



SOCIAL IN JUSTICE AND PROBLEMS OF SELECTED SC WOMEN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANANTAPUR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract

Women's status is a complex subject. Around the world, it varies in each society and culture. Women's status has, in general, improved gradually in many societies. There has been, however, slow progress on this aspect in some societies/social groups. And this is the case with Dalit women in India. This paper examines the state of social justice, with a special emphasis on socio-psychological development, among Dalit women in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. In the Indian context, the constitution makes envisaged a concept of social justice which involves the establishment of an egalitarian, social order where there was no discrimination among individuals on the basis of caste, religion, race, sex or place of birth. The study found that despite policy measures and global commitments, Dalit women have been struggling for realising social justice. Dalit women are treated as a distinct group and a comprehensive needs-based approach is adopted to address the disadvantages. It has recommended that Dalit women need gender specific policies and programmes to address the issue of multiple deprivations. It also felt that there is a need for strengthening the implementation of existing policies and legislations as well as designing new structured interventions.

Introduction

This paper examines the state of social justice among Dalit women in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. Social justice means availability of equal social opportunities for the full development of human personality to all the people in the society, without any discrimination on the ground of caste, sex or race etc. Therefore, the notion of social justice is associated with social equality and individual rights. The challenge is to establish social justice so that disadvantaged sections may enjoy equal status in socio cultural sphere.

Inclusive growth demands that all social groups have equal access to the services provided by the State and equal opportunity for upward economic and social mobility. Though the constitution of India has enshrined several provisions for Dalit communities to safeguard and promote their socio-economic status in order to bring them back in the mainstream of population, the exclusionary mechanism of entrenched hierarchical social relations have brought differential outcome for the Dalit, especially the women. The oppressions of caste, class, and gender are interlocking, which makes the lives of many Dalit women even more burdensome (Sharma and Anurag, 2020). In all the indicators of human development, for example, literacy and longevity, Dalit women score worse than Dalit men and non-Dalit women.

Objectives and Methodology

The present study is an attempt to understand the Struggle of Scheduled Caste Women for Social Justice in Ananthapuramu District of Andhra Pradesh. Its main objective was to examine the level of attainments of social justice by the Scheduled Caste Women respondents. Social justice dimensions as socio-psychological development were taken for study. These indicators covered were Psychological Empowerment, Satisfaction with life, participation in decision making, human rights awareness, legal rights awareness, women's Value to the Family and valuing women's ideas/suggestions.



Anantapur district, a most backward and drought prone area in the AP, was selected for this study. So, all the Scheduled Caste Women residing in the rural areas of Ananthapuramu constitute the population for the study. The study covered 300 rural Dalit women from across 10 villages of 2 mandals (i.e., Anantapur and Madakasira). In other words, 30 SC women were selected randomly from each of the sample villages. (The mandals having highest proportion of SC women were selected as sample. And five villages from each of the mandals were then selected randomly.)

The empirical evidence on these aspects was provided through available official data and primary survey. The official data sources consulted were: the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), the Census of India, the National Crime Records Bureau, and the National Family Health Survey. The primary data was collected from SC women. For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed and executed. (Survey method was followed to find status of social justice among Dalit women in Anantapur district.) The collected data were tabulated and analyzed.

Analysis and findings

As explained above, the study has emphasised on the dimensions of socio-psychological development with special emphasis on indicators such as Psychological Empowerment, Satisfaction with life, participation in decision making, human rights awareness, legal rights awareness, women’s Value to the Family and valuing women’s ideas/suggestions. On each of these indicators, the respondent’s general perspective was collected in a five-point Likert scale: with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. The respondents were asked to rate each item that determined their socio-psychological development dimension of social justice.

Respondent’s perception on their Psychological Empowerment: Among the respondents, 61 percent of them did not consider that they are psychological empowered (Table 1). This perception was due their lack of confidence to face problems and crisis, problem with access to resources, restrictions and more dependency on other family members regarding decision making and lack of autonomy to freely move anywhere without a companion etc. Over one-fifths of the respondents, however, perceive that they attained psychological empowerment. Just over seven percent respondents were not sure whether they attained psychological empowerment or not.

Table 1: Respondents perception on their Psychological Empowerment

Perception	Number	Percent
1 Strongly disagree	58	26.3
2 Disagree	104	34.7
3 Neither agree nor disagree	22	7.3
4 Agree	79	19.3
5 Strongly agree	37	12.3

Respondent’s perception on their Satisfaction with life: One of the key indicators used for understanding Socio-psychological development of Dalit women was Satisfaction with their life (i.e., standard of living). Over 53 percent of them have stated that they were not satisfied with their life (Table 2). The main reasons for dissatisfaction were: poor health status, lack of access to financial resources, various restrictions on women and more dependency on other family members regarding decision making. Just about 36 percent % of the respondents gave affirmative answer to this question,



meaning that they were satisfied with their standard of living. There were also respondents (10%) who neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

