Socio – Economic Mobility among Schedule Caste: A Study of Village Mugalmagri in Rupnagar District of Punjab

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ABSTRACT : *Caste is a powerful organization in Indian society. It provided a structure for arranging and organizing social groups in terms of their statuses and positions in the social and economic system. It predetermined individuals into the structure of social hierarchy on the basis of their birth. In the hierarchical order Brahmins were at the top of the social ladder, and the 'Untouchables', people who were at the bottom of the ladder. They were considered to be inferior in all respects by the higher castes and were placed at the bottom of ritual and social hierarchies of the Caste and Varna system and had been subjected to varieties of disabilities, deprivations and oppression under the traditional system. They were not considered human beings and were exploited and discriminated in many spheres of life. After Independence there has been a growing awareness and concern for the degraded socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes . For this, efforts are being made in collaboration with different organizations and institutions to inculcate and encourage them to merge with the socio - economic fabric of the country . In turn, they have experienced a modicum of social mobility and there has been an unprecedented rise in the political consciousness among them. The caste system in India which is based on the principle inequality whether those inequalities (Social and Economical) are going too diminished or perpetuated further in the period of globalization? Are they being able to compete with the changing scenario? What will happen with their occupations? Are they able to get quality education? What changes has come into their lifestyles? Do they have new skills so as to get the benefits mobility? Is there any social and occupational mobility among them in view of globalization, education, occupation or are they stagnated? Etc. needs to be answered if they have to become a citizen of a global community- dreamed as a knowledge society. So, keeping all these questions in mind the researcher want to express the social mobility among schedule castes of village mugalmagri in district rupnagar . We always judge the things from the upper level but what about the bottom? That is why the main objective of the present study is to analysis the mobility from the bottom level among schedule caste through education, income, occupation, inter-caste marriages and through religious conversions. For this, I have taking 100 respondents from the rural area how were schedule castes.*

KEYWORDS : *Caste System, Scheduled Caste, Socio-Economic, Discrimination, Inequality, Social Mobility*

I. INTRODUCTION

Caste is a powerful organization in Indian society. It provided a structure for arranging and organizing social groups in terms of their statuses and positions in the social and economic system. It predetermined individuals into the structure of social hierarchy on the basis of their birth. In the hierarchical order Brahmins were at the top of the social ladder, the priestly class who are eligible for learning, teaching and religious ceremonies, next comes kshatriyas (warriors) there duty is to protect people during war followed by vaishyas (merchant ,professionals) belonging to trader class and whose job is to serve twice born class and then Shudras (unskilled workers) group of people who serves the other higher Varna's are at the bottom rank in the status hierarchy. Finally the people who considered to be outside of the varna system and named as "untouchables" or ati-sudras or a Varna (no class). They were considered to be inferior in all respects by the higher castes and were placed at the bottom of ritual and social hierarchies of the Caste and Varna system and had been subjected to varieties of disabilities, deprivations and oppression under the traditional system. They were not considered human beings and were exploited and discriminated in many spheres of life. After Independence there has been a growing awareness and concern for the degraded socio-economic condition of the Scheduled Castes . For this, efforts are being made in collaboration with different organizations and institutions to inculcate and encourage them to merge with the socio - economic fabric of the country . In turn, they have experienced a modicum of social mobility and there has been an unprecedented rise in the political consciousness among them. Scheduled caste as community has tried to build a new identity and founds a   ways of moving upward in the terms of socio- cultural, economical as well as political level.

Yogendra Singh , in his book "Social Stratification and Change in India" has argued that there are two kind of social movement which directly influence the status or position of scheduled caste . One is of integrative orientation and other is related with the alienating orientation .In integrative orientation the scheduled caste made an effort to sansktities themselves .The motive forces for the backward and the scheduled caste to sanskritise was just to ventilate their deprived feelings of status and position which were denied to them for centuries. By imitating the local dominate caste they find a position as that of upper caste but they were not succeeded in their efforts because there is no legitimate acceptance by the upper caste. The movement aims to reform the caste system in order to put an end to the problem of untouchability .This movement was arrived out during different periods in India i.e Bhakti movement, neovedantic movement, sanskritisation movement. The alienating movement aims to create 'an alternative cultural environment by conversion to, another religion.

Caste system carries a unique characteristic of rigidity, and domination. One of the well known Indian authorities on the subject, G.S.Ghurye described the caste system in his book "Caste and Race in India" (1932). In this book he draws attention to its six main features of caste and considered that each caste was separated from one and another in a hierarchical order. The six main features of caste were as follows:

- Segmental division of society
- Hierarchy of groups
- Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation
- Restriction on feeding and social intercourse
- Restriction on Marriage.
- Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections.

