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## SCHEDULED CASTE FARMERS: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY



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### ABSTRACT:

Scheduled castes are backward castes in Hyderabad-Karnataka region. As such, farmers belonged to scheduled castes are poor and facing many of the social problems in society. To explore the problems of scheduled caste farmers, the present interview based survey was made in Aland taluka of Kalaburagi district. Totally 400 scheduled caste farmers were surveyed to collect the primary data. It is highlighted from the study that the scheduled caste farmers are facing many problems due to their castes and poverty. Though welfare schemes are formulated for their development, the farmers were not gained benefits from these schemes and lack of awareness is the major reasons for not gaining such benefits. Hence, it is essential to increase awareness about farmers' and scheduled caste welfare schemes among the scheduled caste farmers.

### KEYWORDS

*Scheduled Caste Farmers , Sociological Study , social and economic privileges.*

## INTRODUCTION:

The term Scheduled Castes refers to a list of castes prepared in 1935 by the British Government in India. But during the ancient period and medieval period they were known as 'Panchamas' (fifth group), 'Chandalas' (heathens or outcastes) and 'Antyajas' (lowest class) and during the British period they came to be called first as 'Depressed classes' (dalit jatis) or Exterior Castes (avarnas), later as Harijans (Children of God) as 'Scheduled Castes' (castes listed in the Government Schedule). An examination of how these terms appeared at different periods of history reveals how the so-called untouchables were subject to various types of humiliations before they came to enjoy the same social and economic privileges along with the other castes in India (Kamble, 1995).

Shanin, defines that "The peasantry consists of small agriculture producers who, with the help of simple equipment and the labour of their families, produce mainly for their own consumption and for the fulfillment of obligations to the holders of political and for economic power" (Guruswamy, 1993).

The study is focused on the conditions of Scheduled Castes like, Holeya, Madiga, Chamar, Samagar, Lambani, etc. These castes are depressed and discriminated by the upper castes and the untouchability in past six decades. The constitution of India has been provided constitutional provisions for the welfare and development of depressed class farmers or Scheduled Castes farmers. But still they are illiterate, negligent, poor, suppressed, depressed in society and discriminated by their castes in the district. To sum up, their position is vulnerable in the society. Hence, the present study is made to assess the social conditions of the scheduled caste farmers in Aland taluka of Kalaburagi district.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study is made:

- ▲ To study the age of the scheduled caste farmers;
- ▲ To look into the social background of scheduled caste farmers in Aland taluka of Kalaburagi district; and
- ▲ To know whether the scheduled caste farmers have gained benefits from social welfare schemes.

## Scope and Methodology:

The present study is made in Aland taluka of Kalaburagi district located in Karnataka and is recognized as backward region under Section 371(J) of the Indian Constitution. The present study is made on the basis of sample survey of total 400 scheduled caste farmers. The main castes or communities of these farmers include Holeya, Madiga, Banjara, Mochi, Chamar, Waddar, etc. Interview schedule was used to collect the primary data. The collected primary data is analyzed and discussed as under.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

### 1. Age-wise Distribution of Respondents:

Age of the respondents plays a significant role in the knowledge and awareness about socio-economic, educational, religious and such other aspects. Further, it also helps to know about the knowledge and expertise in their occupation. Hence, the information collected on the age of the respondents is presented in the following table.

Table No. 1. Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Below 25 Years	58	14.5
26 to 40 Years	123	30.7
41 to 60 Years	187	46.7
Above 60 Years	32	8.0
Total	400	100

Age of the respondents revealed that 58 (14.5%) are of below 25 years, 123 (30.7%) of the respondents are between the age of 26 to 40 years followed by, 187 (46.7%) are between the age group of 41 to 60 years, and 32 (8.0%) are of above 60 years. To collect information from all the age groups, the respondents of different age groups were surveyed.

## 2. Marital Status:

Information on the marital status helps to analyze their family background and social culture. Hence, collected information on the marital status of the respondents is shown in the following table.

Table No. 2. Marital Status

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Unmarried	11	2.7
Married and Living with Spouse	367	91.7
Widower/ Widow	14	3.5
Divorcee/ Alienated/ Separated	08	2.0
Total	400	100

Marital status of the respondents revealed that 11 (2.7%) are unmarried, 367 (91.7%) are married and living with spouse, followed by 14 (3.5%) are widower/widow and 08 (2.0%) are divorcees/alienated/separated.

## 3. Work Experience in Agricultural Activities:

Agriculture is hereditary occupation for many of the respondents and for few of the respondents, it is of recent one. For those respondents, whom the Government has given land, the agricultural occupation is recent one and for those who owned land since immemorial days, they have hereditary occupation. The work experience in agricultural activities of the respondents is shown in the following table.

Table No. 3. Work Experience in Agricultural Activities

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Below 05 Years	43	10.7
6 to 10 Years	118	29.5
11 to 20 Years	166	41.5
More than 20 Years	73	18.2
Total	400	100

The work experience of all the respondents in agriculture shows that, 43 (10.7%) of the respondents is less than 05 years respectively, 118 (29.5%) have experience between 6 to 10 years, majority that is 166 (41.5%) have experience between 11 to 20 years followed by, 73 (18.2%) have work experience of more than 20 years.

