

Social Exclusion And Horizontal Mobility Among Local Society: A Study Of Mahasha Community In Hiranagar Tehsil

Jasbir Singh, Dr. Neharica Subhash

Director, Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, University of Jammu

Professional Assistant, Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, University of Jammu,
neharica203@gmail.com

Abstract: The caste system is arguably the most distinctive feature in Indian society. The Indian population is divided into four hierarchical classes or Varna's with large sub population of untouchables excluded entirely from the system. Recent genetic evidence indicates that this rule has been followed for over 2,000 years. Spatial segregation on caste lines within the village results in a high degree of local social connectedness with caste clusters in distant villages and select urban locations linked to each other through marriage over many generations. Under the effect of certain intense variables, caste system is experiencing extraordinary changes in modern India. The rapid improvement of transportation and correspondence are additionally in charge of the breaking down of Caste system to some degree. The nullification of different social issues which are made by Caste System in Indian culture is the principal point of the social change development. Indian caste system is profoundly influenced by the political development. The rigid barriers of caste not only practice the most pungent form of exclusion but also regulate economic and social life. The caste systems fundamental characteristics of fixed civil, cultural and economic rights for each caste with restrictions for change, imply forced exclusion of one's caste to from undertaking the occupation of other castes.

Keywords: Caste system, Horizontal mobility, rigid barriers, Social Exclusion.

Introduction

Social exclusion and inclusion remain issues of fundamental importance to democracy. Both exclusion and inclusion relate to access to participation in the public realm, public goods and services for certain groups of people who are minorities, marginalized and deprived. Although even in advanced western countries the problems of exclusion remain in respect of minorities and the under privileged, the problem of deep-rooted social and cultural exclusion is acute in post-colonial countries, including India. Social exclusion is nothing but inequality generated by the workings of the economic system and is termed social only to conceal its economic system and is termed social only to conceal its economic origin [1]. Caste provided a structure for arranging and organizing social groups in terms of their positions in the social and economic system. In the hierarchical order Brahmins were, and the 'Untouchables', people at the bottom of the ladder. Brahmins, the priestly class who are eligible for learning, teaching and religious ceremonies; Kshatriyas (warriors) their duty is to protect people during war; 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 outside of the varna system and named as "untouchables" or ati-sudras. They were inferior in all respects and were placed at the bottom of ritual and social hierarchies of the Caste and Varna system, subjected to deprivations and oppression under the traditional system. This inhuman attitude of upper castes have exploited and discriminated them in many spheres of life. The Indian caste system is a complex social structure wherein social roles like one's profession became 'hereditary,' resulting in restricted social mobility

and fixed status hierarchies. Furthermore, we argue that the inherent property of caste heightens group identification with one's caste. Highly identified group members would protect the identity of the group in situations when group norms are violated.

Rural Social Mobility

Some of the most widely used measures of 'disadvantage' are based on social areas. In rural areas disadvantage is less easy to identify, as population densities are lower, and therefore postcode areas tend to contain a wider mix of wealth and poverty. This means that rural areas and the people that live in them don't necessarily appear in classifications of 'disadvantage' – and therefore issues of rural social mobility may be largely hidden from the view of policy makers. Rural areas are typically characterized by higher levels of public sector employment and employment in service industries as well as sometimes high levels of employment in agriculture, fishing or resource extractive industries. Senior corporate roles are under-represented in rural labour markets, as will be certain industries such as publishing and finance which are heavily based in urban areas. With exposure to qualitatively different labour markets it is likely that young people's awareness of and contact with the working world will be qualitatively different in rural areas – impacting on the informal advice, support and networking they may access as well as opportunities for work experience in their local communities. In rural areas issues of social mobility may 'look' quite different to urban areas. In some respects greater social diversity within individual postcode areas may mean greater opportunities for mixing with different people and gaining different insights into different lifestyles. However, the lack of exposure to some kinds of profession, community values

that emphasize egalitarianism, and the distances involved in accessing some training and employment opportunities may significantly impact on the accessibility of certain kinds of work among rural young people. The state of Jammu and Kashmir, with its large number of endogamous hereditary groups called Jatis or Castes, form one of the highly heterogeneous groups of populations in India. Dogra dynasty, Rajput clan, or group of clans, in the Kashmir region of the Northwestern Indian subcontinent. They form the chief, or main, portion of Rajputs of the territory centered on Jammu (lying north of what is now Lahore, Pakistan, roughly between the Chenab and Ravi rivers). They attained prominence in the 19th century. There had long been a small state of Jammu, but after 1780 it became tributary to the Sikhs. The Varna systems of the ancient period were still found in the region, a preview of the prevailing varna system is as follows:

Brahmins: Brahmins of Jammu region are mostly Dogra. A few Punjabi Brahmins have also been living in the province for some time now and have mostly inter-married and merged with their Dogra brethren. The Brahmins of Jammu province have mainly been farmers by occupation with the exception of Mohyals, who were concentrated in Mirpur and were in Government jobs. Dogra Brahmins by profession have traditionally also been teachers, astrologers, music experts and doctors. Some were scholars and writers. Brahmin community is highly stratified in hierarchical order, at the top of which stands that clan of the Brahmins who claims to be the descendant of King Porus.

