

Socio-Economic Outlook Of The Residents Of Manampettai Village, Karaikal District, U.T. Of Puducherry, South India- A Study.

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OPENING LINES

Caste is inlaid in a pre-determined hierarchy. It is something one cannot choose, but inherits. Caste matters a lot in everyday life and marriages are negotiated on that basis. It plays a decisive role in elections and as the saying goes, “Indians do not cast their vote but vote their caste”. (Bhupendra Yadav, *The Hindu*, 19th July 2011)

On the recommendation of the Government of India, the President in October 1950 included a number of castes as ‘Scheduled Caste’ in the Constitution of India under Article 341 (SC). With this they enjoy benefit of development and Welfare Schemes. (download.nos.org/.../L-30%20PROBLEMS%20OF%20SCHEDULED%20CASTES%).

With this backdrop in mind, the study was undertaken to portray the socio-economic composition of the villagers of Manampettai Village belonging to Scheduled Caste, in the District of Karaikal, Union Territory of Puducherry. The social structure of the village is similar to the social structure of India which is dominated by Hindu Caste System. It is a fact that the Scheduled Caste (SC's) has suffered a lot to rescue themselves from the clutches of poverty. So, the study is aimed to understand whether similar situation exist in the village by emphasizing on the socio-economic conditions of the villagers which include their occupation, income, marriage, family, housing condition, and education, status of male and female in the village and their level of inclusiveness.

The study is descriptive in design and since the villagers are dominated by agrarian activities and on top of that low educational background of the female and lower economic strata of the residents of the village made the researcher to have the following hypothesis-

Female Residents Do Face Some or Other Form of Exclusion

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION OF DATAS

Table No-1. Table Showing The Age & Income of The Respondents.

AGE INCOME (per month)	Upto Rs 5000	Rs 5001- 10,000	Rs 10,001 – 15,000	Rs 15,001 & Above	TOTAL
	7	1	0	1	9

18-27 Years	77.78 %	11.11%		11.11%	16.68%
28-37 Years	15 78.94 %	2 10.53 %	2 10.53 %	0	19 35.18%
38-47 Years	10 83.33 %	0	2 16.66 %	0	12 22.22%
48 Years & Above	12 85.71%	0	1 7.14%	1 7.14%	14 25.92%
TOTAL	44 81.50%	3 5.55%	5 9.25%	2 3.70%	54

On the whole 16.68% of the respondents are in the age group of 18-27 years, 35.18% of them are between 28-37 years, 22.22% are between 38-47 years and 25.92% of the respondents are 48 years and above.

On the whole 81.50% of the respondents earn up to Rs 5000/- per month, 5.55% of them earn Rs 5001- Rs 10,000 per month, 9.25% of them earn Rs 10,001- Rs 15,000/- per month and only 3.70% of them earn Rs 15,001 and above.

Among those who are in the age group of 18-27 years, 77.78% of them earn up to Rs 5000/- per month, 11.11% of them earn Rs 5001- Rs 10,000/- per month and an equal percent i.e. 11.11% of them earn Rs 15,001 and above.

Among those who are in the age group of 28-37 years, 78.94% of them earn up to Rs 5000/- per month, 10.53% of them earn Rs 5001- Rs 10000/- per month, another 10.53% of them earn Rs 10,001- Rs 15,000/- per month.

Out of those who fall in the age group of 38-47 years, 83.33% of them earn up to Rs 5000/- as their monthly income and 16.66% of them earn Rs 10,001 – Rs 15,000 every month.

Respondents who are 48 years and above, 85.71% of them earn up to Rs 5000/- per month, 7.14% of them earn RS 10,001- Rs 15,000 and finally an equal percent of them earn Rs 15,000/- and above.

The researchers would like to correlate here with another finding of the study which uphold the piece of findings in this table, is that 87% of the respondents have Red Colour Ration Card with them. Red Colour Card is issued by the Government only to those who are below the poverty line (BPL).

