



# SOCIAL CHANGE AMONG CASTE PRIVILEGED: INCLUSIVENESS THROUGH RESERVATION

DR. NEHARICA SUBHASH

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

CENTRE FOR STUDY OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSIVE POLICY

UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU.

**Abstract:** Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar belonged to the so-called lower caste in India. Hence, he suffered the agonies of caste discrimination in his educational and social life. He started many movements for the Dalits to make them aware of their pathetic condition. He struggled for 'equal rights to the lower castes in India'. Social inequality is there in Indian society since ancient times. Among the other factors which contributed to the inequality, the caste system in Indian society occupies the predominant role. As the lower caste was to subject traditional work with low-income earnings. Scheduled caste has low social and economic status. The low status is on account of socio-cultural-economic and political restrictions imposed on them traditionally by society at large. The process of transformation of lower caste people had taken place. Further, the impact of reservation provisions within the lower caste benefited and a few of them emerged as privileged among the lower caste. Thus, the present paper examines the efforts of the scheduled caste privileged and their organizations to improve the social, economic, and culture of scheduled caste people. It also intends to identify the roles of scheduled caste privileged and organizations in creating political awareness among the scheduled caste people.

**Keywords:** lower caste, caste discrimination, inequality, status, privileged

Many social philosophers have realized the adverse effects of caste-based inequalities in society and as such, have organized reform movements. India's indigenous reform movements had inherently revolted against the Brahminical value system, which gave divine sanction to Untouchability and caste-system. After Buddha, Mahavir rejected the notion of caste and birth of Sikhism is related to the caste prejudices rampant in the Varnashrama Dharma system. Reform movements in different states to achieve equality among people have also played a great role. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, *Kabir* talked of the rejection of the caste system and talked of one God and talked of a society based on equality. In this regard, as stated by Nandu Ram(2008), keeping aside an easily conceivable rich travelogue of social discrimination, subordination, exploitation, etc., and their discontent and consequent assertion over the last several centuries, the fact of the matter is that the Dalits today have gained the tremendous degree of confidence and realization of the significance of their strength, compared to that in the past.

**Significance:** Due to the efforts of such privileged among marginalized people have gained equality and social justice in society. So far, none of the studies were conducted on the social changes and status gained by the Privilege among the marginalized and the efforts of these privileges towards the empowerment of the scheduled castes. Hence, the present study is proven to be significant to explore the activities of these leaders toward the equality and development of scheduled castes. The achievements made by these privileged inspire the other marginalized to achieve extraordinary things in their life. Further, it is also needed to know whether

the scheduled castes feel social change in terms of equality, social justice, curbing discrimination, resistance against alienation, etc. Thus the study is proven to be significant to study all these aspects in the Jammu district.

**Objectives of the Study:** The present study is conducted:

1. To study the social background of scheduled caste privileged
2. To look into the attitudes of scheduled caste privileged toward their community
3. To find out the attitudes of forwarding castes towards scheduled caste privileged in society
4. To know whether scheduled caste privileged are supporting people of their own community
5. To analyze the views of the scheduled caste privileges towards a social change of different scheduled caste communities in particular and all the castes in general.

The present research work is mainly based on primary data collected from scheduled caste-privileged working in different sectors. The Class I-II employees were taken for the survey as they are the senior and people, influential people, even persons who have reached higher levels in different sectors. The primary data was collected from the scheduled caste privileged in Jammu province.

**Collection of Data:** The collection of primary data is proven as an important task in research work. The survey method is one of the most popular data collection methods in Social Sciences. The present study adopted a survey method for the collection of primary data. The present study aims to study the changes achieved by scheduled caste privileges and leaders and the efforts of these privileged to bring about change in their caste system. Hence, scheduled caste privilege is the sample unit for the present study. Scheduled caste privileges include political leaders, activists of scheduled caste organizations, social workers, doctors, engineers, and scheduled caste officials at higher posts in government departments and institutes.