Rajputs: Rajputs are the members of one of the major group of the 'Hindu Kshatriya Varna' in the Indian sub-continent particularly North-India. The term 'Rajput' is from Sanskrit word 'Raja-putra' meaning 'son of king'. Rajasthan is the home to most of the Rajputs, although demographically, the Rajput population and the former Rajput States are found spread though much of the sub-continent particularly the North-India. The Dogra Rajputs are divided into many sub-castes. There are atleast fifteen groups within this community.

Scheduled Castes Scheduled Castes ("SC"s) and Scheduled Tribes ("ST"s) are the Indian population groupings that are explicitly recognized by the Constitution of India, previously called the "depressed classes" by the British. As per the 2001 Census, SCs/STs together comprise over 24% of India's population, with SCs at over 16% and STs at over 7.5% (www.censusindia.gov.in). The proportion of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Indian population has steadily risen since independence in 1947 (The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950). There are 13 different populations of Scheduled Castes in Jammu and Kashmir namely; (1) Barwala (2) Basith (3) Batwal (4) Chamar or Ramdasia, Chamar-Ravidas, Chamar-Rohidas (5) Chura, Bhangi, Balmiki, Mehtar (6) Dhyar (7) Doom or Mahasha, Dumna (8) Gardi (9) Jolaha (10) Megh or Kabirpanthi (11) Ratal (12) Saryara (13) Watal. In array to make an assessment of mentioned factors, a field survey has been conducted in villages of Hiranagar Tehsil. The villages were selected as per criteria of

research study by purposive sampling. Among the other villages of Hiranagar tehsil, these four villages i.e Kootah, Bhaiya, Maila, Pachoka chak were selected as they were having highest population of Schedule castes especially Mahasha community. The Scheduled Castes are mainly concentrated in the Jammu region. According to 2001 census, the Scheduled Caste (SC) population of Jammu & Kashmir is 770,155 which form 7.6 per cent of the total population of the State. As the 1991 census was not conducted in the State, decadal (1991-2001) growth rate of population is not possible to work out. The growth of the Scheduled Caste population during 1981-2001 i.e. in a span of twenty years has been 54.9 per cent. Thirteen (13) castes have been scheduled in respect of Jammu & Kashmir. All of them have been enumerated at the 2001 census.

Caste-wise Population - Kathua district

Schedule Caste (SC) constitutes 22.9% while Schedule Tribe (ST) was 8.6% of total population in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Socio-Demographic profile

In the four purposively selected villages, Mahasha community was involved in traditional occupation of palledaries [labourers] which are now replaced by migrant workers from Bihar and Chattisgarh. Total 160 households were selected randomly through lottery method. The sample for the study was selected based on information collected through primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through in-depth survey conducted in four villages of hiranagar tehsil, district Kathua. Tools used for data collection were interview schedule with open and close ended questions whose validity and reliability was checked through pilot survey method. Further, case study method was used for in-depth assessment of research problem. The other research tools included were observation method by researcher for secondary information for the cause and effect method of research problem. Analysis were generated for further deliberations.

Table 1: Village wise distribution of households

| S.No | Villages | No. of households | No. of Schedule caste households | No. of households {Mahasha community} | No. of households Migrant workers |
|------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Kootah | 526 | 90 [17.11] | 45 | 40 |
| 2 | Bhaiya | 427 | 161 [37.7] | 30 | - |
| 3 | Maila | 486 | 45 [9.25] | 25 | 20 |
| 4 | Pachoka chak | 120 | 75 [62.5] | 60 | 20 |
| 5 | Total | 1559 | 371 | 160 | 80 |

The table 1 clearly depicts that the percentage of respondents residing in different villages taken for survey. In total the percentage shows that the villages have very thin composition of Schedule castes, in kootah only 17.11% schedule castes are there out of which 50% are

from Mahasha community. There are 37.7% schedule castes in bhaiya village out of which 18.36% are from Mahasha community. In Maila village there are 9.25% Schedule caste households in which 55.5% are from Mahasha community. In Pachoka chak village there are 62.5% Schedule castes households in which 80% are from Mahasha community. Providing the demographic and social profile of the schedule castes (Mahasha community) is to understand the level of heterogeneity among them. In order to make the link of social mobility among them education, occupation, income variables are important. Sociological imagination assumes that the nature of socio-economic conditions under which one lives has direct relation with what they do, their experiences and performance in life. It becomes more relevant to explore continuity and change among underprivileged section of society having experienced the impact of urbanization, industrialization and education and the way globalization is working in society. To examine how the castes that occupy low positions in the hierarchy are able to change their status through various modernizing factors as well as their own factors.

