

Status of SC ST Agriculturists in India with special Reference to Karnataka State

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Abstract : *Agriculture's contribution to the Indian economy plays a vital role in economic development and in keeping hunger of rural India at bay. Though secondary (Industry) sector is dominant in contemporary economic development of the country, around 65 per cent of people's lives still depends on the primary sector (Agriculture). Seventy per cent of India's population lives in rural areas. 79.8 per cent of Dalits live in villages, out of which around 70 per cent are landless and very few have lands, and are mostly marginal farmers. Entitlement to land brings change in the lives of rural Dalits and contributes to the economy and enables them to enjoy a dignified life.*

The rural masses should have right to productive land under the principle of State socialism, as propounded by Dr. Ambedkar, which places an obligation on "the state to plan the economic life of the people on lines which would lead to the highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise and also provide for the equitable distribution of wealth" (AWAS, Vol-3, P408).¹ In this context the researcher made an attempt to throw the light on the aspect of SC ST farmers a study has been conducted by keeping paper titled as "Status of SC ST agriculture in India"

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

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Introduction:

Land is an important agricultural resource and ownership over agricultural land is an important indicator of economic wellbeing and social condition in rural areas. Hence, access to it is crucial for socially disadvantaged households. Land ownership patterns in India are very lopsided and biased against socially deprived groups and even after 60 years of land reforms, this continues to be the reality of the hierarchical socio-economic conditions in our country. “The pattern of land distribution in India, therefore, reflects the existing socio-economic hierarchy. While large landowners invariably belong to the upper castes, the cultivators belong to the middle castes, and the agricultural workers are largely Dalits and Tribals.² ‘It is also seen from the field that even after all these interventions the landlessness or near-landlessness among the poor, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, is considerable and the demand for land is still being unmet.³ So, the moot question here is how this discrimination and exclusion towards socially deprived groups’ works.

Review of Literature

The researcher has reviewed the very important related articles which are pertaining to the study. They are:

Rayappa and Grover (1979) examined that; facet of poverty among SC ST Sections is the ownership of fewer assets such as agricultural land. Not only the land holdings smaller in size and inferior in quality, the ownership of other assets too appears to be quite negligible.⁴

Uma (1984) conducted a study on the progress of the Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh. agriculture and employment are the two major sectors in which the Scheduled Castes are at present engaged. The policy of protective discrimination has been practiced with regard to employment, whereas there are obvious difficulties in operating with a clear cut policy in agriculture. The author suggested that the kind of determined effort witnessed in the employment sector has not been forthcoming in agriculture.⁵

Singh (2007) in his study found that the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households are left with less percentage of cultivated and higher percentage of uncultivated land as compared to the general caste households mainly due to the fact that the land allotted to them by the government is either a part of steep hills full of trees, bushes and stones or a part of river which remains under water for half of the year and covered by stones and sand during the next half of the year which is not suitable for cultivation and is inferior.⁶

Statement of research Problem

The **Scheduled Castes (SCs)** and **Scheduled Tribes (STs)** are various officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged people in **India**. Land is the vital factor that forms the basis for economic activity and it is the crucial natural resource that produces food and non-food products, if used properly, and thereby serves as a resource to generate incomes to the people, more specifically, rural population in agriculture dominated economics. It is identified from the above studies that the status of SC ST agriculturists is a biggest problem in India till today. Therefore, the researcher aimed to study the “**Status of SC/ST agriculturists in India.**”

Objectives of the study:

- To know the size of land holdings by the SC ST in India in general and in Karnataka in particular.
- To know the area operated and operational holdings of SC ST and other group.
- To offer the suitable suggestions to take necessary steps to uplift SC ST Agriculturists.

Methodology:

The study is completely based on the secondary data. Related information are collected from the sources like agricultural census, books, articles and internet etc. the required statistical tools like percentage has been used to understand in the better way. Graphical presentations have been made to know in the meaningful manner.

