A VILLAGE LEVEL CASE STUDY ON SOCIAL CONDITION OF WOMEN FROM GENERAL CASTE AND SCHEDULED CASTE IN NADIA DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL

A thesis submitted towards partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

M. Phil. in Women's Studies

Course affiliated to Faculty of Interdisciplinary
Studies, Law and Management

Jadavpur University

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CERTIFICATE OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **"A Village Level Case Study On Social Condition Of Women From General Caste And Scheduled Caste In Nadia District Of West Bengal"** is bona fide work carried out by **PINKI HIRA** under our supervision and guidance for partial fulfillment of the requirement for M Phil in Women's Studies during the academic session 2019.

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This foregoing thesis is hereby approved as a credible study of a social science/humanities subject carried out and presented in a manner satisfactorily to warranty its acceptance as a pre-requisite to the degree for which it has been submitted. It is understood that by this approval the undersigned do not endorse or approve any statement made or opinion expressed or conclusion drawn therein but approve the thesis only for purpose for which it has been submitted.

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Declaration of Originality and Compliance of Academic Ethics

I hereby declare that this thesis contains literature survey and original research work by the undersigned candidate, as a part of my M Phil in Women's Studies degree during academic session 2019.

All information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Tanmoyee Banerjee, whose guidance and persistent help has made this dissertation possible. Her continued support and enthusiasm for my project stimulated me to take pride in my research. I am indebted to all the faculty members of School of Women's Studies who have helped me throughout the writing process of this thesis.

Date : **May, 2019**

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PREFACE

Almost every states of India still in the 21st century face the curse of casteism which is in practice since Vedic Period. Caste system is still the most influential and dominant factor in determining an individual's dignity, opportunity, daily life facilities and many other things in the society, especially in the village life of Indian states. The caste system, which has been continuing since many centuries, created an unequal and biased social life. It is the worst thing that intensifies and perpetuates the sufferings of marginalized section of the population. The present research work endeavors to compare the Education and Health condition of women from general caste and scheduled caste of Betai Jitpur in Nadia District of West Bengal, India, through the Primary survey method. The proposed sample size is 136. The survey will collect information on education, health status and other socio economic and demographic factors on women and their families. The study will try to compare the health condition and educational outcome of women from general caste and Schedule caste.

INTRODUCTION:

The Indian Caste system that divides society in different social groups is an extreme form of segregation based on birth of an individual. At the Vedic period, based on division of labor the people of our society were classified into four groups or castes like Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra which is considered to be hereditary. And these stratification among people are still continuing till today. A Brahmin is a member of the highest caste or varna in Hinduism. The English word brahmin is an anglicized form of the Sanskrit word Brahmana. Brahman refers to the 'Supreme Self' in Hinduism or the first of the gods.

In Indian social structure, caste is still the most influential factor in determining a person's dignity in terms of socio-economic indicators (Battula, 2011). So, occupation of any person is decided by his/her birth. In the Veidic society the Brahmins were mainly engaged in occupation of worship and teacher , the Ksyatriyas were rulers and soldiers, Vaisyas were merchants and traders and the lower last level Shudras were engaged in the professions of laborers and artisans. Since then to till date our society make it feel that the Brahmin is the most upper and prestigious caste. They have the highest status in Hindu society. On the other hand, Sudras are considered as the lower most caste in our society. During the Vedic period those hierarchical caste structures were very rigid and caste of every people was determined only by birth. So, people did not have any opportunity to change their caste. At that same time occupation was directly linked with caste. Upper or

prestigious caste people were mainly engaged in administrative works, teacher, doctor, service and business works. And lower caste people were engaged in different lower level types of works. They get little economic return from their works. In society they were untouchable. So, social upliftment of any lower caste person was almost impossible. Their Socio-economic status was totally determined by their position in the caste hierarchy.

The term 'schedule caste' or the 'Depressed Classes' for the first time was properly explained in part-XIV of the Government of India Act, 1935. Since then to till date our constitution has been carrying the same definition of the schedule caste. According to Indian constitution, the definition of schedule is explained in Article 341 in such a way: "… the castes, races or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races or tribes, being castes, races or tribes, parts or group which appear to His Majesty in Council to correspond to the classes of persons formerly known as the 'Depressed classes' as His Majesty in Council may prefer" . This definition was clarified in the Government of India Act, 1936. After passing the Government of India Act 1935 by British parliament, British Government tried to establish a federal structure in India. To understand the definition in a simple way it can be said that scheduled caste or depressed classes people were those who were discriminated or were counted as untouchable by the upper caste people. Reservation of seats in different government sectors for these depressed classes was initiated by the British Government. After post-independence, Members of the Constituent Assembly continued the same definition of Scheduled Castes, giving (via articles 341) the president of India and governors of the states a mandate to compile a full

listing of castes and tribes (with the power to edit it later, as required). Two orders contain the complete list of castes and tribes: The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, respectively.

In the present research work Betai Jitpur village of West Bengal, India has been selected to review socio-economic condition of different individuals belonging to the schedule caste in comparison to the general caste. In this study area, we observe prevalence of different types of inequality between lower and upper caste people. Beside this, different forms of gender inequality are also found in the study area. In our patriarchal society sons are considered to be more vital than daughters, because our society believes sons generally continue family line. In terms of family return sons are recognized as more valuable than daughters. But, in every family women play a pivotal role are they are considered to be the primary care given in the family. They worked hard for long hours in unpaid household jobs and this long working hours have negative impact on women's health. But different social and traditional norms also create gender inequality and put barriers to women's empowerment. Most of the women feel these pressures and our society feel them that they are inferior to man. Recent studies also show that in the workplace women face gender discrimination. For example- Gender-related barriers involve sexual harassment, unfair hiring practices, career progression, and unequal pay where women are paid less than men are for performing the same job.

In this context, the present study will try to find the condition of Scheduled Caste women and Non-Scheduled caste women in Betai Jitpur village, Nadia District of West Bengal.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the present dissertation are as follows:

1. To analyse the education and health inequality between women in different caste in rural areas of the village Betai Jitpur in Nadia District.

2. To analyse the socio-economic condition of women in the study area.

3. To identify the factors responsible for this inequality in the study area.

CHAPTERISATION:

Rest of the dissertation is organised in the following way:

chapter 1 gives the literature review.

Chapter 2 gives the Methodology and the overall description of the Study Area.

Chapter 3 gives Results and Discussions of my research work.

Chapter 4 gives Findings and conclusion.

CHAPTER 1

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Present condition of development is not only depending upon its present social conditions but also upon its socio-economic history, economic background, levels of regional development and so on. To identify the present social condition of the of women from general caste and scheduled caste, the following literatures (books, journals, government documents and unpublished research works) have been reviewed. Is this context different indicators are also examined from important books, journals and articles.

Women work longer hours than man. They are largely responsible for cooking, child care and cattle care and for gathering fuel and fodder. They have no right in any kind of decision making. Most of the women in lower caste are illiterate (Agarwal, 2002).

Bose (1984) has shown that stagnation and inequality are more among the Scheduled Castes than the non-Scheduled Castes. This is mainly because of poverty, malnutrition, ill health, school environment, economic condition, admission policies and some others.

Brahmandam and Bosu (2016) described that lower caste people were geographically, socially isolated and economically marginalized communities. Their lifestyle was quite different from other caste. They were mentally, educationally and economically backward. In the post-Independence period, sincere and concerted efforts were made for

the economic and educational development of this backward class. Despite these efforts the performance in education of backward class was much lower than the other caste.

Chandra (2016) said that Development is a qualitative process which indicates the overall improvement of any region in terms of quality of livelihood of local people, socio-economic environment such as level of education, working scenario, demographic profile, transport and communication, health status, banking facilities, availability of basic civic amenities etc. Development is the process by which a nation improves the economic and social well-being of the people. The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes people are very much backward socio-economically as well as educationally.

Chowdhary, Shobha, Rupali (2012) have investigated that in their work environment bidi workers handle tobacco flakes and inhale tobacco dust and volatile components of tobacco. These are at risk for genotoxic hazards.

Fraser (2010) contends that "education for the Dalits of India has been the greatest challenge for the Indian government in diminishing the social effects of the caste system, which still remain entrenched in Indian society". Dalits are faced different types of inequality. According to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe Prevention of Atrocities Act of 1989, the practice of the caste system is illegal in India. Despite increased various government interventions, the discrimination and mistreatments of individuals of lower castes still occur. Dalits are straggled for their inequality. Education

is the most prime component, which reduced inequality, increased the incomes of impoverished people, it makes individuals more productive.

Freeman (1982) said that the veranda or outer premises of the main study rooms in the schools were allowed to sit those Dalit students whereas, inside the main room were assumed to be allocated for the higher caste students. Dalit students had to sit there as they were counted as untouchable pupil then.

Guha and das (2014) contends that if the adult members of the family are literate or highly educated then there is a scope of high participation in more remunerative economic activities and there is a high chance that children of these family are educated. Now a days government established many schemes to increase the level of education for lower caste children like Feeder school, Eklavya Model Residential School, National Overseas Scholarship Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship, Mid day meal etc. but it is our responsibility to find out the barriers to education.

In north India status of women is very poor and for this reason they do not ger good quality of food, care and treatment. Women are forced to go government hospital and no facilities are available there. These results high juvenile female death rate than male. Whereas in south Indian state the status of women is much better (Millan, 1980).

Mukheijee and Dasgupta (1970) are discussed the overall description of social, economic and cultural conditions of one of the Scheduled Castes, Bauri people of Hoogly district of

West Bengal. The author has observed that like the upper caste people both man and women of these caste follow some social, religious and rituals.

According to Musharuddin (2018) drop-out is the prime problem of girls and its main reasons are poor education level, bad economic condition of family, under-aged marriage, feeling of discrimination in securing jobs, political representation etc.

N.J. Usha Rao (1981) has examined the social change among scheduled castes through education in Karnataka. His work fully based on secondary data and data has been collected mainly from various year wise census report. He pointed out that the literary rate of scheduled castes is 8.95 in 1961 (male 14.8 and female 3.04%). But in 1971 the literacy rate of scheduled castes increased by reservation of seat in Schools, colleges and relaxation in age limits and lowering of minimum mark for admission in various institutions. Then the economic condition and standard of living of scheduled caste improved. But most of this SC people are engaged in unskilled and clerical qualification.

Pal, Aneja and Nagpal (2015) analysed inequality in housing conditions for India for two time period 2008-09 and 2012. According to him housing condition and basic amenities like facility of drinking water, sanitation, electricity is important to improve the health status of people. But there was a huge inequality in rural and urban areas.

The lower caste people like Chamars, Bhangis, Weavers and others are engaged in various low productive and low paid occupations. The female and children of this community are forced to join in different economic activities due to their poor economic

condition and some other factors. But they are very much exploited by their employers. The Scheduled Caste female and children get lower wage than the male workers of the same category and the upper caste people. Their occupations are seasonal in nature and they worked as daily wage base (Pande 1989).

Purkair and Sardar (2015) said that, most of the bidi workers are women in India . Bidi workers more often are the most vulnerable sector of the society and a large number of them are absolutely dependent on bidi rolling in rural India. They continue to struggle for survival despite low wages, steady exploitation by the contractors, lack of education and medical facilities and neglect in government policies. They operate from their homes and are isolated from the rest of the industrial workforce and for this reason they are easy target for gross exploitation. Women workers tend to suffer from a number of occupational health problems.

Social status and economic condition of SC people was pathetic, they are marginalized section in society. "According to the Hindu ideology once the person born in a particular caste will take rebirth in the same caste. And as per the theory of this ideology the profession is determined according to caste, instead of talent or qualification secured by the individual" Rajpal and Sharma (2016).

It is clear that economic conditions determine the quality, type and location of the residence of people. People generally prefer to stay in favorable places where market, schools, transport, playground, recreational centers, medical center and work place are

situated in nearly places. But it is seen rich and upper caste people are lived in that area. Poor lower caste people are lived outer space (Ramchandran, 1977).

Our society is male dominated. As the reason of conventional son preference, the number of males is greater than female. In low developed areas most of them are belong Below Poverty line and they are wage labours. Their income is very low and they spend maximum of their income on fooding (Roy and Mondal, 2015).

Sarkar (2004), found that the conditions of the female bidi workers were miserable as many of them had to roll bidi because they have as no other employment opportunities. But the nature of work is so monotonous, female workers faced different health hazards.

According to Singh (2014) socio-economic condition of SC people is not satisfactory. They lived in kuccha or semi-kuccha types of house but have electricity, water connection and latrine facility. All most every household has the livestock like cow, buffaloes, goat etc. But most of them don't use them for the business purpose. They use for their own purpose. Dowry system is existing today and it is on demand.

Women are engaged in bidi rolling at an early age. Their daily working hour is 8 approximately and average monthly income is 300-1500 rupees. Due to direct inhalation of tobacco flakes and dust and sitting in one position for long hours women bidi workers faces numerous health problems Singh, Rana and Mishra (2014).

