



CASTE-WISE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN IN AHMEDNAGAR DISTRICT (MAHARASHTRA)

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Abstract

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are among the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups not only in India but also in the state of Maharashtra and in its Ahmednagar district. Present study is based on these condary data mainly collected from Census of India, 2011 it is attempted to measure the socio-economic status of women in general in comparison to the downtrodden communities such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra state. It is further intended to appraise the comparison of non-SC/ST women status with the SC, ST women to comprehend the gaps between their statuses. For measuring the status of women Kundu's method of normalization has been employed and comparative analysis has been done. It is inferred that the non-SC/ST women's status is much higher than the SC/ST women. But the status of SC women goes along with the status of non-SC/ST women, which is not true with the ST women as they are residing in the far off remote areas and have not exposed to the modern way of living and their areas are still lagging much behind.

Key Words: Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Socio-Economic, Status.

Introduction

Women constitute nearly half of the total population of the society but their share in the fruits of development is abysmally low. The structural arrangement of the society provides women low position. They are economically exploited and discriminated, socially subjugated and politically rendered a powerless group in the society (Bhattacharya, 2014). Development is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Some of its major dimensions like the level of economic growth, level of education, level of health services, degree of modernization, status of women, level of nutrition, quality of housing, distribution of goods and services, and access to communication (Das, 1999).

The unfortunate fact is that in many developing economies like India, despite growth and development, women are still not granted an equal status at the micro level of the household or at the macro level of community and society at large (Bhat and Sharma, 2006). The general well-being or position of women in the society may define the status of women. The position of women varies from caste to caste, religion to religion and region to region. It is generally seen that the women's status is low. Women have low status because of social and economic insecurity (Ramotra, 1997).

As we know Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are among the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups not only in India but also in the state of Maharashtra and in its Ahmednagar district. In a traditional caste-ridden society of India, a person who has a low status in caste hierarchy also has low status in other hierarchies of social and economic development. It shows that there is a close relationship between the caste-based status and socio-economic status of population in a region (Ramotra, 2008). Thus, it is important to study socio-economic status of women belonging to different communities.

Objectives

The main objective of the present study is to measure the socio-economic status of women in general and in comparison to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra state. It is further intended to appraise the comparison of non-SC/ST women status with the SC, ST women to comprehend the gaps between their statuses.

The Study Region

Ahmednagar district is selected for present study purpose. Ahmednagar district is situated partly in the upper Godavari basin and partly in the Bhima basin occupying a somewhat central position in the Maharashtra state (Fig. 1). It lies between 180 2' and 190 9' north latitude and 730 9' and 750 5' east longitude. It is surrounded by Nashik and Aurangabad districts to the north, Beed and Osmanabad districts to the east, Solapur and Pune districts to the south and Pune and Thane districts to the west. Topographically the district can be divided in to three parts viz. the Sahyadri ranges, the plateau region and the Bhima and Godavari basins.