Concepts of the terms:

Operational Holding: All land which is used wholly or partly for agricultural production and is operated as one technical unit by one person alone or with others without regard to the title, legal form, size or location.

Operated area: Operated area includes both cultivated and uncultivated area, provided part of it is put to agricultural production during the reference period. If, for instance, an operational holding consists of four survey numbers out of which one survey number is put to non-agricultural uses, the total area of the operational holding will be equal to the total geographical area of all the four survey numbers.⁹

The data are presented at All India level and for all States and Union Territories in the following size classes and size groups of operational holdings

Table 1: Size classes and Size groups of Holdings:

S. No.	Group	S.No.	Classes (in ha.)
I.	Marginal	1.	Below 0.5 ha.
		2.	0.5 – 1.0 ha.
II.	Small	3.	1.0 – 2.0 ha.
III.	Semi-medium	4.	2.0 – 3.0 ha.
		5.	3.0 – 4.0 ha.
IV.	Medium	6.	4.0 – 5.0 ha.
		7.	5.0 – 7.5 ha.
		8.	7.5 – 10.0 ha.
V.	Large	9.	10.0 – 20.0 ha.
		10.	20.0 And above.

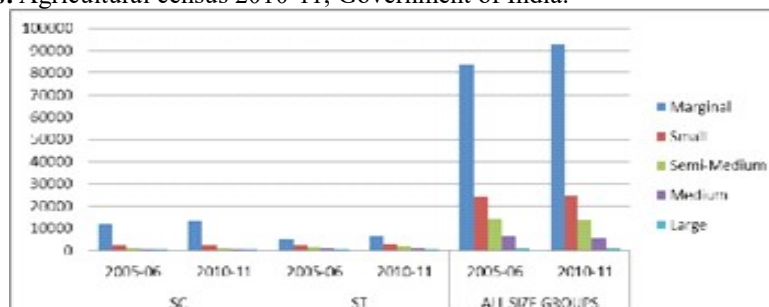
Sources: Agricultural census 2010-11, Government of India.

Analyses and Interpretation

Table 2: Number of holdings of SC, ST and all size of groups in India

Category	Number of Holdings (in '000)					
	SC		ST		ALL SIZE GROUPS	
	2005-06	2010-11	2005-06	2010-11	2005-06	2010-11
Marginal	12233	13247	5118	6470	83694	92826
Small	2445	2464	2650	2877	23930	24779
Semi-Medium	1014	1005	1700	1787	14127	13896
Medium	326	330	763	760	6375	5875
Large	56	52	112	111	1096	973
All Sizes	16073	17099	10343	12005	129222	138348
Percentage	12.43	12.36	8.00	8.67	100.00	100.00

Sources: Agricultural census 2010-11, Government of India.

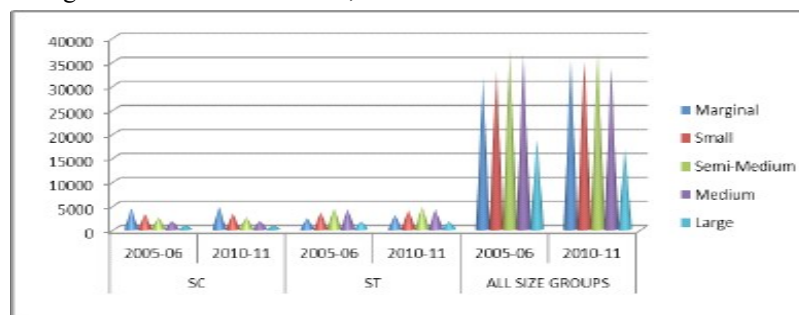


The above table crystallizes about Number of land holdings of SC, ST and all size of groups in India as per the Agriculture Census 2010-11. There is no any scenario has been changed drastically of SC ST farmers in India when compare to all size groups farmers particularly in large and medium land holding farmers, SC ST are very few in number. But marginal and small land holders are in a average position with all size group farmers. It may be due to the government land allotment to SC ST land less people.

