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# Changing Pattern of Social Interaction among Dalit Women in Patna District (Bihar): A Sociological Study

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### ABSTRACT

This paper has been tried to examine various aspect of the Changing pattern of social interaction among Dalits in Patna district. Dalits are traditionally untouchable and depressed class in India According to Verna system they are bottom on the line and are excluded from educational system and property. before independence Dalits are also excluded from social untouchable. After Independence; Indian traditional society has undergone a change due to various factors, e.g., urbanisation, changing occupational structure, rising literacy, democratic value system, Constitutional and legal measures for protective discrimination. Government started socially desirable and economically viable developmental measures to protect equality of opportunity of every individual. But all social groups have not benefited equally in last seven decades. Scheduled Castes (Dalit, used in exclusive sense of the term) is designated as 'disadvantaged group' even today. The paper is descriptive and analytical in design, based on primary and secondary both sources of data.

**Keyword:** - social interaction, untouchability and Dalits

### Introduction

Dalit are traditionally untouchable and depressed class in India according to Verna system. They are bottom on the line and excluded from socially, economically, politically and educationally. The word Dalit literally means to 'oppressed or broken' is generally used to refer to people who were once known's as 'untouchables', those belonging to caste outside fourfold verna system. Traditional Hindu society was generally divided in accordance with varnashram dharma, into chaturvaranas - the four categories were Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. Early vedic priod the used fifth verna know as "Panchayats" also known as chandal there were fifth varnas because they were of system during vedic period they ware chandalas and asprushas (a term used by manu), 'harijan' (a glorified term by mahatma Gandhi). Harijan means people of god, exterior caste (a term used by J.H hutton). During there were British time called as outcaste and depressed castes.

The term depressed classes was mentioned in census report of 1921, but since enactment of government of India act 1935, Dalit are consistently referred as scheduled castes. Within Dalit community, there are many divisions into sub-castes; they are divided into leather worker, street sweeper, cobbler, agricultural worker, and manual "scavenger", etc. According to oxford dictionary, Dalit is relatively a new term, while scheduled caste is a statutory term used for those castes, which have been included in a particular schedule in constitution. In this thesis term dalit has been used exclusively to refer scheduled caste

Dalits are the persons within society, who belong to a caste which Hindu religion considers to be polluting by virtue of hierarchical occupation. The present common use of term Dalit goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When the Marathi social reformer Mahatma. Jyoti Rao Phule used it to describe the out caste and untouchable as oppressed victims of the Indian caste system. "Dalit" is a designated name for a group of communities in India who were historically considered to be untouchable and their works were considered to be very menial, such as, shoe repair, butchering, washing, sweeping, waste and animal carcass disposal, manual scavenging, and cremation work, etc. These people were considering socially inferior and faced economic, political and social discrimination.

### Social Background

Social background of the individual playas an important role in the formation of personality. In this study a set of personal characteristics namely age, education, occupation, sub-caste etc of the 200 respondents have been examined and presented in this paper. The present study reveals that out of 100 respondents in developed block and 100 respondents in under-developed Block, the greater number of respondents are from the age 18-35, i.e., 62 percent in developed block and 46 Percent in under-developed block, of which the next higher is under the age group 36-55, i.e., 32 percent in developed block

and 44 percent under-developed block . Of all these age group the lowest population stands at 6 percent in developed block and 14 percent in under-developed block the age group 56 and above.

Caste is another important factor when it comes to the social background of the respondents in this study. From the present study it was found six sub-caste groups from both blocks mostly belong to the dushadh caste group that is 30 percent in developed and 66 percent is underdeveloped. The second chamar caste group in majority is the 18 percent in developed and 20 percent in underdeveloped block. Thirdly caste group Pasi in majority are 22 percent in developed and 14 percent underdeveloped village. Fourth Mushar caste group are 22 percent in developed, 4 percent is Nat caste group in developed and last Dhobhi caste group is 4 percent in developed block. Mushahar, nat, Dhobhi is not available in underdeveloped block during my field study In this study it has been found that the literacy rate is satisfactory among the Dalit women. Majority of respondents are moderate educated 62 percent 51 percent of developed villages and 73 percent of under-developed villages, respectively. 33 percent illiterate 43 percent of developed and 23 percent of under-developed villages and very few Dalit women only 5 percent 6 percent of developed and 4 percent of under-developed villages, respectively belong to higher education level.