Scheduled Caste : The Scheduled Caste is a political-legal term. For this term Sudras, Panchamas, Antyajas ,Chandalas and a few other names were frequently used. Gandhi ji called them Harijans (The people of God). During the colonial period, the term "Exterior Caste' and 'Untouchables' were commonly used for them. Dr. Ambedkar termed them as Depressed Class, which referred to those classes or categories of persons who were poor and exploited, and socially and ritually degraded. The term "Scheduled Caste "was first coined by the Simon Commission (1927), after the recommendations of Simon Commission the term 'Scheduled Caste 'was adopted in the Government of India, Act, 1935. In April 1936, the British Government issued the Government of India order, specifying certain castes in the list of depressed classes as Scheduled Caste. 'Scheduled Caste' means such castes, races or tribes, parts or group within such castes, race or tribes as are deemed to be the Scheduled Caste under article 341 of the constitution of India.

Social Mobility : Caste has been considered to be closed system of stratification. However, in reality no system can be absolutely closed. In fact, social mobility has always been present within the caste system. Sociologists observe that in spite of the closed nature of caste system, there have been changes in caste hierarchy and its norms from time to time. We took the example from Vedic Period, during that period there are various cultural practices followed by Hinduism. At that time Vedic Hinduism was magico-animistic; Vedic Brahmans drank soma, offered animal sacrifice and ate beef. These practices were prohibited later but they continued amongst the lower castes (Singh 1973:6). Caste mobility as a process of social and cultural change has been explained by Srinivas in his concept of Sanskritization. In the process of Sanskritization lower caste people change their customs, rituals, ideology and the way of life in the direction higher or twice–born caste. This has paved the way for mobility to occur within the caste system.

There are two patterns of social mobility among the scheduled castes; (i) the welfare measures have brought about mobility among some selected sections of scheduled castes, adversely affected hegemony of the dominant castes in the fields of education and employment; and (ii) social mobility among the scheduled castes is also directly a result of certain socio-cultural movements which in turn has created anti–upper caste attitudes and awareness about their own low position. It is not that these two patterns are quite independent of each other, they are interlinked. Since the Scheduled Castes were also a highly differentiated lot before independence, that differentiation could be reflected in these broad patterns of social mobility among them. Certain sections of the scheduled castes have taken more advantages of the constitutional safeguards and welfare measures; hence they have got education, white–collar employment and have migrated to urban centers and settled there.Social mobility refers to the process by which individual or group move from one social status to another in the social hierarchy. When we speak of social mobility, we usually think of an ascent from lower to higher, but social mobility runs in both directions. Some climb, some falls, and some stay at the same level as their parents held. It can be upward or downward, horizontal or vertical mobility. Upward social mobility is one where the individual or group moves from lower status in the hierarchy to the upper. Downward mobility is when a person or group moves from a higher status to a lower one in the hierarchy.

Horizontal mobility when the individual or group transition occurs on the same social level from the standpoint of income, standard of living, prestige, occupation status, level on where the movement, migration, shifting and diffusion of cultural elements are within the same social stratum of population or Vertical mobility, which is the transition of an individual, group, cultural object or value from one social stratum to another may be ascending or descending. It may proceed along several social holders: the economic, when an individual, group a cultural value passes from the poor to the rich classes or vice versa, occupational when the movement from the lower to the higher occupation.

Objectives of Study
In the present study the basic thrust has been to understand the Socio Mobility among scheduled caste. For this, the following objectives are being formulated:
- To study the nature of social mobility among scheduled caste.
- To study their educational and occupations levels and their linkages to social mobility
- To examine whether inter-caste marriages and religious conversions have taken place and helped them in social mobility.

Research Methodology: The present study attempts to assess the Socio mobility among Scheduled caste of Mugalmagri villages in Rupnagar Districts of Punjab, India. Proper care was taken to collect information with the application of both primary and secondary sources. Accordingly, an interview schedule was prepared and questions were framed both open ended and close ended, for the purpose of data collection through primary source. Apart from that, a few secondary sources of data collection like observation of respondents and their family background, informal talks with the family members of the respondents, focused group discussion (FGD) were held for the purpose of getting supplementary information regarding the study.100 respondents have been taken as a sample size "Snow Ball Sampling Method "was used for collection of data.

