



## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF DALIT WOMEN IN COASTAL ANDHRA: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

**K. Suvatha\* Dr.K. Dhanalakshmi\*\***

*\*Research Scholar, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur.*

*\*\*Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur.*

### **Abstract**

*Dalit women have very limited access to and control over land, which in turn leads to food insecurity. They also lack access to water and other communal resources, when those resources are in non-Dalit areas, the women are attacked for attempting to use them. When it comes to infrastructure and resources in Dalit communities, the government often overlooks those areas and does not allocate the necessary funds to ensure equality of access to resources. Further, women lack of employment options and other livelihood opportunities, more so than their male Dalit counterparts. The present paper highlights that the social awareness of Dalit women in Coastal region of Andhra Pradesh state.*

**Key Words:** *Dalit Women, Social Dimension, Education, Constitutional Safeguards.*

### **Introduction**

The Dalits are considered not only impure in terms of their occupations, their very existence, their dwellings, their movements and even their fall of shadow creates a state of impurity among all the upper castes throughout the country. As a consequence, these castes have remained socially, economically, culturally and educationally backward for several centuries. Due to the inhuman and ruthless practice of untouchability by caste Hindus, Dalits thought that unless they desert that exploitative order, there was no liberation for them. Then they started movement against the inhuman and antagonistic baseless caste system. The protest movements took strong roots in the nineteenth century, which is mostly concentrated on social issues than economic issues as social discrimination is most important. The movements, which were taken up related to the economic issues may not be neglectable, it also created awareness among the common people about the economic inequalities and the importance of land in the agrarian society.

In India, Dalit women face serious challenges in varying out their multiple productive and reproductive roles within their families and communities, in part due to lack of rural infrastructure and lack of access to essential goods and services. They have the highest poverty levels, are landless and depend on the dominant caste for employment, wages and loans. Their access to resources or even their efforts to access them are often met with violence.

### **Need for the present study**

It is clearly understanding after collected raw-material and constructed review literature from various individuals, institutions by different dimensions of Dalit women identifying them as one of the focus group for development of them. Some of studies were taken up on political dimensions and Dalit women participation. But there is clearly defined and focused on particularly empirical studies stress on socio-economic conditions and awareness of selected Dalit women population at carried at micro level. Here, the researcher has taken up an innovatively and specifically Coastal Andhra Dalit women population socio awareness on various issues in select study area.



### Objectives

1. To know the Dalit status in India
2. To analyse the awareness of Dalit women on various issues.

### Sample selection

In coastal region have nine districts -more than 17 per cent of the populations were belong to Dalit. The study focusing on proportionate of Dalit in total population among the select district wise classification of Dalit population in coastal Andhra region. It can be shown that among total population of Prakasam (33,97,448) district 23.19 per cent (7,87,861) of the population were belong to Dalit and it is the highest Dalit have been living, second highest Dalit have been living in S.P.S Nellore and it is found 22.49 per cent, and finally west Godavari having 8,23,545 Dalit population with 20.16 per cent with third place among the nine district respectively. It is surprisingly noticed that single digit per cent of Dalit have been living in two districts namely Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam. And also Vijayanagaram were also selected in the context of lowest Dalit population in three districts. Altogether, three districts were highest population and three districts where lowest population of Dalit were selected for analysis purpose. After that, each district 50 Dalit women sample were selected. Altogether, six district and 300 sample respondents were selected in coastal region districts of Andhra Pradesh state.

