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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WASHER-MEN COMMUNITY IN VILLIANUR COMMUNE OF PUDUCHERRY REGION

Vignarajan P.

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Abstract

The washer-men communities are all Informal workers the government has offers many policies to Washer-men communities like, Old age pension scheme. Even after the policies washer-men community cannot grow in socio-economic level due to illiteracy rate, lack of political awareness. Washing cloths now became a corporate sector but traditional washer-men community people is not develop. The government has to give a different kinds of skill training to washing clothes. Our local body government has to give important to these kinds of grass route workers. This paper also investigates the socio-cultural relations of this caste with other castes in the villages. Caste is occupational unity of specific function but this caste' s operations are extended from the limits of washing clothes to participate in. It explores the internal hierarchies and patron and dependent caste relations in the larger social arena.

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Introduction:-

“Our society is afflicted with casteism. When we fight against the untouchable inflicted upon us. Our responsibility to wipe out the division’s among the Scheduled castes increase”

-Dr.B.R.Ambedkar

This dissertation is a documentation of ethnographic field work on Vannar community in Puducherry Region. It is a service community in village and practice traditional hereditary occupation. The field work is purely documenting their social and cultural responsibilities being as a vannar caste in the village. It is the only community maintains monopoly over washing clothes in villages. This paper also investigates the socio-cultural relations of this caste with other castes in the villages. Caste is occupational unity of specific function but this caste’s operations are extended from the limits of washing clothes to participate in. It explores the internal hierarchies and patron and dependent caste relations in the larger social arena.

In Puducherry and Tamilnadu the washer men community or group has been identify two names vannar and eakali. In these communities as approved by the Government of Tamilnadu under each category is maintained as per the provisions contained in Article 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution of India. These names Hindu-vannar’s are officials documented in the Puducherry and Tamilnadu has added MBC. G.O. (Ms). No. 38 BC, MB&MW Department (BCC), dated 5.11.2009.This occupation practice group has other names too such as Rajaka and Chakali in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. In Tamilnadu and Puducherry the Washer-men community organization has to be

about 12% of the backward class considered as the total population. In other parts of the country it is known as dhobi caste and in 18 states it is listed among the schedule caste.

In Puducherry Region as per the Presidential Order 1964 and 2002 Puthirai-Vannan. Puthirai-vannar's are the schedule caste people. According to the constitution (Pondicherry) scheduled castes order 1964. The Presidential order dated 05.03.1964 is reproduced hereunder: "In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 341 of the Constitution of India, the president is pleased to make the following Order, This Order may be called the Constitution (Pondicherry) Scheduled Castes Order, 1964.

Objectives Of The Study:-

1. To study the ethnographic identity of washer men community.
2. To study socio-economic status of washer men community in Puducherry region.
3. To analyses the income, expenditure and health conditions of washer men community.

Hypotheses

1. The economic backwardness of washer men community is due to their traditional occupation.
2. Washer men community is not only involved in their community occupation but also in their income earning vocations.

Methodology:-

'Research', the word itself gives the meaning as searching more relevant facts from the existing fact. Research aims at discovering the truth. The social research applies scientific steps in proving into the social phenomena. A research may be defined as careful critical enquiry or examination in seeking facts or process consists of a number of selected steps, which essentially interdependent. The collection of facts and of selected steps, which essentially interdependent. The collection of facts and information will follow scientific techniques and tools to arrive at reasonable conclusion.

In this section, the researcher makes an attempt to explain the methods of study through which this study was completed. The following steps have been adopted in the research methodology. The present research study is designed in such the way to collect the socio-economic, health and working conditions of washer men community in the Union Territory of Puducherry.

Methods Of Data Collection:-

Data collection is one of the most important aspects while conducting study. In this study, primary data and secondary data were collected from various sources.

Data Collection:

The researcher used a Structured Interview Schedule as the tool of data collection. It contains both open ended and close ended questions to collect the required data on the socio-economic, health and working conditions of respondents. It also contains questions to understand the awareness of the respondents about various schemes, its utilization and the feature plans.

In this study is based on the primary data to collect the rural areas. In rural area there are different kinds of communities are doing traditional occupation. Most of the Vannar communities are doing washing works. So I was collecting Convenience sample method. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. There are 60 samples are collecting the study area. (49) Samples are puthirai-vannar and (19) is samples, Hindu-vannarsin Villianur commune Panjayats

Review Of Literature:-

After clarifying some of the important concepts and definitions used in the study, an attempt has been made to review some important but related literature on the subject of the socio- economic and conditions of the Scheduled dhobis (Puthirai Vannar) and backward class dhobis (Vannar). The review of the past studies has been done keeping in mind the broad objectives of the study.