Village Profile : The study was carried out in the Mugalmagri villages of Rupnagar, District of Punjab. As far as, the demographic profile of the village is concerned, there are about 2998 households in the village. There are pucca houses for every family unit in the village. Mostly people are small business man for e.g. – tailor, Confectioner shop, Vegetable Vendors , govt officer etc. There is one government senior secondary school at the entrance of Mugalmagri village. Apart from that, there are for about four places of worship to meet the religious and spiritual requirements of the residents. In Mugalmagri village there is Separate Temple and Gurudawara for Scheduled Caste people

II.   DATA DISCUSSION

After collecting the data, the information collected was coded and tabulated on the basis of the responses given by the respondents, in order to generalize the responses of the respondents.

*Distribution of the Respondents According to their Sub – Castes*
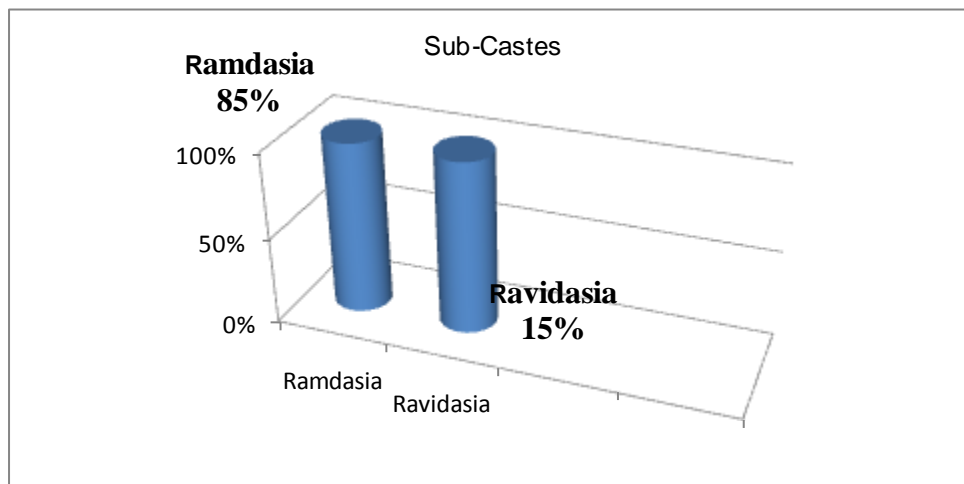
It is important to state that 38 sub castes have been listed in the Scheduled Caste Category in Punjab. The Sub – Caste distribution of the Sampled Respondents indicated that the major Sub –Castes in the village are Ravidasia and Ramdasia . Out of the total Respondents Ramadasia constitute 85% and Ravidasia Constitute15%.

**Distribution of the Respondents According to their Religion**
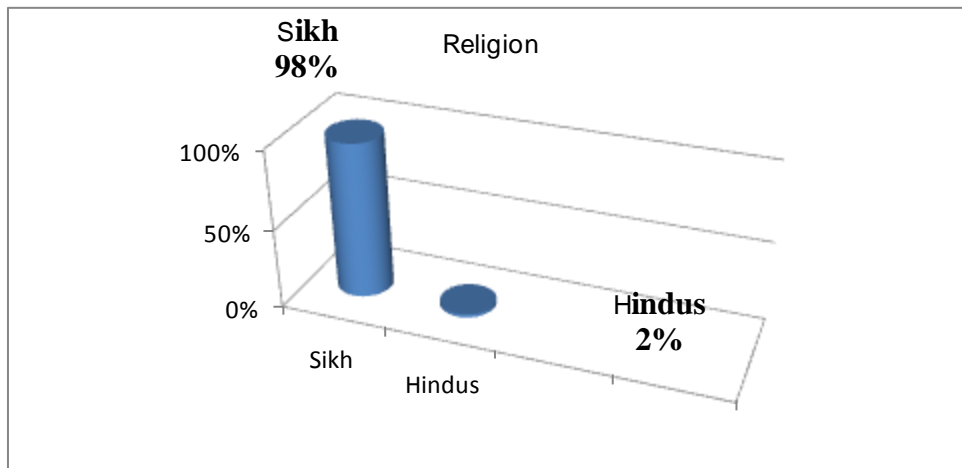
The bar shows that out of the total respondents 98% are Sikhs and 2% are Hindus. Thus we can say that majority of our respondents are of Sikh community in the village.