Table 2. Table Showing The Age-wise Marriage of The Respondents

AGE	Arranged	Love	Not Applicable	TOTAL
MARRIAGE				
18-27 Years	0 11.12%	1 11.12%	8 88.88%	9 17%
28-37 Years	13 68%	4 21%	2 11%	19 35%
38-47 Years	8 66%	4 34%	0	12 22%
48 Years & Above	12 86%	1 7%	1 7%	14 26%
TOTAL	33 62%	9 17%	11 21%	54

On the whole 62% of the respondents' marriage is arranged, 17% of them had Love Marriage and 21% of them are unmarried.

Among those respondents who are 18-27 years 11.12% of them had love marriage and 88.88% of them are unmarried.

Out of those respondents who are 28-37 years 68% of their marriage is arranged, 21% of them had love marriage and 11% are unmarried.

Among those who are 38-47 years 66% of them had arranged marriage and 34% had love marriage.

Among those who are 48 years and above 86% of them had arranged marriage and 7% of them had love marriage and another 7% are unmarried.

In nutshell, the study shows that the village is bound by customs and traditions and majority of the residents of the village abide by it and had married the life partner selected by their parents.

Table 3. Table Showing The Gender & Sources of Debt of The Respondents.

GENDER SOURCES OF DEBT	Money Lender	Bank	Relatives/ Friends	Not Applicable	TOTAL
Male	9 56%	5 32%	1 6%	1 6%	16 29%
Female	16 42%	14 37%	1 3%	7 18%	38 71%
TOTAL	24 45%	19 36%	2 4%	8 15%	54

29% of the respondents are male and 71% of them are female.

45% of the respondents go to the money lender for money, 36% of them go to the bank in case of need of money, 4% of them go to their relatives/ friends for seeking money and 15% of them do not borrow money.

Among those who are male, 56% of them borrow money from the money lender, 32% of them borrow money from the bank, 6% of them say that they approach their relatives and friends for money and 6% say that they do not borrow money at all.

Among those who are female, 42% of them approach the money lender for money, 37% of them approach banks, 3% of them approach their relatives and friends for money and 18% of them do not borrow money at all.

Even when most of the banks have now become very customer friendly, money lenders still seem to be busy in rural areas and continue to do a good business. It is understood that money lender are easily accessible, any time in need. They offer the most flexible mechanism of returning the loan, i.e. since most of the respondents are engaged in agriculture oriented labour, and being daily wage earners and they do repay their loan on daily basis. This flexibility is completely absent in case of other formal financial institution.

Table 4. Table Showing The Colour of Ration Card & Dropouts in The Family.

DROPOUTS IN FAMILY	Red	Yellow	TOTAL
RATION CARD - COLOUR			
Yes	11 100%	-	11 20%
No	36 83 %	7 17 %	43 80%
TOTAL	47 87%	7 13%	54

In table no. 4, the researchers have attempted to analyze the dropout and the economic condition of the family. Though the cause of dropout can never be attributed directly to the poverty but it may have been a reason. A further research can certainly ascertain this issue. But it is astonishing to see that all the families where there is a dropout case, they own a Red Colour Ration Card which means they belong to the BPL.

The table indicates that 20% of the respondents have opined that there is a case of school dropout in the family whereas 80% of the respondents do not say so.

On the whole 87% of the respondents have Red Colour Ration Card which is issued by the Government to the family living below poverty line (BPL). Cent percent of the dropout case are from those families who live below the poverty line. It is an encouraging sign to indicate that 83% of the families who live below the poverty line do not have any dropout case in the family. Only 17% of the respondents possess Yellow Ration Card.

Table No 5. Multivariate Table Showing The Sociological Profile of The Respondents

Occupation	Type of Family	House	Ward's Type of School
Agriculture 40 (75%)	Nuclear 49 (90%)	Own 52 (96%)	Government 48 (88%)
Govt. Employment 6 (11%)	Joint Family 5 (10%)	Rented -	Private 3 (6%)
Private Employment 7 (12%)	--	Lease 2 (4%)	Aided 3 (6%)
Business 1 (2%)	--	--	--

While analyzing the **occupation** of the respondents, it is found that 75% of the respondents are engaged in agriculture, 11% of them are Government employees, 7% of them are employed in private sectors and only 1% of them are found to be running their own business.