**Profile Of The Study Area: Villianur Commune Of Puducherry Region
Rural-Urban Population In Villianur Taluk**

Area	No.households	Male	Female	Total population
Rural	34367	72421	73603	146024
Urban	16017	33253	34001	67254
Total	50384	105674	107604	213278

Sources: census Reports, various issue

In Villianur Region total 50384 households are there, total population is 213278, male population is 105674 and female population is 107604. The male children's are 12489 and female children's are 11865 the total populations of children's are 24354. The total SC population is 49807; male SC population is 24277 and Female's SC populations are 25530. The total literate population is 152260; male literate population is 81935 and female's literate population is 70325. The total illiterate population is 61018; male illiterate is 23739 and female illiterate population is 37279. Villianur is one of 5 Communes in Pondicherry district in the Indian territory of Puducherry. Villianur Commune comes under Villianur Taluk of Puducherry District. Mannadipet is another commune under Villianur Taluk. Villianur Commune consists of 1 Census Town and 17 Panchayat Villages. Urban area under Villianur Commune consists of one census town, viz. Villianur and one Gram Panchayat, viz. Kurumbapet.

Socio-Economic Conditions Of Washermen Community In This Study Area Of Villianur Commune Panjayat:

The reason for the setback has been proved and documented. In this research of socio-economic conditions determined following the factors are:

1. Age structure, Educational background, Religious group
2. Family types
3. Family size
4. Occupational type
5. Source of Income
6. Monthly Income, Saving, Expenditure
7. Housing conditions, toilet facility, electricity, drinking water facility.
8. Health conditions,
9. Perception of work details
10. Discrimination, nature of work, awareness about funeral ritual works.
11. Expectation from the government side to improve your socio economic status.
12. Personal opinions of Respondents.

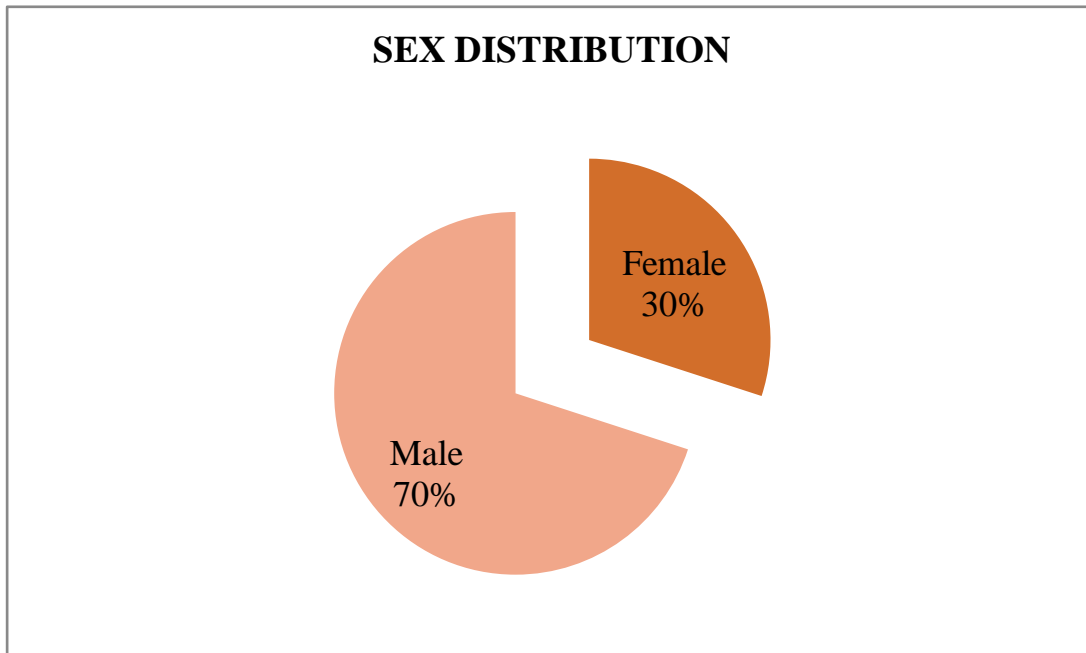
The study relates to the socio-economic, health condition of the washer- community in Puducherry Region. The literacy among the respondents is very poor where a majority of them are illiterate. Among the literates, none has been found to have education above the graduate standard. Most of the Washer-men were in middle aged with daily income ranges from Rs.100to Rs.500. The Socio- Economic, Health condition of washer men communities are very poor in Villianur commune of Puducherry Region.

