



Literary Perspective of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes of UT of Jammu and Kashmir

Miss Rupa

Guest Faculty in the department of English, GDC, Marh, Jammu.,India

ABSTRACT

Upbringing of downtrodden sects was the main challenge before Independent India. Thinkers and law makers gave birth to two words Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in India. Although they ensure the economic, political, social rights and opportunities to these sects by enacting laws time to time. But the reservation policy in due course of time is making rigidity in the minds of upper caste people and now at present these people are thinking that they are being discriminated. Moreover it has been found by many studies that the actual goal of reservation policies and affirmative actions were not achieved till date. Huge disparities are seen within sub-castes of scheduled caste. There is still the menace of ban on inter sub-caste and sub sects of tribe marriage. Still many evil practices are been followed by downtrodden sects but positives changes have been seen also in the field of education, culture, politics. The main aim of writing this paper is to give a picture of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes of Jammu and Kashmir in literary context.

Introduction

The caste system and regional disparities has been an influence on the socio-cultural and economic development of India. Despite the todays occupational changes and modernization. The present Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir lies at the extreme north of India Sub-Continent in Himalayan region bounded on north by China, east by Tibet and west by Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Afghanistan. The main motive of writing this paper is to highlight the literary world of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes of UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir has three geographical divisions i.e. Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh divisions. Recently Government of India abrogated Article 370 and enacted Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019 thus has changed its statehood and splits it into two Union Territories viz. UT of J&K and UT of Ladakh. As per the record of census 2011 total population of scheduled caste in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is 9.24 lakh out of these 30% are dwellers of Chenab Valley and remaining are spread over Kandi belt of Kathua, Samba, and R. S. Pura and Jammu. Scheduled Caste are Jammu centric and 82.6% of them reside in rural areas. There are 13 castes among scheduled caste population in Jammu and Kashmir out of which Megh (40%), Chammar (24.9%) and Doom 8%. These three sub-castes constitute 84.2% of the total population. Four sub-castes namely Batwal, Barwalla, Basith and Saryara account for 12.9%. The remaining six castes constitute only 2.9% of the total population. Among all Wattal is the smallest community having below 200 population only. The overall sex ratio of scheduled caste in J&K is 910 female per 1000 males which is quite lower than national average.

Scheduled Caste of these regions are educationally backward due to extreme poverty, exploitation from generation to generation by upper castes, rituals and customs. All these lower caste communities are among poorest of the poor. Historically they were considered as services caste with jajmani transactions. The scheduled caste of the chenab valley has unique cultural identity as compared to other areas lower caste. They have their own dialects, customs and rituals. There are strict codes of conduct for scheduled caste in the society. These code of conduct finally interlinked with culture.

Scheduled Caste of Jammu and Kashmir and their exclusion

Even in the modern era scheduled caste of India as well as of Jammu and Kashmir are facing social discrimination. Reservation which was adopted by Indian Parliament in order to reduce gap of exclusion however proved oil in fire for social exclusion. Although religious exclusion of scheduled caste in J&K has seen reduction up to edge, but social exclusion and ban on inter-caste marriage is still practised by elite classes (Hafiz & Joshi 2018). The main reason which is making radical mind of elite class towards downtrodden class is reservation. It is the reservation which is safeguarding the education, job, political and financial security of scheduled caste but making them vulnerable community in the eyes of upper caste. As per official record of crime report 64% scheduled caste in India are restricted from entering Hindu worship places and 52% are prevented from using cremation grounds of upper caste. Even in today's busy and modern life, upper caste people are treating scheduled caste in same way as their fore father were treating. Bureaucrats see scheduled caste as their carriers, politicians as votes and businessman as labour.

Socio-Economic scenario of Scheduled Tribes in Jammu and Kashmir

Scheduled tribe population of UT of J&K is spread over the area of Chenab Valley, Pir-Panchal, Mirpur, BalwallaKote, Poonch and Rajouri regions. Migrant scheduled tribes come from the parts of Punjab during summer season. *Based on religion belief scheduled tribes are divided as Hindu scheduled tribes and Muslim scheduled tribes. Among Hindu scheduled tribes Gaddi are prominent and they are settled type of tribe residing over the area of Chenab Valley. They have lineage with the Himanchal Pradesh gaddi tribes. Gaddi has their own unique dialects other than the local one. Among Muslim tribes Gujjar and Bakarwal are dominant (Koundal 2014).* These two tribes, although practice Islam but have different customs and cultures as compared to other Muslims of the areas. Gojri is local dialect of these tribes. The main occupation of Gaddi, Gujjar and Bakarwal is domestication of milch and mutton animals. In summer season these tribes along with their animals they goes to upper reaches and meadows and in winter season migrates to kandi regions and even some migrate to Punjab. Mutton and milk products are main source of earning. *Due to reservation in education and jobs and modernization practices young generation of these tribes are limited to ethnicity. They believe that change is only tool which helps survival in this modern society (Hafiz 2015).*

A great Sufi poet HazratMajoor of KhaddiShriefMirpur has written a book titled "Mashavi-Batul-Malukh" in 1892 to 1907. He describe the socio-economic scenario of gujjar and bakarwal in the region of J&K. We are not much aware about the gojri literature because there are less written records due to high illiteracy rate but it is preserved in the shape of gojri folk songs and folk tales and has been surviving from one generation to another. Mostly gojri folk songs includes storytelling, about the events of war, death, sorrow, love songs, nomadic life, hardship, Islamic contents such as Naats, Haddis. Some common gojri folk songs are Chahog or Doha, Doli, Sehra, Boli, Balo, Cuckoo, Maya, Basakh etc. Nowadays mostly settled gujjars are leaning towards education and doing tremendous job in promoting gojri language and literature and one of the prominent personality is Dr.JavaidRahi. *Gaddi tribe write Takri in local script. Lesser people of this tribe know how to read and write Takri especially Chela (Tantrik). They used these words or spells for treating people from evil spirits. Young generation of gaddi tribe are unaware about the Takri literature (Banti 2019).*

Conclusion

Right from the time when human being started living together in community division and strata ruled us. Gradually due to advancement of technology and learning skills these stratification of communities changes in many countries from casteism to rich and poor, advanced and backward. But regarding our country India here still one can find the glitches of disparities on the basis of religion, caste, creeds, languages. Here advancement and betterment of life doesn't matter for some sects, still they do discrimination with other sects and make them away from the opportunities. As for UT of Jammu and Kashmir we can say that here the scenario of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes is shifting from old age practices to modernization. Due to this however they are loosing their ethnicity but change is the natural phenomenon. Here too some malpractices are still in practice in both

communities. Here not much income disparity is seen between general and selected castes and tribes. Reservation is burning issue both for general and downtrodden castes/tribes. As seen it is making wide and rigid gap between two sects of society. Timely experts and law makers should take appropriate action on this matter before this explode and cause major damage to country.

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