Distribution of the Respondents According to their Educational Qualification
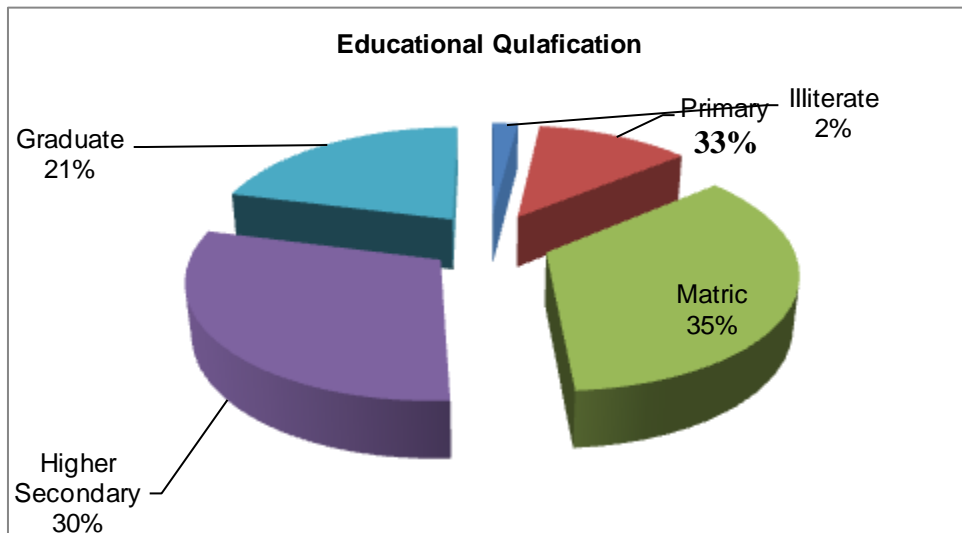
The Pie Chart shows the level of education of the respondents. It shows that the 2% respondents were illiterate, 33% respondents were Primary, 30% respondents were higher secondary and the majority of our respondents (35%) were educated up to Metric level and 21 % were graduate. It also shows the mostly head of families were educated.

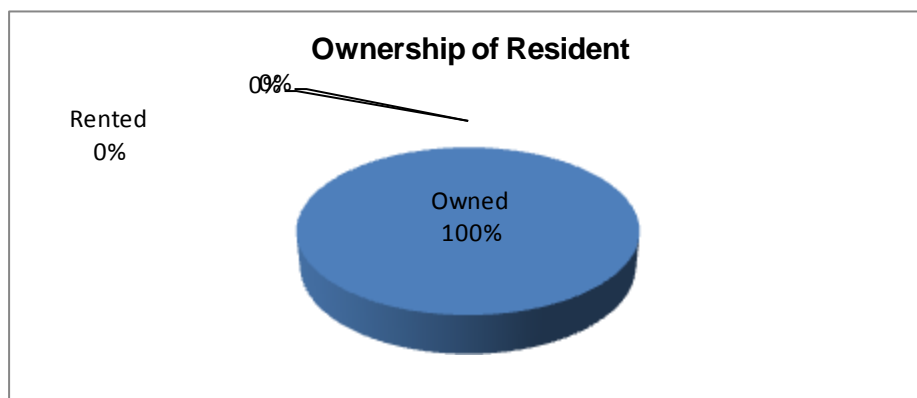**Distribution of the Respondents According to their Present Occupation**
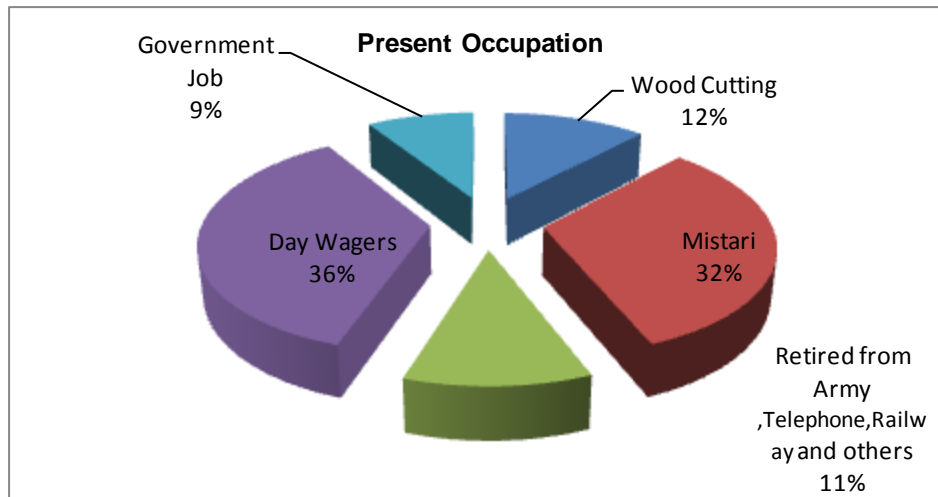
The present pie chart showed that majority of our respondents were Day wagers (36%). 32% of them were Mistari, and 12% were involved in the occupation of woodcutting, 11% were retied from different govt. jobs and hardly 9% were in Govt. sector (army men's, drivers in roadways and railways, and some were working at telephone exchange etc).

