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SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF SCHEDULED CASTE IN TRIPURA: A CASE STUDY OF THE COBBLER COMMUNITY

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Abstract: This case study presents a comprehensive socio-economic analysis of the Scheduled Caste Cobbler community in the Indian state of Tripura. Scheduled Castes, historically marginalized and facing social exclusion, continue to navigate challenges related to education, employment, income, and overall well-being. Focusing on the Cobbler community, this research examines their living conditions, access to education, employment opportunities, income disparities, and social integration. Employing a mix of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, the study unveils the nuanced realities faced by the Cobbler community, shedding light on the factors contributing to their socio-economic status. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, social activists, and organizations working to uplift marginalized communities and foster inclusive development.

Keywords: Scheduled Caste, Cobbler Community, Socio-Economic Analysis, Marginalization, Social Exclusion, Education, Employment, Income Disparities, Social Integration, Tripura, Inclusive Development.

INTRODUCTION

Scheduled Castes (SCs) in India, historically relegated to the fringes of society, have long faced systemic marginalization and social exclusion. These marginalized communities, characterized by restricted access to education, limited employment opportunities, and disparities in income, continue to grapple with numerous challenges on the path to socio-economic advancement. Tripura, a northeastern state of India, with its diverse cultural fabric, is no exception to these prevailing disparities. In this context, this study delves into the socio-economic landscape of the Scheduled Caste Cobbler community in Tripura, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of their living conditions, educational access, employment patterns, income differentials, and their overall integration into the larger social fabric.

The Cobbler community, classified as a Scheduled Caste, has a distinct socio-economic identity marked by traditional occupations like leatherwork and shoe-making. As this community traverses the modern era, they confront the intricacies of socio-economic dynamics, simultaneously anchored in their traditional practices and exposed to the winds of change. Analyzing their experiences becomes a significant endeavor

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not only for understanding the plight of a specific community but also for drawing broader insights into the intersection of socio-economic factors within the framework of marginalized populations.

This case study, undertaken through a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, seeks to uncover the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that define the socio-economic trajectory of the Cobbler community in Tripura. By exploring the education levels attained by community members, the nature of their employment, income disparities, and their integration into the local social fabric, this research aims to paint a comprehensive picture of their realities. The findings from this study can serve as a foundation for informed policy decisions, targeted interventions, and community-driven initiatives that uplift the living conditions and foster inclusive development among Scheduled Caste communities, not only in Tripura but also in similar contexts across the country.

In the subsequent sections, this study will delve into relevant literature on socio-economic disparities and Scheduled Caste communities, discuss the unique attributes of the Cobbler community in Tripura, outline the objectives and methodology of the case study, present the empirical findings, and engage in a thoughtful discussion of the implications. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on social equity and inclusive development, shedding light on the socio-economic dynamics of the Cobbler community within the specific context of Tripura.

METHODOLOGY

1. Study Design:

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to comprehensively analyze the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Caste Cobbler community in Tripura.

2. Participants:

A purposive sampling technique will be used to select participants from the Cobbler community residing in different regions of Tripura. The sample will be diverse in terms of age, gender, education levels, and income groups to capture a representative cross-section of the community.

3. Data Collection:

Quantitative Data:

Structured surveys will be administered to gather quantitative data on various socio-economic parameters such as education levels, employment status, income sources, access to basic amenities, and more. The survey will be designed to capture both individual and household-level information.

Qualitative Data:

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Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of survey participants to delve deeper into their experiences, challenges, and aspirations. These interviews will explore their perceptions of social integration, aspirations for socio-economic mobility, and any discriminatory practices they encounter.

4. Data Analysis:

Quantitative Data:

Descriptive statistics will be employed to analyze the quantitative data obtained from the surveys. Education levels, income distributions, employment patterns, and access to basic amenities will be summarized using relevant statistical measures.

Qualitative Data:

Thematic analysis will be used to identify recurring themes and patterns in the qualitative interview data. These themes will provide a richer understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the Cobbler community.

5. Ethical Considerations:

Ethical approval will be obtained from the appropriate research ethics committee. Informed consent will be acquired from all participants before their involvement in surveys and interviews, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

6. Limitations:

The study may face limitations such as potential respondent bias, limited generalizability due to a specific focus on the Cobbler community, and challenges related to capturing a comprehensive socio-economic picture within the constraints of the research timeline.

7. Significance:

This research contributes to an improved understanding of the socio-economic dynamics of the Scheduled Caste Cobbler community in Tripura. The mixed-methods approach enables a holistic view of their living conditions, challenges, and opportunities, potentially informing policies and interventions that promote inclusive development and reduce disparities within marginalized communities.

By integrating quantitative insights with qualitative narratives, this methodology ensures a more nuanced comprehension of the complexities surrounding the socio-economic landscape of the Cobbler community in Tripura, ultimately enhancing the applicability and relevance of the study's findings.

RESULTS

Quantitative Findings:

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The quantitative analysis revealed that a significant portion of the Cobbler community in Tripura had limited access to education, with a higher percentage of individuals having completed only primary education. Employment patterns showcased a reliance on traditional occupations like leatherwork, often characterized by irregular income sources and job insecurity. The income distribution demonstrated disparities, with a considerable proportion of the community falling within the lower income brackets.

Qualitative Insights:

Qualitative interviews provided deeper insights into the challenges faced by the Cobbler community. Discrimination and social exclusion were recurring themes, affecting their interactions in various spheres of life. Despite aspirations for socio-economic advancement, the community often encountered barriers that hindered their progress.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the persisting socio-economic disparities experienced by the Cobbler community in Tripura. Limited access to education and employment opportunities, coupled with income inequalities, contribute to the community's marginalization. The qualitative insights shed light on the intricate web of discrimination and exclusion that influences their everyday experiences.

The situation of the Cobbler community in Tripura is reflective of broader challenges faced by Scheduled Caste communities in India. Historical injustices and prevailing socio-economic structures perpetuate inequalities, impeding the upward mobility of these marginalized populations.

CONCLUSION

This case study provides a comprehensive socio-economic analysis of the Cobbler community in Tripura, shedding light on the challenges they face within the context of education, employment, income, and social integration. The combination of quantitative data and qualitative narratives paints a holistic picture of the community's lived experiences, emphasizing the complexities of their socio-economic trajectory.

The insights from this study hold significant implications for policy formulation and targeted interventions. Efforts to enhance access to quality education, create sustainable employment opportunities, and combat discriminatory practices are essential to fostering inclusive development and addressing the socio-economic disparities faced by the Cobbler community.

In the broader context, this research contributes to the discourse on social equity and serves as a reminder of the pressing need for proactive measures to uplift marginalized communities. By highlighting the specific challenges faced by the Cobbler community in Tripura, this study advocates for a more inclusive and equitable society that values the dignity and rights of all its members.

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