In the present context given the existing literature to best of our knowledge we did not come across any study that compares the socio-economic, health and educational inequality between Scheduled caste women to Non-Scheduled caste women. Thus, we should focus on that issue and conducted a primary survey Betai Jitpur, Nadia District of West Bengal to find the condition of Scheduled Caste and Non-Scheduled Caste Women.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY:

To fulfil the main objectives of the study, primary as well as secondary data have been used in this research. Extensive field survey has been conducted to evaluate the condition of women from general caste and scheduled caste of the study area. Secondary data have been collected mainly from published Government reports, documents like Census of India report, and relevant publications of different NGOs. Primary data have been collected mainly from field survey, in-depth interviews and observations. Total 136 number of households have been interviewed.

To analysis the health condition of the respondents Body Mass Index (BMI) method has been used.

$$\text{Body Mass Index} = \frac{\text{Weight in kilograms}}{\text{Height in meters squared}}$$

Various indicators have been used for the study. All data have been compiled and analyzed. Explanations of the analyses were done qualitatively and quantitatively.

Table 1. Different Indicators used in methodology.

Indicators	Variables
1. Demographic	I. Caste composition II. Age Structure III. Resides of respondent's husband
2. Economic	I. Work participation rate of the respondents II. Income per month III. Occupation of respondent's husband IV. Family income per month V. Size of agricultural lands VI. Ownership of agricultural lands
3. Social	I. Level of education II. Drop-out from school III. Educational condition IV. Types of house V. Ownership of animals VI. BPL card
4. Health	I. Condition of health

	II. Different health problems
	III. Treatment centre
	IV. Daily working period
	V. Used of sanitary pads
	VI. Antenatal treatment
	VII. Place of child birth
	VIII. Cooking fuel
	IX. Use of LPG
	X. Source of drinking water
	XI. Toilet type
5. Others	I. Upper or prestigious caste of the village
	II. Inter-caste marriage
	III. Nature of benefit from the government
	IV. Demand of dowry at the time of marriage
	V. Types of harassment
	VI. Equal opportunity in making decisions with regard to household earning and expenditure

COLLECTION OF PRIMARY DATA:

There are several methods of collecting primary data like observation method, interview method, questionnaire method, observation method etc.

I.   Observation method:

Observation method is most commonly used in behavioural science. Without asking from the respondent, investigator is noticed and observed deeply. If observation is done accurately, subjective biased is eliminated accurately. Information which is obtained from this method is fully based on respondent's current situation. But there are some limitations in this method –

> ➢ This is an expensive method.

> ➢ Sometimes respondents do not behaviour normally and this is directly affecting on researcher's data collection process.

> ➢ some factors which are not seen by the researcher may interfere with the observational process.

II.   Interview method:

The interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses (Kothari, 2004). Only personal interview of respondents is used in this study. In personal interview method researcher generally asking questions to the respondents in a face-to-face contact. When this interview is carried out in a structured way, this is called **Structure Interview Method.** In this study I asked all the questions which was predetermined. "As against this, the **Unstructured**

Interviews are characterised by a flexibility of approach to questioning" (Kothari, 2004). This interview does not follow the pre-determined questions.

III.   Questionnaire method:

Questionnaire is used during the field survey. While collecting data through questionnaire method special attention was given on women's socio-economic condition, education, income, health, occupational status, status in house and also society, problems faced by them etc. There are some merits in this method –

> ➢ Respondents answers all the questions in their own words so, it is free from the bias.

> ➢ This method is less expensive.

> ➢ Results are more dependable and reliable.

There are two types of questions – open ended questions, close questions. The possible responses are not given in the **Open-ended Questions** method. In this method respondents write down their answers in their own words and there is no limitations or boundary. For example, "What was the demand of dowry at the time of your marriage by your husband or in-laws?".

But in **Close Questions** method the possible responses are set out. Respondents tick the category from these possible responses. For example, "Type of house – Kuccha/ Semi-pucca/ Pucca".

STUDY AREA:

Everywhere Caste inequality is the common issue. Betai jutpur village has been chosen as the study area. Betai is a village in Tehatta I CD Block in Tehatta subdivision of Nadia district in the state of West Bengal. Tehatta I CD Block is bounded by Naoada, Murshidabad district and Karimpur II CD Block, in the north, Chapra CD block in the south, Gangni Upazila, Meherpur Sadar Upazila and Mujibnagar Upazila of Meherpur District of Bangladesh in the east and Tehatta II CD Block in the west. This village is near the India-Bangladesh border. It is situated 5.7km away from sub-district headquarter Tehatta and 48.2km away from district headquarter Krishnanagar. The total geographical area of Betai is 1803.97 hectares whereas the total geographical area of the study area is 1216.32 hectares. As per 2011 census betai jitpur has a total population of 14,193 peoples. From the physiographic point of view, the study area is lying in the Hooghly and Jalangi delta region. Distributaries of Jalangi, Churni and Ichhamati create alluvial plains in this area. All the areas are composed of Alluvial soil. This soil is very fertile for agriculture. Main agricultural crop is rice. Beside this different type of vegetables are cultivated here, most of the lands are multi-cropped. Different irrigation processes are practiced here. The study area is characterized by the tropical monsoon climate. Transport and communication system is developed in this block. All the villages are

connected with metalled or unmetalled roads, where private cars, buses or other vehicles play regularly to the other main cities or urban places.

The district is composed of flat alluvial plain where the amount of rainfall is adequately high. So, this condition is favorable for forest. But at present there is no such land which we can consider as forest. Most of the land is used for agricultural purpose. Still there are jungles, bushes, cultivated vegetation are found some areas.

Compared to West Bengal Betai has lower literacy rate. In 2011, literacy rate of Betai village was 75.93 % compared to 76.26 % of West Bengal. Male literacy rate was 81.13 % while female literacy rate was 70.34 %. Most of the villagers of Betai are Schedule Caste (SC), which constitutes 73.77 % while Schedule Tribe (ST) were 0.64 % and rest are from general caste.
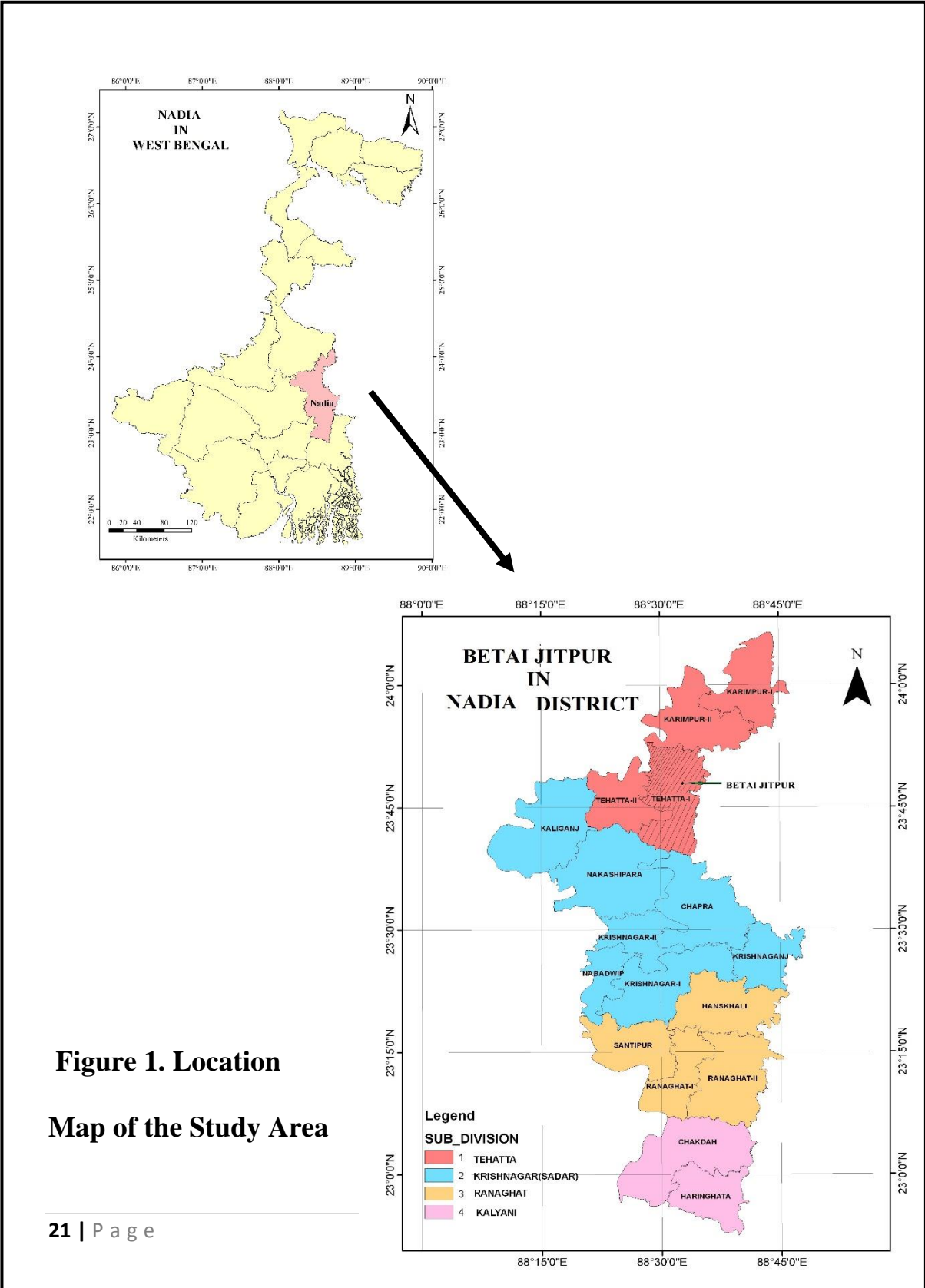
Figure 1. Location Map of the Study Area

CHAPTER 3

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS:

In this chapter some important parameters of demographic, economic and social aspects will be discussed.

1. DEMOGRAPHIC:

1.a. Caste composition
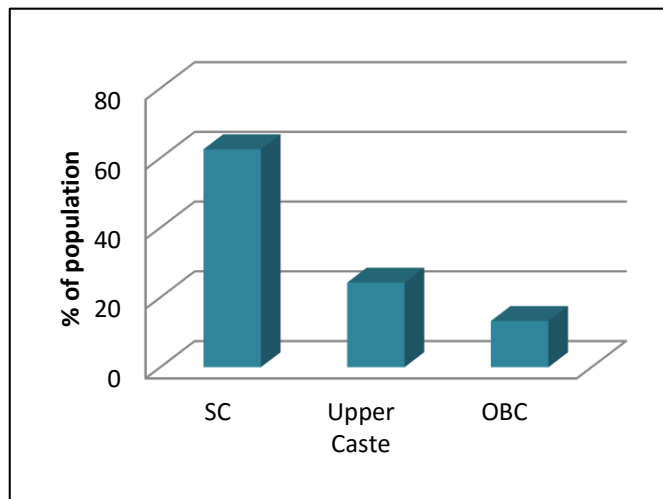
Table 2. Caste composition   **Figure 2. Caste composition**

Caste	Number	% of population
SC	85	62.5
Upper Caste	33	24.26
OBC	18	13.24

Source: Primary Field Survey

Mainly three types of caste are found in the study area. Table 2 reveals that there are 62.50 % of people are belonging to SC caste, 24.26% are Upper Caste and 13.24 % are OBC.

1.b. Sex structure

Table 3. Sex Structure in Surveyed Households

SEX	Number	% OF POPULATION
Male	253	49.9
Female	254	50.1

Source: Primary Field Survey

Table no 3 shows that 50.1 % are female headed and 49.9 % are male headed. A strong orientation towards son preference has been observed during the field survey and because of this fact sex ratio is low. They also think that more children mean more working hands. Apart from that, the early marriage of the girls as well as resultant female migration may also affect it.
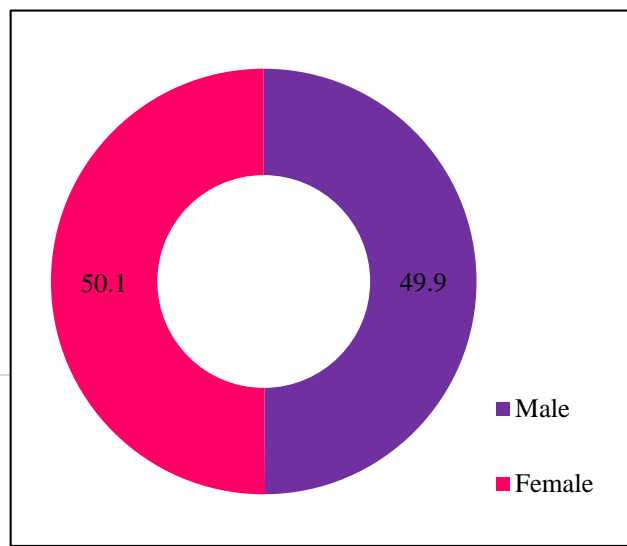
Figure 3. Sex Structure in Surveyed Households

1.c.   Age   structure:

Age distribution among the population depends upon biological, social, economic, demographic conditions of the people and it is determined by fertility, mortality and migration. In the developed countries fertility and mortality are low. Whereas in the developing or poorly developed areas, fertility and mortality are very high.