### Data collection

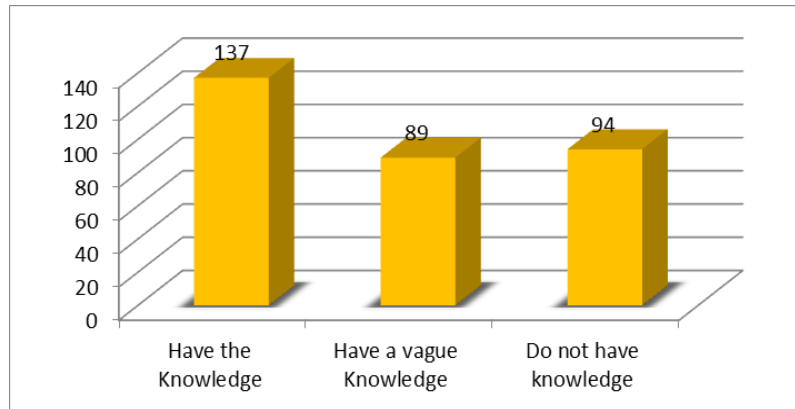
The study is made based on the data collected both from primary and secondary sources. Primary data have been collected by administering an Interview-Schedule designed exclusively for this purpose among the Dalit women respondents in the study area. Secondary data have been collected from books, Research Journals, Manuals, reports of various Committees, published and unpublished Ph.D. theses and websites. However, personal interviews were also made with the Project Director of DRDA, DWAMA, Deputy Director, Dalit Finance Corporation, Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department in respective districts in Coastal area of Andhra Pradesh. The personal and professional experience of the researcher who has had hold many District and State level positions and actively involved in policy-making and implementing institutions further added necessary inputs for analysis and also for drawing meaningful inferences.

### Results

**Table 1, Knowledge about reservations in all political aspects by the Dalit women**

S.No	Knowledge	No. of households	Percentage to total
1	Have the Knowledge	177	59.00
2	Have a vague Knowledge	89	29.67
3	Do not have knowledge	34	11.33
	Total	300	100

Source: Field Survey



Reservation of seats for Dalit and Dalit women in the local bodies like Village Panchayats, Mandal, District levels, Legislative Assemblies of the State and in Parliament have been provided in the constitution and not less than one –third of the total number of seats are reserved for women even among the seats served for Dalits since Independence. In order to know whether the selected Dalit women respondents have the knowledge about such provisions, a question was set and asked them to elicit their knowledge. The responses are shown in the Table 1 above. It is clear from Table that 177 respondents out of 300 representing 59 per cent have stated that they have the knowledge, 29.67 per cent have elicited that they have the vague knowledge and 11.33 per cent of the respondents have said that don't have any knowledge. On the whole, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents in the study have the knowledge about the reservation of seats in the local, district, state and national level bodies for the Dalits. It shows that still 12 per cent respondents purely struggling for the livelihood without bothering other activities.

**Table 2, Level of awareness on constitutional safeguard by the Dalit women**

S. No	Safeguards (assigned weights )	Aware of (3)	Have a vague idea (2)	Not aware of (1)	Weighted average
1	Awareness about prevention of Atrocities Act which is framed to safeguard Dalit from civil practices followed in the society	54 (18.00)	35 (11.67)	211 (70.33)	1.47
2	Awareness about the social safeguards to protect evil practices of Untouchability	62 (20.67)	50 (16.66)	188 (62.67)	1.58
3	Awareness about Bonded Labour-Abolition Act	38 (12.66)	45 (15.00)	217 (72.33)	1.40
4	Awareness about Child Labour Act	35 (11.66)	45 (15.00)	220 (73.33)	1.38
5	Awareness about institutional provisions and Safeguards like National and State level SC Commission for Dalit to protect Dalit from social injustice and all forms of exploitations	80 (26.67)	45 (15.00)	175 (58.33)	1.68
Overall average response					1.51

Source: Field Survey



Though India is celebrating its 71 years of Independence and achieved tremendous progress in science, technology and communications, still it is unfortunate to observe that evil practices like untouchability, atrocities, bonded labour, ill treatment festive occasions, two- glasses systems in hotels are prevailed. In order to protect and safeguard the Dalit communities from all such evil practices and exploitations many constitutions safeguard and preventive measures are incorporated in the Indian constitutions. Therefore, an attempt is made to know to what extent the select Dalit women respondents in Coastal Districts have an awareness about such constitutional safeguards. The details ascertained from the respondents are shown in Table 2. It is very disheartening to note that majority of the respondents are not aware about important constitutional safeguard under Atrocities Act, protection from evil practices likes untouchability, bonded and child labour act, and institutional measures like National and State level SC commissions. However, only 18 per cent of the select respondents are aware of Atrocities Act, 20.67 per cent are known about Bonded labour act and Child labour act by 11.66 per cent of the respondents. Similarly, only 26.67 per cent of the respondents under the study are aware of about the existence SC Commission which are working for the cause of Dalits.