Distribution of Respondents who had changed their occupation

| Occupation	Previous	Change
Wood Cutting	3%	12%
Mistari	6%	32%
Retired	6%	11%
Day Wagers	6%	36%
Govt. Jobs	3%	9%
Weavers	80%	0%
No change	2%	0%

It is interesting to observe that Ramdasia sub-caste is not following their traditional work named weaving. Majority of them had changed their occupation and adopted the other occupations. Due impact globalization and education in their lifestyle they changed their occupations. It was revealed that lack of input in their previous traditional business forced them to change their occupation. There was only 2% of responded who never changed their occupation.

Distribution of the Respondents According to Ownership of Resident

The Pie Chart shows that 100% respondents have their own houses and no single respondent lives in rented home at both villages.

Distribution of the Respondents According to their House Type

House Type

Kacha 0%

Semi Pucca 30%

0%

Pucca 70%
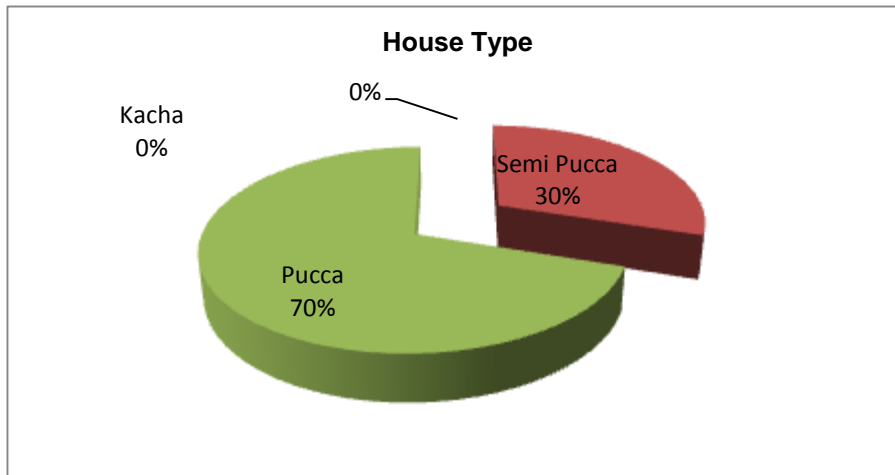
Pie chart shows that there was no signal respondent who had kacha house. Out of 100 Respondents 30% had semi-pucca houses. Apart from this 70% respondents lived in their own pucca houses.
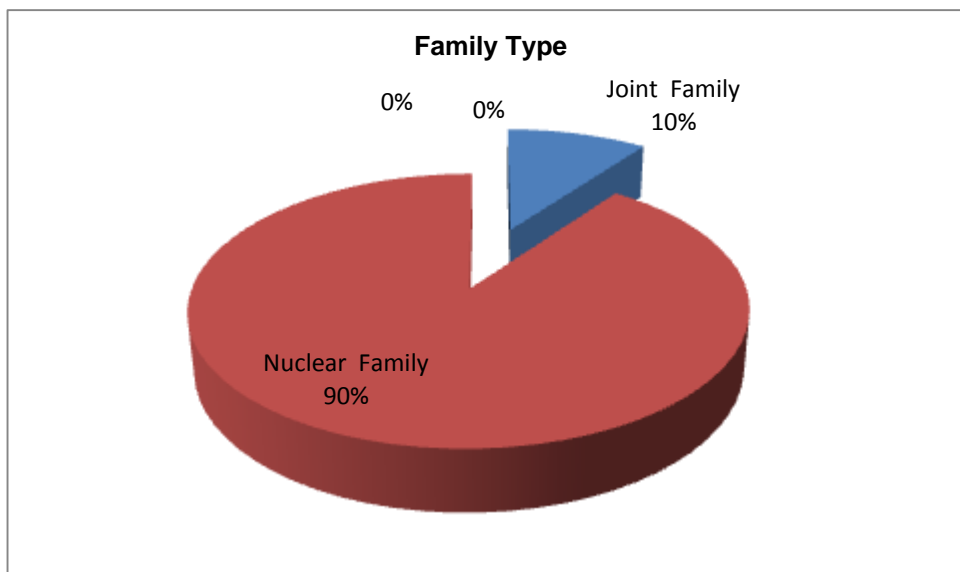
Pakka House   **Semi-Pukka House**

Distribution of the Respondents According to Family Type

Family Type

0%   0%   Joint Family 10%

Nuclear Family 90%

The pie chart gives the analysis of type of the family of respondents. It showed that majority of our respondents (10%) were belonged to joint family and 90% of respondents were belonged to nuclear family. So, it showed that the joint family structure still prevails in the Indian villages

Factors Responsible for Change in the lives of the Respondents

Factors	Percentage
Education	11
Social	16
Economic	32
Psychological	10%
Communication	14
Media	6
Transportation	8
Awareness	3

The table showed that out of 100 respondents 32% thought that Economy had changed their life, 9% of the respondents felt that education had improved their lives. 16% were reported that the change had come in their lives due to the social contact with other communities. 10% due to media, 14% due to communication, 9% due to transportation and 7% due to awareness.