#### 4. Faced Worst Situations Due to Caste:

The depressed class farmers are discriminated alienated and treated unequal in the society since immemorial days, even though legislations have been already passed by the government to curb such practices. Hence, it was asked to the respondents that whether they have faced any of such worst situations in their life and the collected information is shown as under.

Table No. 4. Faced Worst Situations Due to Caste

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Social Discrimination or Alienation	132	33.0
Restrictions to Enter Public Places	83	20.7
Lower Treatment at Religious, Cultural and Public Functions	164	41.0
Atrocities from Forward Caste People	92	23.0
Total	400	100

It is observed from the above table that, a few of the respondents have faced more than one type of bad situations and a few of the respondents have not at all faced such bad situations in the society due to their caste. Of all the respondents, 132 (33.0%) have experienced social discrimination or alienation, 83 (20.7%) have faced restrictions to enter into public places, 164 (41.0%) have faced lower treatment at religious, cultural and public functions, 92 (23.0%) have faced atrocities from forward caste people. It is highlighted that even though social discrimination and lower treatment of the scheduled castes have banned long back, still it exists in the society as majority have faced such situations in their life.

#### 5. General Problems Faced in the Community or Caste:

Apart from economic problems, the depressed class farmers are deprived from different aspects and privileges. They include lack of preference in education, social aspects, welfare services, etc. These are the general problems faced by the depressed class farmers in the community or caste and the following are general problems faced by the respondents in the society.

Table No. 5. General Problems Faced in the Community or Caste

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Atrocities and Harassment	92	23.0
Untouchability & Social Discrimination	141	35.2
Social Injustice/ Inequality	182	45.5
Conflicts / Frictions between Communal Groups	66	16.5
Any Other	-	-
Total	400	100



It is noted that the depressed class farmers are faced with general problems of more than one type. Particularly, of all the respondents, 92 (23.0%) have faced atrocities and harassment, 141 (35.2%) have faced untouchability and social discrimination, 182 (45.5%) have faced social injustice and inequality, 66 (16.5%) have faced conflicts and frictions between communal groups.

#### 6. Benefits gained from Central Government Schemes and Programmes:

As discussed above, majority of the respondents are aware about the central government welfare schemes and programmes formulated for the welfare of the depressed class farmers. The benefit gained from the schemes by these respondents is shown as under.

Table No. 6. Benefits Gained from Central Government Schemes and Programmes

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
ATMA Scheme	15	3.7
National Agricultural Insurance Scheme	32	8.0
Grameen Bhandar Scheme	21	5.2
Term Loan Scheme	112	28.0
Micro Credit Finance Scheme	42	10.5
Mahila Samriddhi Yojana	43	10.2
Mahila Kisan Yojana	56	14.0
Skill Development Training Programmes	18	4.5
Any other	--	--
None	234	58.5
Total	400	100

It is observed that only few of the respondents have gained benefits from central government welfare schemes and a few of the respondents have also gained benefits from more than one scheme. Particularly, 15 (3.7%) of the respondents have got the benefits from ATMA Scheme, 32 (8.0%) have gained benefits from National Agricultural Insurance Scheme, 21 (5.2%) have gained benefits from Grameen Bhandar Scheme, 112 (28.0%) have gained benefits from Term Loan Scheme, 42 (10.5%) have gained benefits from Micro Credit Finance Scheme, 43 (10.2%) have gained benefits from Mahila Samriddhi Yojana, 56 (14.0%) have got the benefits from Mahila Kisan Yojana, 18 (4.5%) have gained benefits from Skill Development Training Programme and surprisingly, though aware about the schemes, 234 (58.5%) of the respondents have not gained benefits from any of the above schemes.

#### 7. Benefits gained from State Government Schemes and Programmes:

As discussed above, a great majority of the respondents are aware about the State Government Schemes and Programmes formulated for the welfare of depressed class farmers and the benefits gained from these schemes by these respondents is shown in the following table.

Table No. 7. Benefits Gained from State Government Schemes and Programmes

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Self –Employment	112	28.0
Land Ownership Scheme	43	10.7
Ganga Kalyana Scheme	172	43.0
Safayee Karmachari Rehabilitation Scheme	--	--
Any other	36	9.0
None	111	27.7
Total	400	100

It is noted that only few of the respondents have gained benefits from state government welfare schemes and a few of the respondents have also gained benefits from more than one scheme. Particularly, 112 (28.0%) have gained benefits from self-employment, 43 (10.7%) have gained benefits from land ownership scheme, 172 (43.0%) have gained benefits from Ganga Kalyana Scheme and 36 (9.0%) have gained benefits from other schemes. Further, 111 (27.7%) of all the respondents have not gained any benefits from any of the state government schemes.

#### CONCLUSION:

It is observed from the above discussion that, many of the scheduled caste farmers are facing many problems in society. Further, though many of the social welfare schemes were formulated by the Government, only few of the scheduled caste farmers were taken benefits from these schemes. Lack of awareness about these schemes among the scheduled castes is the main reasons for the same. Hence, it is essential to increase awareness of scheduled caste farmers to avail the facilities and benefits from social welfare schemes.

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