduled caste women.
- (ii) To find out vertical occupation development of youth generation of scheduled caste women.
- (iii) The study of extent Educational improvement among scheduled caste women.
- (iv) To assess the areas where development is clearly pronounced.

**Dr. B.R.Ambedkar** had dealt in detail the logic and reasons behind these measures against discrimination and in particular equal rights, legal safeguards against violation of rights, development and empowering measures of compensate for historical exclusion.

### **Educational Programme For Scheduled Caste Women's**

Keeping the constitutional safeguards in view, Special plan and programmes are framed for educational development of scheduled caste women's. The educational programmes in the central sector include reservation of seats in educational and technical institutions, Pre and post metric scholarship, books, library and hostel facilities, Article 15(4) empowers state government to make reservation of seats of admission of scheduled caste women's in various educational and technical institutions. As per the rule 21% of seats are reserved for the scheduled candidates in educational, technical and medical institutions. They also take the benefit relaxation in age and the minimum qualification marks to get admitted in to the institutions.

As education and employment are of paramount importance in eradicating poverty, government have taken care to provide not only necessary education but also adequate coaching and training facilities for students of scheduled castes to help gain entry in to all India services such as the I.A.S, I.P.S, P.C.S and other allied central and state cadre positions.

### **Scheduled Caste Women's Social Contract With Higher Caste Women's**

With the impact of modern education scheduled castes are in favour of breaking taboos on inter caste relationship in interlining, social visits etc. Educated people always will get chance for close contact with higher caste, thereby reducing the social distance 89.78% of girls had never dared to dine with higher castes, in earlier days. Education wise analysis shows that in earlier days none of the illiterate or the primary educated respondents dined with them. 48% of college educated also never dined with them. Here we can see the intensity of social distance prevalent among lower castes. In those days even Dalit's people are not treated as equals by higher castes. In the case of mothers, none were invited to dine with higher castes when they visited them with impact of modern education debarring of untouchability, more Dalit women are invited to dine

with higher castes hosts. The percentage of inter-dining and social contract increases with the increase of education. In both the mother's and daughter's cases, the above fact is found to be true.

It is found that 50.67% of daughters had dined and social contract with high castes while visiting them. In case of mother's 92% of them said that they are not invited to dine and social contract with higher castes. Education and fundamental rights is the most important factor contributing to the change in interdining and social contract of Dalit's and Higher castes. Table No. 1 proves of this.

**Table No. 1:** Daughter's Education :Interdining& social contract with Higher castes.

Education	Inter dining & Social contract with Higher castes		
	Yes	No	Total
<b>Illiterate</b>	8 (30.77%)	18 (69.23%)	26 (11.55%)
<b>Primary</b>	4 (30.77%)	9 (69.23%)	13 (5.78%)
<b>Junior High School</b>	14 (46.67%)	16 (53.33%)	30 (13.33%)
<b>High School</b>	30 (50.00%)	30 (50.00%)	60 (26.67%)
<b>Intermediate</b>	39 (54.92%)	32 (45.08%)	71 (31.56%)
<b>College</b>	19 (76.00%)	6 (24.00%)	25 (11.11%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b> <b>(50.67%)</b>	<b>111</b> <b>(48.33%)</b>	<b>225</b>

Majority of the illiterates (69.23%) are never invited to dine with high caste while visiting them, while (76%) of college educated said that they are invited to do so. As fundamental rights and education increased social contract and interdining also increased.

The analysis also revealed that none of the illiterates and primary educated mothers are invited to dine with higher castes. The jounior high school and above educated group are invited to do so. When asked whether any high caste friends took part in scheduled caste's social functions and activities it is seen in present times, higher caste friends particiapated in their social functions and activities. All the mother and daughter respondents said that often they has guests from higher castes for their social functions.

In early days there were restrictions on food among castes. It is found that 52% of the daughter respondents said they give cooked food to higher castes in their family. In the case of mother's 31.11% also said 'Yes'. These respondents are highly educated i.e.,High School and above level. The people who said they gave cooked food to high castes meant that the higher caste took part only in tea party, when there are some functions like marriage and birthday etc. They also revealed that most often high caste people are ready to take food from their house, if it is cooked by high caste people. The mother respondents still believed that it is not proper to give food to higher castes prepared by them, because they are untouchables. They also added that the high castes would not like their preparation.