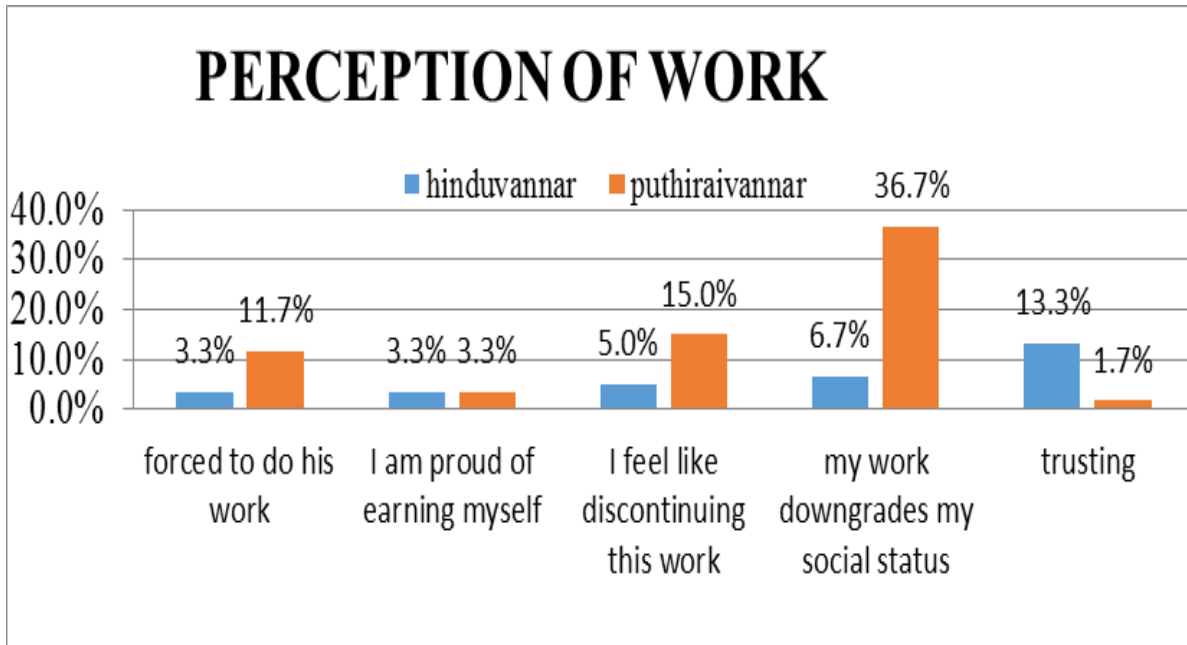
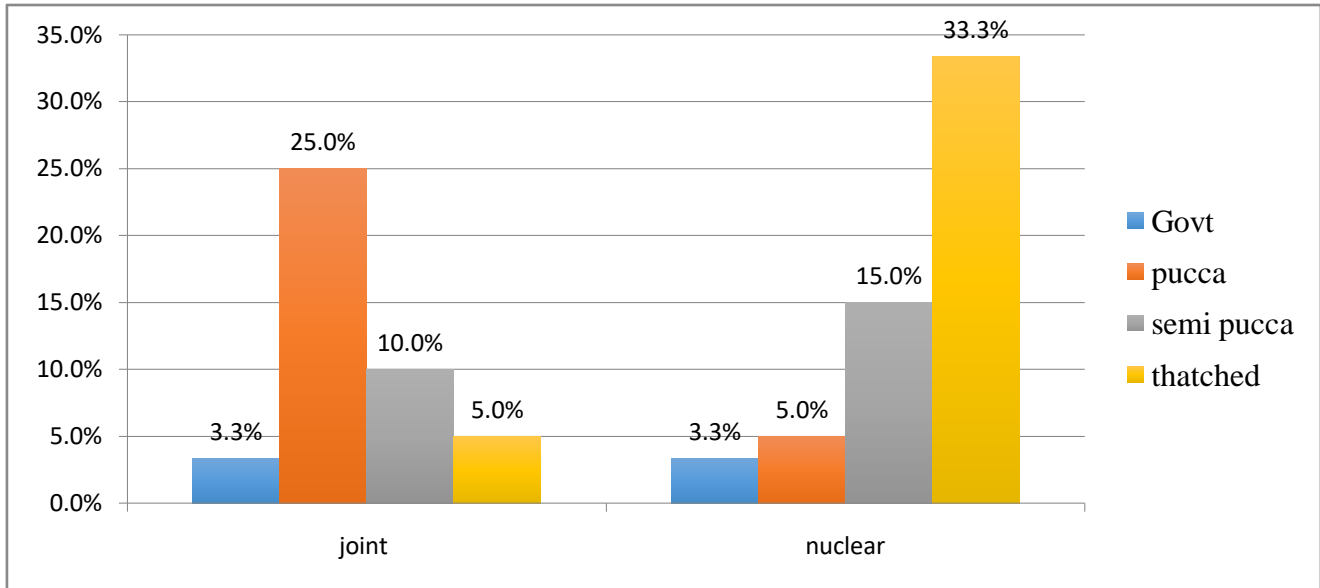
In this age wise classification of respondent has explained that a female worker is very low, compare than the male workers. The washing community person has always given important to women workers. The ethnography of vannar community has played a certain roles and responsibilities. They are doing pooja works in Punithaneeratuvizha So the 35-40(21.7) age female workers are high level and the low level age wise female