**Review of literature:** Many Indian and foreign scholars devoted to caste study are Risley, Bougle, Hutton, etc. The Indian scholars Majumdar and Madan, Karve, Beteille, Ghurye, and Ketkar studied the caste structure in India. Regarding caste and occupation, Ibbetson views that the fundamental idea which lies at the root of the institution in its inception was the hereditary nature of the occupation. Toynbee says, "The Depressed class in India are typical examples of 'Internal Proletariat, namely people who are in the society but not of the society. Srinivas defines caste, as a hereditary endogamous localized group having a traditional association with occupation and as graded in the hierarchy depending on the occupation, though agriculture is common (in villages) to all castes from Brahmins to untouchables. All these research-based studies attempted this study discuss the pattern of interaction between privileged from Scheduled Castes with non- Scheduled Castes. In addition, the study will also be focusing on the patterns of interaction at social, economic, and cultural levels. This study will focus on the concepts of interaction patterns, Scheduled Castes, and Privileged.

There are a number of studies that have been carried out, especially on Schedule castes that refer to more social mobility. Few studies were notably focused on the relationship between education and social economic status of Schedule castes. All these research-based studies attempted to verify the impact and effect of the Reservation policy and the efforts of the government to abolish untouchability.

Wankhede (2001) has researched through the study of 150 respondents among SCs communities of different states. The residing locality of these respondents was under the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) housing scheme. The conclusion stated, that in the case of Scs, the contribution of education to positive change is directly linked to occupational mobility. It analyses that as compared to other means like economic development, political power, intellectual power, and even conversion proved to be effective, whereas the education sector, is considered slow but is useful for additional values and operational functions. Wankhede found very similar situating socio-economic variations. He states that the Scheduled Castes population in Delhi is divided into 36 different castes. Each of these does follow differences in their traditional occupations.

V. Rama Krishna and G. Sreeramulu (2010) both have researched on Scs privileged and their organization in the district Gulbarga in Karnataka state. They selected 40 samples from different castes like Holya, Madiga, Lambani, Waddar, korchar, Dhor, Samagar, Mang, Garudi and these members are professionally linked as political leaders, social workers, government officials, teachers and lawyers. A small proportion of the SCs has began to gain mobility due to quotas, especially in political institutions, bureaucracy and academia (Jodhka & Prakash, 2016). It is seen that only a small proportion has been able to enter the middle-level occupations in the occupational hierarchy. These mobile dalits are the new entrants to the already existing middle class (Srivastava, 2015). This article examined the efforts of Scs to privilege their organizations to improve the social, economic, and cultural values of Scs people. It also intends to identify the roles of Sc privileged organizations in creating political awareness among SCs people. 'In many ways, Scheduled Caste privileged do privileged participation and demand for political and social leadership, which shall hopefully persist and grow in the future. Increasing social complexity owing to internationalization may widen the gap between scheduled caste privileged. In these processes, with respect to social class well as gender, strengthening political and social participation of the Scheduled Caste privileged in the central field is one of the greatest future challenges.

As per the Census India 2011, Jammu & Kashmir has 2119718 households, a population of 12541302 of which 6640662 are males and 5900640 are females. The population of children between the ages 0-6 is 2018905 which is 16.1% of the total population (<https://www.census2011.co.in>)

The sex ratio of Jammu & Kashmir state is around 889 compared to 943 which is the national average of India. The literacy rate of Jammu & Kashmir state is 56.35% out of which 64.22% of males are literate and 47.5% of females are literate. The total area of Jammu & Kashmir is 222236 sq. km with a population density of 124 per sq. km. Out of the total population, 72.62% of the population live in Urban areas and 27.38% live in Rural areas. There are 7.38% Scheduled Caste (SC) and 11.91% Scheduled Tribe (ST) of the total population in Jammu & Kashmir. Scheduled caste includes a total of 13 castes as per the order of the Jammu & Kashmir state. But, it is noted that a few of the communities and castes are not available in the Jammu district and a few of these communities are dominated in the district. Hence, information was collected on the caste and sub-castes of the respondents and tabulated as under.

**Caste-wise distribution:** The specific caste or community of the respondents shows that out of a total of 80 respondents 16 (20%) belongs to *Ramdasia*, *Valmiki* (8%), *Megh* 17 (21%), *Attri* 4 (5%), *Mahasha* 16 (20%), 13 (16%) of the respondents belonged to *Chamar* and only 8 (10%) belongs top *Jheer* caste. It is noted that Jammu district has more *Megh* population comparatively other respondents from the community are selected for the study.