**OCCUPATIONAL AND SOCIAL STATUS AMONG SCHEDULED CASTE’S WOMEN:**

Status in traditional Indian Society was mainly determined by the institutions of family and the caste and in the changing society other social institutions like education and also occupation emerge as the status determinates. The scheduled castes know that they do not enjoy status in society because of their caste and occupation.

In this study, an attempt is made to measure the respondent’s opinion about whether traditional occupation is the main reason for their low status in society. If low paid traditional jobs are the reason for low status improvement in the occupational pattern i.e. performance of modern occupational roles, will definitely contributes to the status improvement. In order to understand our respondent reaction to this , we asked whether they thought that improvement in occupational pattern would help to release them from subservience to the higher castes. It was found that 59.56% of daughters thought that it would help them. The remaining 40.44% did not think so. This might be because they thought that they would not get anywhere near higher status, even though they acquired the same occupation as the higher caster did.

The same question is put to the mother respondent’s and it was found that 39.12% of them thought that improvement in occupational pattern would help to release them from subservience, and 60.88% did not thinkso. They opined that even if they got modern jobs it is so on the basis of the principles of job reservation introduced by the Government which in itself but the stamp of low caste on them. They had strong belief that they are subordinate class and deserved lower status. This belief is inculcated in them through the socialization process. Their strong inferiority complex made them think that they would never get equal status with the high caste in society. These might prevent them from aspiring for modern jobs. These finding supported that inferiority feelings still prevalent among those women contributed to their low rate of occupational mobility. it is clear from Table No.2

**Table No. 2:** Daughter’s age and Belief that Occupational Improvement contributes to Higher status

Daughter’s Age	Whether they think occupational improvement contributes to higher status		
	Yes	No	Total
<b>Below -20</b>	48 (84.21%)	9 (15.79%)	<b>57 (25.33%)</b>
<b>20 - 29</b>	45 (59.22%)	31 (40.78%)	<b>76 (39.78%)</b>
<b>30 – 39</b>	23 (51.11%)	22 (48.89%)	<b>45 (20.00%)</b>
<b>40 – 49</b>	12 (40.00%)	18 (60.00%)	<b>30 (13.33%)</b>
<b>50 +</b>	6 (35.29%)	11 (64.71%)	<b>17 (7.60%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>134 (59.56%)</b>	<b>91 (40.44%)</b>	<b>225</b>

$\chi^2=28.81$

Df = 4

Table value at 0.01 level = 13.2777, C= 0.33

That the younger age group thought that the improvement in occupational pattern would help them to get a release from the subservience to the higher castes. The majority of the below 40



age has agreed to the statement at the same time, and among the above 50 age group, 35.29% has agreed with that. From this it can be inferred that as age increased, the percentage of those who believe the above fact decreased. This might be because that in a caste conscious society, the elder generation of scheduled caste has strong notion about casteism. They believed that only higher castes deserved higher occupation. Even if they succeeding getting higher occupation, this did not add to their status. Chi Square Test supported the relationship between these two variables. (Chi Square Test = 28.81, Degree of freedom 4, Table value at 0.01 = 13.277). Contingency co-efficient of correlation 0.33 also has shown significant relationship.

### **Educational level of Dalit women**

Education has a major role in enabling a person to acquire modern occupation leading to higher economic status, and thus social mobility. Uttar Pradesh is considered to be the less progressive among the Indian states with regard the rate of literacy. Literacy is an important demographic characteristic which is a pointer to the level of advancement of the people. It is all the more significant in the case of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, since most of them are confined to darkness of illiteracy and ignorance for centuries.

It is true that literacy rate of Dalit's in Uttar Pradesh is lesser than the national average. Literacy rate among Dalit's is lower when compared to that of non-Dalit's in various regions of India. This is mainly because they have been prohibited from learning since ages. However in recent times, particularly after independence, their literacy rate has been improving.

