

A Study for increasing the enrolment rate of SC/ST students in education

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Abstract: This paper highlights the problems of school dropouts among *Adivasi* students with special reference to Paniya tribe in Wayanad. C.V Good (1973) states that “Most often designates an elementary or Secondary School pupil who has been in membership during the regular school term and who withdraws or is dropped from membership for any reason except death or transfer to another school before graduating or before completing an equivalent progress of studies; such an individual is considered a dropout whether his dropping out occurs before or after he has passed the compulsory school attendance age and, where applicable, whether or not he has completed a minimum required amount of School Work”.[1] Wayanad, a district in the state with a sizeable population of Scheduled Tribes has the highest overall dropout rate in the state. When compared to the total dropout in the district, the tribal dropout was 61.11% in 2007-08 and 5 years later in 2011-12 it rose to 77.23%. This shows the increase of 16.12% of drop out in district’s tribal sector alone.[2] The fundamental aim of this paper is to unveil the hidden reasons for these increasing school dropouts among the ST students of Wayanad district, with special reference to the *Paniya* Tribe. Qualitative analysis and short research studies were followed to extract the reasons for the increase of tribal dropout rate in the district.

Introduction:

The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have been identified as two most disadvantaged groups of Indian society needing special attention. There are numerous scheduled castes and scheduled tribes groups in the country and their number has been increasing over time. For example, while the number of scheduled castes in 1961 was 964, it increased to 11 16 in 1971. Similarly, while in 1951 there were 212 scheduled tribes, in 1967 their number was 314 and in 1971 it increased to 427. There are great variations among different groups of schedule castes and scheduled tribes. In general, however all these groups are at disadvantage compared to other groups of population.

A characteristic feature of the scheduled groups is their rurality. In 1961, nearly 90 per cent among the scheduled castes and 97 per cent among the scheduled tribes were rural dwellers as against 82 per cent of total population. The situation was not much different in 1971. For example, nearly 88 per cent of the scheduled castes and 97 per cent of the scheduled tribes continued to live in rural areas although the proportion of rural dwellers in the total population declined to 80 per cent. It may, however, be noted that some of the scheduled castes like Bhangis and Maliya Vanshi have larger proportion of their population in the urban areas than in rural area. However their total share in the urban population

No separate data are available regarding the income level of the scheduled groups vis-a-vis the non-scheduled people. The consumption survey undertaken by the National Sample Survey (16th Round) however, shows that average monthly expenditure is uniformly lower among the scheduled castes households in all the states both in rural and urban areas. Further, the extent of land available for cultivation with the scheduled castes households is much lower as compared to general population. Among the tribes, although the size of land may be larger, the land is generally of inferior quality. The extent of indebtedness among the scheduled households is also greater than general category.

The level of literacy among the scheduled groups has been very low. Almost 90 per cent of these two groups were illiterate in 1961. The literacy rates for the scheduled castes rose from 10.3 per cent in 1961 to 21.4 percent in 1981 and among the scheduled tribes, the literacy rate rose from 8.3 per cent to 16.4 per cent in 1981. The female literacy rate in 1981 was only 10.9 per cent for the scheduled castes and 8.0 per cent for the scheduled tribes. However, some of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes have comparatively higher literacy rates. For example, the level of literacy of some tribals groups in the eastern states is much higher.

The school enrolment ratios of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes as compared to others also present the expected pattern. The differences are lower at primary level because of recent emphasis on the education of these groups but they increase as one proceeds to higher levels. Scheduled castes, in general, have higher enrolment than the scheduled tribes.

While both the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes are the deprived groups the source of their deprivation is different. In the case of scheduled castes, the deprivation is due to the low place accorded to them in the Hindu caste system where they are not only at the bottom, but also, at times, untouchables. The scheduled tribes have suffered because of the long period of physical isolation as most of the tribes lived in remote and inaccessible forest areas and were thus cut off from modern civilization. The tribal economy is based on primary production involving primitive technology. The high rate of illiteracy among these groups make them susceptible to exploitation by certain undesirable elements. The tribes, however, have their own culture and dialects.

Educational Status of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes

The literacy gap between the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes, however, continues. As against the All India literacy rates of 46.9 per cent and 24.8 per cent for males and females respectively, the literacy rates for the scheduled castes males and females stood at 31.1 per cent and 10.9 per cent respectively in 1981. The corresponding percentages for the scheduled tribes were still lower at 24.5 per cent and 8.0 per cent respectively. The rural urban differences in literacy rates among these groups are rather alarming. In several states these differences are of the order of six to ten points.