workers is 20-25(6.7%). The female respondents of worker in the group of 30-35 age (8.3%), 35-40 age (15.0%), 40-45 age (5.0%), and 45-50 age (6.7%), 50-55 ages6.7%).Results of the study are controversial that 35-40 old people are highest (21%) and 40-45 aged people are the lowest (5%) involved in washing works.



Results of the sex ratio and religion related study suggested that total 70% male and 30% female respondents were actively involved in the washing. Most of the washer men communities are doing traditional works like funeral ritual in gravy yard in corpuses. Mostly women’s are participating in the marriage inauguration function and condolence function. So the Vannar community women are having the role and responsibilities of Pooja works in all kinds of village ceremony functions.

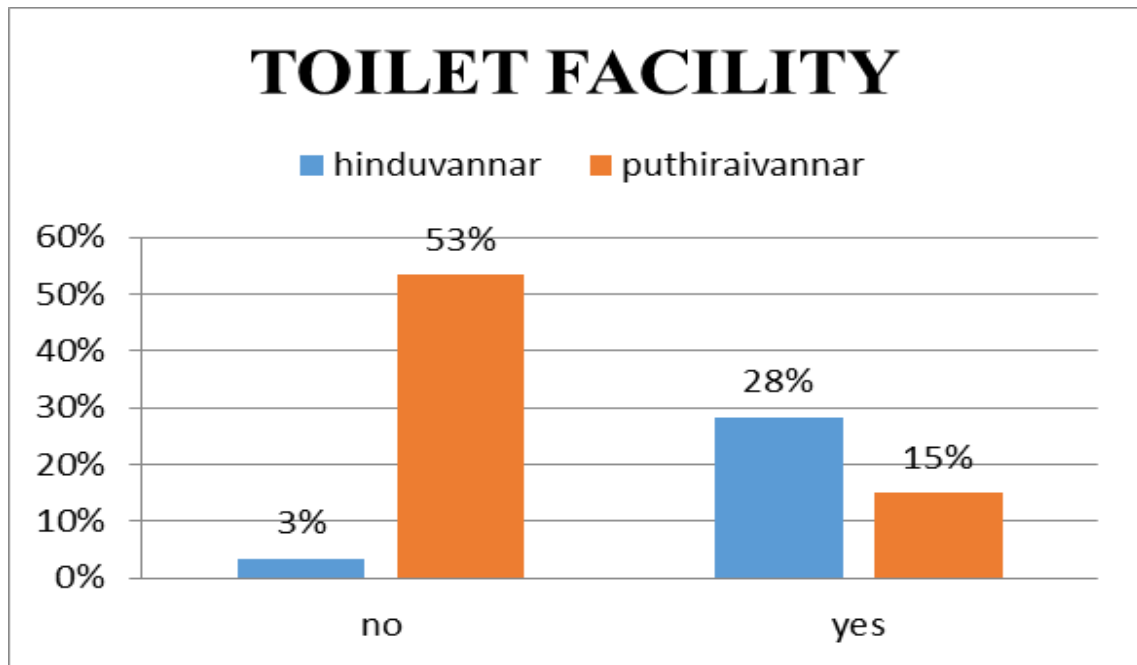




This diagram discussing the two category of family like joint and nuclear, in this diagram is calculated in percentage of total 60 respondents. Only 3.3% of respondents lives joint family in government Quarters. The comparison between nuclear and joint family’s government quarters is same. But the 25% of Pucca home is high in joint family. Semi pucca is 10%, Thatched is 5% in joint family. In nuclear family thatched houses are 33.3% is very high, Pucca is very low in 5% of nuclear family. We are easily understanding the relation between the joint and nuclear family details. Finally nuclear families are living in thatched house. In joint families are living in Pucca house

We are collecting two variable methods of survey. Hindu-vannar and Puthirai-vannar. Those two Vannars are doing same traditional works but they are having different kinds of reservation. According to this diagram said that “only Few Hind-vannars community peoples are doing traditional works. Most of them are migrated to another job like formal sectors. But the Puthirai-vannar peoples don’t have alternate job so still graduates also doing his traditional works.

