



Social Status of Dalit Women at Pappapatti Panchayat in Madurai District

(1991 – 2003 A.D)

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Introduction

Dalit women live an existence of the worst kind combining abject poverty with grinding labour in the work places and in the home abused and used exploited. During 20th century women's condition developed in society global level. In India, the British government provides education to the women. Freedom fighter Mahatma Gandhiji has spoken full freedom of women. Dr. Ambedkar support to Dalit women's freedom through reservation policies and abolition of Hindu caste system. Dr. Ambedkar in his writings on the riddle of women has explained in detail how man has deprived the status of women by curbing the liberty and equal rights of women. He was willing to bring certain changes in the Hindu Law for the betterment of women.

After the independent, the participation of women is higher in all the departments especially State and Central government policies. But Dalit women were not so well in general category. So the government introduced special preservation acts to improve Dalit women in Tamil society. Pappapatti village panchayat is an important centre of Usilampatti block in Madurai district. Here the population, Kallar community were mostly dominated caste. So Dalit people were dominated by Kallar people.

Pappapatti Village Panchayat

Pappapatti is a Village in Chellampatti Block in Madurai District of Tamil Nadu State, India¹. It is located 35 KM towards west from District head quarters Madurai, 8 KM from



Chellampatti, 501 KM from State capital Chennai Pappapatti Pin code is 625537 and postal head office is Uthappanayakanur. It is a separate panchayat. Usilampatti , Sholavandan , Vadipatti , Thirumangalam are the nearby Cities to Pappapatti².

Pappapatti 2011 Census Details

Pappapatti Local Language is Tamil. Pappapatti Village Total population is 1359 and number of houses are 356. Female Population is 45.0%. Village literacy rate is 70.9% and the Female Literacy rate is 25.5%. As per the population 407 people were Scheduled caste people³.

History of Dalit People in Pappapatti Village Panchayat

According to the Government of India Act by the British government, the people who are socially and economically background and untouchable were called as schedule caste. After the independence, our Indian constitution provides special reservation to improve them self socially, economically and politically. These reservation policies were not sending to Scheduled Caste people. The higher class people were banned the reservation policies of Indian constitution maximum. The lower class people of the Schedule Caste status were not yet changed in Pappapatti village panchayat. Due to this defect our Indian government decided to improve of these people in Tamil society. Common village water also not provide to their people⁴.

Social Status of Dalit women in Pappapatti Village

In Pappapatti Village panchayat, the social status of Dalit women, in their category were good but not so well in other society in 1991 to 2003 A.D. They were decision makers of their family. They were not only deciding their life but also decide their children life too. They had full freedom in their own Panchayat areas alone. They were allowed to work in higher class people areas especially land works (former works), companies and fields⁵. But not allowed to enter the higher class people's street. If they need emergency to go, they were not permit to go with chapels, cycling, motor cycle, and car⁶.



Kuladeivam

Mostly male *kuladeivams* were worshipped by them like *Karuppasamy*, *Muniasamy*, *Sudalai Mada Samy*, *Madurai veeran* and *Veera Samy*. Dalit female kuladeivam is *Kaliamman*⁷. Most of Dalit community was compulsorily visit their own village at every *Sivarathiri* and worship their gods.

Houses

In Pappapatti village panchayat most of the Dalit people have own houses. Those houses were built with Thatch and Tile. They lived in joint family and lived in the same areas of a village. Most of people do not have Pattas⁸. Their houses were out of their village. It is called Colony Street.

Birth of girl in Dalit society

When a woman conceive and reaches 7th month she will go her mother house for delivery of her child. After her delivery she will come back to her husband's house. Basically both the children are treating same in society. But most of the women loved male child⁹.

When the girl is attaining puberty, she separated and stays in small house (*Olaiyal neithal*) in common place for nearly to 30 days. She will take care by the villager's everyday one and other family provides food to that girl. This system developed the join family system in their society¹⁰.

Education

Indian national policy on education 1986 stipend 100 rupees per month and 5 rupees for mid – day meals to each child the State government provided free education, mid – day meals (*sathunavu*) and free uniforms. These policies not only improve the education level but also the child labours abolition in the society. Due to this women education also emerged in this society. Due to their economic problem they did not provide higher education to their children urban



areas. So Dalit women education was only in primary and middle level only. In Pappapatti village panchayat Dalit totally 47 women were studied in primary and middle level schools. But only 6 women studied in higher education¹¹.