Age

Age is very important criterion as to know the level of mobility the respondents have experienced. Mostly the respondents working as daily wage labourer's are young at age. As there is not much work given to them they are more prone to taking drugs and liquor also.

Family structure

Now a day's family structure is changing very vastly from joint family type to nuclear family type. But in the villages especially, among Schedule castes still joint and extended family system is practiced. It has been found during survey that joint and extended family system is mostly practiced among Mahasha community than other families residing in the village. The family structure here has been classified into three categories as practiced in the villages. It is important to discuss this variable as the type and size of household may determine the access to education and external source of employment as well. The table clearly shows that extended family system is still prevalent in villages where there is high concentration of Schedule castes. 43.75 % respondents live in extended type of household as same number of people i.e., 43.75% are living in joint family structure. Only 12.5% respondents are residing in nuclear households as they have shifted from their native villages to nearby towns as they have occupational mobility which motivated them to move from joint and extended family to nuclear family structure to give better living standards and education to their next generation.

Family size

In view of the fact there are extended and joint family types of families among Schedule castes, the likelihood of large family size is there. In rural areas having large size families is on higher side as compared to urban areas. The data reflected in the table clearly indicates that the respondents are having large family size. It is very important to take into consideration the number of family members living in each household with the respondent.

Mostly the respondents are heads of households; large family size adversely affects the needs, education, and living space because of financial constraints. It has been observed from the table that majority of respondents have large size households i.e 43.75% are having large family size with 7-10 family members and 50% medium sized households with 4-6 members and very low with 6.25% small family size with 2-3 members.

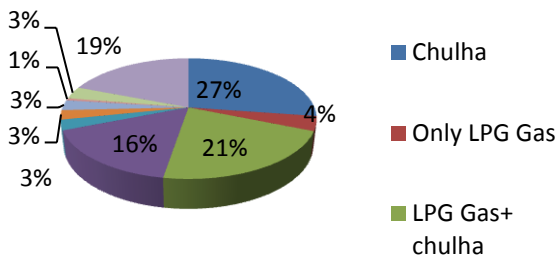
Type of houses

The table 3.4 shows the distribution of respondents according to the type of houses in which they reside. The information reveals that a large majority of respondents from Mahasha community i.e 61.25% own a semi Pacca house. Only 10.62% respondents own Pacca house. It is pertinent to mention here that that these respondents are those who have migrated from their house native residence to nearby towns like Vijaypur, Dyalachak, Samba as they have got occupational mobility and are working on good salary packages. Keeping in view as all the members who have migrated are from extended family structure. The main reason behind migration is to raise their living standards and to impart quality education to their children. The majority of respondents 61.25% have semi Pacca living structure, 28.12% respondents are living in kutcha houses. During the survey it was found that many of the BPL families of Mahasha community are aware of the scheme run by Government of India under the flagship of Social welfare department termed as Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana (PMGAY), previously Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) to provide housing for the rural poor in India. A similar scheme for urban poor was launched in 2015 as Housing for All by 2022. The broad purpose of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to some of the weakest sections of society for them to upgrade or construct a house of respectable quality for their personal living. The vision of the government is to replace all temporary (kutcha) houses from Indian villages by 2017. The funds are allocated to the states based on 75% weightage of rural housing shortage and 25% weightage of poverty ratio. District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) are district level development execution and monitoring agencies created under the Indian Societies Registration Act. Substantial sums of rural development funds of government of India were transferred and routed through them under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The community members came to know about these schemes from social workers and Asha workers working in their villages. It becomes very important to know that how spacious their houses are. Information was gathered by visualizing the number of rooms each house had. It has been visualized that maximum number of households have 2-3 rooms with large veranda, only few houses are there with 4-5 rooms as they have space to build them. It has been found that there is no co-relation between number of members and rooms in the households, which shows a wide variation in their quality of life.