Distribution according to ownership of Households Assets

Assets	Percentage
Cycle	90%
Car	5%
Telephone	90%
Television	100%
Refrigerator	98%
Celling Fan /Table Fan	100%
Room Cooler	85%
D.V.D	90%
Washing Machine	50%
L.P.G	100%
Chula	100%
Mobile	100%
Motor Cycle	68%

The table showed that 100% of respondents had television, ceiling fan and table fan, L.P.G, Chula, mobile phones appliances, 98% of them had Refrigerator. 90% had DVD, Telephone and Cycle. 85% of them had room cooler. 68% respondents had motor cycle.50% had washing.

**Relationship with upper caste people towards Scheduled Caste**
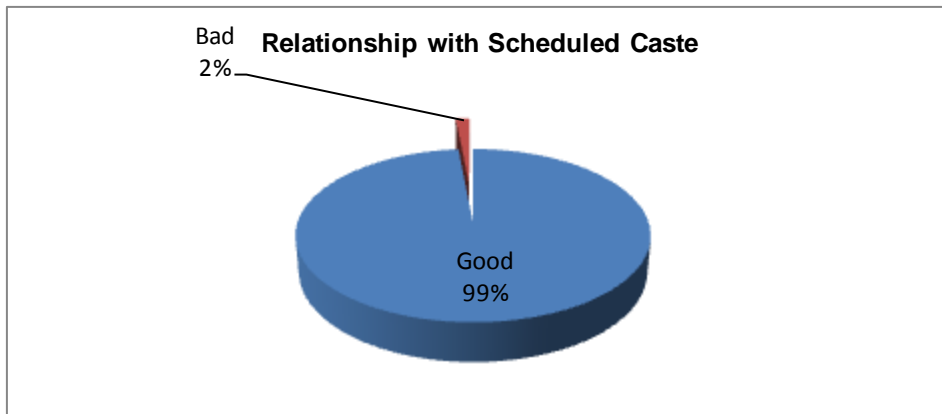
The Pie Chart shows the Relationship of upper caste people towards Scheduled Caste. When we asked them how they were treated by the people of upper caste in the village. Most of them i.e.98% answered that they were treated equal, good and 2% answered that they were treated badly by the people of upper caste in the village.

Socialization and mobility among the respondents

| Age gropu	Vertical mobility	Horizontal mobility	Total
20-30	8	10	18
31-40	14	55	79
41-50	5	7	12
Total	28	72	100

The above table shows that in (31 – 40) age group are more mobile vertical that other. 55 respondents are horizontally mobile in this age group. Thus, 79 out of 100 are mobile in this age group. This indicates that the age group of (31 – 40) is more favorable for mobility

**Feelings of Schedule castes for taking food & water by Higher Caste people**
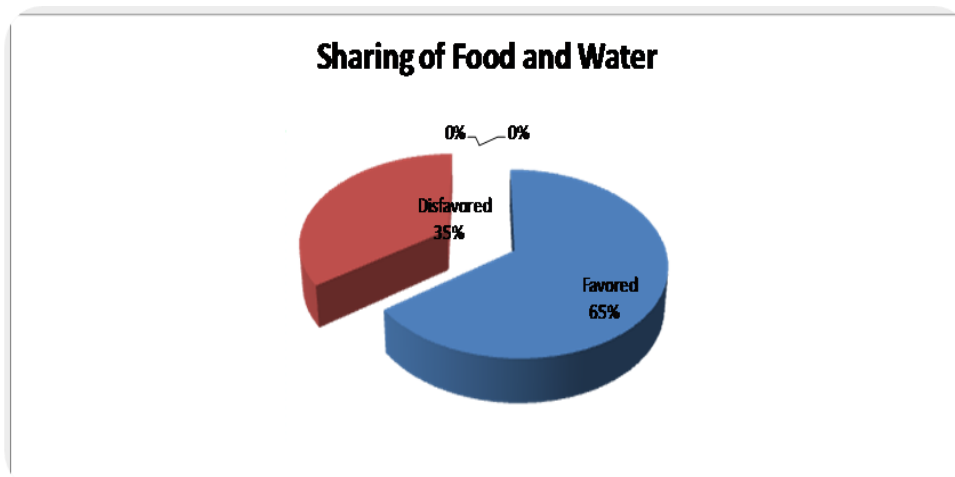
In the present pie Chart 65% respondents out of 100 were felt that the higher caste people were now in favored of taking food or water from scheduled castes and 35% respondents were not in favored of taking food or water from them. Thus we can say that due to availability of education and modern occupations the SCs were taking off their traditional unclean occupations, most of the people of upper and middle strata were in favored of taking food or water from the lower castes people. So we concluded that the restriction and bondage of caste system are broken due to the Globalization, westernization, modernization, education and availability of legal provisions by Government.