Occupations of the parents have strong role in determining the age structure. Parents or father with primary occupations believed that children are economic assets. So people of agrarian economy have huge younger population. On the other hand parents of secondary and tertiary occupations are economically strong and have more social status. Parents have to invest lots of money for the development of their children. As a result in non-primary occupations parents have very few children. Poor people of primary occupation are not lucky enough to provide food and medicines to their children. This results not only high mortality but also high fertility. But economically well-off people have enough opportunity to provide good food and medicines to their children, which reduce not only mortality but also fertility. So poor people of primary workers have more young children and low proportion of old population. On the other hand socio-economically well off non-primary workers have less young people and more old people.

Table 4. Age Structure in Surveyed Households (in %)

	0 - 14 Years		15 – 60 Years		More than 60 Years	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	36	11.36	244	76.97	37	11.67
General	12	9.84	93	76.23	17	13.93
OBC	5	8.06	51	82.26	6	9.68

Source: Primary Field Survey

There are 11.36% SC household, 9.84% general and 8.06% OBC household have younger population of age below 14 years (Table 4). The middle age group or working age group people are of 76.97% among SC household, 76.23% among General household and 82.26% among OBC household in the study area. So the dependency ratio is much higher among SC people than Non-SC people.

There are 11.67% SC household, 13.93% General household and 9.68% OBC household of that study area have old people. Due to high mortality among all the people, proportion

of old people is low. From this discussion it can be told that the level of socio-economic condition is not only poor among the SC people but also they remain far behind the Non-SC people.

In the rural areas marriage takes place at a lower age, as a result a woman get long time to give birth of children. On the other hand in a developed society where marriage age of women is higher or span of fertility period is low, number of children produced is also low. A Survey of Indian Statistical Institute (1964) has also shown that number of children per couple decrease with increase of educational level. Education makes people more aware and conscious and they reduce their fertility in having very few numbers of children.

1.d. Resides of respondent's husband:

Table 5. Resides of Respondents Husband in Surveyed Households

	SC		GENERAL		OBC	
	Total	% among that class	Total	% among that class	Total	% among that class
Here	59	69.41	198	57.6	11	61.11
Outside	20	23.53	8	24.2	3	16.67
NA	6	7.06	6	18.2	4	22.22

Source: Primary Field Survey

In between SC caste household there are 70.24% of the respondent's husband lived with them, 23.81 % lived outside. In between General caste household 57.60% of the respondent's husband lived with then and 24.20% lived outside (Table 5). Whereas in OBC caste household 61.11% of the respondent's husband lived with them and 16.67% lived outside (Fig. 4). Because of their bad economic condition husband of lower caste women's have to go outside for better source of income. Most of them are constructional labour. They worked there as daily wage based.
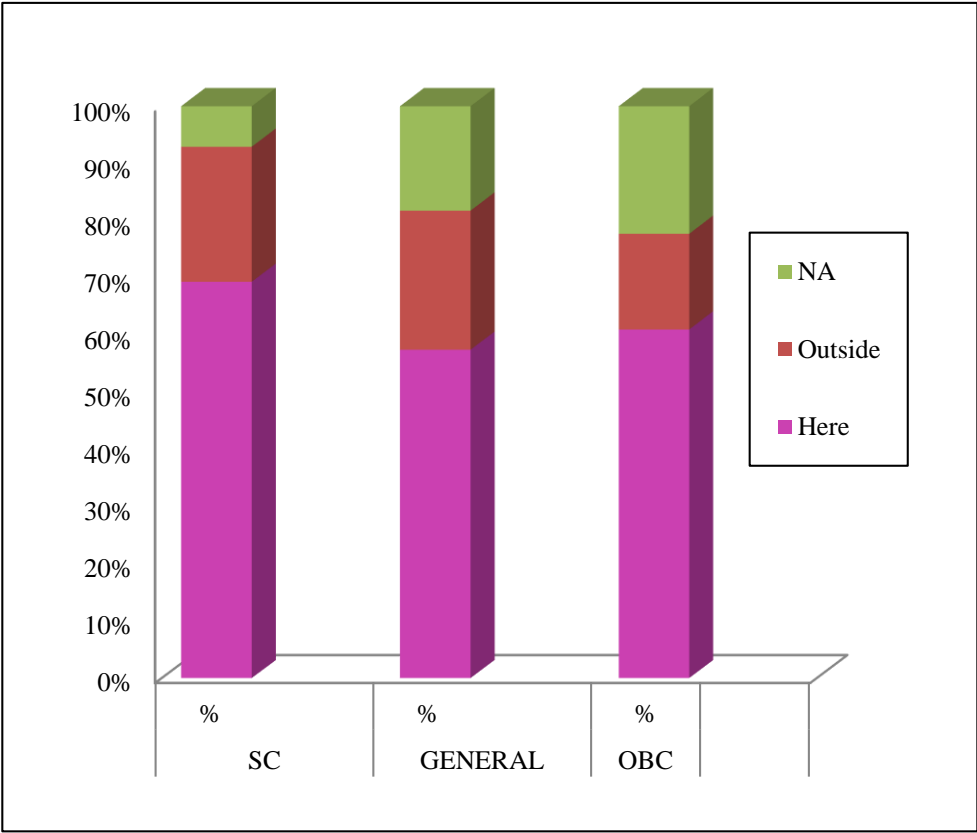
Figure 4. Resides of Respondent's Husband in Surveyed Household

2. ECONOMIC CONDITION:

In this research work some important economic indicators have been taken to access the disparity between SC people and NSC people of the study area. In the study area agriculture is the main economy and most of the women are bidi worker. But they have very poor income and they spend most of their money on food. There are 94.05% of SC women are economically active, 75.76% of General women are economically active and 72.22% of OBC women are economically active (Table 6).
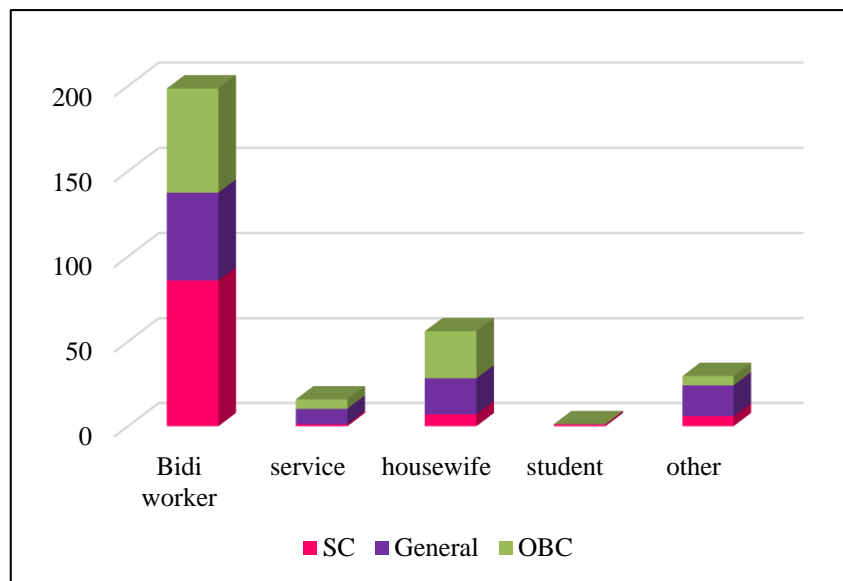
Figure 5. Occupation of the Respondents

Table 6. Respondents Economically Active (in %)

	SC	General	OBC
YES	94.05	75.76	72.22
NO	5.95	24.24	27.78

Source: Primary Field Survey

According to India's Ministry of Labour, 85% of the Dalit women have the most formidable occupations and work as agricultural laborers, scavengers, sweepers, and disposers of human waste. Their level of self-perception is low and life is mainly reduced to a struggle for survival (Wankhede, 1999). A large number of them continue to live below poverty line. Due to their poor economic condition, they can not afford adequate and good quality food and basic amenities of life for themselves.

There are 85.88% SC respondents, 51.52% General respondents and 61.11% OBC respondents are Bidi-worker. Bidi making is one of the most important informal sector activities in rural India. 7.06% SC women, 21.21% General women and 27.77% OBC women are housewife. Only 1.18% SC women, 9.09% General women and 5.56% OBC women are doing service (table 7). Some women are engaged in various types of occupations as priest, tutor, darzi, domestic worker, cook and many others. Socio-economically they are very poor.

Table 7. Occupation of the Respondent

	SC		General		OBC	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
Bidi worker	72	84.70	17	51.52	11	61.11
service	1	1.18	3	9.09	1	5.56
housewife	6	7.06	7	21.21	5	27.77
student	1	1.18	0	00	0	00
other	5	5.88	6	18.18	1	5.56

Source: Primary Field Survey

2.a. Income per month:

Other important factor is daily working time. They generally have to work up to 9 to 10 hours per day but very low income. They get rupees 12 for 1000 bidi. Besides this they have to work various household work like cooking food, clean home, wash, look after their domestic animals, look after the other members of the family and rearing their

children etc. But the work participation rate is high among the SC women than Non-SC women. On the other hand, rich upper caste families do not allow their women family members to join any economic activities as that may hamper their family prestige in the village society.

There are 37.65% SC women, 42.42% General women and 61.11% OBC women have very low income per month (less than 2000); 48.24% SC women, 36.36% General women, 16.67% OBC women have low monthly income (2001 to 4000) (Table 8). Their family income is very low. So, a large number of SC women have low income than non-SC women.

Middle income of 4001 to 6000 per month, have 3.53% among SC women, 9.09% among General women and 11.11% among OBC women. On the other hand, there are only 3.53% SC women, 12.13% General women and 11.11% OBC women have high monthly income (6001 and above). So, a large percentage of Non-SC women are economically better-off situation.

Table 8. Income per Month of the Respondents

	SC		GENERAL		OBC	
Ranges of income	Total	% among that class	Total	% among that class	Total	% among that class
0-2000	32	37.65	14	42.42	11	61.11
2001-4000	41	48.24	12	36.36	3	16.67

4001-6000	3	3.53	3	9.09	2	11.11
6001 and above	3	3.53	4	12.13	2	11.11
N.A.	6	7.05	0	00	0	00

Source: Primary Field Survey

2.b. Occupation of respondent's husband:

In every patriarchal society male person are considered as the principal earning members of a family. So, he is the real head of the family. Due to bad economic condition, poor education level, absence of other non-primary diversified occupations, absence of employment generating sectors large number of workers are engaged in agriculture or related occupations but they get very low wage. From the field survey it shows that the income level is little higher among Non-SC male than SC male persons.

Table 9. Occupation of Respondent's Husband

	SC	General	OBC

	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
Farming	25	29.41	3	9.09	6	33.33
Business	13	15.29	13	39.39	5	27.78
Service	6	7.06	9	27.27	4	22.22
Others	35	41.18	1	3.03	0	00
NA	6	7.06	7	21.22	3	16.67

Source: Primary Field Survey
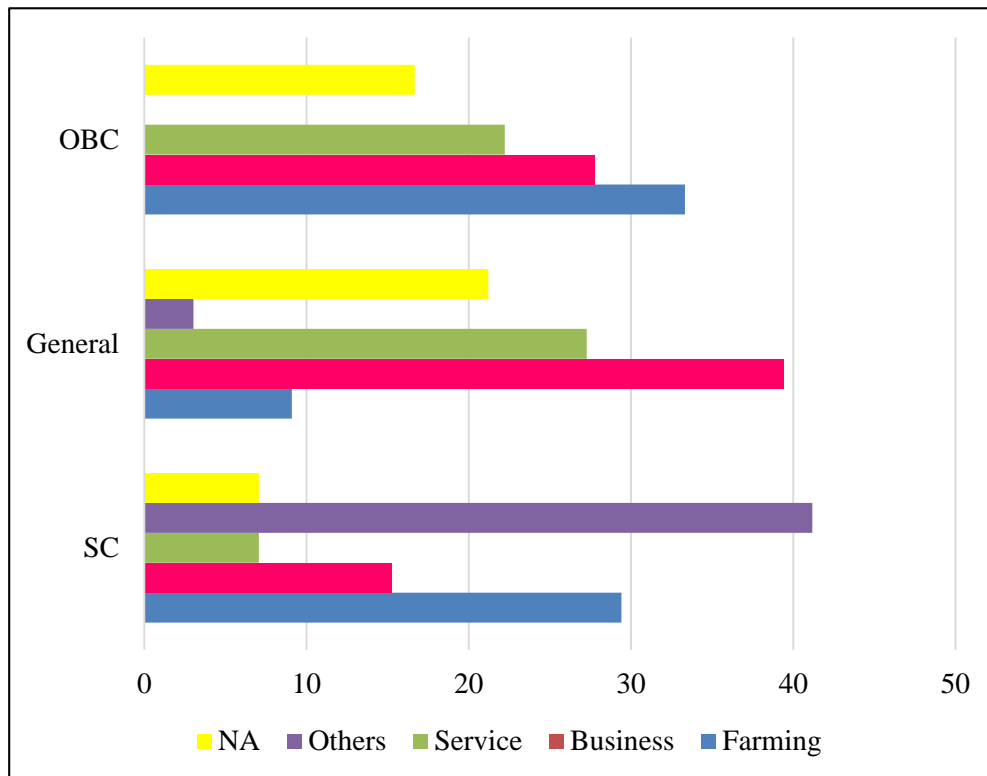
Figure 6 Occupation of Respondent's Husband

There are 29.41% SC male, 9.09% General male and 33.33% OBC male are engaged in farming (Table 9). Agriculture is the main occupation of the study area. Most of the agricultural lands of the study area are under the control of the upper caste people. SC people are worked as a marginal labour. There are 15.29% SC women's husband, 39.39% General women's husband and 27.78% OBC women's husband are doing business. On the other hand, only 7.06% SC male, 27.27% General male and 22.22% OBC male are doing service (Fig. 6). So, it is clear that due to various social, economic factors more Non-SC male persons are engaged in service than SC male persons.