Table 3: Operated area of SC, ST and all size of groups farmers in India

Category	Operated Area (in '000 ha.)					
	SC		ST		ALL SIZE GROUPS	
	2005-06	2010-11	2005-06	2010-11	2005-06	2010-11
Marginal	4494	4867	2468	3144	32026	35908
Small	3364	3455	3692	4119	33101	35244
Semi-Medium	2693	2678	4542	4831	37898	37705
Medium	1865	1885	4397	4363	36583	33828
Large	883	836	1831	1763	18715	16907
All Sizes	13300	13721	16929	18221	158323	159592
Percentage	8.40	8.59	10.69	11.41	100.00	100.00

Sources: Agricultural census 2010-11, Government of India.

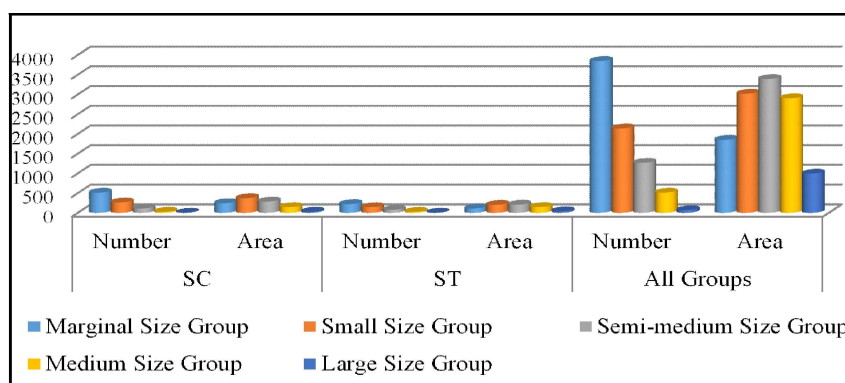


The above table exhibits about operated area of SC, ST and all size of groups farmers in India as per the Agriculture Census 2010-11. It is clear from the above table that, SC STs operated area is very small when compare to all size groups farmers particularly in semi-medium, Medium and large operating area farmers. But marginal and small land holders are in an average position with all size group

farmers. At last the inferences may be drawn that, because of limited land they are not competent with all size group of famers in agricultural activities.

Table 4: Distribution of Number of Operational Holdings and area operated in Karnataka

All Size Classes	SC		ST		All Groups	
	Number	Area	Number	Area	Number	Area
Marginal Size Group	511	244	222	111	3849	1851
Small Size Group	264	371	143	202	2138	3020
Semi-medium Size Group	110	285	78	207	1267	3393
Medium Size Group	27	145	26	146	511	2904
Large Size Group	2	29	3	39	68	994
All size groups	914	1074	473	705	7832	12161

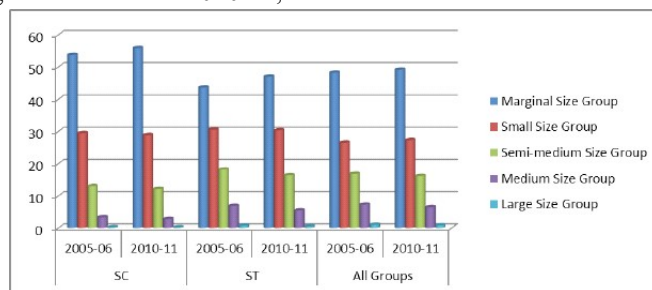


The above table depicts about distribution of number of operational holdings and area operated in Karnataka as per the Agriculture Census 2010-11. There are single digit famers in large and double digit farmers in medium size group of SC ST farmers in Karnataka. Whereas not more than 511 farmers in marginal small and semi-medium size group farmer from SC STs. is no any scenario has been changed drastically of SC ST farmers in India when compare to all size groups farmers particularly in large and medium land holding farmers, SC ST are very few in number. But marginal and small land holders are in an average position with all size group farmers. It may be due to the government land allotment to SC ST land less people.