The table also clearly indicates that 90% of the respondents are in nuclear family and 10% of them are in joint family.

It is also found that 96% of the respondents live in their own house and only 2% of them reside in house taken on lease.

88% of the respondents opined that they send their wards to Government schools, 6% of the respondents send their children to private schools and another 6% of them send their offspring to aided schools.

RESULT OF HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis - Female Residents Do Face Some or Other Form of Exclusion

The Table Value is 3.84. The Calculated Value for df 1 at 0.05 level is 0.0056.

Since the Calculated Value is less than the Table Value, the Hypothesis stands Proved. Thus, it can well be said that the Female Residents of the village do face some or other exclusion in the village. To be more specific the type of exclusion experienced by the respondents is Ritual Exclusion.(as per the study)

The main finding of this study is that the female members face Ritual Exclusion in the village.

SUM UP OF CONCLTUDING COMENTS

The present study also paves scope for further studies to investigate the issues and a few problems relating to the socio-economic aspects. Though this study has been conducted with the aim to understand the socio-economic background alone of the village, the investigators have tried their level best to put forth some of the concluding comments by summing up in the following manner:-

81.5% of the respondents have a monthly income of up to Rs 5000/- only. It is a sorry state which deserves a mention here that 85% of the respondents who are 48 years and above also earn up to Rs 5000/- only as their monthly income. The main reason that can be attributed to this low income is that 75% of the respondents are engaged in agricultural work where the earnings are not regular due to intermittent nature of work. To substantiate this with another data it is also found that 87% of the respondents own Red Colour Ration Card, which is also a testimony of their poverty. And this also has an impact on sending the children (88%) to Government schools where the fees charged are very negligible.

96% of the respondents live in their own house and nearly an equal percent i.e. (90%) of them live in nuclear family.

Indian Rural areas were traditionally well known for joint family pattern. The modernization and impact of industrialization has not spared this old family pattern. Moreover, on the ground, the main reason for the break-up of joint family is that all the Welfare Schemes provided by the Government is made available to the family rather to an individual. So, the family's welfare benefit has to be divided among the family members irrespective of the size of the family. So, to avoid this, people tend to live in a nuclear family, so that they can avail a separate Ration Card. But another fact that has come out in this research is that 62% of the respondents had arranged marriage.

A touchy issue but needs a further investigation to confirm it, happens to be the main scope of this research article. The study has found that those respondents who belong to the Below Poverty Line- cent percent of them have a case of School Dropout in their house.

Finally, the testing of hypothesis proves that the residents of the village do face exclusion (ritual exclusion).

The conclusion would be incomplete without placing on record a few suggestions that could go a long way in improving the socio-economic conditions of the residents of Manampettai village.

As far as an attack on the poverty of the villagers are concerned, the local NGO's can take up the responsibility of training the prospective villagers on taking up self-employment schemes to substantiate their income. Moreover, the Self-Help Groups can probe and also be encouraged to take up small entrepreneurial activities in their own village to supplement their income.

The researcher is of the strong opinion that the quality of education in Government Schools is equally good when compared to a few private schools. Only thing that is found to be missing among the rural areas who study in Government schools is that the parents fail to motivate their wards in studies. There is also a lack of monitoring and supervision of the studies of the offspring. If this is done, the quality of education of the children of this village can be improved to a great extent. The researchers would like to go ahead and take the liberty of placing a simple suggestion to the teachers to take extra care about those children especially who hail from rural areas. This would go a long way in preventing the children from dropping out.

A small village is always considered as a webbed society where there is always a greater chance of maintaining peace and harmony and safeguarding all the traditions and customs which is the identity of India as a whole. The village as a whole can consider taking up the task of making the village a Model Village.