2.c. Family income per month in Rupees:

Table 10. Family Income per Month in Rupees

	SC		General		OBC	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
0-5000	68	58.12	8	16.33	7	29.17
5001-10000	40	34.18	16	32.65	9	37.50
10001-15000	2	1.71	8	16.33	3	12.50
More than 15001	7	5.99	17	34.69	5	20.83

Source: Primary Field Survey

There are 58.12% SC household, 16.33% General household and 29.17% OBC household have very low monthly family income (less than 5000) (Table 10). So, the percentage of low income group is very high among SC household than Non-SC household and these people are also forced to work at very lower wage rate. There are only 1.71% SC household, 16.33% General household and 12.50% OBC household have little high monthly family income (10001 to 15000). It is seen that there are very few SC people those who have higher income. 5.99% SC household, 34.69% General household and 20.83% OBC household have high monthly income (more than 15001). Our society does not allow lower caste people to raise their income. Most of the Non-SC people are engaged in non-primary economic activities.

2.d. Ownership of agricultural lands:

Agricultural land plays an important role in determining social, economic and political power of the people in rural areas. According to H.N. Singh (1978)," political power that is enjoyed by various families is roughly determined by the ownership of land". So people with large agricultural land enjoy higher status, which is mainly found in between Non-Sc household.

	Yes	No

There are household, General and 83.33% household agricultural

	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	39	45.88	46	54.12
General	18	54.55	15	45.45
OBC	15	83.33	3	16.67

45.88% SC 54.55% Household OBC have lands (table

11, Fig 7). It is found that the condition of SC people is much lower than Non-SC people. A large section of SC people remain landless or very small size of agricultural land.

Table 11. Cultivation Land

Field

Cultivated Land   SC   General   OBC

Source: Primary Survey
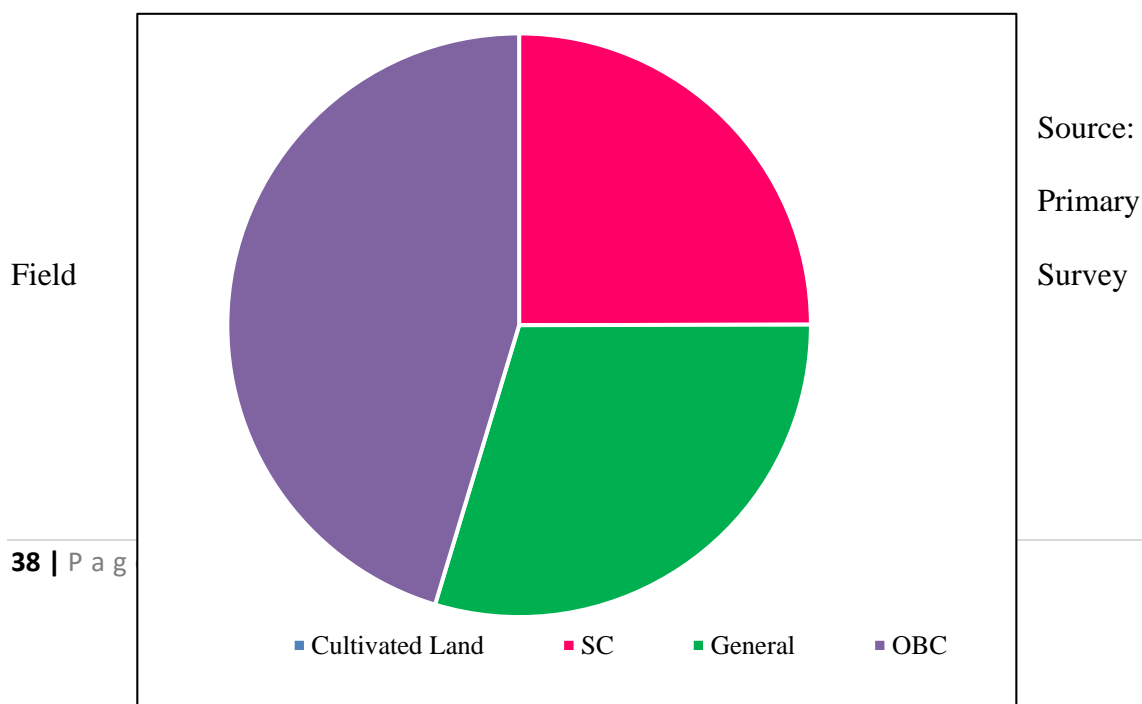
Figure 7. Ownership of Agricultural land

2.e. Size of Agricultural Land:

Table 12. Size of Agricultural Land

	0-5.0 Bighas		5.1-10 Bighas		More than 10 Bighas		
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	NA
SC	34	41.18	6	7.06	0	00	51.76
General	9	27.27	8	24.24	1	3.03	45.46
OBC	11	61.11	3	16.67	0	00	22.22

Source: Primary Field Survey
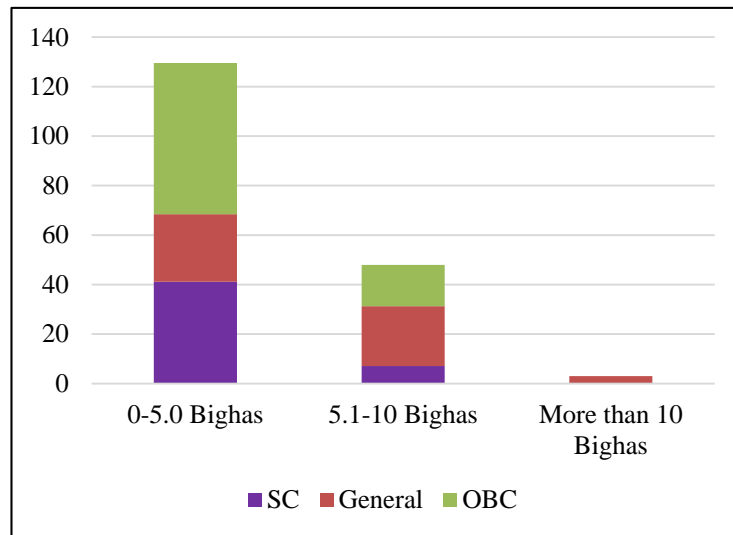
Figure 8. Size of Agricultural Land

In this study areas there are mainly four types of farmers are found, i.e. middle farmers (land with more than 10 bighas), small farmers (land with 5.1 to 10 bighas) and marginal farmers (land with less than 5 bighas).

There are 41.18% SC, 27.27% General and 61.11% OBC household are marginal farmers with less than 5 bighas (Table 12). 24.24% General, 16.67% OBC and only 7.06% SC household are small farmers (land with 5.1 to 10 bighas). On the other hand 3.03% General households are middle farmers (land with more than 10 bighas) (Fig 8). There are no middle farmers from SC households. So from that data and figure it is clear that a large number of people are poor marginal farmers are SC people. Only very few Non-SC people who have large-sized agricultural lands. On the other hand, most of the large sized cultivated lands are mainly under the control of upper caste people.

2.f. Asset Holding and Financial Inclusion

Table 13. Asset Holding and financial Inclusion

		Number	% among that class
Bank Account	Sc	77	90.59
	General	26	78.79
	OBC	14	77.78
Mobile Phone	Sc	56	65.88
	General	28	84.85
	OBC	16	88.89
Bicycle	Sc	33	38.82
	General	10	30.3
	OBC	10	55.56

Source: Primary Field Survey
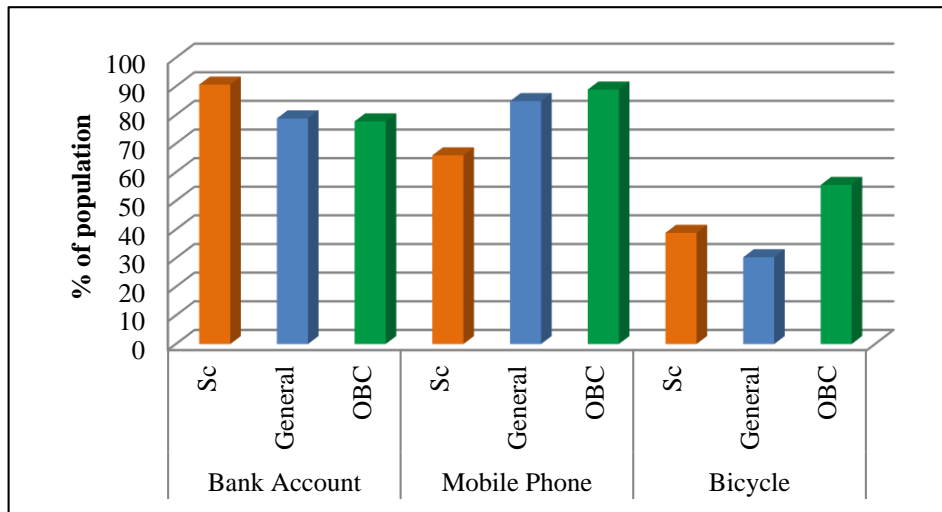
Figure 9. Asset Holding and Financial Inclusion

For the requirements of my study some important things of a household are discussed like Bank Account, Mobile Phone and Bicycle. There are 90.59% SC women, 78.79% General women and 77.78% OBC women have Bank Account (Table 13). This rate is high among SC women than Non-SC women. Because most of the SC women are bidi worker and it is mandatory to have a Bank Account. On the other hand, Non-SC women are not allowed to work outside and most of them are housewife. So, they do not have bank account. There are 65.88% SC women, 84.85% General women and 88.89% OBC women have Mobile Phone (Fig. 9).

In rural areas Bicycle is most important means of transportation system. The cost price of a bicycle is very low and it's maintenance cost is also very low. There are 38.82% SC women, 30.30% of General women and 55.56% OBC women have Bicycle. In that study area women are gone their work place through bicycle.

3. SOCIAL CONDITION:

It is important to measure the disparity of social development among SC women and Non-SC women. Some useful indicators of social development are discussed here like level of education, literacy, health condition, housing condition etc.

3.a. Level of education:

Education is the prime component of economic and social development. Over fifty years since India's government promise to free and compulsory primary education for all children up to the age of fourteen years-with special care and consideration to be given to promote the educational progress of scheduled castes-illiteracy still plagues almost two-thirds of the Dalit people as compared to about one-half of the general people. Due to discrimination from upper castes, the lower caste children specially girls did not feel comfortable to attend schools. George (2004) wrote "…education has come as an enlivening and empowering agent for women and all other weaker sections of the society....". If we go through the books which were published in pre-independence time regarding the educational opportunities available for the lower caste students, it is vividly float in front of our eyes that how terrible the situations were faced by those untouchable students. They had to face a lot of problems to continue their study and sometimes the problems were so bad that those students were compelled to leave the school or the study in their midways of study life because of unbearable humiliation done by their educational guru.