Educational status explained that primary level in Hindu-vannar 3.3%, Puthirai-vannar 18.3%, and middle level is 3.3% of Hindu-vannar and 15% of Puthirai-vannar. High school level is that 16.7% of Hindu-vannar and 18.3% of Puthirai-vannar. But the main thing about higher secondary level is that Puthirai-vannar is that zero.



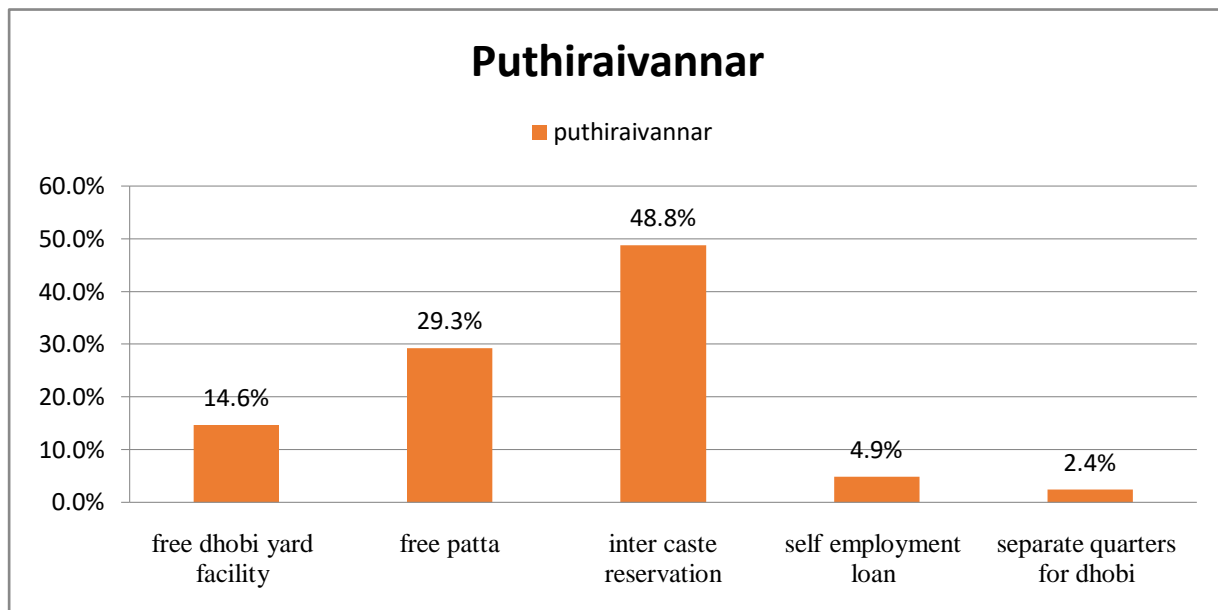
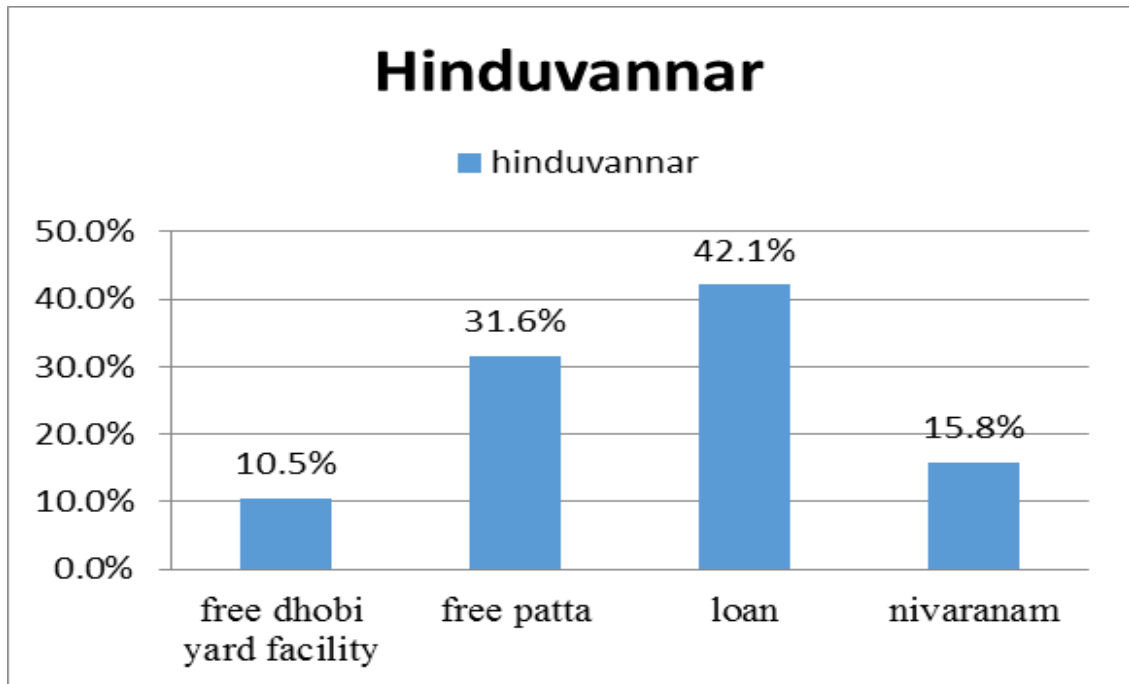
The 53% of Puthirai-vannar statement is that shows there is no toilet facility in his home. 15% of respondents are having the toilet facility in his home. But the Hindu -vannar community 28% of people is having toilet facility in his home. 3% of hinduvannar are using public toilet. The comparison between hindu-vannar and puthirai-vannar toilet facility is easily understand the above diagram. In this washer-men community peoples are mostly using public toilet. In urban areas the municipality corporation builds the Public toilet facility. In this study explained that the sanitary condition of washing community in study area. There are 56% of respondents are says “we don’t have the toilet facility in my home”. 43.3% of people say “we are having the toilet facility in my home”. In this study area we are understand the sanitary condition of washing community. 56.7% of respondents are using open place in rural areas and public corporation in urban areas.