Marriage

Mostly, Dalit married their relatives. Women have full freedom to choose her life partner in the society. Most of women loved to her maternal uncle or maternal uncle's son. During the marriage time both bride and bridegroom meet each other and discuss to plan the marriage with seeing *Jatakam* of both and get acceptance from god though tying flowers in front of god. White and red flowers tied and a small baby is provided to take the flowers to get for acceptance from god. If white flower comes, god accepted. The other means god denied. This is one of the procedures of their marriage system¹².

Women have rights to diverse her partners (*thurumbaruthal*)¹³ and remarriage. After the death of her life partner, they were not wearing the *Thali*, not apply sandal and turmeric. But they wore *vlaiyal*, *kammal* and *nosering*¹⁴.

Child marriages were rarely in Dalit society. Teenage girls were forced to marry at very young age of 13 to 18. There were some reasons for child marriage. 1. Poverty 2. Avoid sexual abuse in working place 3. Lack of education etc. Due to this system women were lack her freedom in society¹⁵.

Social status of Dalit women compared to other people in a society

In Pappapatti village panchayat Dalit women social status were not good when we compare to other caste people. Even elder of Dalit community coined by other caste people with name. But they won't do like that even the younger of other caste coined by Dalit in respect. Dalit they themselves restricted to enter in public areas. They won't wear upper garment to respect other caste people in society¹⁶.



Festivals

Dalit were not invited to the common festivals. Sometimes very few of them were inviting to do cleaning works in the festivals areas¹⁷. In a common meal they use to have their lunch at last, means after eaten by the other caste people¹⁸.

After over the common festivals as well as their own festivals next day they enjoy with non-vegetarian especially beef and pork sharing with their own peoples. In funeral ceremonies they have to do menial works towards other caste peoples. But this case not applicable to their funerals, other caste won't even come and participate, sometime they come to funeral namesake but of avoid of taking meal and water¹⁹.

Economic condition

Economy of Dalit is not well. They are used to work in agricultural fields for salary. To work they divide areas of land owners and work in their respective fields, this is called as field system. After completing their work in field they get income by cash or kind. Sometimes without getting anything they took the remains in the field and use it after cleaning²⁰.

Conclusion

The present research study deals with history, population and culture of Pappapatti village panchayat women. It deals with social status of Dalit women in Sattur very particular and explained their status. From time immemorial they use to worship Goddess and respect women also. The position of women is not commendable due to lack of education, finance and child marriage. They were not allowed to the upper caste People Street, this problem is lesson to the untouchability to this people. Apart from this the Government announces the scheme of constructing houses freely to them and also issue free land Patta to improve Dalit in a society. But upper caste people ban the all government policies and break the development of this people.



End Notes

1. *G.O. No.56, Rural Development and Local Administration*, 16 January 1970.
2. *G.O. (Ms) No. 50, Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare (TD2) Department*, 29.April.2009
3. *Census of India 2011*, in Pappapatti village panchayat SC, ST population,
4. *G.O No.130, Village panchayat Administration Water Supply Department*, 11 June 1996.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Thirumaavalavan, *Talisman Extreme Emotions of Dalit Liberation*, Op.cit, pp. 9-11.
7. Phakthavachala bharathi. C., *Panpattumanudaviyal (Tamil)*, Manikavasagar Pathigapagam, Chennai, 1990, p. 530.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Thirumaavalavan, *Talisman Extreme Emotions of Dalit Liberation*, Op.cit, p. 28.
10. Thirumavalavan, *Uproot Hindutva The Fiery Voice of the Liberation Panthers*, Samya publication, Kolkata, pp. 32-33.
11. The Commissioner of Labour, *A Hand Book on child labour for Enforcement officials*, Labour Department, Government of Tamilnadu, March 2004, pp. 36-37.
12. Thirumavalavan, *Op.cit*, pp. 35-38.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Edgar Thurson, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India, vol. 3*, MJP Publishers, 2014, p. 4.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Hindu newspaper. Dated 28.September.2003*
17. *Ibid.*
18. Edgar Thurson, *Op.cit.*, pp. 5 – 7.
19. Thirumavalavan, *Op.cit*, p. 40.
20. Thirumaavalavan, *Talisman Extreme Emotions of Dalit Liberation*, Samya publication, Kolkata, pp. 9-11.