Table 5: percentagewise distribution of number of operational holdings in Karnataka

All Size Classes	SC		ST		All Groups	
	2005-06	2010-11	2005-06	2010-11	2005-06	2010-11
Marginal Size Group	53.77	55.88	43.61	47.08	48.23	49.17
Small Size Group	29.51	28.91	30.54	30.33	26.56	27.30
Semi-medium Size Group	13.04	12.09	18.20	16.47	16.86	16.17
Medium Size Group	3.40	2.90	6.87	5.51	7.31	6.52
Large Size Group	0.28	0.23	0.78	0.60	1.05	0.86
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Sources: Agricultural census 2010-11, Government of India.

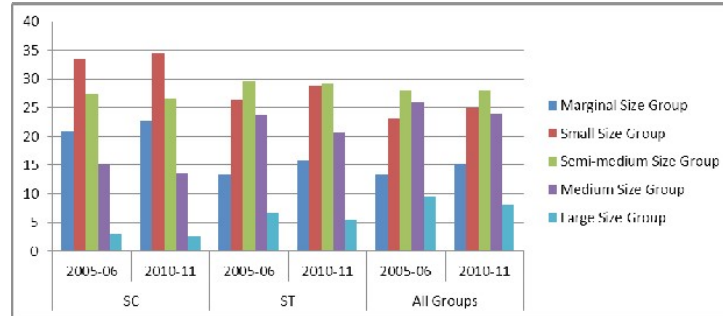


The above table summarizes about number of operational holdings of SC, ST and all size groups farmers in Karnataka as per the Agriculture Census 2010-11. SCs are very few in number when compare to ST and all size groups farmers particularly in large and medium number of operational holding farmers, which reveals that according to their population they have not got share in the total farming in Karnataka. But marginal and small land holders are in an average position with all size group farmers. It may be due to the government land allotment to SC ST land less people.

Table 6: percentagewise distribution of area operated by operational holdings in Karnataka

All Size Classes	SC		ST		All Groups	
	2005-06	2010-11	2005-06	2010-11	2005-06	2010-11
Marginal Size Group	21.00	22.69	13.41	15.76	13.33	15.22
Small Size Group	33.58	34.58	26.45	28.71	23.22	24.83
Semi-medium Size Group	27.32	26.56	29.70	29.31	28.00	27.90
Medium Size Group	15.12	13.51	23.74	20.66	25.88	23.88
Large Size Group	2.99	2.67	6.70	5.56	9.56	8.17
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Sources: Agricultural census 2010-11, Government of India.



The above table discloses about percentage wise distribution of area operated by operational holdings in Karnataka as per the Agriculture Census 2010-11. It is clear from the above table that, SC ST marginal, small and semi-medium size farmers are operating their land in very appropriate way when compare to all size group of farmers. SC STs operated area is very small when compare to all size groups farmers particularly in large operating area farmers. Ultimately the inferences may be drawn that, because of limited land holdings, SC STs are not in position to compete with all size groups of famers in Karnataka.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it is quite clear that more than 70% of SC STs are dependent on the agriculture and its allied activities. Dr. Ambedkar was a strong proponent of land reforms, and for a prominent role for the state in economic development. For that reason as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has rightly given some suitable suggestions to increase the productivity and standardize the life of the rural inhabitants in general and SC STs in particular, in this direction the researcher wants to recollect the wordicts of Dr. B R Ambedkar to offer suitable suggestions to uplift the level of SC STs.

Dr. Ambedkar proposed state ownership should be there in agriculture with a collectivized method of cultivation and a modified form of state socialism in the field of industry. It placed squarely on the shoulders of the state obligation to supply capital necessary for agriculture as well as industry. Dr. Ambedkar insisted that, agriculture shall be a state industry, and be organized by the state taking over all land and letting it out for cultivation in suitable standard sizes to residents of villages; these shall be cultivated as collective farms by groups of families. If the state and central government is ready to do something in this direction, automatically every problem of the farmers may come to end, and not only the SC St farmers but

also all formers of the India will lead standardized life by contributing the economical development of the nation.

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