Monthly income status of Washer men community. The below income of Rs.5000 is getting (11.7%), Rs.6000 is (20%), Rs.7000 is (8.3%), and Rs.8000 is (20%), 9000 is (5%), Rs.10000 is (20%), Rs.12000 is (3.3%), Rs.15000 is (5%), Rs.20000 is (5%), above Rs.35000 is (1.7%). The washer men community peoples are daily wage labor. So this community people statement is approximately monthly expense. But it’s not an actual expense it may be increase or decrease. This survey explained that Rs.2000-3000 is 1.7% of people’s monthly expense, Rs.4000-5000 is 13.3%, Rs.5000-6000 is 23.3%, Rs.6000-7000 is 21.7%, Rs.7000-8000 is 5%, Rs.8000-9000 is 20%, Rs.9000-10000 is 3.3%, Rs.10000-11000 is 5%, Rs.15000-16000 is 58%, and Rs.25000-26000 is 1.7%.

Monthly Children’s Educational Expenses is 33.3% of respondents are don’t have the children’s educational expenses 38.3% of respondents are spend Rs.500 21.7% of respondents are spend Rs. 1000 for educational expense Rs.1500 for 1.7% of respondents Rs. 2000 for 3.3% of respondents and Rs.3500 for 1.7% of respondents is very high. The observation of children’s education expense is Rs.3500 is high. So, most of the Vannar Community peoples are prefer Government School. So their expense is very low comparing their other community.

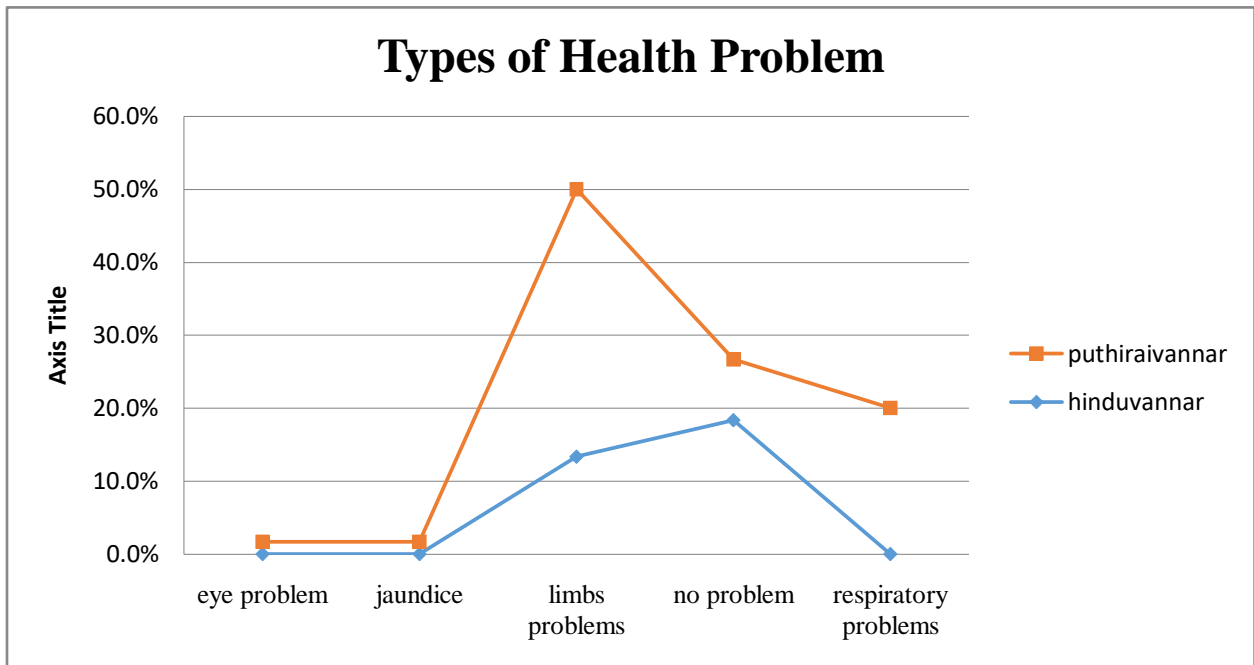
In this study data indicates that 15% of respondents are forced to do this works, 6.7% of respondents said I am proud of earning myself because of they are working self-sufficient jobs. They are giving jobs for two or more person, they having a Pucca Environment for doing a Washing Work. And 20% of respondents are feeling discontinuing this works because of they are getting very low income but expenses is high.