Table 14. Level of Education

	SC		General		OBC	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
Literate	280	87.50	109	89.34	62	98.41
Illiterate	40	12.50	13	10.66	1	1.59

Source: Primary Field Survey
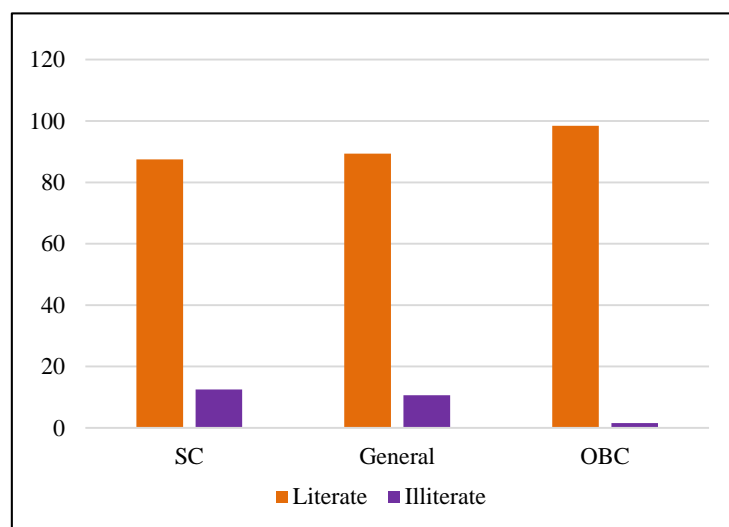
Figure 10. Education Level

Education helps women to become aware about their ground reality as well as legal rights. The overall status of women is measured by her literacy rate. So, in macro level planning to improve women empowerment it essentially depends on the level of female literacy as well as female education. Literacy rate improved quality of living, especially with regard to life expectancy, educational levels of children.

There are 87.50% SC women, 89.34% General women and 98.41% OBC women of the study area are literate. It shows that Non-SC people are more literate than SC people. Total educated people are classified into Primary, Madhyamik, Higher-Secondary (H.S.), Graduation, Post-Graduation. Another classification is technical levels (Table 14, Fig 10).

Table 15. Literacy level among SC Caste

	Primary	Below 10th class	Below 12th class	Graduate	Post-Graduate
Number	62	70	70	48	3
%	24.51	27.67	27.67	18.97	1.18

Source: Primary Field Survey

Table 16. Literacy Level Among General Caste

	Primary	Below 10th class	Below 12th class	Graduate	Post-Graduate
Number	9	13	37	34	6
%	9.09	13.13	37.37	34.34	6.06

Source: Primary Field Survey

Table 17. Literacy Level Among OBC Caste

	Primary	Below 10th class	Below 12th class	Graduate	Post-Graduate
Number	3	8	25	14	7
%	5.26	14.04	43.86	24.56	12.28

Source: Primary Field Survey
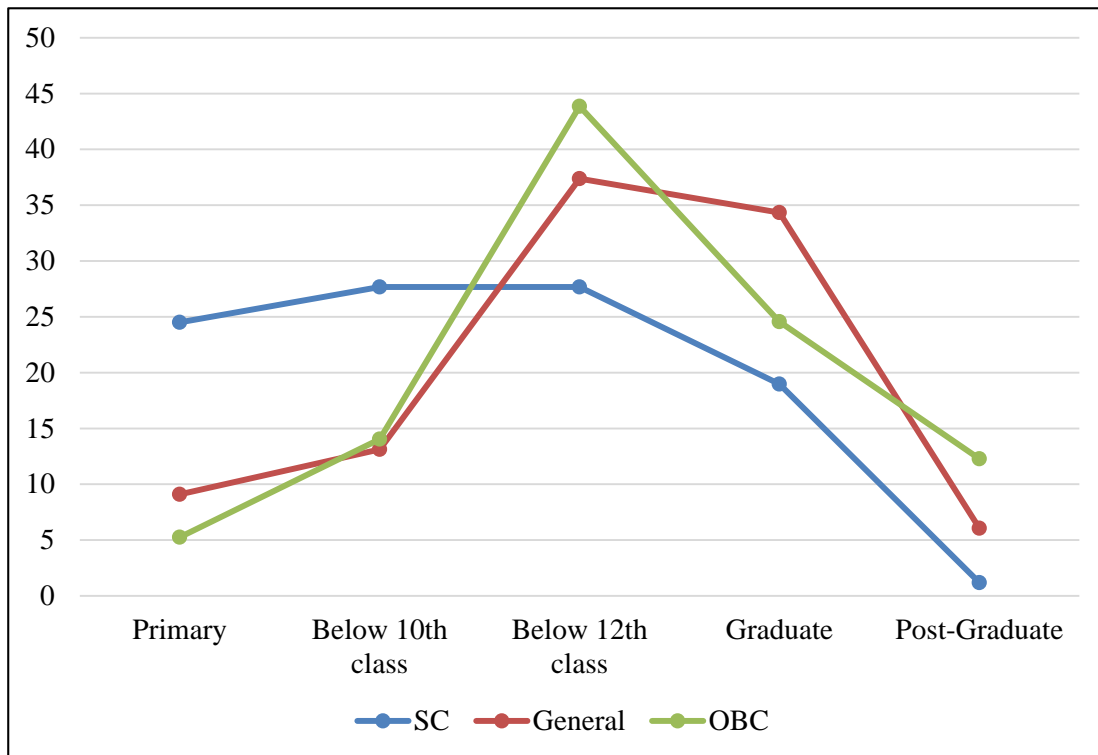
Figure 11. Difference in Education Level in Between Lower Caste and Upper Caste

Figure 11 reveals the disparity in literacy level in between SC, General and OBC caste people. It is clear that lower caste people have poor level of literacy. Only 18.97% and 1.18% SC people have completed their graduation and post-graduation course; where as 34.34% General, 24.56% OBC people have completed graduation and 6.06% General, 12.28% OBC people have completed their post-graduation course (Table 15, 16, 17). Most of the lower caste people are drop-out form the school at primary level. Because of that primary school level education level rate is higher among SC than Non-SC people. There are 27.67% SC, 13.13% General and 14.04% OBC people have passed 10th standard level of school education.

3.b. Dropout from school:

The dropout rates at the primary school level are very high for the Scheduled Castes (Pande, 1986). Some reasons for Scheduled Castes students to drop-out of school are : a) when a child is born, the mother puts it in the charge of its elder brother or sister since the mother is employed; b) schooling expenditure increases more rapidly than the income of the parents; c) financial liabilities of Scheduled Castes parents are rising; and d) in rural and interior areas, teachers are not serious about their teaching as they are engaged in other work (Khan, 1980). According to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes' 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 Report, the national drop-out rate for Dalit children-who often sit in the back of classrooms-was a staggering 49.35 percent at the primary level, 67.77 percent for middle school, and 77.65 percent for secondary school. According to the government's own fourteenth periodic report under ICERD, "The lowest literacy is among the occupational castes. Women constitute more than two thirds of the illiterates."

A report published in the Anandabazar Patrica (25march, 2001: henceforth ABP) quating a District Primary Education Project (DPEP) report states that 80% of school children have to go in for private tuition and 44% of the total cost of education per children goes on private tuition.

According to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes' 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 Report, the national drop-out rate for Dalit children was 49.35

percent at the primary level, 67.77 percent for middle school, and 77.65 percent for secondary school.

According to Venkatanarayana (2009), "the high dropout rates in schools are often cited as the cause of educational deprivation among children at the elementary school level". The distance between the school and the house and lack of free transport facilities is often cited as a barrier for parents to send their girls to schools. In many areas SC people are often lived in hamlets which are on the outer edge of the village. As the Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE) report concluded, "In many areas, villages are divided into separate hamlets, and children from one hamlet may be reluctant or unable to go to school in another hamlet due to caste tensions".

Table 18. Dropout From School

	Yes		No	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	62	72.94	23	27.06
General	8	24.24	25	75.76
OBC	15	16.67	3	83.33

Source: Primary Field Survey

There are 72.94% SC women, 24.24% General women and 16.67% OBC women dropout from school (Table 18). Poor economic condition, early age marriage, family pressure etc, are the main reasons of their dropout, The responsibility of looking after the

young ones at home compel them to attend the child care work as the parents have to go for their daily works to earn their livelihood. It is the girls responsibility of looking after their younger sister or brother.

3.c. Educational condition of girls:

Table 19. Educational Condition of Girls

	As far as possible		As long as daughter is not marriage	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	22	25.88	64	75.29
General	22	57.89	10	30.30
OBC	13	72.22	5	27.78

Source: Primary Field Survey

Financial handicap of the family is the main reason behind dropping out. In that case girls are very much neglected. They also engaged in domestic and bidi making work. Most of them are married before the age of 14 years. The majority of the parents send their daughters to school in order to ensure better marriage prospects, lower dowry demands and the ability to teach their own children at home. Table 19 manifests that 57.89% General women, 72.22% OBC women and only 25.88% SC women said that their daughters to continue their studying as far as possible. On the contrary 75.29% SC

women, 30.30% General women and 27.78% OBC respondents said that their daughters to continue studying until they are married off.

3.d. Types of house:

Shelter is considered as one of the basic needs of any people after food and cloth. Other than giving shelter to the people, house also provides access to sanitation, health, education and other welfare services (Alam and Khan, 1987). Kuccha, semi-kuccha and pucca three different types of houses are discussed here. Depending upon the socio-economic condition, level of income, government facility, level of development types of houses are different in that study area. All of them in that area are said it is their own house.

Table 20. Condition of House

	Kuccha		Semi-Kuccha		Pucca	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	20	23.53	48	56.47	17	20.00
General	1	3.03	11	33.33	21	63.64
OBC	1	5.56	6	33.33	11	61.11

Source: Primary Field Survey
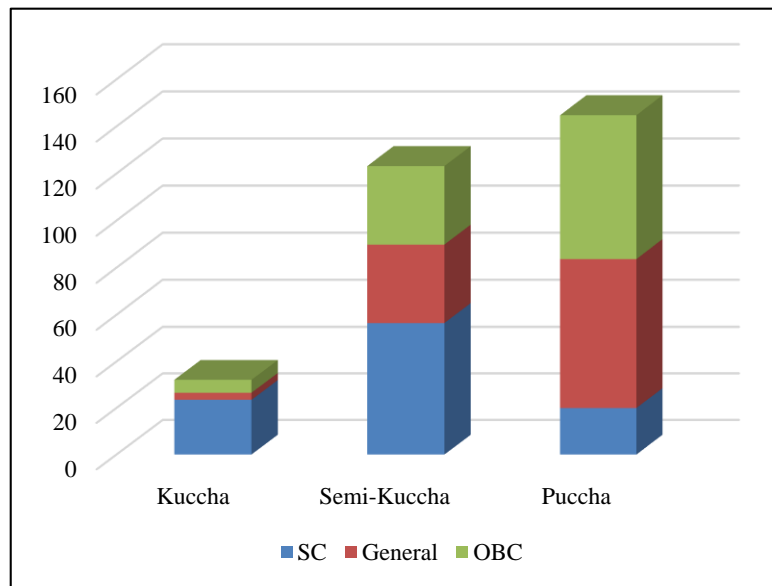
Figure 12. Types of House

There are 23.53% SC household, only 3.03% General household and 5.56% OBC household have Kuccha types of house. Semi-kuccha types of houses are found 56.47% among SC household, 33.33% among both General and OBC household. Only 20% SC household have pucca types of house and 63.64% General household, 61.11% OBC household have pucca types of house (Table 20, Fig 12). Because of poor economic condition most of the SC people have kuccha or semi-kuccha types of house. The poor people of rural area make their house with mud, wood, asbester and other similar fragile materials. On the other hand rich upper caste people afford to make pucca house. Their socio-economic conditions are much better so they able to construct pucca types of house.

Various Government policies and its implementation through efficient administration is very important in determining the types of the houses. Different planning period government have made different policies for providing shelter for the poor people like

Housing for all, Indira Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana etc. But these policies are not fulfilled because of improper implementation of such policies in the rural area. In this area some people also get help from the government to construct pucca houses.

In the study area all the people have their own houses but number rooms varies from one caste to another. It is very clear that rich people are able to built their house according to their requirements, desire. So they have many number of rooms. On the contrary poor most of the SC people have single room. Where all the married couple, younger, children, parents, relatives are stayed together in the single room. In this aspect there are very few SC household who are able to build more rooms, which reflect their better socio-economic conditions. But the number is very low.

3.e. Ownership of animals:

livestock is considered as the second source of income of a farmer in rural areas. It seems that most households prefer to rear livestock as investments to improve the chances of their economic security. They provide nutritional benefits from milk, egg and meat. In India, the landless, marginal and poor poultry farmers keep an average flock of 7-8 non-descript hardy but low-yielding poultry birds, mainly as a source of eggs for home consumption and to meet one-off expenditures, whereas wealthier farmers can keep flocks with over 20,000 broilers for profit motives (GOI, 2006; Mehta and Nambiar, 2007). Households with different levels of income have incentives to keep livestock because of the wide spectrum of benefits these provide, such as cash income, food, manure, draft power and hauling services, savings and insurance, and social status and social capital (Moll, 2005). Government livestock policies have been long biased towards large ruminants in India, most of the rural households are reported to keep some dairy cows or buffaloes (GOI, 2006).

There are 29.41% SC household, 9.09% General household and 38.89% OBC household have various domestic animals like cow, goat, duck, chicken, buffalo etc (Table 21). It is observed that Poorer lower caste households are more likely to keep small ruminants like chicken, duck but richer upper caste ones, who are more likely to keep large ruminants like buffalo, cow, goat etc. Table shows that 10.59% of SC, 6.06% of General and 22.22% of OBC respondents said they have cow; 15.29% of SC, 3.03% of General and 22.22% of OBC respondents said they have Chicken (Table 22).