Ownership of household Assets

The ownership of household assets simultaneously signifies the level of modernity and mobility. As far as the kitchen accessories are concerned

Fig 1: Household Assets



The data in Fig 1 shows that majority of respondents are using chulha i.e 87.5% besides that 68.75% respondents are using LPG Gas and chulha also. 12.5% respondents are there who use only LPG gas. We find that 52.5% respondents are using fan, there are some households who have table fans only. Nearly 8.12% have refrigerator in their houses with other modern assescerios like TV, washing Machine etc. 61.25% have mobile phones which they find as a source of entertainment also. In modern times owning a vehicle has become a necessity as it make mobility possible. A total 10.62% respondent own a vehicle in which only 3 households have Car as their means of transportation. To summarize on socio-economic status of schedule castes in rural area of hiranagar tehsil we may state that there is a significant variation in Mahasha community as compared to other Schedule castes residing there. The Mahasha community has been found to be less progressive in terms of other communities. Different variables depicts that they still reside in joint and extended family structure with high number of family members but less assets which depicts that they are less progressive towards globalization. Using less modernized kitchen gadgets clearly shows their low income status. Still living in semi-Pacca/kutchra houses gives an overview that social mobility is still required by this community.

Education and Occupation

Before the presentation of data, it is worthwhile to provide a glimpse of literacy rate of Kathua district. As per 2011 census, 85.45% population of Kathua districts lives in rural areas of villages. The total Kathua district population living in rural areas is 526,722 of which males and females are 278,126 and 248,596 respectively. Literacy rate in rural areas of Kathua district is 70.83 % as per census data 2011. The total literacy rate of Hiranagar Tehsil is 79.63%. The male literacy rate is 74.9% and the female literacy rate is 63.8% in Hiranagar Tehsil. It is clear from the data that overall literacy rate of Hiranagar is satisfactory (census 2011 data).

Fig 2: Educational level of Respondents

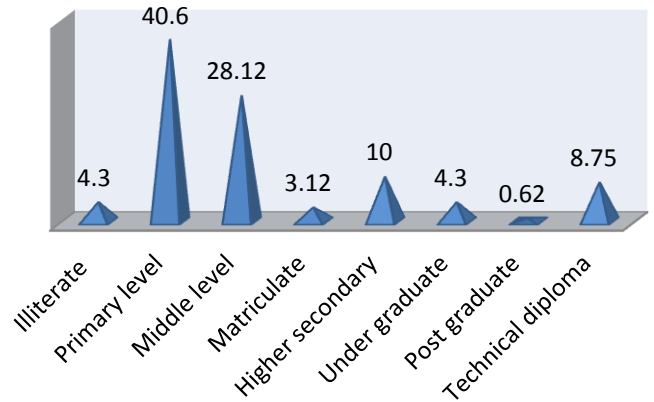


Figure 2 evidently shows that majority of respondents were only educated upto primary level. Although there are many provisions for the education of Schedule Castes, but they are unable to raise the percentage of SC students motivated towards education. One of the implications of low education level is that the Mahasha community is always confined to occupations of lower level. The large family size also one of the reason for low level education as every person has to earn for having meals, 3 times a day. Other factors leading to less educational level is no atmosphere or live examples to narrate in order to have high occupational mobility. More negativity around is there. It is very important for the study that with the advancement in the educational schemes, are they becoming the beneficiaries of it. The data clearly indicates the still they are lacking in their educational status. It is very much clear from the data regarding educational profile that there is a change in the educational level from grandfather to grandson/granddaughter; the literacy rate has gone up. If we map up the literacy rate among generations shows linear progression. It is important to mention that there is likelihood of the greater number of schedule caste’s getting literate than the Mahasha community owing to awareness regarding mobility through education. Somewhere it also seems that mobility among class in schedule caste’s combined with traditional conquer might have played the role in influencing the levels of education. It is very clear that there is a linkage between education and better economic status, it gives way to the perception that education leads to mobility is losing its appeal especially in case of Mahasha community of the villages taken into study. The relation between caste and education in general has been highlighted has been mentioned in the ideology of caste system where hereditary nature of occupation is emphasized. Placed in the traditional context of hereditary occupation the education was believed to be the monopoly of the Brahmin caste whereas the other upper castes could acquire education but their rights are limited. The expansion of modern education began during the colonial period and it had specific purpose. The education was linked with white collar jobs at the low level in general. The post-independence period saw tremendous expansion of educational institutions in the country. Under the constitution of India the access to education was made to

every child. There is no doubt a difference between accessibility and utilization. The accessibility differs from caste to caste.