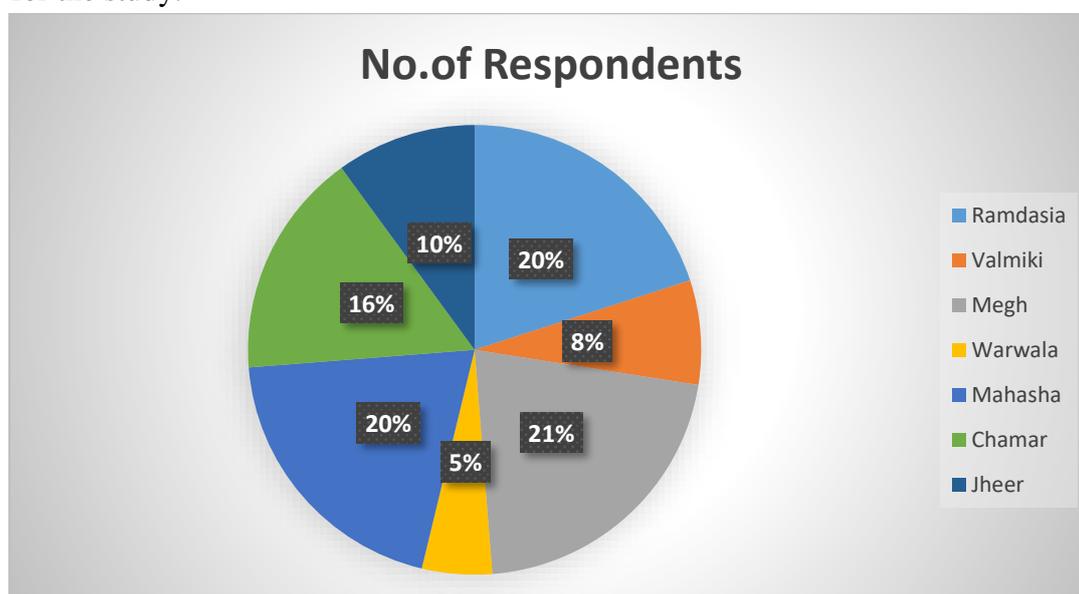


Fig:1 Caste-wise distribution of respondents

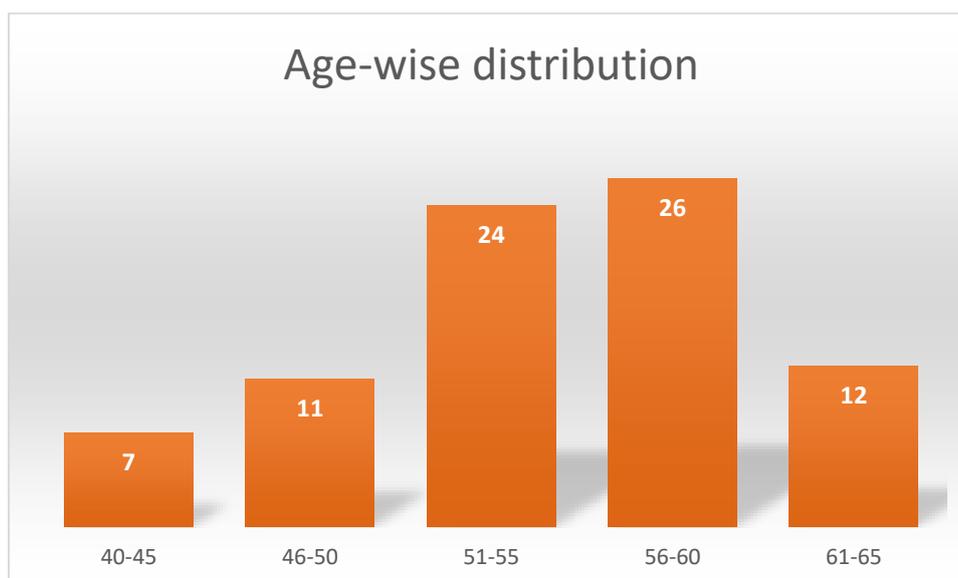
It is noted that there are also few of the scheduled caste privileged are females and a great majority of the scheduled caste privileged are males. The collected primary data from the respondents on gender is analyzed and discussed as under.