Table 21. Domestic Animals

	Yes		NO	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	25	29.41	60	70.59
General	3	9.09	30	90.91
OBC	7	38.89	11	61.11

Source: Primary Field Survey

Table 22. Different types of Domestic Animals (in %)

	Cow	Buffalo	Goat	Chicken	Duck
SC	10.59	00	5.88	15.29	9.41
General	6.06	3.03	3.03	3.03	3.03
OBC	22.22	00	5.56	22.22	5.56

Source: Primary Field Survey

3.f. BPL card:

Table 23. Household Have BPL Card?

	Yes		No	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	21	24.71	64	75.29
General	3	9.09	30	90.91
OBC	2	1.11	16	88.89

Source: Primary Field Survey
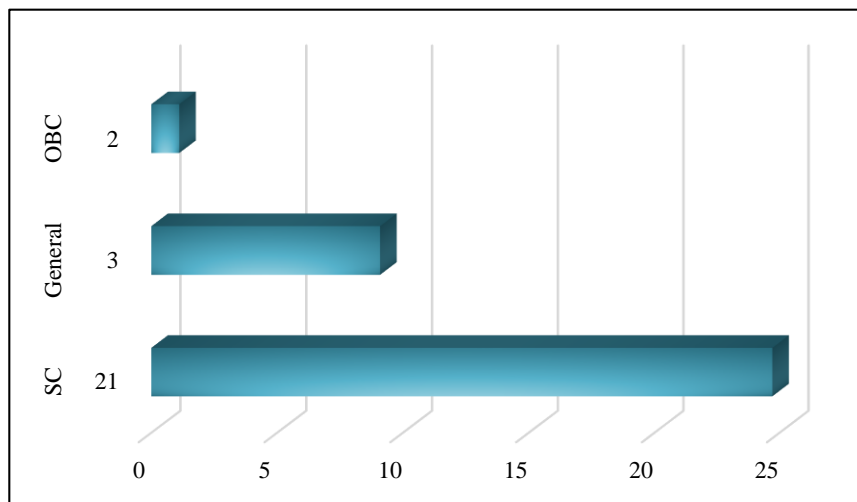

Figure 13. Household Have BPL Card? (in %)

Government of India used Below Poverty Line (BPL) as an economic benchmark to indicate economic disadvantage and to identify individuals and households in need of government assistance and aid. It is determined by using various parameters which vary from state to state and within states; Country to Country and within Country. A BPL is

defined a person/family that is not capable to feed itself solely because of their income is so less that they can't provide themselves with 2400 kcal per day per head for rural and 2100 kcal per day per head for urban area. Now a days government provides the BPL card to the families who are belongs to these criteria. There are 24.71% SC household, 9.09% General household and 1.11% OBC household have BPL card. It is clear that the rate is higher among lower caste than upper caste household (Table 23, Fig. 13).

3.g. Condition of health:

Data from the National Family Health Survey-III (2005-2006) clearly indicate that the caste stratification is directly linked with health status. This survey reveals that low levels of contraceptive use among the lower caste women compared to upper caste women. Both mother and her children faced different health problems like anemia, underweight, mal nutrition, stunting and wasting etc. Neonatal, postnatal, infant, child and under- five stages clearly show a higher mortality among lower caste. The National Family Health Survey-II (1998-99) also documented the similar picture of lower accessibility and poorer health condition among the lower caste people.

Body mass index (BMI) relates weight to height in a normalized index that was first published in Quetelet's 18th Century treatise on 'the average man'. BMI is defined as weight (in kilograms) divided by height (in metres) squared. As an individual's height and weight can be readily and inexpensively measured, BMI has become a popular heuristic approximation for body fatness in epidemiology and clinical practice. The World Health Organization (WHO) defined BMI-based fatness categories of underweight

(BMI < 18.5 kg/m^2), normal weight (18.5–24.9 kg/m^2), overweight (25.0–29.9 kg/m^2) and obese ($\geq$30.0 kg/m^2).

Table 24 shows that 10.59% SC women, 3.03% General women and 5.56% OBC women are underweight; 54.12% SC women, 51.52%General women and 50% OBC women are health; 5.88% SC women, 15.15% General women and 5.56% OBC women are Obese.

Table 24. BMI Level of Respondents

BMI Chart							
		SC		General		OBC	
		Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
Under weight	Below 18.5	9	10.59	1	3.03	1	5.56
Healthy	18.5 – 24.9	46	54.12	17	51.52	9	50.00
Over weight	25.0 – 29.9	25	29.41	10	30.30	7	38.89
Obese	30.0 and above	5	5.88	5	15.15	1	5.56

Source: Primary Field Survey
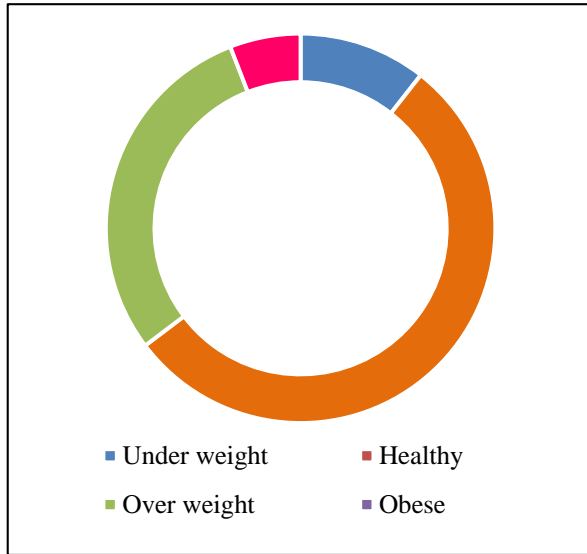
Figure 14. BMI Level in SC Caste
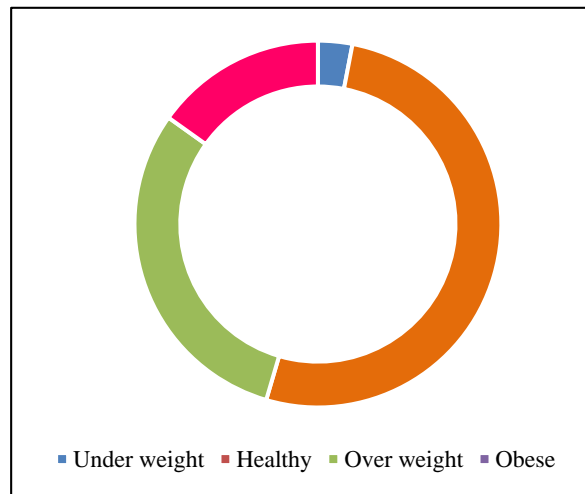
Figure 15. BMI Level in General Caste
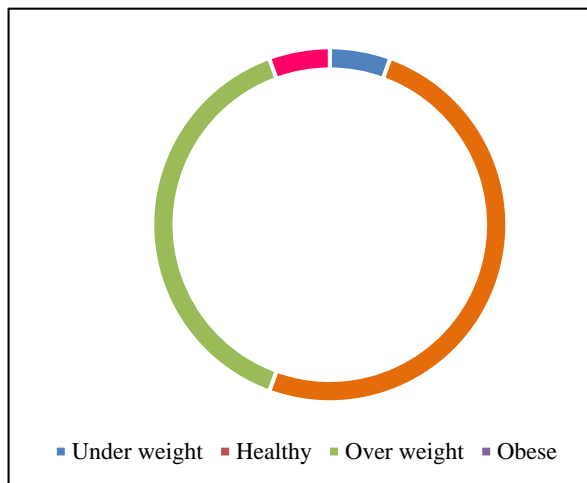
Figure 16. BMI Level in OBC Caste

3.h. Different health problems:

Table 25. Various Health Problems

		Aches & pain related to bidi work	Coughs	Stomach	Skin problems	Depression	Eye or vision problem	High blood pressure	Migrane	Others
SC	No.	53	20	32	16	4	47	16	30	7
	%	62.35	23.53	37.65	18.82	4.71	55.29	18.82	35.29	8.24
General	No.	11	11	8	1	2	17	11	6	6
	%	33.33	33.33	24.24	3.03	6.06	51.52	33.33	18.18	18.18
OBC	No.	10	2	15	2	0	9	3	3	1
	%	55.56	11.11	83.33	11.11	0.00	50.00	16.67	16.67	5.56

Source: Primary Field Survey

Almost all women are faced different types of diseases like aches and pain, coughs, stomach, skin problems, depression, eye problems, high blood pressure, migrane, sugar etc, Ranjit Singh and Padmalata (1995) described that, "bidi rollers were affected by respiratory disorder, gastrointestinal illness, and gynecological problems and are susceptible to fungal diseases, peptic ulcer and diarrhea". When asked about the problems related to work, they replied that it is mostly joint pain and vision problem. Table 25 also reveals that 62.35% of SC women, 33.33% General women and 11.11% OBC women have aches and joint pain; 55.29% SC women, 51.52% General women and 50% OBC women have vision problem; 37.65% SC women, 24.24% General women and 11.11% OBC women have stomach related problems. Continuous bidi dust and unhygienic living conditions increases the possibility of contracting diseases of the eyes, skin, joints and bronchial and respiratory problems like asthma and cough. Their ignorance, illiteracy and poverty have added to their woes all the more. During any event of sickness, they don't get to work, so they are not paid. So the life of women bidi workers is very tough, as they have to perform a dual role. While bearing and rearing children remain their primary responsibility, they are involved in economic activities also. As a result they suffer from stress and tension while managing both. There are 35.29% SC women, 18.18% General women and 16.67% OBC women faced migrane. In patriarchal social norms, these activities are 'invisible' and viewed as 'labour for love' (Doyal 1995).

3.i. Treatment center:

According to Mehta (1984), "it is a formidable task to organize health care at village or block level". Everyone should get basic medical facility but, in the rural areas they do not get necessary treatment.

In rural area there are mainly four sources from where they get necessary treatment. There are mainly, Hospital, Primary Health center, Private medical Dispensary and quack doctors.

Table 26. Treatment Center

		Hospital	Primary Health Centre	Private Medical Dispensary	Quack	Others	Nothing
SC	Number	67	59	30	35	59	0
	% among that class	78.82	69.41	35.29	41.18	69.41	00
General	Number	22	23	20	4	23	0
	% among that class	66.67	69.70	60.61	12.12	69.70	00
OBC	Number	14	6	15	4	10	0
	% among that class	77.78	33.33	83.33	22.22	55.56	00

Source: Primary Field Survey

There are 78.82% SC, 66.67% General and 77.78% OBC women go to the hospital or health center for necessary treatment (Table 26). Socio-economically developed people are mainly going to private medical dispensary. That's why the rate is high among Non-SC women. There are 83.33% OBC, 60.61% General and only 35.29% SC women go to the Private medical dispensary. Most of the poor SC people prefer to go quack doctors and take home made medicines. It reveals that 69.41% SC, 12.12% General and 22.22% OBC women said that they go to the quack doctors (Fig. 17).

Use of medical treatment of the women reflects their consciousness about their health, socio economic condition, development etc. but, now a days the position of SC women has quite improved.
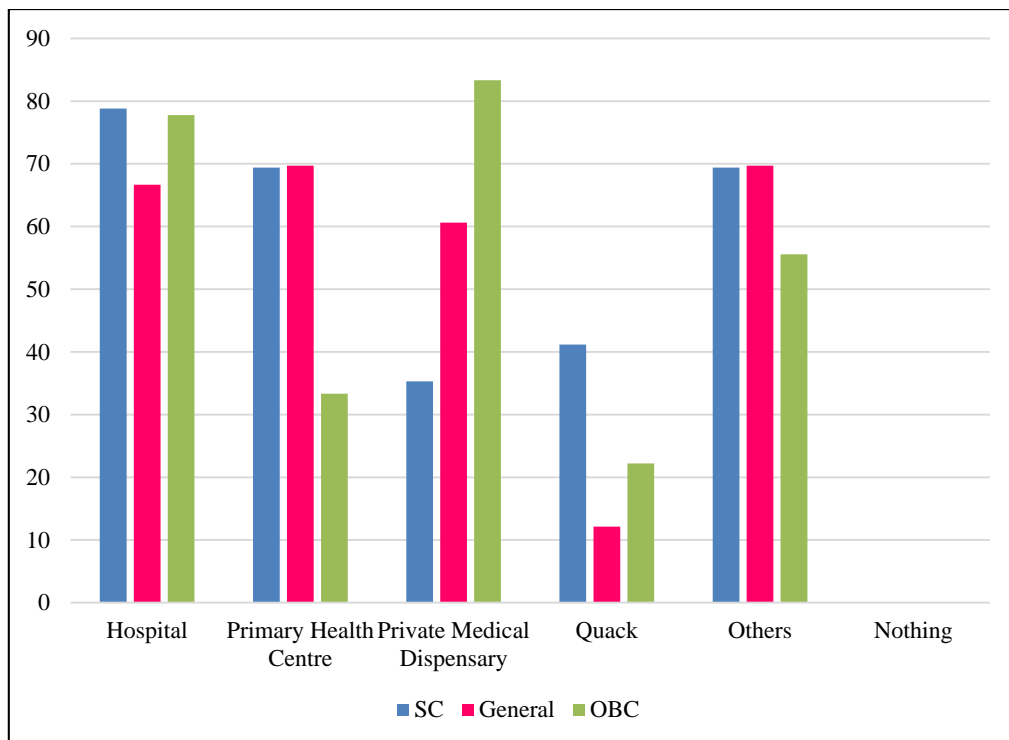
Figure 17. Treatment Center

3.j. Daily working period:

Table 27. Working Time of respondents (in Hours)

		0-5.0	5.1-10.0	10.1 & above
SC	Number	0	52	33
	% among that class	00	61.18	38.82
General	Number	8	22	3
	% among that class	24.24	66.67	9.09
OBC	Number	4	10	4
	% among that class	22.22	55.56	22.22

Source: Primary Field Survey

"Women -- especially women who have to juggle multiple roles -- feel the effects of intensive work experiences and that can set the table for a variety of illnesses and disability," said Allard Dembe.