Occupation

Education and occupation has always been strong ever since modern education system introduced in India. Both education and occupation have positive relationship. Different educational qualifications are required for different occupational levels. Rise in educational level, development, occupational diversity have gone up simultaneously. Now every society is educated whereas in traditional societies literacy rate is still low. One should always imagine a society where we have restricted occupational choices. Particular caste has to be identified with the set pattern of occupations. Likewise the Mahasha community has to be associated with traditional work of band or palledar only. The person from tarkhan caste has to be tarkhan[carpenter]. But simultaneously the occupational level has experienced social mobility because of level of education and development of society as well. While focusing on the occupation of the respondents, the data reveals that there are old respondents who were not having occupation now, then women respondents who are house wives involved in household works only, last were the present generations educated but not employed.

Traditional Occupation:

The scheduled caste workers are diverting from their traditional occupations. The working force of scheduled caste population had remained dominantly into traditional occupations such as Bard [traditional band], making banj [funeral beir] and palledars {labourers}. But this agricultural sector also experienced decline in percentage of scheduled caste workers during the last decade. In this section an attempt has been made to examine the traditional occupation associated with the Mahasha community, whether the occupation in present scenario enhanced due to their educational level. Before we analyse it is important here to mention that It is interesting to observe that people from Mahasha community are still into traditional occupations of palledari besides band and making of funeral pier. Very few of them had changed their occupation and adopted the other occupations. Due to globalization and education, their vision of raising their lifestyle motivated them to change their occupations. It was revealed that lack of input in their previous traditional occupation forced them to change their occupation. It indicates that discernible changes have taken place in the field of education as far as Mahasha community is concerned. It clearly shows that low educational qualifications are barriers in good occupational level. The findings in this study are contrary to the notion that Schedule castes are getting reservation in every aspect especially education and occupation. But there the findings focused that the rural communities are still lacking in the reservation facilities provided by Government. They are not regarded as the beneficiary of reservation policy. It is pertinent to mention that many of the respondents do not have category certificate also. The failure seems to be the consequence of unawareness regarding reservation policy and poor economic conditions also.

SPHERES OF EXCLUSION AMONG SCHEDULE CASTES

While focusing on the SC community in Jammu, the study focuses to place its caste dilemmas and resistance within the wider socio-political structure of the state and the framework of the conflict. Besides religious diversity, Jammu manifests immense cultural, linguistic, sub-regional, tribal, and caste plurality. Dogri, Pahari, Pothwari, Punjabi, Hindi, Gojri, Siraji, Bhaderwahi, and Kashmiri are the main languages spoken in various parts of Jammu. The Dogri-speaking ethnic community of the Dogras—mainly inhabiting the Hindu majority belt—constitutes the dominant group in Jammu. Though Dogras comprise Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, the most influential are the upper-caste Dogra Hindus, especially the Rajputs. The tribal Gujjars and Bakerwal Muslims are the communities that form the most socially marginalized and economically backward communities in Jammu. They compete with other socially and economically peripheral groups, such as Pahari-speaking Hindus and Muslims, for economic resources and political recognition. Together, these groups often express their marginalization in relationship to upper-caste Dogra Hindus. Placed in this cultural heterogeneity, neither Hindus nor Muslims form homogeneous groups. Similarly, Schedule Castes do not form a cohesive community. Though having a significant presence in Hindu majority areas, they are spread out in various other parts of Jammu and are culturally differentiated. Constituting a sizeable 17.44% of Jammu province population, they are divided into 13 sub-castes, of which Megh, Chamar, and Doom (Mahasha) are numerically predominant forming 39%, 24%, and 21%, respectively, of the total Schedule Caste population. These three sub-castes are locating themselves better politically organized and educated than the rest of the subcastes. The remaining sub-castes are Batwal, Barwala, Basith, Saryala, Chura, Dhyar, Gardi, Jolaha, Ratal, and Watal. Although Schedule Castes in Jammu are not politically organized to assert their caste and class interests. Apart from their caste interests—such as their attempts to escape physical and social marginalization as well as stigmatization by upper and middle caste Hindus, Schedule Castes also emphasize their class concerns, confronting various forms of economic exclusion and impoverishment despite the emergence of a small middle class among them. Issues of caste and class are often closely coupled in different contexts, such as the concentration of a large number of Schedule Castes in low paying or menial jobs, thus indicating a reinforcement of their low caste and class status to a large extent. While not politically organized to powerfully voice these concerns, Schedule Castes largely identify with the mainstream conflict-based politics of Jammu. Though various sub-castes among the Schedule Castes compete with each other to some extent at the social level, such as in claiming a higher social status, caste-based competition does not surface in the political realm. Despite the fragmentations within and inter mixings across various Schedule Caste sub-castes, their insistence on a shared identity vis-à-vis upper-castes in the social realm underscores a common sense of caste-based marginalization and renders “Schedule Caste” a single group for the purposes of academic analysis.