Enrolment of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes also registered substantial increase over the last three decades at all education levels. However, there is large gap in enrolment between the scheduled and the non scheduled groups. Also there are large statewide variations at different levels of education.

Apart from low enrolment ratio, wastage in education due to repetition and dropout is quite heavy in case of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Industrial Training Institutes. Data for the 1976-77 show that combined wastage on account of dropout and repetition for the scheduled castes was 66.5 per cent and for the scheduled tribes 79.8 per cent as against 63.1 per cent for the total population.

Technical and vocational training is very important for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes from the viewpoint of improving their productivity which is very low and which keeps them poor. Secondly, it

Scope and objectives of the Study

Technical education and industrial training is imparted in a variety of institutions including on the job training in the factories in various industries. The total enrolment in all the technical and vocational institutions at the school level was 5,04,442 in the same year with 3,79,460 boys and 1,24,982 girls. The 5 major types of technical and vocational institutions imparting training for middle level technical personnel are:

1. Polytechnics
2. Industrial Training Institutes
3. Junior Technical Schools
4. Crafts & Handicrafts Schools
5. Industrial and Technical Schools

These accounted for about four-fifths of the enrolment of all the technical institutions, the first two categories above accounting for roughly half the enrolment. The total out-turn from the institutions in 1973 was 1,97,666. Of the total enrolment in all the institutions at this level the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes formed 9.1 per cent and 4.4 per cent respectively.

8 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Industrial Training Institutes

To answer some of the questions raised above, an intensive study of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes undergoing training, in industrial training institutes was conducted by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA). The objectives of the Study are :

- (1) To analyze the provision and utilization of training facilities in the ITIs by the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes students vis-a-vis non-scheduled castes/scheduled tribes students.
- (2) To study the extent of under-utilization, if any, of various training facilities, specially by the scheduled castes/scheduled tribes students, and reasons for the same.
- (3) To identify special programmes of technical and industrial training, if any, for the scheduled tribes students in the institutions located in the tribal areas and also to determine the utilization of such programmes.
- (4) To investigate the extent and causes of dropout in these institutions.
- (5) To evaluate impact of the training provided by the ITIs on the employment pattern of their trainees, specially the scheduled castes/scheduled tribes in terms of emoluments, waiting time, place and nature of employment etc.
- (6) To identify the various incentives schemes that are available for the scheduled castes/scheduled tribes students, pattern of their implementation and extent of benefits scheduled castes scheduled tribes students are deriving from such schemes. Is it necessary to modify or expand some of these schemes? If so, in what manner?

The study has been conducted in the five states of central tribal belt that is Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maha-rashtra.

Policy framework for education development

National Policy on Education 1986 (revised in 1992): A key milestone in India's march towards Education for All was the adoption of the National Policy on Education 1986 (revised in 1992) which states "In our national perception, education is essentially for all". Some of the key thrust areas of the National Policy on Education 1986/92 include; (i) national system of education which implies that "up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparative quality"; (ii) early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) "both as a feeder and a strengthening factor for primary education and for human resource development in general"; (iii) focus on universal access and enrolment, universal retention of children upto 14 years of age; and a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children achieve essential levels of learning; (iv) emphasis "on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality"; (v) widening of access to secondary education with emphasis on enrolment of girls, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), particularly in science, commerce and vocational streams; (vi) education for women's equality, with special emphasis on the removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education; (vii) the introduction of systematic, well-planned and rigorously implemented programmes of vocational education aimed at developing a healthy attitude amongst students towards work and life, enhancing individual employability, reducing the mismatch between the demand and supply of skilled manpower, and providing an alternative to those intending to pursue higher education without particular interest or purpose; (viii) making adult education programmes a mass movement involving literacy campaigns and comprehensive programmes of post-literacy and continuing education for neo-literates and youth who have received primary education with a view to enabling them to retain and upgrade their literacy skills, and to harness it for the improvement of their living and working condition; (ix) overhauling of the system of teacher education with emphasis on continuing professional development of teachers, establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) with the capability to organize pre-service and in-service training of elementary school teachers, and upgradation of selected secondary teacher training colleges.

Strategic approaches

The approach to education development is based on the following four mutually supporting strategic priorities, often referred to as four Es.