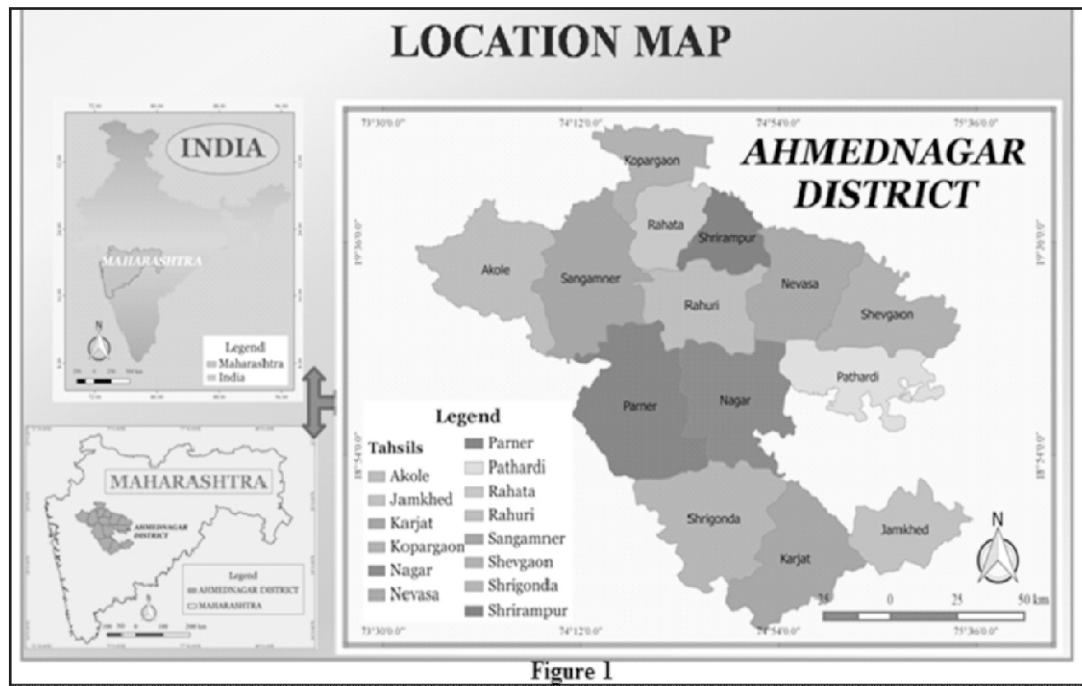


Figure 1

Database And Methodology

On the basis of availability of data, for the present study, six socio-economic indicators like general sex ratio, child sex ratio, literacy rate, work participation rate, workers in non-agricultural sector, and proportion of urban population, etc. are taken in to consideration separately to assess the socio-economic status of women concerning to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Non-SC/ ST and Overall women at tahsil level, for the year 2011.

Composite index for measuring the status of women belonging to different sections of society (SC, ST and non-SC/ST) have been computed by using Prof. Kundu's (1980) method of normalization. For that purpose each observation for each indicator have been divided by their corresponding mean values in order to remove the scale bias in the data without affecting relative positions of areal units in the series. Herein we have made some modification and computed the mean of the mean of each indicator for 2011 and accordingly each observation of each indicator have been divided with their respective mean of the mean so as comparative analysis of women's status belonging to Scheduled Caste, Schedule Tribes and non-SC/ST have been done for the year 2011. Lastly on the basis of composite index, women's status has been classified into four different suitable categories as follows.

1. Very High Level Status of Women (Above 7.00)

2. High Level Status of Women (6.00-7.00)
3. Moderate Level Status of Women (5.00-6.00)
4. Low Level Status of Women (Below 5.00)

Caste-wise Socio-economic Status Of Women, 2011

The composite index value of socio-economic status of women belonging to different segments of the society shows (Table 1) that higher level status of women is found in Nagar tahsil with respect to the women's of all sections of the society (SC, ST, non-SC/ST). Low status of women index among Scheduled Castes and among the non-SC/ST is found in Shevgaon tahsil, their composite index values are 4.70 and 4.57 respectively. Women's status is found low in the Nevasa (4.50) tahsil, followed by in Shevgaon (4.55) tahsil in case of Scheduled Tribes.

1. Status of Scheduled Caste Women

In fact, status of all women continuously increases passes over time (Fig. 2). Very high level status of Scheduled Caste women was identified in 3 tahsils, like Nagar (11.10), Shrirampur (7.9), and Rahata (7.1). However, higher level status of women was observed in 4 tahsils. These tahsils are Kopargaon (6.85), Rahuri (6.71), Sangamner (6.26) and Jamkhed (6.08). The moderate level of status of Scheduled Caste women was noticed in 5 tahsils, viz. Akole (5.86), Shrigonda (5.46), Pathardi (5.43), Karjat (5.16) and Parner (5.14). Remaining 2 tahsils like Nevasa (4.85) and Shevgaon (4.70) was included in the low level status category (Below 5.00).

As far as Scheduled Caste women's status is concerned as compared to the Scheduled Tribe and non-SC/ST, it is found that Scheduled Caste women's status index (6.33) is relatively much higher than women's in the Scheduled Tribe (5.44) in all the tahsils. Whereas it is surprisingly higher than non-SC/ST of women status index (6.15) in most of the tahsils of Ahmednagar district in 2011. Foregoing discussion clearly shows that the status of deprived class women goes on increasing at a much faster rate than the non-SC/ST class women's status, but in reality, they are lagging behind them in the study area. Because some SC communities like Bhangi (92 per cent) are residing in the urban centre's wherein they mainly pursuing vulnerable jobs of cleaning and for that they are paid comparatively less. Therefore, being in urban consign a bit better status which is in fact, not the reality. However their literacy rate is getting enhanced at a faster rate than the non-SC/ST population, but still SC/ STs are lagging behind.

The increase in industrialization and urbanization along with social infrastructure, also enhance the considerable proportion of scheduled caste females residing in urban areas (16.83 per cent) than the non-SC/ST females (16.61 per cent), much of the improvement in their literacy rate (65.98 per cent) but remains their literacy at lower level than the non-SC/STs (72.03 per cent). In the study area, female literacy rate increased at a higher rate than the male literacy, leads to increase in rural to urban migration of both male and females for the purpose of education and employment (Pawar, 2013). Their share in non-agricultural sector is about (20.34 per cent) over the non-SC/ST women (18.07 per cent) and also better sex ratio in general (968 females per 1000 males) and child sex ratio (930 girls per 1000 boys) than the non-Scheduled Castes sex ratio in general and child sex ratio in particular, all these causes behind the enhancement of women's status of Scheduled Castes.