Sample villages:

Sample Village 1

Kootah, a “Hindu” village in Kathua district of Jammu & Kashmir State, India. It is located 35 km towards west from district headquarters Kathua, 7 KM from Hiranagar. Kootah is a large village with total 526 families residing has population of 2674 of which 1375 are males while 1299 are females as per Population Census 2011. There are 90 households of Schedule castes with 45 households belonging to Mahasha community. It is nearly all-Hindu, mostly consisting of Brahmins and various Schedule Caste. Although Schedule Caste own very less landholdings and some have to work on Brahmin lands, economic avenues in terms of contractual employment in factories or lower level government jobs have made the community somewhat self-sufficient and less dependent on Brahmins. The study was carried out among Schedule castes particularly Mahasha community. Looking at the demographic profile of the village there are Pacca houses but mostly semi-Pacca houses for every family unit in the village. This is because of the awareness created by social workers visiting their village and making them beneficiary of the scheme called Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna. Mostly people are small business men e.g. – Tailor, Confectioner, Vegetable Vendors, and working in Government office, etc and the SC people are working as daily laborers at construction sites and agricultural fields, wall white washer/painter, barber, chowkidar, factory worker, There is one Government higher secondary school in the village with three private schools. Apart from that, there are many places of worship to meet the religious and spiritual requirements of residents of Kootah, but people of schedule castes are restricted to enter the temples, so they worship in their own households. In various Brahmin meetings within the village, maintaining social and physical distance from Schedule Castes remains the major topic. Schedule Castes are also differentiated into various sub-castes—mainly Megh, Chamar, and Doom [Mahasha] that are segregated from each other to form endogamous sub-groups with competing notions of superiority. However, just like Brahmins, these internal differences are not sharp enough to totally segregate various groups among Schedule Castes. Despite their differences, Schedule Castes intermix and share a common feeling of marginalization. There prevails a strong feeling within the community that they should collectively deal with Brahmin dominance. Brahmins assume an economically, socially, and politically dominant position in the village. Defining and claiming space reinforces the symbolic domination of Brahmins while keeping lower-castes on the periphery. Brahmins have claimed a central space in Kootah by characterizing their elaborate rituals, traditions, and social life as central to village activities while excluding Schedule Castes and making socio-ritual space inaccessible to them. Schedule Castes are not invited to Brahmin weddings, festivals, or other ceremonies. On deliberating on this one of the lady from upper caste narrates” mahashe barabar bathiye ase in apni juun thode kharab karni hai” Majority of respondents from Mahasha community are of Krottra sub-caste. The majority of the respondents were living in extended and joint family type of household. Some have moved to other places to setup their nuclear families as the trend is now becoming very

common in rural areas too. While studying the occupational patterns of the respondents, it was revealed that large numbers of respondents were working on daily wages as their traditional job is palledari and very few of them were employed in Govt. or Pvt. Services mostly on contract basis. It is interesting to observe that Krottra sub-caste is still following their traditional work of laborers/white-washing. They are still been asked to play band whenever any major function solemnized in the village whether personal or religious as well. It is very important that the respondents of Mahasha community still play major role during birth and death ceremonies. Till date after the birth of child in upper caste community of village, the lady from Mahasha community is being called to take care of the mother and the child for ten days, on eleventh day according to the ritual of the upper caste after the sutra of the mother and child the lady working for ten days is further prohibited to come to their household. Similarly when someone dies belonging to upper caste in the village, the behd[funeral bier] is made by Mahasha community of banj [bamboo] is categorically required. Ironically still the schedule caste people of the village cannot perform funeral rite in the same cremation ground. The upper caste people have well maintained cremation ground with shed, but the schedule caste people have to perform the funeral rites in open just near water place nearby. Some respondents narrated that” MLA ki bi aakheya, vayedde te bade kite par jagah nahin bani”. Majority of them had changed their occupation and adopted other occupations in order to have social mobility. They consider education and occupation is one of the most important factors for their social mobility. It was observed that the respondents who have changed their traditional occupations are residing in Pacca houses. It was also noticed that they had all kinds of luxury assets in their houses like T.V, mobile phones, sitting pots, motor vehicles and car, washing machines, 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 other than Mahasha community in this area. The Mahasha community is still following their traditional occupation of daily labourers. It was observed that these households are still living in deteriorated conditions. They are living in semi Pacca houses of one/two rooms only with large number of family members. Even some of the houses only have one table fan and only traditional chulah system for preparing food. They have to fetch water from the hand pump installed in the area where majority of people of the Krottra caste are residing. They are not motivated to have education also, as they are going to schools for midday meals only. As if due to these traditional occupations they are not been able to satisfy their needs so are moving towards taking liquor, drug abuse and sometimes burgling also. The children of these families are also involved in drug abuse as they are not been able to get sufficient food and other modern facilities like android phones, motor cycles, television, refrigerator etc. A recent trend which started in village Kootah is that many of the labourers have migrated from different places of Jammu and Kathua to the village. They have replaced the traditional labourers of Schedule caste residing here many years ago. The reason behind the migration is change of pattern in family