**Table No. 1 Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents**

Particulars	No's of Respondents
Male	69 (86.2%)
Female	11 (13.7%)
Total	80 (100%)

It is observed from the above table that, a great majority of the respondents 86.2% are males, whereas only 11(13.7%) are females. It shows that females among the scheduled castes are deprived of their castes as well as their gender and even the scheduled castes are not giving adequate preference for education and employment females. As such, females among scheduled castes are still more backward.

**Age-wise Distribution of Respondents:** The age of the respondents reveals their level of knowledge. That is, if the respondents are having more age, then they may have good knowledge based on their experiences in society and vice versa. Hence, the collected primary data on the age of the respondents is presented in the following figure.



**Fig:2 Age-wise Distribution of Respondents**

The age of the respondents shows that the majority that is, 26 (32.5%) are in the range of 56- 60 years followed by, 24 (30%) are in the age group of 51-55 years. It is summarized that majority of the respondents were on the verge of retirement as the respondents chosen belong to Class I and they are more experienced and have good knowledge about society.

**Educational Qualifications:** Education plays a significant role as it determines the knowledge of respondents like age. Hence, the primary data collected on the level of education of the respondents are shown in Table 2 revealing that majority of the respondents 41.25% have completed post-graduation, research degrees and were awarded Hon. Doctorates followed by 32.5 % have completed their graduation, and the rest 26.25% have gained degrees in various professional courses. It is highlighted that majority of the respondents have higher education or even higher degrees and only a few of the respondents are low-educated.

*Table 2 Educational Qualification*

<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>No.of Respondents</b>
Graduate	26 (32.5)
Post-Graduate/Research/ Hon.Doctorate	33 (41.25)
MSc. Nursing	3 (3.75)
MBA	9 (11.25)
MTech	7 (8.75)
MSc.Pharmacy	2 (2.5)
Total	80 (100)

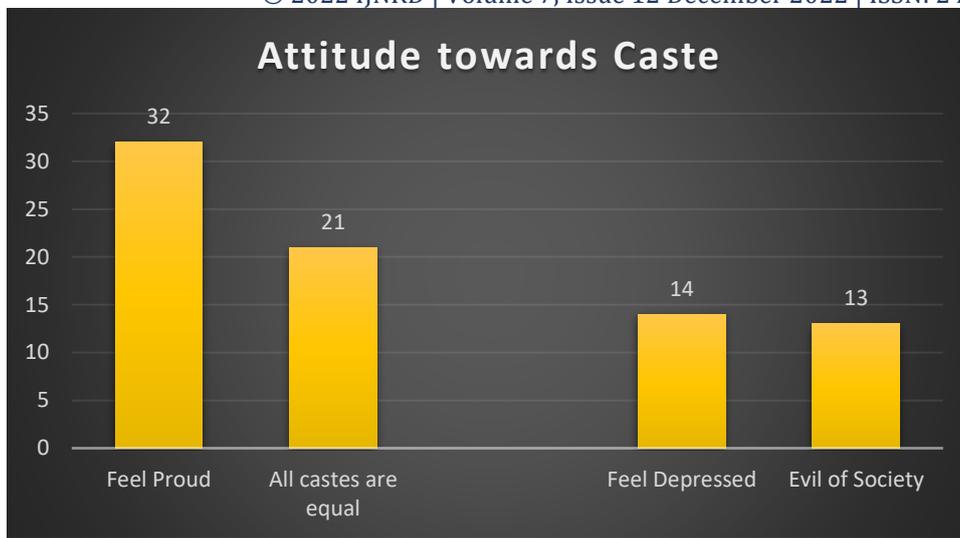
**Occupation/ Profession:** Of course, the Government has provided reservations in education and employment, but many of the scheduled castes were not willing to serve as Government employees. Few of the scheduled castes were interested to serve society politically and as such, they have become politicians. Further, due to the difficulties they faced during their childhood, they have cultivated ambitions to develop scheduled castes in society. Many of the scheduled castes were got educated and gained government employment at higher posts. In this way, scheduled caste privileged were chosen their occupations and professions based on their education, knowledge, and ambition to serve society.