2. Status of Scheduled Tribe Women

With regards to the status of Scheduled Tribe women (Fig.3), Nagar (8.09) and Jamkhed (7.69) tahsils belong to the category of very high level status. There only Rahata tahsil (6.0), which indicates the higher the level of women's status of the Scheduled Tribes. There 5 tahsils fall in the category of moderate level status with respect to the Scheduled Tribe women, namely Shrirampur (5.62), Rahuri (5.40), Karjat (5.32), Shrigonda (5.09) and Sangamner (5.01), while 6 tahsils fall in the category of low level status viz. Pathardi (4.88), Kopargaon (4.83), Nevasa (4.79), Akole (4.73), Shevgaon (4.55) and Parner (4.50).

Table 1
Ahmednagar District: Caste-Wise Socio-Economic Status of Women (2011)

Scheduled Caste Women's Status								
Sr. No.	Tahsil	General Sex Ratio	Child Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate	Work Participation Rate	Workers in Non-Agricultural Sector	Urban Population	*CI
1	Akole	1.03	1.13	1.06	1.08	1.09	0.45	5.85
2	Sangamner	1.02	1.00	1.1	0.94	1.09	1.16	6.31
3	Kopargaon	1.02	1.05	1.03	0.81	1.17	1.78	6.87
4	Rahata	1.02	1.05	1.1	0.68	1.97	1.36	7.19
5	Shrirampur	1.05	1.03	1.08	0.72	1.96	2.06	7.90
6	Nevasa	1.01	1.00	1.02	1.03	0.77	0.00	4.83
7	Shevgaon	1.03	1.07	0.91	1.11	0.58	0.00	4.70
8	Pathardi	1.00	1.01	0.95	1.11	0.54	0.78	5.39
9	Nagar	1.01	1.03	1.18	0.58	3.15	4.29	11.25
10	Rahuri	1.00	1.04	1.07	0.84	1.19	1.61	6.74
11	Parner	1.04	1.10	1.09	1.10	0.77	0.00	5.10
12	Shrigonda	1.00	1.04	1.00	1.04	0.67	0.67	5.43
13	Karjat	1.00	1.03	0.94	1.09	0.6	0.44	5.10
14	Jamkhed	1.00	1.04	0.89	1.09	0.68	1.34	6.05
	Mean	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

Scheduled Tribe Women's Status								
Sr. No.	Tahsil	General Sex Ratio	Child Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate	Work Participation Rate	Workers in Non-Agricultural Sector	Urban Population	*CI
1	Akole	1.04	1.06	0.88	1.23	0.31	0.18	4.69
2	Sangamner	1.01	1.06	0.84	1.20	0.62	0.26	5.00
3	Kopargaon	1.03	1.07	0.72	1.09	0.54	0.33	4.80
4	Rahata	1.03	1.04	0.77	1.04	0.97	0.78	6.00
5	Shrirampur	1.05	1.12	0.74	1.01	0.96	0.67	5.55
6	Nevasa	1.04	1.13	0.75	1.14	0.77	0.00	4.83
7	Shevgaon	1.02	1.05	0.72	1.12	0.68	0.00	4.59
8	Pathardi	1.01	1.06	0.82	1.15	0.37	0.33	4.75
9	Nagar	0.99	1.08	0.93	0.83	1.81	2.48	8.13
10	Rahuri	1.03	1.04	0.75	1.11	0.69	0.78	5.39
11	Parner	1.04	1.09	0.74	1.24	0.36	0.00	4.47
12	Shrigonda	0.98	1.06	0.62	1.21	0.92	0.30	5.09
13	Karjat	1.01	1.17	0.69	1.08	0.92	0.34	5.21
14	Jamkhed	0.98	1.07	0.73	0.99	1.31	2.63	7.71
	Mean	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