The overall average response is 1.51 which is arrived by calculating the weighted average about the level of awareness on constitutional safeguards among the select Dalit women respondents. The average figures bring us to infer that the level of awareness in this regard is ranging in between vague idea to not aware of.

**Table 3, Awareness about policy initiatives in the form of Welfare and Development for Dalits**

S.No	Policy initiatives on Welfare and Development  (Weights assigned)	Opinion			Weighted average
		Aware of (3)	Have a vague idea (2)	Not aware of (1)	
1	Awareness about Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana	43 (14.33)	40 (13.33)	217 (72.33)	1.42
2	Awareness about Dr.Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana for the construction of Hostels for Dalits	155 (51.66)	30 (10.00)	115 (38.33)	2.13
3	Awareness about Schemes for upgradation of Merit of Dalits students for attending remedial coaching's	70 (23.33)	20 (6.67)	200 (70.00)	1.50
4	Awareness about various Social Welfare schemes undertaken by the State and central Government	286 (95.33)	12 (04.00)	02 (0.66)	2.94
5	Awareness about Dr. B.R. Amnbedkar International centre for Social Justice	36 (12.00)	20 (6.67)	244 (81.33)	1.30
6	Awareness about the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment of Central and Ministry of Social Welfare for the welfare & development of Dalits	152 (50.66)	30 (10.00)	118 (39.33)	2.11
Overall average response					1.90

Source: Field Survey



In order to develop Dalits on par with other communities many welfare & developmental efforts in the form of schemes, programmes, centres, remedial coaching programmes a separate Minister both at National and state level have been proposed and being implemented. In order to assess and gauge to what extent the selected Dalit women respondents in Coastal Andhra are aware and acquainted with such institutions and their initiatives for the development of Dalits. The data collected on such schemes, programmes and institutional efforts from the select Dalit women respondents are shown in table 3. It is evident from the Table that majority of the respondents are unaware of the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (72.33 per cent) schemes for up gradation of merit of Dalit students for attending remedial coaching the existence and functioning of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Centre for Social Justice (81.33 per cent). Further it is observed that 95.33 per cent of the respondents are aware about various social welfare schemes of central and state government being implemented for the development of Dalits. Awareness about Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas yojana could be seen among the 51.66 per cent respondents the existence of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment at central level and Ministry of social welfare at state level are known among 50.66 per cent of the respondents in the study area. It is very unfortunate to notice that very small number of respondents have the knowledge about Pradhan Mantri Adarsha Gram Yojana (14.33 per cent) schemes for upgradation of meant for Dalit students attending remedial coaching classes (23.33 per cent) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar International Centre for Social Justice (12 per cent). Some of the respondents have also stated that they have a vague knowledge on all the welfare and development schemes initiated and implemented by both central and state government as stated in the table.

As is observed from the overall average response (1.90) as depicted in the table above clearly tend to conclude that awareness about policy initiatives in the form of welfare and development for Dalits is closer to 'vague idea' about such initiatives. Therefore, it can be concluded that the level of awareness on various initiatives as shown in the table above is ranging from 'aware' to have a 'vague idea'.

### Conclusions

The social development of Dalits can also be possible through proper awareness about the educational privileges provided and implemented by the government by the constitutions. Recognizing the importance of education, constitutional safe guards and political aspects by the government both at central and state have been supporting the children of Dalits in the various dimensions. Even information world, Dalit have been facing number of problems int the society. Hence, the government will initiate and implement better policies and programme for empowering the Dalit women in India.

### References

1. Fisch, J. (2005). Dying for the Dead: Sati in Universal Context. *Journal of World History*, 16(3), 293- 325. Retrieved June 10, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20079331>.
2. Rege, S. (2006). *Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Reading Dalit Women's Testimonios*. New Delhi: Zubaan.
3. Sharma, Bhushan (2021). "Narratives of Dalit Women and 'the Outsider Within': Toward a Literary Practice of Dalit Feminist Standpoint." *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 22(4), 25-40. Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol22/iss4/3>.
4. A study titled 'The State of Panchayats: 2007-2008' done by the Anand based 'Institute for Rural Management (IRMA) brings out the point about the condition of Dalit women taking up leadership roles, especially in Gram Panchayats.