*Table:3 Occupation of the respondents*

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Social forestry Department	2( 2.5%)
Education Department	18(22.55)
PHE Department	8 (10%)
Drug Control Department	8(10%)
Geological & Statistical Department	6(7.5%)
Medical Health Department	11(13.5%)
Agriculture Department	2 (2.5%)
J&K Civil Services Department	17(21.25%)
Social Welfare Department	8(10%)
Total	80

The occupations of the respondents revealed that 17 (42.6%) are working as administrators such as KAS, Project Directors (Smagra Shiksha), Chief Medical Officers, Chief Engineers, and Project Control Managers. It is noted that to collect the opinions of all the types of specialists working in all the fields, the scheduled caste privileged serving in Class I status were surveyed. It is noted that the majority of the respondents are of middle age or older age. As such, they are serving the public for at least 10 to 15 years. It has been observed that the majority of the respondents were dealing with the society of mixed castes for a long time period.

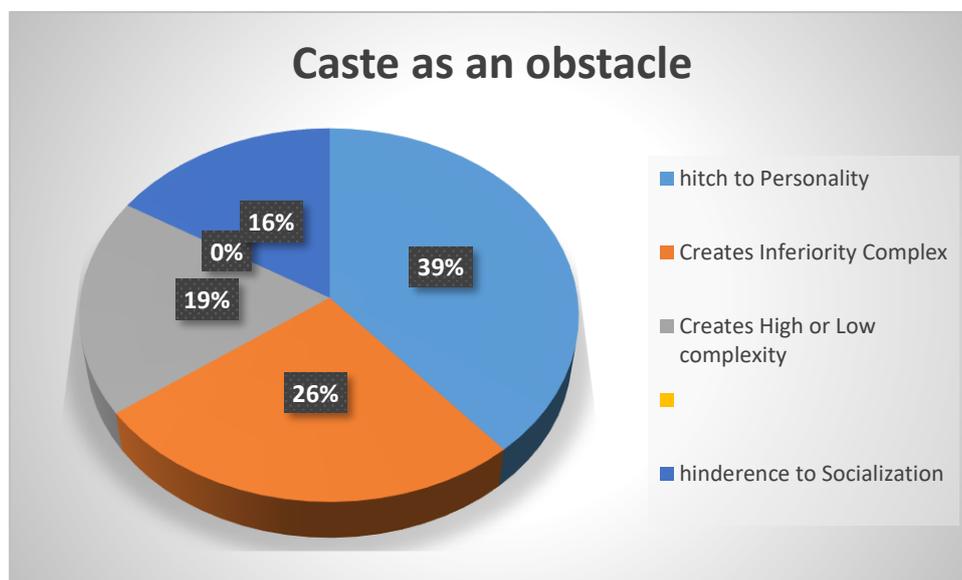
**Attitudes Towards Caste:** Many studies have already proved that caste has become an obstacle to the overall development of the scheduled castes. As such, many of the scheduled caste people feel inferior to their castes and even many of the scheduled caste people feel proud that though they were born in lower castes, they have reached higher positions in society and consequently, these scheduled caste people may feel proud about their castes also. In this regard, the attitudes of the respondents towards their castes are shown as under.



**Fig:3 Attitude of respondents towards Caste**

The attitudes of the respondents towards their castes show that 26.25% think that all castes are equal, 40% of respondents feel proud or termed themselves as SC privileged, 17.5% have felt depressed and 16.25% have stated that castes are evils of society. It is noted that the scheduled caste privileged have reached a noble position in society and as such, they have felt pride and equality of all castes in society surprisingly, a few of the respondents also felt depressed or feeling inferior due to their castes.

**Caste as Obstacle to Achievements:** Although many of the SC privileges are skilled, intelligent, and talented, due to them in society increases inferiority. In this way, though many of the scheduled castes are also having good talents, caste becomes an obstacle to their achievements.