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Non-SC/ST Women's Status								
Sr. No.	Tahsil	General Sex Ratio	Child Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate	Work Participation Rate	Workers in Non-Agricultural Sector	Urban Population	*CI
1	Akole	1.01	0.93	1.16	1.1	0.87	0.25	5.32
2	Sangamner	0.98	0.94	1.16	0.96	1.09	1.36	6.50
3	Kopargaon	0.98	0.97	1.19	0.78	1.17	1.60	6.70
4	Rahata	0.98	0.91	1.22	0.74	1.77	1.24	6.85
5	Shrirampur	1.00	0.94	1.23	0.68	1.80	2.29	7.92
6	Nevasa	0.97	0.92	1.13	1.01	0.76	0.00	4.79
7	Shevgaon	0.99	0.92	1.01	1.07	0.57	0.00	4.56
8	Pathardi	0.97	0.91	1.00	1.16	0.54	0.71	5.30
9	Nagar	0.97	0.96	1.28	0.64	2.69	4.28	10.83
10	Rahuri	0.97	0.90	1.18	0.84	1.04	1.54	6.47
11	Parner	1.00	0.92	1.06	1.22	0.54	0.00	4.74
12	Shrigonda	0.96	0.91	1.09	1.18	0.50	0.69	5.33
13	Karjat	0.95	0.9	1.03	1.16	0.43	0.32	4.79
14	Jamkhed	0.96	0.9	0.99	1.04	0.7	1.49	6.07
	Mean	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

Overall Women's Status								
Sr. No.	Tahsil	General Sex Ratio	Child Sex Ratio	Literacy Rate	Work Participation Rate	Workers in Non-Agricultural Sector	Urban Population	*CI
1	Akole	1.02	1.00	1.02	1.16	0.6	0.23	5.04
2	Sangamner	0.99	0.96	1.12	0.99	1.03	1.22	6.31
3	Kopargaon	0.99	1.00	1.12	0.82	1.07	1.48	6.48
4	Rahata	0.99	0.95	1.17	0.75	1.73	1.23	6.81
5	Shrirampur	1.01	0.97	1.17	0.71	1.74	2.14	7.73
6	Nevasa	0.98	0.95	1.09	1.02	0.76	0.00	4.81
7	Shevgaon	1.00	0.95	0.99	1.08	0.57	0.00	4.58
8	Pathardi	0.97	0.93	1.00	1.16	0.54	0.71	5.30
9	Nagar	0.98	0.97	1.26	0.63	2.73	4.24	10.82
10	Rahuri	0.98	0.94	1.12	0.87	1.01	1.46	6.38
11	Parner	1.00	0.95	1.04	1.21	0.54	0.00	4.75
12	Shrigonda	0.97	0.94	1.06	1.16	0.54	0.67	5.34
13	Karjat	0.96	0.92	1.01	1.15	0.46	0.34	4.84
14	Jamkhed	0.97	0.92	0.97	1.05	0.7	1.48	6.09
	Mean	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

Note: *CI - Composite index

Source: Based on Primary Census Abstract of Ahmednagar District 2011.

Status of Scheduled Tribe women shows lower composite index value (5.44) than the Non-SC/ST (6.15) and the Scheduled Caste women (6.33) also. It is mainly because of higher share of female workers engaged in agricultural sector and allied activities rather than non-agricultural activities i.e. only 14.57 per cent, comparatively the non-SC/ST and the SC group indicate 18.07 per cent and 20.34 per cent share in non-agricultural sector. Their urban proportion (9.57 per cent) is also much lower than the women's of the non-SC/ST class (16.61 per cent). Their literacy rate (48.96 per cent) is also at much lower level as compared to the non-SC/ST (72.03 per cent) and the Scheduled Caste literacy rates (65.98 per cent). Illiteracy is a serious handicap, if not absolute barrier to participation in the modernization of traditional activities and also is a major factor limiting women's contribution to economic and social development (Ramotra, 1996). It is very interesting to note that, the sex ratio (970 females per 1000 males) and child sex ratio (962 girls per 1000 boys) of the Scheduled Tribes is comparatively much balanced than the non-SC/ST class.

1. Status of non-SC/ST Women

There are as many as 2 tahsils identified with a very high class status of women like Nagar (10.72) and Shirampur (7.77), whereas 5 tahsils like Rahata (6.78), Kopargaon (6.68), Rahuri (6.48), Sangamner (6.44) and Jamkhed (6.08) identified with the higher level status of non-SC/ST women. These tahsils are mostly urbanized and industrialized except Jamkhed tahsil. In case of non-SC/ST, moderate level socio-economic status of women was found in 3 tahsils, like Shrigonda (5.35), Akole (5.31), Pathardi (5.31), while lower level status of women was noticed in 4 tahsils like Nevasa (4.80), Karjat (4.80), Parner (4.75) and Shevgaon (4.57) (Fig. 4).

Generally, higher socio-economic status of women is found in favour of the non-SC/ST as compared to women's in the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe, but there is also tahsil-wise disparity in women's status belonging to privileged class. Present study reveals, the similar spatial pattern of socio-economic status of women was found everywhere belonging to the non-SC/ST class women as compared to the overall women's status, but the difference is observed in the values of composite index.