In the study it is found that 31 percent majority of them are engaged in agricultural labour, of which 32 percent is in developed villages and 30 percent in under- developed village. Another significant category is peasants of only developed village 6 percent. 2 percent is in Gov-job and social servicewomen both are equal percent from developed and under-developed village. Only 2 percent Dalit women have business women from the under-developed village. 4 percent of Dalit women are engaged in non-agricultural labour, while 3 percent is in developed and in under- developed village it is 5 percent. 7.5 percent is engaged in animal husbandry in both developed and under-developed villages. Field data show that 41 percent majority of the Dalit women are housewife/ unemployed mainly reasons of the Indian patriarchal system. However occupational mobility has been seen within in this both developed and under-developed village.

Majority of 41 percent Dalit women have no any income due to unemployment/ housewife within in Dalit community. Next majority of them 46 percent are in the range of Rs. 5000- 100000 from developed and underdeveloped village 45 percent and 47 percent respectively. Rs. 100001-200000; is 6 and 5 percent in both categories of village. Third majority category of 4.5 percent Dalit women are in the range of Rs. 200001-300000 from developed and under-developed village. Above Rs 500000 annual income is for 1.5 percent respondents from both villages developed and under-developed 1 and 2 percent. Income of some of the Dalit women has significantly increased in last few decades due to various government program and initiatives. After developed LPG program many impacts of Dalit community with modernization, industrialization and occupational mobility.

### Methodology of the Study: -

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected through non-participant observation and semi-structured interview schedule. Secondary data has been collected through various publications of Census of India, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry and Welfare Department and various report.

### Sampling Method

Patna district was selected purposively in this study, because it is one of the most developed districts in the state of Bihar. The study has been carried out in two blocks in Patna district of Bihar. Briefly, following has been sample plan of this study:

In the first stage, two blocks were selected- one developed (Phulwari) in terms of infrastructure and economic indicators with higher Dalit population; and other under-developed (Barh) in the above terms, albeit with a higher population of Dalit.

In the second stage, two Panchayats from each block were selected to capture major sub-castes of Dalits.

In the third stage, following random sampling method, 50 Dalit households were selected from one village from each Panchayats, with the help of Panchayats records and census report. In selection of households' utmost care has been taken for representation of major sections of Dalit sub-castes. Thus, the sample size of this study is 200 households.

**Table 1.0 A Detail of Sampling is Present in Table Below**

	Developed		Under-Developed	
Block	Phulwari		Barh	
Panchayat	Alampur Gonpura	Sakraicha	Bhatgawanan	Birhana East, Birhana West
Villages	Gonpura	Sakraicha	Langarpur	Birhana East
	50 Household	50 Household	50 Household	50 Household

**Source:** Field Data

### Field of the study

field study concentrates around two prominent Villages under the two blocks of Patna districts. Where one developed block (Gonpura village) and another under- Developed block (langarpur). Therefore, for the purpose of location of the work, it is essential to provide a brief account of the state of Bihar in general and of the two blocks of Patna districts that is Fhulwari and Barh in particular. Bihar is an important state of northeast India. It has a total area of 94,163 Km<sup>2</sup> and total population is 104,099,452 (2011, census). The density of population is 1,102/km<sup>2</sup> i.e. 2850/sq mi. its literacy rate is 69.83 percent. Where male is 70.32 percentages and female is 53.57 percentages.

### Objective of the Study: -

Main aim of the study is to explore emerging socio-economic and political sub-structures changes among Dalit women due to educational attainment and its resultant impact on traditional social structures.