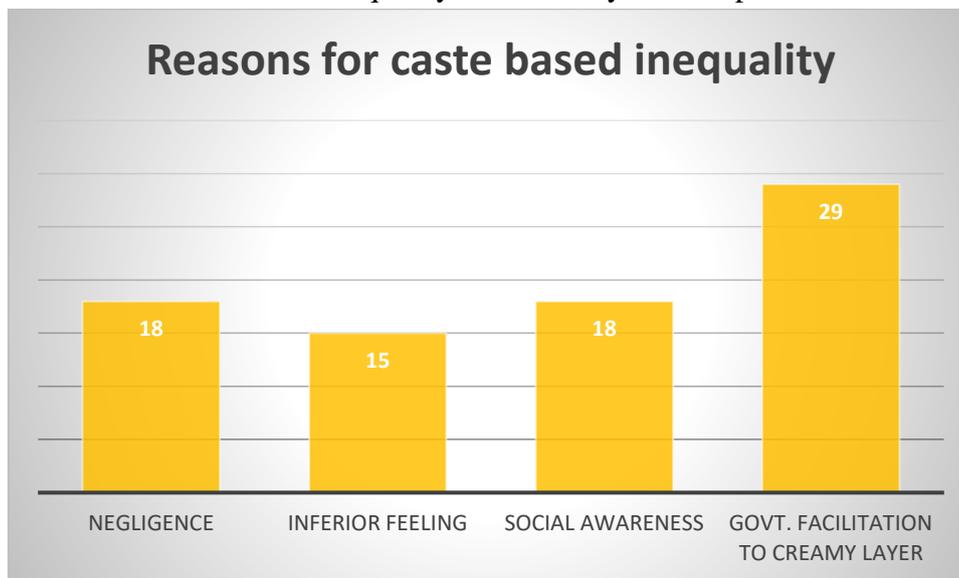
**Fig:4 Caste as an obstacle**

The above figure highlighted that majority that is, 39.0% of the respondents have agreed that caste has become a hitch that ruins their personality, 26% have felt that caste creates an inferiority complex, 19.0% have opined that caste creates high or low complexity and even 31 16% have mentioned that caste has become a hindrance when they socialize with people of other castes. Overall, it is concluded that caste has become an obstacle to the development of SC privileges.

**Effects of Caste:** There are many effects of castes. Earlier, many of the scheduled caste people faced atrocities, alienation from villages, social discrimination, untouchability, etc. But due to legal safeguards, these effects have been reduced, and still, in a few places, a few of such evil effects of castes prevailed. In this regard, it is observed that few of the respondents have mentioned more than one type of effect of caste.

Particularly, 31.4% have expressed that there is caste-based discrimination in society, and 21.7% have mentioned that there are sometimes atrocities from forwarding castes. It is highlighted that due to their castes, the scheduled caste people are facing many barriers and problems.

**Reasons for Caste-based Inequality:** The Indian Constitution guaranteed equality in all respect and it curbed discrimination in the name of caste, gender, race, etc. Further, realizing the caste-based inequality in society, the Government has formulated many of welfare schemes to enable social justice for the weaker sections such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Still, it is found that in a few of the areas and in a few of the aspects, the scheduled castes are facing caste-based inequality in society. The scheduled caste privileged are more experts and experienced in their individual communities and also in society. As such, there as one furnished on the caste-based inequality are stated by their respondents as under.



*Fig:5. Reasons for Caste-based Inequality*

The above figure clearly shows 18 (22.5%) have mentioned that illiteracy, poverty, and negligence were the main reasons for caste-based inequality in society and 15 (18.75%) have remarked that feeling of inferiority among the scheduled castes was established after the behavior of the upper castes was the reason for caste-based inequality, 22.5% have opined that poor social awareness regarding Brahminical order is the reason for caste-based inequality and 29 (36.25%) felt that the Government welfare schemes formulated for the welfare of the scheduled castes are gained only by the creamy layer. It can be shortened that, illiteracy, poverty, negligence, the feeling of inferiority, and poor social awareness were the reasons for caste-based inequality.