system. Now in villages residents of upper caste are moving from traditional joint family system towards nuclear families, so there is ample of construction work of houses is going on. For these small constructions sites also laborers are required round the clock. Now the SC labourers are being replaced by migrant labourers as the members are more involved in unlawful activities of drinking liquor, drug abuse also. The young lot of Mahasha community narrates” madam, nasha kiye bina kaam nahi hota, aur unchi jati wale dete bhi nahin kam”

Sample Village 2

Bhayaia is a large village located in Hiranagar Tehsil of Kathua district, Jammu and Kashmir with total 427 families residing. In Bhayaia village, nearly 161 households are there of Schedule Caste constitutes 37.7% of total population. The Schedule Castes in bhayaia were quite aware of their oppression, and during the survey narrated in detail their experiences of day-to-day exclusion. In a focus group interview with Schedule Castes in bhayaia, a low-level government employee, narrated: “in the previous generation Brahmins forbade our community to name our children after the Hindu Gods, such as sham, Ram, Mohan. ‘when talking to a old person sitting under a tree, as do not got any labourer work today, he was careful and restrained about making such statements openly as his words reach the upper caste people narrates : “ I have three sons, all were going to government school, kootah as it is nearby and my sons are very fair in complexion with golden brown hairs, so they go to school with the boys of uppercaste, one day they were brutally beaten up by some boys of upper caste saying gora rang hai te un sadi brabari karge tus mahashe. Hira, who works as a labourer [pandi] in a grocery store outside the village, similarly protested: “Brahmins are free to address me as ‘Hira’ but I am obliged to address them respectfully ...as ‘Bhai-Sahab’ can’t even address the children of upper caste by name. Despite strongly criticizing the oppressive caste system, Mahasha community expressed vulnerability as well as assumed partially conformist positions. They often questioned their marginalization and exploitation by affluent Hindus, yet stated their desire to fit into upper caste and middle class norms of society. While criticizing the caste rules of purity and pollution and resenting their exclusion from the socio-ritual activities of Brahmins, Mahasha community desired to be included in these activities. For instance, Lalit, a contractual worker in a nearby factory, stated: “we feel hurt that they (Brahmins and other upper caste) do not invite us.” Mahasha community also perceive the social realm of the Brahmins as “central” to the village and therefore share, to some extent, the dominant worldview that attaches primacy to the Brahmanical ritual realm. Yet, this very conformity has created an alternative space for Schedule Castes that exceeds norms and makes Brahmins feel insecure about their dominant position. For example, excluded from the Brahmins’ socio-cultural ceremonies, Schedule Castes organize their own exclusive community ceremonies. Despite their differences, all Schedule Castes and sub-castes participate in these ceremonies and find a common private space where they share their experiences, mock upper caste people and express their defiance. Through this alternative space, though viewed as marginal by Brahmins, Schedule Castes

show their collective presence in a non-confrontational manner, asserting their right to live with dignity and their claim on village life. While strongly attached to their “Hindu” identity, various sub-castes among the Schedule Castes in the village also created an alternative religious space. Besides following the anti-caste religious traditions of Kabir, Ravidas. where Meghs identify themselves as Kabirpanthi [Followers of Kabir] while Chamars call themselves Ravidasi [Followers of Ravidas]), they are also attached to various sectarian traditions distinct from mainstream Hinduism such as Radhasoami, Nirankari, and Sahib Bandagi that offer them a dignified socio-religious space. Sunita, a middle-aged housewife belonging to one of the very few middle-class Schedule Caste families said her “Hindu” identity and always using the phrase “we Hindus” irritates. So she started a new era after becoming follower of the Radhasoami tradition. A large framed picture of a Radhasoami guru was placed in one of her rooms. She stated: “No Brahmin family from this village are Radhasoami followers, they mainly go to temples.” Although mocking the Brahmins of her village by labeling their religious practices as showy and should confined to temples and idols. She herself had put up a few pictures of Hindu deities in her house. Thus, while Schedule Castes may not openly resist norms, their daily disagreement from these norms conveys their rebelliousness toward authority. On many occasions, Schedule Castes may cooperate with or attempt to please upper-caste or middle class sections. Furthermore, resistance to dominant norms may be internally fractured and may not be collectively expressed.