They are the rural Washer man community; mostly rural washer men are all doing traditional (untouchable works). So they are feeling like discontinue. Then 43.3% of respondents are expressed “Vannar community works are downgrades to my social status”. It is the highest level of respondents is status of perception of work. 15% of respondents are trusting to doing these kinds of works. Because of its now became a corporate. They are making an innovating method. The total sixty respondents explained that the (15%) of people said to force to do this work. (6.7%) of people said I am proud of earning myself. (20%) of people said I feel like discontinuing this work. (43.3%) of people expressed my work downgrades my social status. Remains (15%) of peoples trust these traditional jobs.



The washermen community people are expecting more demand but they are getting very low. Because of they are the primary service holder's. This occupation is an ethnographical work. 13.3% of respondents are expectations Dhobi yard facility. 30% of respondents are expecting free Patta. 33.3% of respondents are expecting Inter-caste reservations 13.3% of respondents are expecting Loan's 5% of respondents are expecting Nivaranam due to the rainy (or) Disasters time. 3.3% of respondents are expecting self-employment loan. And 1.7% of respondents are expecting self-employment loan. And 1.7% of respondents are expecting separate quarters for dhobi. In this Hindu vannar diagram clearly shows their expectation to Government. The 10.5% of people are expecting free dhobi yard facility. 31.6% of people are expecting only Patta, 42.1% of respondents are expecting loans, and 15.3% of people are expecting nivaranam. The highest people are asking to loan. This community socio-economic background is very poor

In this Puthirai vannar diagram has clearly explained that the expectation of Government side. 14.6% of people are expecting the free dhobi yard facility, 29.3% of people are expecting free patta facility, 48.8% of people are expecting the inter-caste reservation, 4.9% of people are expecting self-employment loans and 2.4% of people are expecting separate quarters for Dhobi community. The highest respondents are expecting the Inter-caste Reservation. Because of still they are not develop, there no one political participation candidates among the Reserved Constituency. Their political economic condition is very low compare than other SC community. Mostly the discrimination is applicable in very high level. They are seeking for Adi-dravida, Arunthathiyar, Puthirai-vannar Reservation.



The Indian society have the different kinds of traditional workers, now the traditional works is fully occupied the caste. Caste has played many roles in the social system. The Social science researcher has noted information among the society. Now also discrimination as also seen our society, most of the washer men community has faced many discrimination. 70% of respondents said that “we are facing discrimination, and 30% of people are told we are not facing discrimination due to these kinds of work. But the majority people said that discrimination is happening in our society Psychological Problems condition of this community has explained that 6.7% of respondents are indicates that no problems. 18.3% of respondents are having anxiety, 23.3% of respondents are having depression, 28.3% of respondents are having ear 21.7% of respondents are having the problem but it in if be clear. And 1.7% of respondents are having the tension. These are all the psychological problem of Washer-men Community. The chronological problems of washermen community. There are 26.7% of respondents said “We don’t have the health problems.” And 73.3% of respondents are having the health problems. But most of the washer-men community peoples are facing the problem due to these kinds of job.