## Results and Discussion: -

### Pattern of social interaction

#### Discrimination among Dalit sub-castes within the village

Table data show regarding distribution of Dalit sub – castes in sample village. Most preponderant is Dushadh, dhobi and pasi in all 4 villages, followed by chamar in 3 villages, Nat and musahar in 2 villages. Pan was available in only one village out of total sample villages.

**Table 1.1: Dalit sub-castes in sample villages**

Village category	District	Block	Name of village	Name of Dalit sub-caste
Developed village	Patna	Phulwari	Alampur Gonpura	Dushadh, musahar, pasi, chamar,dhobi ant Nat
			Sakraicha	Dushadh , pasi, chamar, musahar, Nat and dhobi
Under-developed village	Patna	Barh	Langarpur	Dushadh, chamar, pasi and dhobi
			Birhana	Dushadh, pasi, pan and dhobi

**Sources:** Field Data

In this table, an attempt has been made to examine changing dynamics of social interaction within Dalits themselves. In term of caste based discrimination within Dalit sub – castes; majority of the respondents 74.5 percent (88 and 61 percent in developed and under-developed villages) replied in negation. But 25.5 percent of them (06 and 39 percent of both categories of villages) reported that they do experience such discrimination within their community. Here it is important to note that caste based discrimination within dalits is much pervasive in under-developed villages.

**Table 1.2: Discrimination among Dalit sub- castes within the village**

Details		Developed village		Under-developed village		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Caste based discrimination within Dalit sub-castes in your village?	Yes	12	12.00	39	39.00	51	25.5
	No	88	88.00	61	61.00	149	74.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Sources:** Field Data

#### Participation of non- dalits in dalits' social occasions

In this table analyzed about participation of non-dalits in dalits' social functions. Field data has shown that, 81.5 percent respondents said that they also invite them on social occasions and 70 percent reported that non-dalits do participate on their request. But more than 18.5 percent respondent said that not invite non-dalits on my home any social occasions 30 percent respondents not coming non-dalits community at my house on the social occasions.

**Table 1.3: Participation of non- dalits in dalits' social occasions**

Details		Developed village		Under-developed village		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Do you invite non-dalits on socio- religious occasions?	Yes	88	88.00	75	75.00	163	81.5
	No	12	12.00	25	25.00	37	18.5
Do non-dalits visits on such occasion?	Yes	70	70.00	70	70.00	140	70.00
	No	30	30.00	30	30.00	60	30.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Sources: Field Data

In term of accepting food in Dalit households by non- Dalit is a significant indicator of changing dynamics of social interaction between Dalit and non-dalits. 85.71 percent respondents said that non-dalits do take food in their social functions (88.57 percent developed and 82.85 percent of under-developed village). Another only 14.29 percent respondents reported that non-dalits do not take food in their social occasion 11.43 and 17.15 percent of developed and under-developed respectively. As per field data shows that discrimination has been reduced among non-dalits specify main factors economic, political and educational mobility. Majority of them replied due to educational development 93.33 percent, followed by political development 58.22 percent and economic development 71.66 percent.

**Table 1.4: Detail of acceptance of food given by dalits**

Details		Developed village		Under-developed village		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
If non-dalits comes on such occasion do taking meal?	Yes	62	88.57	58	82.85	120	85.71
	No	08	11.43	12	17.15	20	14.29
<b>Total</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Factors of change	Economic development of dalits	45	72.58	41	70.68	86	71.66
	Political development of dalits	42	67.74	28	48.27	70	58.22
	Educational development of family	57	91.93	55	94.82	112	93.33

Sources: Field Data

**Participation of lower Dalit sub-castes on social occasions**

As per field data caste based discrimination has declined under both villages developed and under-developed between Dalit and non-dalits. But within Dalit sub caste discrimination has increase in the few decades. The table below indicates that, majority of the respondents 82.5 percent said that they also invite lower Dalit sub castes in social occasions, 75.5 percent said that they do visit on request. Only 20 percent respondent said that no visit Dalit sub caste on the social occasion at my home