Attitude of respondents towards Education

Attitude Towards Higer Education

Un Favourable
10%

0%

0%

Favour
90%
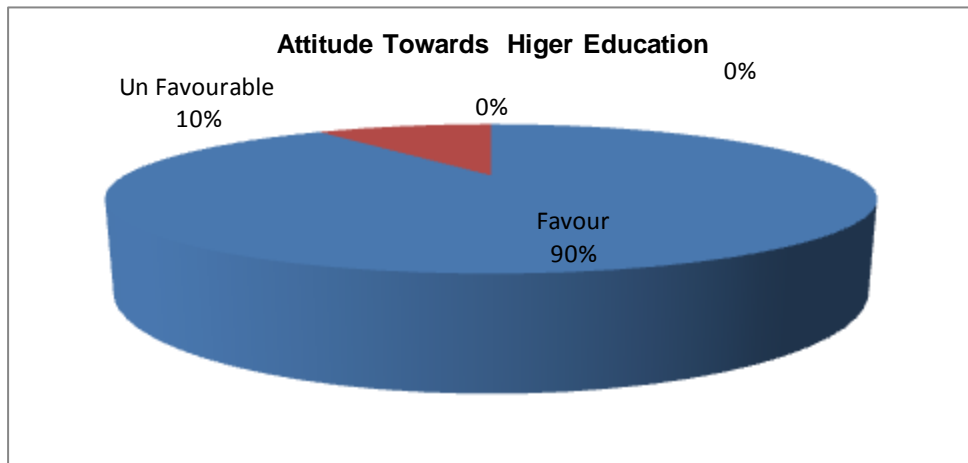
The pie chart shows that 90% of respondents were in favor of high education, only 10% of the respondents were not in favor of high education. They feel that good and higher education would mobile then in social ladder. Higher Education will change their status and position.

Respondent's views about to change their Caste

Change their Castes

Wants to change
0%

Not want to change
100%
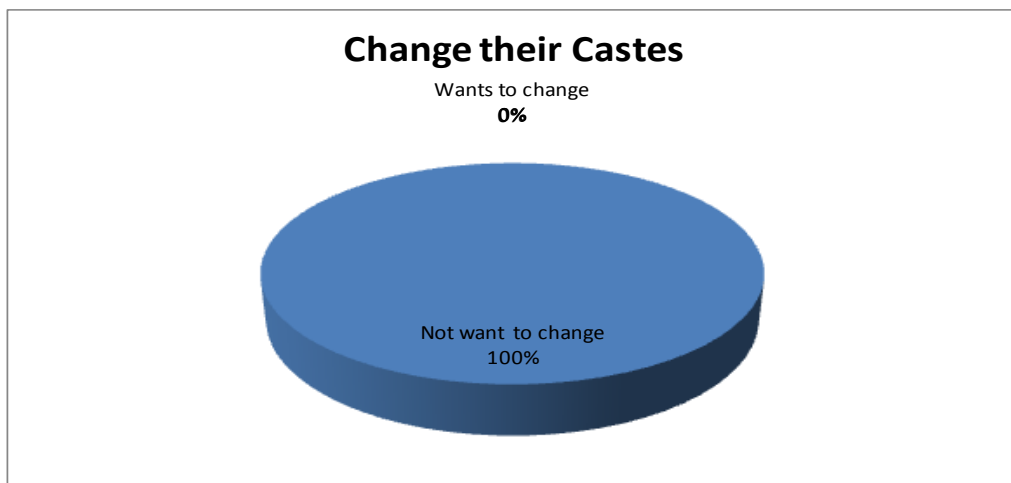
The pie chart shows that 100% of respondents in two villages don't want to change their caste. They were happy in their own castes.