The health problems of washer-men community. 1.7% of respondents are having the eye problems, 1.7% of respondents are having the jaundice problems, 50% of respondents are having the limbs Problems, 26% of respondents are told we don't have the problem and remaining 20% of respondents are facing the respiratory problem. And the 3.3 % of washermen community peoples are aware about the insurance policy. Rest of them 96.7% of people not aware this insurance policy

Findings:

1. The major findings of Washer-men communities are not develop; they are socially and economically under develop community.
2. The study found that major group of Washer-men is from the age group 20 to 60. The work participation is the age of 35-40.
3. The Illiterate/can writes name has the highest number of Washer-men in the study area suggests that lack of interest, poverty, and lack of awareness about education.
4. In this study majority of them belong to Hindu Religion because of the bloodline or ancestors belong to the same religion. Most of the people are following traditional works. In this
5. Traditionally there was much joint family but due to modernization and changes in need of the people standard and mindset they started to have a nuclear family
6. In rural area most of the Puthirai-vannar's family are doing traditional and funeral ritual workers. But the Hindu-vannar's are not doing this kinds works.
7. Mostly vannar community people facing discrimination to their neighbour. Their children's are also facing discrimination.
8. Their Income, Expense, Savings is not sufficient to live. Most of the people are BPL (Below Poverty Line) holders.
9. (42.1%) of hindu-vannar's are seeking for loans. But the banks are asking securities, so they are struggle to get loan. And they don't have the awareness about the loans and schemes.
10. (48.8%) of Puthirai-vannar's expectations are Inter-caste reservation among the Scheduled Caste. They are very low minority people among the Dalits.
11. Their educational Expenses is very low, this caste children's are studying Government schools and college. Their family members are also working part-time.
12. Puthirai-vannar community people are working street cycle washing worker. Their monthly highest income is Rs.12000. Hindu-vannar highest monthly income is Rs.35000.
13. (43.3%) of respondents are said to my work is downgrades of my social status. Their thing to improve his social status.
14. My last finding is that in Villianur Region there are 5 graveyards are there. Mostly the Puthirai vannar community peoples are forced to do this funeral ritual works because of their ethnography identity and traditional festival are clearly explained to this research work.
15. Now we are seeing the modernisation of classical workers. Washing cloths occupation is became a corporate sector. But the washer-men community is still under develop. Because of our social structure is gives this kinds of works are depressed class economy.
16. Most of the funeral ritual works are untouchable works. We are study the funeral ritual works socio economic conditions. On the other hand Bhramins are also involving the Funeral works but they are not comes under the untouchable. These are all the background of Political economy.
17. There is no Representative Candidates in Politics in Puducherry Region. Because of vannar community is a minority community among the backward class.
18. The main objective of local Panchayat is to give awareness of untouchable workers. But they did not give because of they are the voiceless minority people.

Suggestions:-

1. My specific suggestion is that to give Inter-caste Reservation of Puthirai-vannar community among the schedule caste.
2. To allot separate budget of all kinds of funeral ritual workers. And evaluating and maintain.
3. The Government has to give more important to this kinds of excluded community.
4. The Government has to give the Political awareness of excluded community in every local Panjayat election
5. The government provided policies needed additional programs and set up to develop the socio-economic of the washer-men

6. The washer-men family children need to be given quota in the educational system to improve their economic conditions of family and community.
7. The awareness of modernisation occupation needs among to be made among the washer-men to improve their safety and standard of living.
8. The government needs to set up export development program among the Washer men, even among small washer men.
9. The government needs to set up flood cyclone awareness among every washer-man to save their life and livelihood.
10. The employment for educated Washer-men needs to be created by the government to avoid people jobless or provide them loan and subsidies to start the business on their own.
11. The awareness needs to develop by the government for the upliftment of the washer-men communities.
12. The banking system is very poor among Washer men; financial inclusion needs to be ensured among the washer-men communities.

Conclusion:-

This study was conducted from April to August 2016. The study was based on collection of primary and secondary data. Before collecting the primary data a draft questionnaire was developed which was pre-tested with few Washer-men. In this pre-testing, much attention was given to any new information in the draft questionnaire in order to reach the objectives of the study. According to the experience gained in pre-testing, the final questionnaire was improved, rearranged and modified. The final questionnaire included the questions on the socio-demographic condition, income of washer-men, family size, family members Primary data were collected through personal interview supplemented by multiple Methodological Participatory Research Approach (PRA) Tools such as Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Crosscheck Interviews (CI) with key informants. Necessary relevant information on the socio-economic condition of washer men was collected from regional offices. All the collected information were accumulated and analyzed by MS-Excel and then presented in textual, tabular and graphical forms to understand the present status of the livelihood status and constraints of the Washer-men studied area.

The washer-men communities are all Informal workers the government has offers many policies to Washer-men communities like, Old age pension scheme. Even after the policies washer-men community cannot grow in socio-economic level due to illiteracy rate, lack of political awareness. Washing cloths now became a corporate sector but traditional washer-men community people is not develop. The government has to give a different kinds of skill training to washing clothes. Our local body government has to give important to these kinds of grass route workers.

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