**Table 1.5: Participation of lower Dalit sub-castes on social occasions**

Details		Developed village		Under-developed village		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Do you invite lower Dalit sub-castes on social occasions?	Yes	84	84.00	81	81.00	165	82.5
	No	16	16.00	19	19.00	35	17.5
Visit of Dalit sub-castes on invitation	Yes	82	82.00	78	72.00	150	75.5
	No	18	20.00	22	24.00	40	20.00

Sources: Field data

**Change in discrimination between Dalit and non-Dalit**

This table data discussed about changing discrimination between Dalit and non-dalits. 83 percent total respondent (90 percent of developed and 76 percent of under-developed village) saying that discrimination and untouchability has been reduced between dalits and non-dalits in their areas. But out of 17 percent respondents (10 and 24 percent of developed and under-developed villages) replied that such caste based discrimination are still prevalent. Educational development is the most important factor for decline in discriminations as saying by 43.13 percent respondents, followed by increase in economic condition 30.88 percent, political empowerment 11.76 percent, and increase in living standard 14.21 percent.

**Table 1.6: Change in discrimination between Dalit and non-Dalit**

Details		Developed village		Under-developed village		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Has discrimination declined between Dalit and non-Dalit in your area?	Yes	90	90.00	76	76.00	166	83.00
	No	10	10.00	24	24.00	34	17.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Factors of change	Economic development of dalits	65	30.09	61	31.77	126	30.88
	Political development of dalits	26	12.03	22	11.45	48	11.76
	Educational development of family	93	43.05	83	43.22	176	43.13
	Living standard	32	14.81	26	13.54	58	14.21

Sources: Field Data

#### Entry of dalits in temple in their locations

This table exposed regarding entry of dalits in local temples; majority of the respondents 96.5 percent out of total (98 and 95 percent of developed and under-developed villages) replied negatively. But 3.5 percent of them (2 and 5 percent of developed and under-developed villages) replied in affirmation.

**Table 1.7: Entry of dalits in temple in their locations**

Details		Developed village		Under-developed village		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Prohibition in entry of dalits in temple	Yes	02	02.00	05	05.00	07	3.5
	No	98	98.00	95	95.00	193	96.5
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Sources: Field Data

#### Conclusion: -

In this component we have analyze that, changing dynamics of social interaction within Dalits themselves. In term of caste based discrimination within Dalit sub – castes; majority of the respondents 74.5 percent replied in negation. But 25.5 percent of them reported that they do experience such discrimination within their community. However; after collection of field data I have analyze that here it is important to note that caste based discrimination within dalits is much pervasive in under-developed villages.

Regarding Participation of non-dalits in dalits' social occasion's majority of 81.5 percent respondents said that they also invite them on social occasions and 70 percent reported that non-dalits do participate on their request. But more than 18.5 percent respondent said that not invite non-dalits on my home any social occasions 30 percent respondents not coming non-dalits community at my house on the social occasions. In term of accepting food in Dalit households by non-Dalit is a significant indicator of changing dynamics of social interaction between Dalit and non-dalits. 85.71 percent respondents said that non-dalits do take food in their social functions. Another only 14.29 percent respondents reported that non-dalits do not take food in their social occasion. As per my field observation discrimination has been reduced among non-dalits specify main factors economic, political and educational mobility. Majority of them replied due to educational development 93.33 percent, followed by political development 58.22 percent and economic development 71.66 percent.

As per my field observation caste based discrimination has declined under both villages developed and under-developed between Dalit and non-dalits. But within Dalit sub caste discrimination has increase in the few decades. As per my field data majority of the respondents 82.5 percent said that they also invite lower Dalit sub castes in social occasions, 75.5 percent said that they do visit on request. Only 20 percent respondent said that no visit Dalit sub caste on the social occasion at my home

In this component we have also analyzed the changing discrimination between Dalit and non-dalits. 83 percent total respondent saying that discrimination and untouchability has been reduced between dalits and non- dalits in their areas. But out of 17 percent respondents replied that such caste-based discrimination is still prevalent. Educational development is the most important factor for decline in discriminations as saying by 43.13 percent respondents, followed by increase in economic condition 30.88 percent, political empowerment 11.76 percent, and increase in living standard 14.21 percent.

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