However, the women belonging to the privileged class indicates high literacy rate, high percentage of female workers engaged in non-agricultural sector and higher percentage of urban female. In general women with higher education tend to have a better position (WHO, 1989). However, education alone may not be sufficient to enhance status unless it is associated with employment as well (Hogan and Hailormarium, 1991).

On the other hand declining sex ratio in general (932 females per 1000 males) and child sex ratio (823 girls per 1000 boys) in particular disturbing the status of women. So there is a great challenge before government planners that, not only to improve sex ratio by improving child sex ratio (0-6 age group) among the non-SC/ST class but also Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe have maintained their existing sex ratio in general by balancing the child sex ratio in particular in near future.

2. Overall Status of Women

With regard to the overall women's status (Fig. 5), it is found highest in Nagar tahsil (10.72), while lowest in Shevgaon tahsil (4.59). Very high level status of overall women was found in 2 tahsils, viz. Nagar (10.72) and Shirampur (7.77), while in case of higher level status of overall women was observed in 5 tahsils. These tahsils are Rahata (6.75), Kopargaon (6.47), Rahuri (6.39), Sangamner (6.27) and Jamkhed (6.10). Overall women's status was found to be moderate level in 3 tahsils viz. Shrigonda (5.35), Pathardi (5.32) and Akole (5.04), while remaining 4 tahsils, like Karjat (4.86), Nevasa (4.81), Parner (4.76) and Shevgaon (4.59) fall in the low level of status category.

It is found that, mostly northern tahsils are industrialized, urbanized and agriculturally developed,

where as southern tahsils of the districts are drought affected and backward. Hence, northern part of district is concerned with the higher level status whereas southern part of the district is concerned with the lower level women's status of all sections.