Respondents report that they generally have to work up to 9 to 10 hours. Most of the bidi workers are worked on daily or weekly wages base. When they don't work, they are unpaid. Table 27 reveals that there are 61.18% SC women, 66.67% General women and

55.56% OBC women said that they worked up to 5 to 10 hours daily. Only 24.24% General and 22.22% OBC respondents said they worked less than five hours daily.

3.k. Did you or other female member of your family member use sanitary pads?

Table 28. Use of Sanitary Pads

	Yes		No	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	25	29.41	60	70.59
General	17	51.52	16	48.48
OBC	10	55.56	8	44.44

Source: Primary Field Survey

According to Ameade (2015), "There is no doubt that educating women brings greater benefits to society as family health, child survival, human capital investment, productivity and even
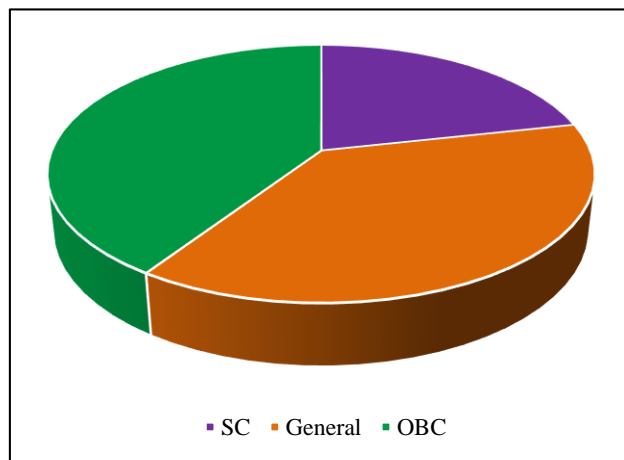

Figure 18. Use of Sanitary Pads

average life expectancy experiences significant improvement". Menstruation, which is an indicative of every female's sexual maturation, is rather associated with negativity in several societies sometimes requiring isolation as well as prohibitions from engaging in normal daily activities. Appropriate selection, use and disposal of sanitary materials as well as adequate body cleaning with soap, and seeking suitable diet during menstruation ensure good menstrual hygiene. But this picture is seen mainly in urban areas. In rural areas women are illiterate and they don't conscious about their health. There are 51.52% General women, 55.56% OBC women and only 29.41% SC women used sanitary pads (Table 28). It is clear that the rate is high among Non-SC women than SC women. Instead of sanitary pad many of the rural illiterate women used various other material such as ash, feather, soil, cotton wool, cloth, old pieces of mattresses, newspapers among others, to soak the menstrual blood.

3.l. Antenatal treatment:

Pregnancy is the most vital phase of every women's life. "For normal delivers' as well as for health baby need lots of medical care and nursing during pregnant period." (Yesudin 1988). In that time pregnant mothers are susceptible to attack various diseases. So, regular medical checkup is necessary in that period. Lower marriage, economic condition of their family, lower age of their pregnancies, heavy work pressure, prevalence of high dowry system and poor food is quite common for women. These result serious problem not only during the time of pregnancies but also after that.

On the other hand the condition of upper caste rich women is quiet better. Because of their high economic condition they are very much conscious about the health of the pregnant women. They are taken important and necessary medicines at that time.

Women from 64.71% SC household, 75.79% General household and 77.78% OBC household in that study area go for antenatal treatment (table 29).

Table 29. Pre-Natal Treatment

	Yes		No		NA	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	55	64.71	28	32.94	3	2.35
General	26	75.79	3	9.09	4	12.12
OBC	14	77.78	2	11.11	2	11.11

Source: Primary Field Survey

3.m. Place of child birth:

Social, cultural, demographic, economic condition, occupational structure, transport and communication network, availability of medical facility or levels of regional development, decision of the elderly person of the family, head of the society and sometimes of the religious head etc. are the obstacles of rural people. So couple do not have freedom in making decision where the child will be born. Economic condition of people is one of the most important aspect in determining the place of child delivery.

There are 8.71% SC women, 51.52% General women and 42.42% OBC women said their delivery take place at hospital (Table 30). At the same time in 27.27% General and 11.11% OBC household child delivery takes place at nursing home. For SC household no child birth takes place at nursing home.

Table 30. Place of Child Birth (in %)

	Home			Hospital			Nursing Home			Other Place		
	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	NA	Yes	No	NA
SC	8.24	89.41	2.35	8.71	10.59	2.35	00	97.65	2.35	00	97.65	2.35
General	6.06	81.82	12.12	51.52	36.36	12.12	27.27	60.61	12.12	00	87.88	12.12
OBC	00	88.89	11.11	42.42	11.11	11.11	11.11	77.78	11.11	00	88.89	11.11

Source: Primary Field Survey

3.n. Cooking fuel:

Serious health hazards are caused by smoke from solid cooking fuels like wood, grass, dung cakes, charcoal, straw, shrubs and agricultural crop wastes etc. In the Indian context, firewood is the dominant household fuel; in 2004-2005 75 percent of households used firewood whereas the incidence of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) was only 8.6 percent (NSSO, 2007). Bio-mass fuel like wood, dung cakes etc. directly link to the incidence of Indoor Air Pollution (IAP). This Indoor air pollution can cause chronic lung disease in adult women and acute respiratory problems in children (WHO, 2002). Exposure from cooking fuel is usually much greater among women, who spent most of the time in kitchen, and among young children who tend to stay indoors and who are often carried on their mother's back or lap while she cooks.

Table 31. Used of Cooking Fuel (in %)

	Charcoal	Wood	Cooking Gas	Kerosene	Dung Cakes
SC	00	95.29	75.29	61.78	32.94
General	00	66.67	88.57	48.48	3.03
OBC	00	83.33	88.89	50.00	33.33

Source: Primary Field Survey

Table 31 reveals that there are 95.29% SC women, 66.67% General women and 83.33 % OBC women used wood for their cooking purpose. So, it is clear that the use of wood is

much higher among lower caste than upper caste household. On the other hand, there are 88.57% General, 88.89% OBC and 75.29% SC respondents used cooking gas.

3.o. Use of LPG:

Table 32 reveals that there are 75.29% of SC household, 90.91% of General household and 88.89% OBC household LPG for their cooking purpose. The rate is high among upper caste household. They are more conscious about their health than lower caste women.

Table 32. Is the Respondents use LPG?

	Yes		No	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	64	75.29	21	24.71
General	30	90.91	3	9.09
OBC	16	88.89	2	11.11

Source: Primary Field Survey

3.P. Source of drinking water:

Water is the most important or essential aspects of everyone's life. We can not live without water. Health of the people depends upon pure water supply. Many diseases like typhoid, cholera, diarrhea, enteric fever, bacillary dysentery, many skin and eye problems are results from impure or unhealthy polluted water. However, in rural areas access to drinking water and toilet facilities is still very low. In 2012 report, only 39 percent of rural households have toilet facility inside the household or in the nearby area. In the same year, 44.3 percent of rural households report access to drinking water inside the house or in the nearby area.
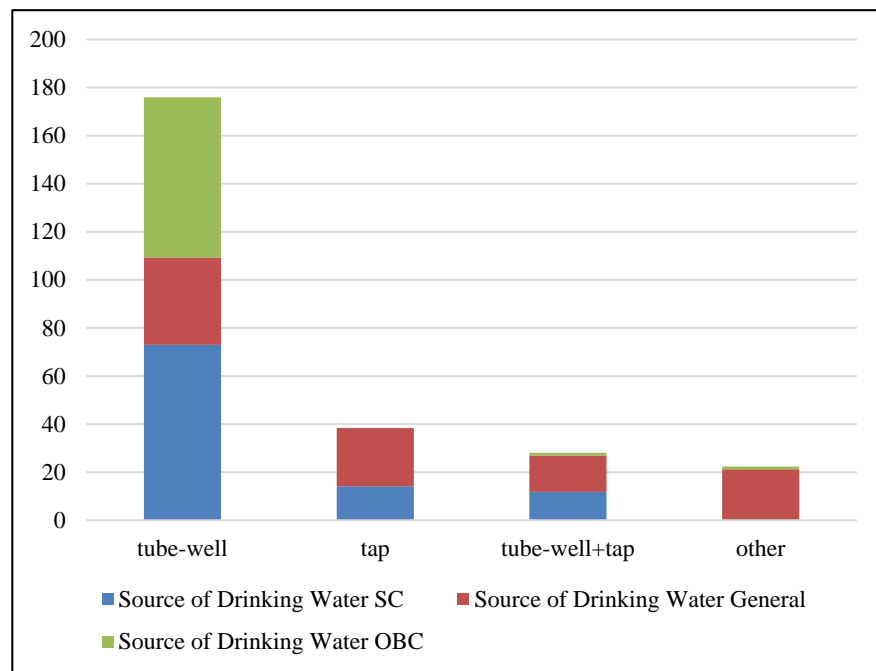

Figure 19. Source of Drinking Water

Table 33. Source of Drinking Water (in %)

	SC	General	OBC
tube-well	72.94	36.4	66.7
tap	14.12	24.2	0
tube-well +tap	11.76	15.2	1.11
other	0	21.2	1.11

Source: Primary Field Survey

In the study area people get water from different sources like ponds, tanks, rivers, wells, tube-wells, tap, pumps etc. In some area people collect safe and pure drinking water, from deep tube-well or tap. Many rich people can afford to have deep tube-well or tap water. Table 33 shows that there are 72.94% SC household, 36.4% General household and 66.7% OBC household collect drinking water from tube-wells. At the same time 14.12% SC household and 24.2% General household collect drinking water from tap (Fig. 19). Very few rich upper caste people used aquaguard for drinking water purpose.

3.q. Toilet type:

Toilet and bathroom are very important aspect in maintaining hygiene and health and privacy. Due to the absence of this facility people are forced to go outside. But in that study area every women said that they have individual toilet and bathroom facility.

Table 34. Toilet Type

	Attached with House			Outside the house		
	SC	General	OBC	SC	General	OBC
Number	18	25	12	76	20	12
% among that class	21.18	75.76	66.67	89.41	60.61	66.67

Source: Primary Field Survey

There are 21.18% SC household, 75.76% General household and 66.67% OBC household have toilet which is attached with their house (Table 34). Beside this, 89.41% SC household, 60.61% General household and 66.67% OBC household have toilet which is outside of their house. So it is very clear that most of the toilet of the SC household is outside of their house. Because of that these women are forced to go outside for nature's call or for taking bath.

4. OTHER PERSPECTIVES:

4.a. Upper & prestigious caste of the village:

Since Vedic period Brahmin, Kayastha, Vaishya are considered as upper caste people. On the other hand Sudra is considered as lower caste. But now a days this classification is based on occupational condition and economic status of any people. Throughout a long period of history, the Brahmins are enjoyed maximum social prestige. In the study area landholding castes also got social prestige for their agricultural lands.

Table 35. Is respondent faced Untouchability

	Yes		No	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	62	72.94	23	27.06
General	3	9.09	30	90.91
OBC	3	16.67	15	83.33

Source: Primary Field Survey

In past Sudras did not have right to join any social functions, they have not right to get education and keep agricultural lands. They faced different types of untouchability issues. In that study area there are 72.94% SC women experienced various untouchability issues. On the other hand only 9.09% General women and 16.67% OBC women faced

untouchability (Table 35). This data reflects that there are many people still believe in untouchability. But now educational level, socio economic condition, decision making power, regional development directly reduced untouchability issues.

4.b. Is there any incidence of inter-caste marriage?

Table 36. Inter-Caste Marriage

	Yes		No	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	6	7.06	79	92.94
General	13	39.39	20	60.61
OBC	10	55.56	8	44.44

Source: Primary Field Survey

Marriage plays important role of a family. Marriage in our society are controlled by different factors like caste, class, level of education, socio-economic condition, culture etc. Most of the Hindu family marriage is permissible within same caste and women are not allowed to marriage parents permission.