Status is the position that a person occupies on the scale or ladder of esteem in the eyes of other members his society. Status dependent on a variety of factors such as birth, wealth, ability, occupation type of education etc. Everybody's status is the outcome of how other people assess his roles and the way he plays them. Statistical indicators such as literacy, education and employment, political participation, age at marriage and after demographic features help to determine the status of women. A rise in literacy and educational attainment of class of people is a reliable indicator of change in their status. In the case of dalit women, the formidable barrier in the way of assessing change in that they have been under constant influences of traditional values and patterns of behaviour of higher castes and education is never considered a must for women who are not expected to play modern roles in the society.

### **MOTIVATION OF SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN'S FOR HIGHER EDUCATION:**

In Western Uttar Pradesh rural areas parents are mostly High School and Intermediate literate, economically poor, Socially depressed, busy day and night in earning their bread and also educational facilities like school are not available in a number of places. So parents have practically no time for thinking about education. As a consequence the students or rural areas do not take interest in education. It was interesting to examine who motivated our respondents for higher education. This question is raised only to those who had above Intermediate education. In the case of mother respondents only two of them are college educated. Of these two, one are self motivated and the other by parents.

### **YOUNGER SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN AND ADVANTAGE OF EDUCATION:**

When asked about their opinion about the advantages of education, they expressed three advantages viz, education helps to get a job, helps to improve status, helps to get a good alliance in marriage. The opinion in this regard is seen to be influenced by age and education. As age increased the desire to achieve status improvement also increased. Both  $\chi^2$  (Chi Square) value and contingency co-efficient showed significant relation. The Table No 3 will make it clear.

**Table No. 3:** Younger scheduled caste womme’s age and advantages of Education.

Younger Scheduled Caste Women’s Age	Advantages of Education			
	Helps to get a jobs	Helps to improve stasus	Helps to get a good marriage alliance	Total
<b>Below -20</b>	40 (70.18%)	10 (17.54%)	7 (12.28%)	<b>57</b> <b>(25.33%)</b>
<b>20 - 29</b>	47 (61.84%)	20 (26.32%)	9 (11.84%)	<b>76</b> <b>(33.78%)</b>
<b>30 – 39</b>	22 (48.89%)	17 (37.78%)	6 (13.33%)	<b>45</b> <b>(20.00%)</b>
<b>40 – 49</b>	13 (43.33%)	15 (50.00%)	2 (6.67%)	<b>30</b> <b>(13.33%)</b>
<b>50 +</b>	3 (17.65%)	11 (64.70%)	3 (17.65%)	<b>17</b> <b>(7.55%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b> <b>(55.56%)</b>	<b>73</b> <b>(32.44%)</b>	<b>27</b> <b>(12.30%)</b>	<b>225</b>

$\chi^2=41.68$

Degree of freedom = 8

Table value at 0.01 level = 20.090, C= 0.395

Above the table it is found that the majority of the younger generation of below 20 age group, (70.18%) said that the most important advantage of education is that it helped them to get a modern job. At the same time, majority of the elder generation of above 50 age group(64.70%) expressed the advantage of education as a status raising factor. It can be noted that the younger age group is having a clear idea about the advantage of education for getting non-traditional jobs. But the elder age group felt that the factor which is responsible for their backwardness is lack of education, so they thought that education could rise their status in society.

**CONCLUSION**

This study also revealed that there is difference in the attitude and opinion among respondent in traditional work and in modern jobs. The scheduled caste older women’s in modern jobs had younger generation in occupation.As against the traditional worker’s , the respondents in modern occupation are satisfied with their income and occupation. In the case of their status in society, both generations are dissatisfied. The respondents in modern jobs also stressed that modern occupation helped them to get more social contacts, which in turn, had decreased so- cial disabilities.

The trend in socio-economic and educational mobility showed that there is Inter-generational vertical change. Analysing these case, we could indentify certain factors contributing to sched- uled caste women’s change of status namely, social, economical and educational changing inter caste relations, change in attitudes and in the level of aspiration. Education modern occupation and welfare schemes, development programme of the Government and constitutional law are important contributing a lot towards changing the socio-economic, educational and cultural attitudes and the life-style of the Dalit’s women.

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