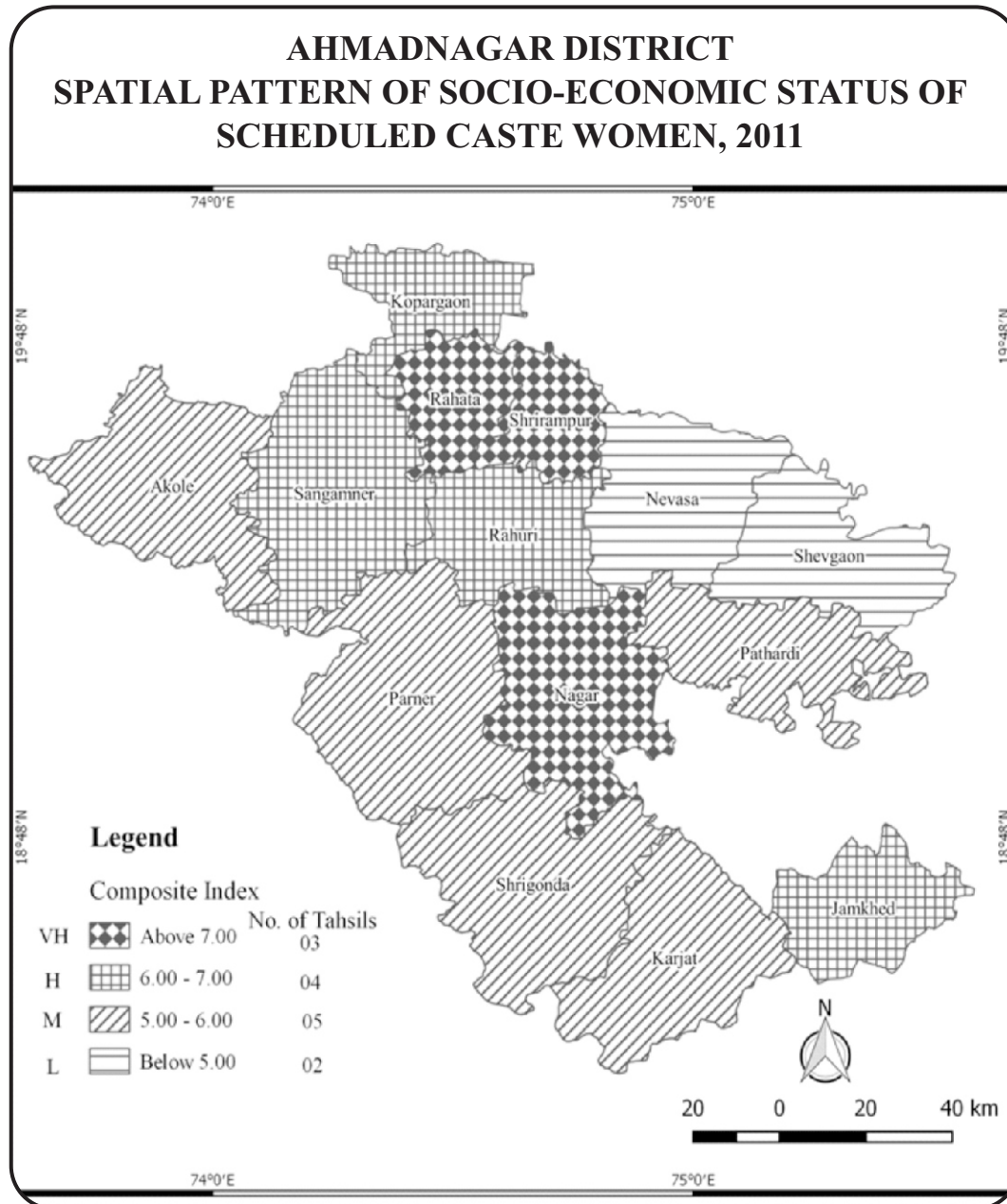
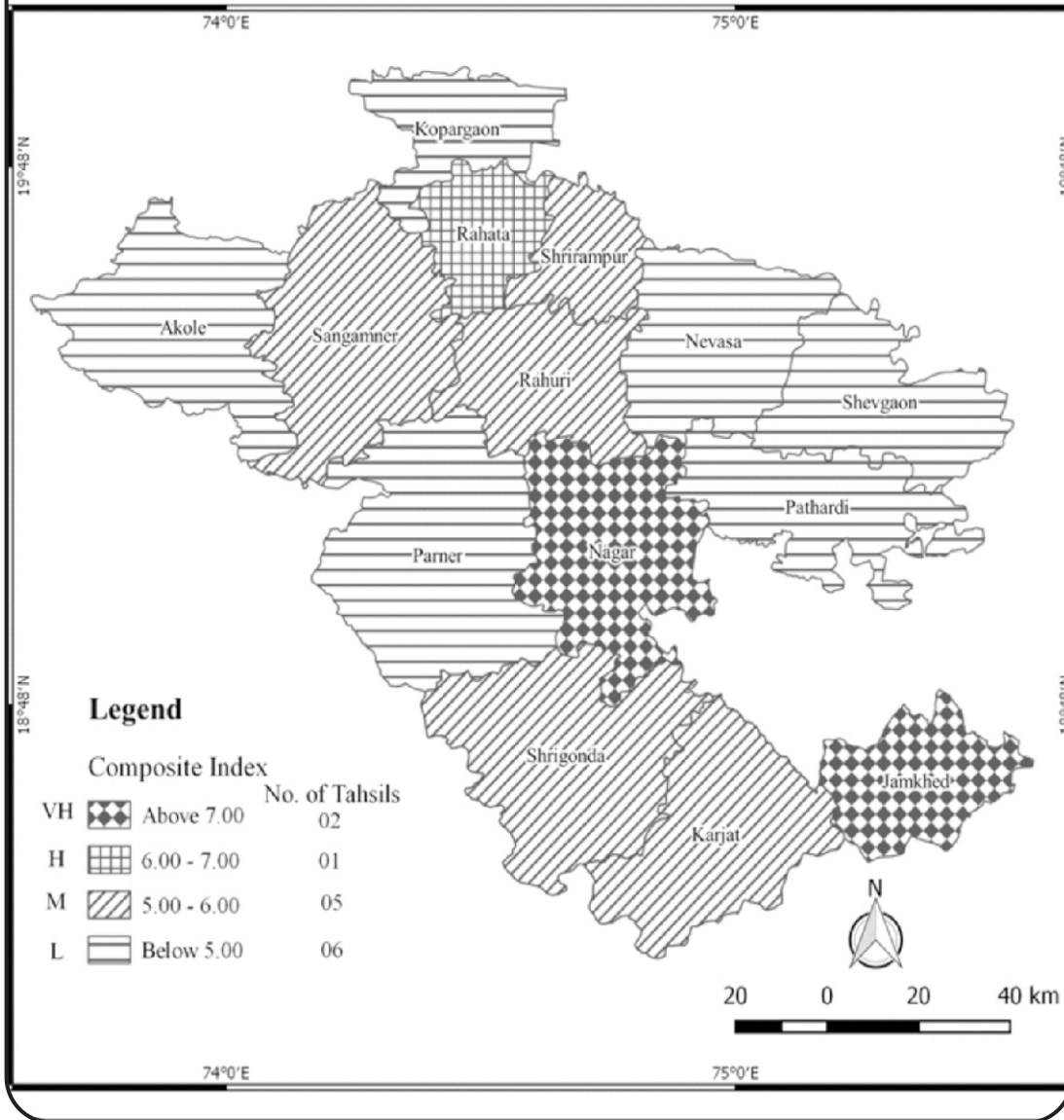