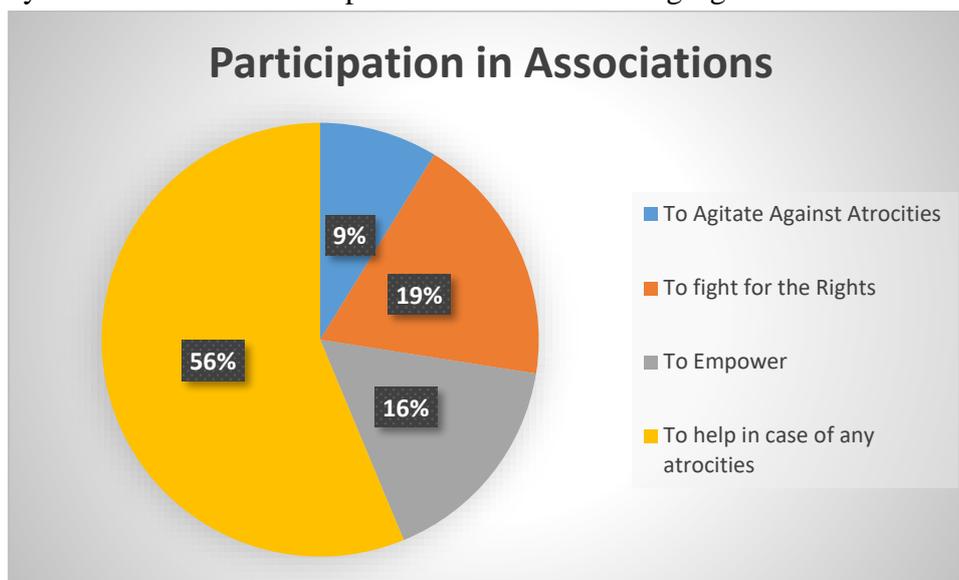
**Reduce caste-based inequalities:** The scheduled caste privileged are more educated and experienced in society. As such, they have more knowledge about the caste hierarchy and caste-based inequalities. Hence, it was asked the respondents how to reduce the caste barriers and inequality in society, and collected primary data is analyzed and discussed

*Table:4 Overcoming Caste-based Inequalities*

Do's	Respondents
More Reservation Policies	36 (45)
Promoting Inter-Caste Marriages	16 (20)
Communities awareness	21 (26.25)
Total	80 (100)

Respondents have their own perceptions to reduce caste barriers and inequality in society, 45% feels that by providing more reservation, caste barriers and inequality in society can be reduced, and 20 % stated that caste barriers and inequality in society may be reduced by promoting inter-caste marriages, 26.25% have remarked that enactment of more laws can overcome the caste barriers, as a society can progress only with civilized growth and inequality in society reduced if disclosure of caste is prohibited in public that is SC's have still not been accumulated in the mixed society.

**Participation in Movements of Scheduled Castes:** The scheduled caste privileged have reached popular and higher positions through education, hard work, and efforts. Many of them have been recognized as part of scheduled caste organizations/associations and even they may have participated in scheduled caste movements and agitations to enable social justice and equality for the scheduled castes in society. In this regard, the primary data was collected and presented in the following figure.



*Fig:6 Participation in Associations*

It is observed many of the respondents have participated in movements organized by the associations from time to time. They have participated in movements to agitate against Dalits, 19% felt that they should have participated to fight for the rights of the scheduled castes, others have participated in movements to empower scheduled castes and 56% have participated in movements to serve them in any case of violence against them.

**Status in Socio-cultural activities:** Scheduled castes have gained economic status in terms of income, employment, and public positions through attaining higher levels of education. Still, it is observed that many of the scheduled castes working at the higher level felt that, they are not treated equally at various events especially, in socio-cultural and family functions by fellow castes and hence, the information was collected from the respondents in this regard.

*Table: 6 Status in Socio-cultural activities*

Particulars	Respondents
Given Equal Status & Respect	46 (57.5%)
Don't Differentiate	22 (27.5%)
Suppressed & Neglected	12 (15%)
Total	80 (100%)

It is noted that of all the respondents on the status at socio-cultural and family functions of the forward castes, 46 (57.5%) are highly respected and have always been given equal status and respect, 22 (27.5%) were

never been differentiated only 12 (15%) are suppressed and neglected. Due to their public status, the scheduled caste privileged is getting equal or higher social status in society.

**Conclusion:** The present research study concluded with the interaction pattern among the Schedule caste privileged that they want to absorb with the upper castes. The privileged is an aggregation and not an active functioning primordial group as the members lack group homogeneity, equality of status and rank and equal distribution of power had always asymmetrical relations. Therefore, the idea of economic mobility does not seem quite sound as the facts contradict this proposition. Moreover, one of the main strands of the present paper is that in many ways Scheduled Caste privileged popular participation, and demand for political and social leadership will probably persist and grow in the future. Increasing social complexity owing to internationalization may widen the gap between Scheduled Caste privileged and the population, simultaneously creating greater strains on those filling the privileged positions. In these processes, with respect to social class as well as gender, strengthening political and social participation of the Scheduled Caste privileged in the central field is one of the greatest future challenges.

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