The incidence of inter-caste marriage is 7.06% among SC women, 39.39% among General women and 55.56% OBC women (Table 36). These data reflect that the incidence of inter-caste marriage is comparatively more among Non-SC women than SC

women. Because of agricultural based economy, joint family and property system, zamindary system where inter-caste marriage is not permissible among upper caste.

4.c. Nature of benefit from the government:

Table 37. Do you ger help from Government Policies?

	Yes	No
SC	72.94	27.06
General	33.33	66.67
OBC	72.22	27.78

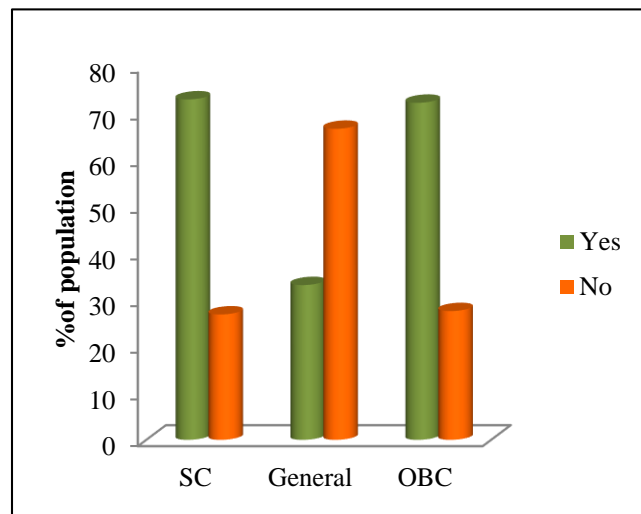Source: Primary Field Survey

Figure 20. Do you get help from Government Policies?

Table 38. Nature of Government Help

	Economic	Educational	Housing	Health	Political	Others
Number	0	37	75	5	0	0
% among that class	0	27.21	55.15	3.68	0	0

Source: Primary Field Survey

All the government helps are classified into economic, educational, housing, Public Health, political and others. SC people of the rural areas are mainly engaged as agricultural labourers or daily labourers with very little return. These people generally have large dependent population.

These data show that 72.94% of SC household, 33.33% of General caste household and 72.22% of OBC caste household have got different types of government help (Table 37). It has been observed from the data that more SC people are aware about the Government facilities. In many cases these SC illiterate people are misguided also and used to face various unfair incidences. There are 55.15 % of the household get Housing facility, 27.21 % of the household get Educational facility and only 3.68% get Health facility (Table 38). Other than this, there is no single household who has got economic and political safeguards for their development.

4.d. Was there any demand of dowry at the time of your marriage by your husband or in-laws?

Table 39. Dowry System

	Yes		No	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	34	40.00	51	60.00
General	7	21.21	26	78.79
OBC	6	33.33	12	66.67

Source: Primary Field Survey

In India Dowry is illegal, but it is still common practice to give expensive gifts to the groom and her relatives at weddings which are hosted by the family of the bride. Due to high rate of dowry, parents are not interest in girl's education. This system is existed in this village. It also noticed that parents are ready to give dowry in their daughter's marriage and it was mandatory if the bride have government job. There are 40% SC female respondents, 21.21% General respondents and 33.33% OBC respondents said at the time of her marriage their husband or his family members demanded dowry (Table 39).

4.e. Type of harassment:

Harassment is a serious problem for female in our society. It is also a form of male dominance over female. Everyday they faced different types of harassment like physical, mental and verbal. Study reveals that there are 44.71% SC women, 30.30% General women and 27.78% OBC women faced different types of verbal harassment (Table 40). Beside this there are 15.29% SC women, 3.03% General women and 5.56% OBC women faced physical harassment. So it is very clear that the level of harassment is very high among SC women more than Non-SC women.

Table 40. Types of Harassment

	Verbal		Physical		Mental	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	38	44.71	13	15.29	12	14.12
General	10	30.30	1	3.03	4	12.12
OBC	5	27.78	1	5.56	1	5.56

Source: Primary Field Survey

4.f. Do you have equal opportunity in making decisions with regard to household earning and expenditure?

Table 41. Is respondents have equal opportunity in decision making?

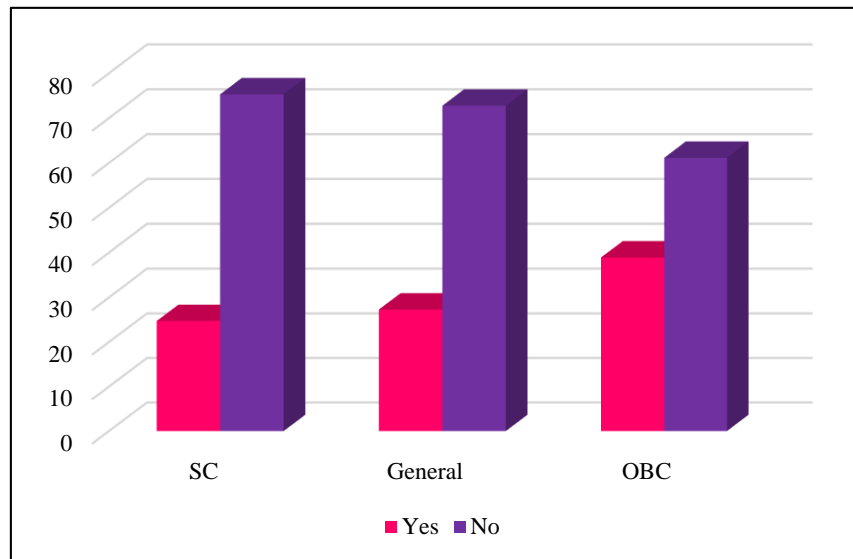|	Yes		No	
	Number	% among that class	Number	% among that class
SC	21	24.71	64	75.29
General	9	27.27	24	72.73
OBC	7	38.89	11	61.11

Source: Primary Field Survey

Figure 21 Opportunities in Decision Making

"Gender inequality dwells not only outside the household but also centrally within it" (Agarwal, 2002). In the decision making process gender inequality is very prominent and it varies according to segments of decision i.e. domestic, educational, economic, religious, social and political. In our patriarchal society women do not have the equal opportunity in making decisions with regard to household earning and expenditure. The rate of female decision makers is extremely low in comparison with the rate of male decision makers in the study area. They worked hard for their family but they don't have the right in decision makings on their own income. Table 41 reveals that 75.29% SC women, 72.73% General women and 61.11% OBC women responds that they don't have the right to make decision with regard to household earning and expenditure. There is a wide gap between the lower caste and upper caste female decision makers.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS:

Different indicators of demographic, economic and social aspects of SC and Non-SC women of the study area have been discussed separately in the previous chapters. To understand the total state of development of above mentioned individual aspect a combined result will be discussed here.

- In society Brahmin and rich persons are called upper caste. They are considered as the prestigious caste. On the other hand SC people are considered as exterior caste or lower caste. They are faced the problems of untouchability.

- Due to poor economic condition and poor educational level of SC women, they have very low demographic condition.

- Non-SC women and their family have higher economic development than SC women and their family. These upper caste women have higher social respect, large sized agricultural land, higher productive occupations, higher level of educational, better housing condition, better health status and so on.

- Most of the household of the study area are belongs to SC caste. Factors keep the Non-SC people in highly developed condition.

- Most of the SC women are engaged in bidi making activities. They worked on daily or weekly wage base.

- A large number of SC people are agricultural labour but the size of their lands are very small. So their monthly income is very low and a large amount of money is spent on their food.

- Beside this husband of upper caste women are engaged in farming, business, service and other high income-based job. So, their monthly income is also high.

- Dropout rates of women at primary school level are very high among lower caste household. It is also seen that parents have to go outside for their daily works and it is the girl's responsibility to look after their younger sister or brother.

- The majority of the parents who belongs to SC caste believed that their daughters go to the school because of better marriage prospects. So, their daughters are continuing their study until they are married off. On the other hand the marriage age of these girls is also very low.

- Most of the lower caste girls are getting education in Govt. school within the village. But, the upper caste children are getting education in private English medium schools.

- Most of the respondents are living in semi kuccha house. But, the upper caste families lived in pucca house. Families are medium and nuclear type of households. It has also found that most of the families have the facilities of electricity, water connection and toilet.

- Because of poor economic condition, lower level of living, lower education level, daily hard work a large amount of SC caste women are suffered from various types of health problems like aches and pain related to bidi work, coughs, stomach related problems, skin problems, eye problems, high blood pressure, migrane, pregnancy related problems etc. On the other hand the health condition of upper caste women is quite better.

- Most of the SC women used wood, dung cakes for their cooking purpose. But, most of the upper rich caste women said they used LPG for their cooking purpose.

- Majority of the respondents have bank account and mobile facility but least of them have vehicle facility.

- Most of the respondents have livestock as cows, buffaloes, ducks, chicken and goats etc. for the purpose of milk instead for business.

- Marriage age of girl's is remarkably low in the lower caste population.

- Different delivery complications have been observed as significantly high in lower caste women due to low age of marriage, low mean age of motherhood, low education level and bad socio-economic condition.

- In spite of the legal obligations in practicing dowry, the dowry system widely prevails in the study area. Most of the parents are ready to give dowry in their daughter's marriage.

- They faced different types of harassment like physical, mental and verbal. But the rate is higher among lower caste women than upper caste women.

- Most of the women responds that they do not have the equal opportunity in making decision on their own income.

CONCLUSION:

For measuring the status of women in this study area, different indicators of demographic, social, economic and power structure and administrative conditions have been taken into account.. From the field study it has been observed that in this study area demographic development is more among the Non-SC people than the SC people. SC women are facing untouchability and harassment at different level. Due to poor economic condition, most of the SC people have kuccha house and poor types of toilet facility. In this study area most of the women are bidi worker. Gender inequality has remained very prominent in case of work participation rate. Male work participation rate is much higher than the female work participation rate to a larger extent. They faced different types of health problems.

This area is fertile for agricultural land. But Non-SC people mainly the upper caste people catch hold this highly productive multi cropped agricultural land. Because of the poor educational levels of these people they could not join in other productive occupations. The economic condition of the SC people in very poor.

Education reduces inequalities and improved the status within the society and also within family. It is important for everyone. Higher Education enables individuals to increase their income and to engage is many economic activities. It reduces the gap in gender inequality. By education women improve their own and their children's health and chances of survival, because education empowers women to make choices. So proper

educational opportunities should be provided for women especially to lower caste in the rural areas at village level. The level of literacy is lower among SC women than Non-SC women. The key variable of caste and gender inequality is the high rate of school dropout among SC women. In this context, Jawaharlal Nehru said "If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family". A large number of parents don't allow to go their girl children in school because the distance of school is long. So, in addition to the physical distance, the 'social distance' to the school also needs to be considered. To reduce dropout of poor girl students costs for books and other learning aids, food, school dress and other conveyance must be borne by the Government. Gram panchayat, government as well as NGO should make various awareness programmes for all women. The government must make an exhaustive and comprehensive legislation, which could streamline the employment procedures for the working women, better school environment for lower caste children, working conditions, formulate awareness camp and other welfare facilities.

From the above analysis another important fact comes out that antenatal or prenatal care play crucial role in engendering of a woman. Prenatal care indicates a through and regular checkup of a pregnant woman to prevent any hazardous issues relating to give birth of that pregnant woman. In this prenatal care a pregnant woman is thoroughly observed by doctors and she is advised about do's and don'ts for the benefit of the mother to give birth of a healthy and fit baby. Prenatal care should be started at the early stage when a woman is confirmed of having baby in her womb. Primary Health Care Centers at village level should look after the matters that the pregnant woman is getting proper

prenatal medical assistance i.e. B.P. checkup, measuring of weight, upper and lower abdominal checkup, providing multivitamin medicines, immunity development medicines or injections etc. There should be proper infrastructure for normal delivery as well as cesarean delivery case. And the most important thing is that this Primary Health Care Centers should be located in easily accessible zone, otherwise this health centers would not be indeed beneficial to them.

Lower age of marriage is another problem of girls. This marriage age is remarkably lower in lower caste people than upper caste people. Girls are not taken any kind of decision making process at their house or community level. So, it is their right to aware of self-esteem. They may join with the Panchayat Mahila Samiti or similar types of organizations. They take decisions which is beneficial for their education, health, own empowerment, marriage, occupation, child bearing and other domestic spheres. They must be aware about domestic violence or any kind of harassment. These are serious punishable offence.

If we reduce the social distance between the higher castes and lower castes it was an important indicator of social mobility. Educational advancement, employment opportunities, participation in social and religious ceremonies, participation in socio-cultural activities, inter-personal interactions, inter-caste marriages, etc. play a significant role in reducing the social distance and bridging the gap between the higher and lower castes.

In rural areas all caste group is not well accepted the adoption of family planning methods. Moreover, ignorance towards family planning methods has been highly noticed in Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people. So, government should notice about that fact.

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