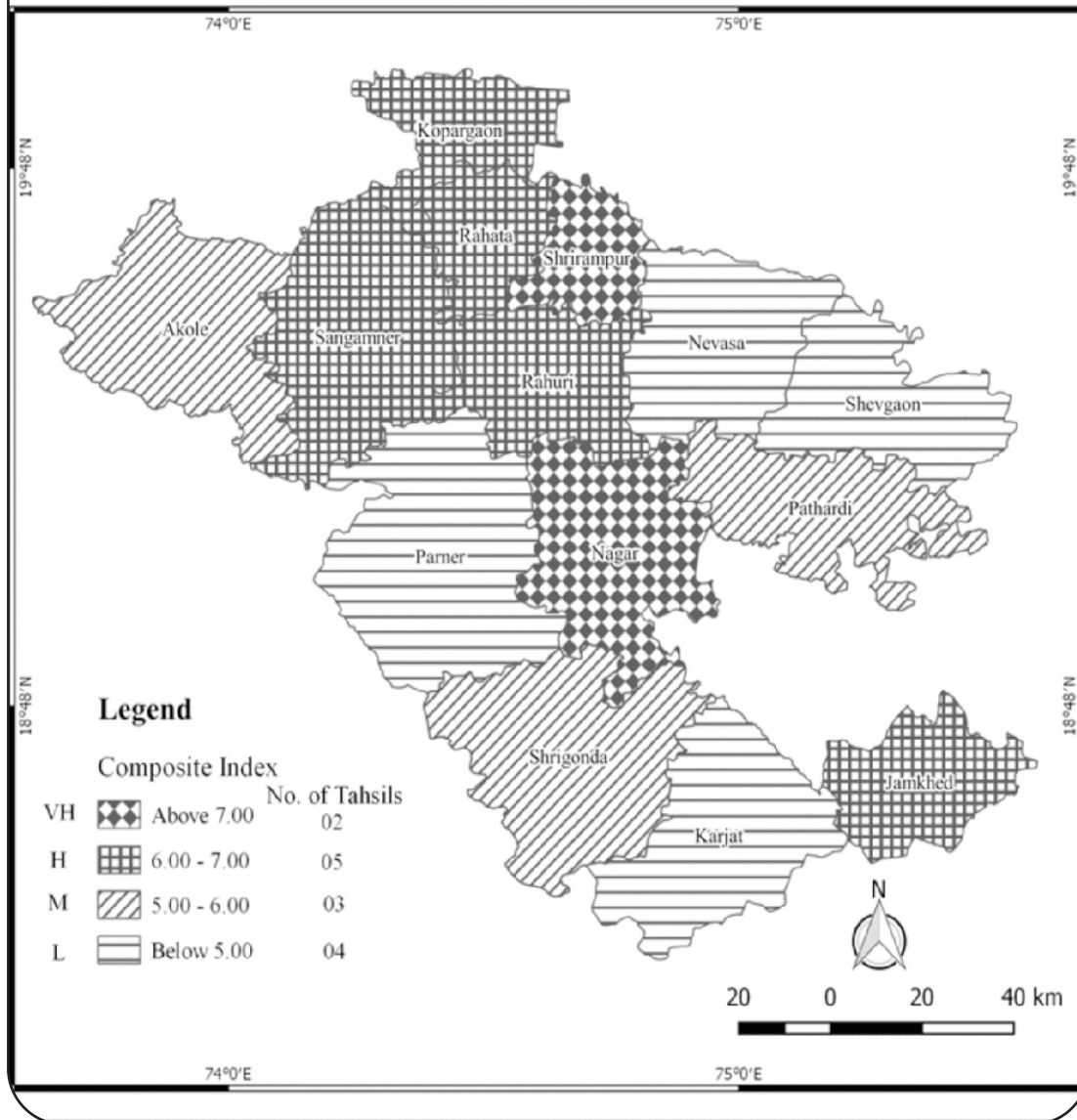