Table 2: Perception on the satisfaction with life

Likert Scale		Number	Percent
1	Strongly disagree	62	20.59
2	Disagree	97	32.33
3	Neither agree nor disagree	30	10.00
4	Agree	78	26.08
5	Strongly agree	33	11.00

Respondents’ perception on their participation in decision making: The respondent’s perception on active participation in decision making is given in (table 3). 62.5 percent of them did not consider that they are actively participating decision making. 21.6 percent respondents gave affirmative answer to this question, meaning that they were actively engaging in decision making process along with men. There were also respondents (6.0%) who neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

Table 3: Perception on the Active participation in decision making

Likert Scale		Number	Percent
1	Strongly disagree	91	30.3
2	Disagree	97	32.3
3	Neither agree nor disagree	18	6.0
4	Agree	65	21.6
5	Strongly agree	29	9.6

Perception on Human rights awareness: The respondents’ perception on their awareness on human rights is given in table 4. Over 64 percent of them felt that they don’t have required awareness and knowledge on human rights. 30.6 percent respondents gave affirmative answer to this question. There were also respondents (5%) who neither agree nor disagree with this statement.

Table 4: Perception on human rights awareness

Likert Scale		Number	Percent
1	Strongly disagree	92	30.6
2	Disagree	103	34.3
3	Neither agree nor disagree	15	5.0
4	Agree	48	16.1
5	Strongly agree	42	14.0

Perception on Legal rights awareness: The respondents’ perception on their awareness on legal rights is given in table 5. Over 70 percent of them felt that they don’t have required awareness and knowledge on legal rights. 24 percent respondents gave affirmative answer to this question. There were also respondents (5.6%) who neither agree nor disagree with this statement.



Table 5: Respondent’s perception in regard to their Legal rights awareness

Likert Scale		Number	Percent
1	Strongly disagree	88	29.2
2	Disagree	124	41.2
3	Neither agree nor disagree	17	5.6
4	Agree	54	18.0
5	Strongly agree	18	6.0

Women’s Value to the Family: When asked whether they feel themselves valuable in the family and society, about 32.6% of the respondents gave affirmative response (Table 6). Another 61.6% of them felt that they are not considered valuable for the society or their family. They face issues such as unequal treatment of women in the family and outer world, no better access to education, a rigid mind set of family to expect only a newborn boy child, etc. Less than 6% of them were neither in agreement or disagreement on this aspect.

Table 6: Respondent’s perception in regard their value in family

Likert Scale		Number	Percent
1	Strongly disagree	104	34.6
2	Disagree	81	27
3	Neither agree nor disagree	17	5.8
4	Agree	64	21.4
5	Strongly agree	34	11.2

Whether women’s ideas/suggestions are valued: When asked whether their ideas and suggestions are valued in the family and society, 22.5% of the respondents gave affirmative response (Table 7). Another 69.8% of them felt that they are not considered valuable for the society or their family. They face issues such as unequal treatment of women in the family and outer world, no better access to education, a rigid mind set of family to expect only a newborn boy child, etc. Less than 8% of them were neither in agreement or disagreement on this aspect.

Table 7: Respondent’s perception on valuing their ideas /suggestions

Likert Scale		Number	Percent
1	Strongly disagree	115	38.4
2	Disagree	94	31.4
3	Neither agree nor disagree	23	7.7
4	Agree	50	16.7
5	Strongly agree	17	5.8

Conclusions and Recommendations

The caste system, patriarchy and class difference in India is a reality of the country. In India, women cannot be treated as a ‘single’ unit. The plurality of ‘woman’ as a category, and the need to address the diversity within this category, including how different groups of women have different access to citizenship and other rights, different identities, and different problems, is now recognized all over the world as an important issue in feminism (Nidhi Sabharwal and Wandana, 2015).



It is evident from the above analysis that 31 percent of women consider that they were psychological empowered. On the question whether they were satisfied with their life, only 37 percent of women gave affirmative answer. The percentage of respondents consider that they were actively participating decision making was 31.2 percent.

The proportion of respondents reported having awareness and knowledge on human rights and legal rights were 30 percent and 24 percent respectively. When asked whether they feel themselves valuable in the family and society, about 32.6% of the respondents gave affirmative response. Above all, women ideas and suggestions are valued in the family and society only in the case of 22.5% of the respondents. Thus, the analysis has indicated that there is a slow rate of improvement on a majority of indicators for Dalit women.

Despite policy measures and global commitments, Dalit women have been struggling for realising social justice. The problem of Dalit women is distinct and unique in many ways because they suffer from the triple burden of economic deprivation, patriarchy, and caste- and untouchability-based discrimination– all of which cannot be removed merely by applying the laws. The study recommended the following:

- Dalit women are treated as a distinct group and a comprehensive needs-based approach is adopted to address the disadvantages.
- Dalit women need gender specific policies and programmes to address the issue of multiple deprivations.
- Separate allocations are to be made for addressing concerns of Dalit women.
- There is a need for strengthening the implementation of existing policies and legislations as well as designing new structured interventions.

References

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