Respondent's views about Inter-Caste Marriage

Inter Caste Marriage

0%

0%

Disfavour
56%

Favour
44%
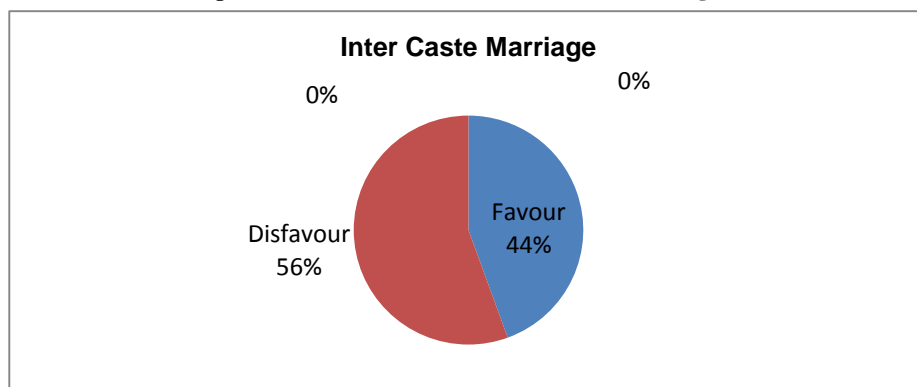
The pie chart showed that 56 % respondents were not in favor of inter-caste marriage but 44 % were in favor of inter- caste marriage.

Distribution according to Infra-Structure
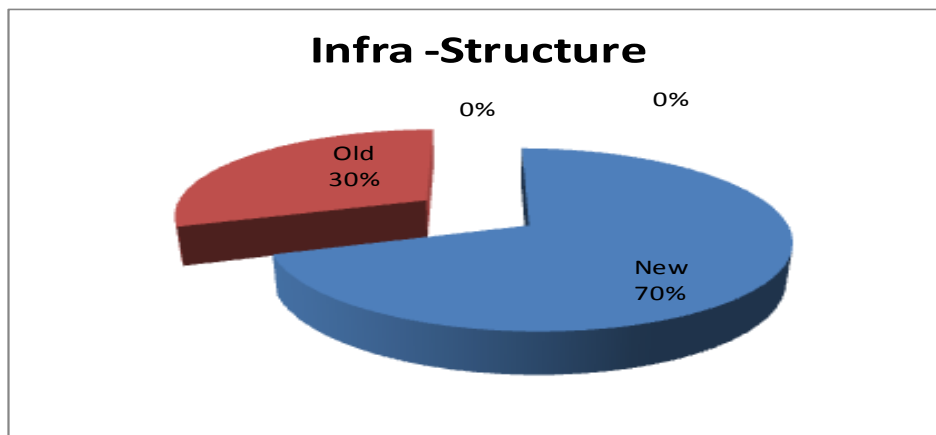
This pie chart showed that 70% of respondents had new infra-structure and 30% had old infra-structure. They had used lots of new things in their home like tiles in rooms/kitchens, chine's ports, sink in warandas, wooden doors, etc.

New infrastructure

Old Infrastructure

III.   SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Result shows that majority of respondents are of Ramdasia community, have considered education and occupation is one of the most important factor for their social mobility , they are getting information through TV and Radio about new schemes launched by Govt and most of them are a waling . They used telephone for massage convey and large number have personal Transportation facilities .The majority of the respondents were living in a nuclear type of household. The trends are now becoming very common in rural areas too, which was once known for a traditionally joint family system. While studying the occupational patterns of the respondents, it was revealed in this study that the large numbers of respondents were working on daily wages and very few of them were employed in govt/pvt. services. It is interesting to observe that Ramdasia sub-caste is not following their traditional work named weaving. Majority of them had changed their occupation and adopted the other occupations due to global trade. These respondents changed their previous occupation due to heavy loss. They started occupations other than their traditional occupation. It was observed that all of the respondents had their own houses and majority of them resided in pucca houses. It was also noticed that they had all kinds of luxury assets in their houses like T.V. telephones, D.V.D, sitting pots, motor vehicles, marbled houses and well furnished furniture and infrastructure. Education, communications, media, transportation, psychological mind and social contacts with other communities found major factors of changes in the scheduled caste people in rural areas. In the end it was also found that majority (90 %) of scheduled caste people were in favour of higher education.

The forces of globalization, urbanization are likely to change the life style and cultural practice of the people, since the world is going to be a global village. The value system of the people is becoming more and more individualistic and materialistic. The association between the life styles and the impact of globalization was examined and found to be statistically significant. It was observed that the respondents with low change in their life styles had perceived high impact of globalization as compared to the respondent with high change in their life styles. It was found that majority of the respondents did not experience untouchability and most of them said that their relationship with the other caste was good and quite a large number of them had said that their social status was improved during the past few years. Upper caste people started accepting food from lower caste people. Both upper caste and lower caste people participate in social interactions. In spite of all these cordial relations many a times they felt that upper caste behave indifferently with them.

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