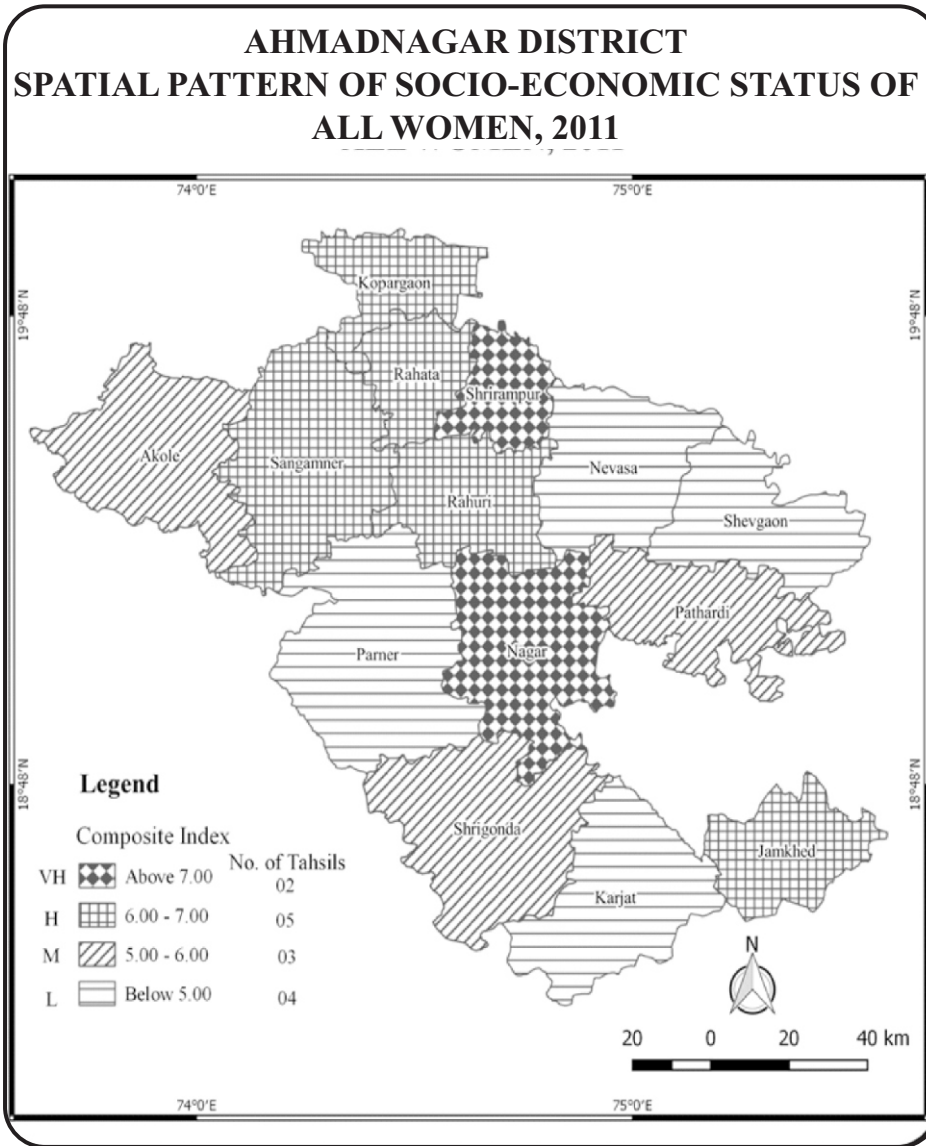
Fig. 2

AHMADNAGAR DISTRICT SPATIAL PATTERN OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF SCHEDULED TRIBE WOMEN, 2011



AHMADNAGAR DISTRICT SPATIAL PATTERN OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF NON SC-ST WOMEN, 2011





Conclusion

The present paper concludes that the composite index value of socio-economic status of women among the different segments of the society shows that there is much progress in women's status but there remains wide disparity in women's status within and between the different communities in 2011. It is further found that mostly those tahsils, which are having higher level status of women belonging to the Non-SC/ST also having the higher level status of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and vice-versa. It is very significant to note that there is much enhancement in the status of Schedule Caste women and disparity goes down and their statuses come closer to the women's in the privileged class, but on the contrary the Scheduled Tribe women's status is far lagging behind in relation to women's in any other sections of the society.

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Though there has been much of the improvement in various socio-economic dimensions like, education, occupation, urbanization, infrastructure, level of living, etc. in the study area, correspondingly positive changes are found in socio-economic status of different segments of society and ultimately rise in their status, but the Scheduled Castes are found as most disadvantaged socio-economically. It is also found that the Non-SC/ST is found at the top of the social hierarchy as well as in the women's position while Scheduled Tribes are at the bottom of the social hierarchy and women's position. The mass illiteracy, adverse socio-economic condition, poverty, high fertility rate, scarcity of educational and health facilities in rural areas are some of the causes behind their lower level status.

Therefore, there is need to give special attention by the government, towards women's position of Scheduled Tribes to improve their socio-economic condition and level of living by giving them equal opportunities in education and employment so far Scheduled Tribe women's status come up to the level of women's status of Scheduled Castes and non-SC/ST class.

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