Expansion: The strategy is focused on making educational facilities and learning opportunities available for and accessible to all children, young people and adults. Expansion involves establishing educational facilities in under-served or un-served locations in order to ensure that all children, young people and adults, especially those children in rural and remote areas, have access to education as well as to relevant vocational education and training programmes.

Equity and inclusion: The focus of equity/inclusion is on bridging the gender and social category gaps in participation in education. It recognises the right of every individual to education without discrimination on any grounds and according priority to education of the excluded, vulnerable, under-served and other disadvantaged groups. The main thrust is to ensure that educational opportunities are available for and accessible to all segments of the society. The approaches include special initiatives for enhancing access to quality

education for disadvantaged and weaker sections of the community such as the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes, children belonging to Muslim community and differently-abled children. The focus on equity and inclusion also envisages approaches that would help meet the learning needs of diverse groups of pupils and provide opportunities for all learners to become successful in their learning experiences.

Excellence: Achieving excellence by improving the quality and relevance of education and enabling all children and young people to achieve expected/specified learning outcomes remains a key goal of education sector development programmes in India. The core elements of the strategy for achieving excellence include: (i) strengthening the quality of teaching-learning processes through comprehensive concerted large scale efforts with simultaneous attention to how these processes translate into better outcomes; (ii) enhancing the motivation, capacity and accountability of teachers for improving learning outcomes at all levels; (iii) improving governance of educational institutions through institutional focus

on quality, based on principles of autonomy, accountability and performance, along with measures for re-defining the recruitment criteria, eligibility of teachers and merit-based processes of recruitment in these institutions; (iv) encouraging innovations and diversity of approaches in matters of curricula, pedagogies and community engagements in order to respond to the diversity of learner groups, and

(v) strengthening the monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

Employability: High priority is accorded to the task of enhancing employability of the products of the education system. Specific measures for enhancing employability include renewed focus on vocational education and making secondary education more job-relevant through skills training within the schools, equipping secondary schools with teachers/trainers who have technical skills and with facilities that are required to impart technical and vocational skills. Vocational education at the secondary stage is redesigned to promote diversification of educational opportunities so as to enhance individual employability, and reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower.

CONCLUSION

Given the structural inequalities and exclusionary and discriminatory character of Indian society, the State has developed remedies against caste and ethnicity-based exclusion and discrimination and for empowerment of excluded groups, the SC/STs, which constitute about one-fifth of India's total population. The safeguards against exclusion and discrimination in the forms of legal measures and affirmative action's cover public employment, public education and legislative seats and also other government amenities like public housing, etc. However, affirmative action policy in India is conned to the government sector only and the vast private sector is excluded from its jurisdiction. The Government has used some sort of an Informal affirmative action policy in the private sector.

Over time, there has been considerable improvement in the share of SC/ST reservation and representation in government employment and educational institutions. The reservation in legislative bodies has also ensured the SC /STs some space in the executive and decision making process. The impact of formal reservation policy in government sector and informal affirmative action policy in private sector has led to some improvement in the human development of SC /STs. However, as compared to non-SC / ST population of the country, the rate of improvement has been rather slow. And as result, despite positive improvements, the disparities in human development between SC and ST sand non-SC / ST continue even today.

During the course of the implementation of reservation policy, some problems have become apparent. Although the Government has taken steps to improve the implementation of reservation policy, there has been resistance to the policy in indirect forms and as result, its success is uneven across sectors and department. Reservations is close to the population mark of SC / STs in lower categories of jobs, but lower than the population mark in case of high grade positions and technical education institutions. Owing to the indirect nature of resistance to implementation of reservation policy, the extension and the percolation of the reservation policy to several government sectors has been slow.

The other issue that recently acquired prominence is the demand made by SC / ST groups to extend the affirmative action policy of the Government to the private sector employment and educational institutions and other private sector spheres as well; this is under active consideration by the Government of India.

Education, thus for the weaker sections of the society needs to become the panacea and an inclusive growth strategy for their economic and social up-liftmen.

- Education has special significance for the SCs and STs who are facing a new situation in the development process to admit themselves properly in the changing circumstances.
- Education not only helps them to promote their economic development but also helps to build their self-confidance and inner strength to face new challenges.
- The SCs and STs have been the targets of economic exploitation, harassment, atrocities, injustice, etc. due to their illiteracy linked to their poverty.
- To eliminate these social problems, Government of India has made special provisions in the Constitution through its Articles 29(1), 46, 15(4), 35o-A to promote education among SCs and STs.