Sample Village 3

A Hindu village Mela or Maila situated in Hiranagar Tehsil, District Kathua of Jammu & Kashmir State, India. Maila is a large village located in Hiranagar Tehsil of Kathua district, Jammu and Kashmir with total 486 families residing. The Maila village has population of 2569 of which 1350 are males while 1219 are females as per Population Census 2011. There are 45 households of schedule castes with 25 households of Mahasha community. Main temple of Village Mela is Data Ranpat Dev Ji Maharaj. Every Sunday people come there for praying and take a bath of a holy pond. Every six month is the big spiritual function in the Temple more than 20,000 people come for praying. One more Temple is there 10008 Sant Gopal Dass ji Maharaj Holy Asharam in Maila. Many people are coming in holy Ashram. Sant Gopal Dass ji Maharaj did many social activities in all over India. In village Maila divergent voices of resistance as well as compliance among Schedule Castes were manifested on the issue of pollution and purity concept.

Sample Village 4

Pachoka chak is a small village located in Hiranagar Tehsil of Kathua district, Jammu and Kashmir with total 120 households out of which 75 households are of Schedule Caste comprising 62.5%. The Schedule Castes in pachoka chak were quite aware of their oppression, and Brahmins, Chowdhary and other upper castes compete among themselves for power within, they together maintain a distance from the village’s Schedule Castes. During the survey one of the old man having 2 daughters both married narrated: “in the previous generation

Brahmins forbade our community to worship the Hindu Gods in the temples. When talking to an old person sitting under a tree, as do not got any labourer work today, stated in a submissive tone as his words should not reach the upper caste people narrates, My sons were harassed, so they do not go to school as this is the right of upper caste. Brahmins are free to address us as 'oye amarchand' but I am indebted to address them respectfully as 'Ji pundit ji' can't address them by name. Strongly criticizing the upper caste system, Mahasha community expressed their marginalization and exploitation by affluent Hindus, yet stated their desire to fit into upper caste and middle class norms of society. Criticizing the rules of purity and pollution and resenting their exclusion from the socio-ritual activities of Brahmins, Mahasha community desired to be included in these activities. 'We feel hurt that they (upper caste) do not invite us to any community feast'. As the Mahasha community with Jangral caste, dominates the upper caste in number in pachoka chak but then also they are marginalized on the bases of residential segregation, societal exclusion, and economic deprivation also.

Conclusion

The study highlights the various ways in which schedule castes perceive their marginality, interact with power structures, and generate ambiguous forms of resistance. Through the case of villages of hiranagar tehsil it has highlighted the socio-economic responses of Schedule Castes point to a layered and complex social reality. Schedule Castes ally with upper- and middle-caste Hindus at the political level while they resist them at the everyday social level. Resistance at the social level stems from the fact that caste forms one of the predominant identity markers for Schedule Castes in the social realm and enables them to question their oppression. Even within these layers, the responses of Schedule Castes are not consistent but manifest contradictions. Rather than a futile condition, these ambiguities signify a complex, creative process that enables Schedule Castes to interact and collaborate with power structures without being fully unified within them. The issue of social mobility among schedule castes has remained in any discourse on social inequality in India. The concept of social mobility in India has different context and paradigm from that of the west. In west concept of social mobility was understood as movement in occupational and income hierarchy. Caste mobility has not been simply a movement along the income and occupational lines. In this study the main focus was on the caste discrimination based on residential segregation among the schedule castes very specific in the villages under survey. It is evident from the data that the schedule castes living in these villages are facing exclusion from the society as well as the people of the upper caste. These people were excluded from decision making. Economic exclusion is practiced through the denial of access to hiring for jobs, in sale or purchase of leasing of land, in commodities and consumer goods. They face discrimination from participation in certain categories of jobs, because of notions of purity and pollution attached with occupations and engagements, which leads to economic poverty and a poorer sense of well-being. An overall development has been found among the Mahasha community in terms of education, basic necessities, asset making etc. as far as the political

power is concerned now the people have started exerting for their rights as well. As the local MLA's are pressurized to make their lanes and bi-lanes as pucca path for daily mobilization as promised by them during elections. Unemployment is another factor prominent in these villages but the scenario shows that it will take time to bring these Mahasha community people out of ascribed jobs to achieved status. Migration of labour class from outside will definitely be the motivating power behind the changing of ascribed status of the communities. The governmental efforts are still on the way trying to benefit these communities through there schemes especially for rural areas which will create chances for social and economic mobility. Different trainings for the youth of schedules castes by different Government agencies are going to help in making better chances of employment. They can become daily commuters from their place of origin to place of employments. No wonder private entrepreneurship among the Schedule castes will be the next step towards globalization in these rural villages.

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