



COROLLARY OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION: A CASE AMONG STUDENT TEACHERS

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Abstract

India is a land of diversity. Her greatest strength is the young human resource. Education aims to tap these potentials irrespective of the multiplicity of its population in terms of cultures, religions, social backgrounds, economic power and so on. But these can be truly realized only if the nation is inclusive to the disadvantaged sections of the society. Persistence of social exclusion leads individuals or groups to be kept at, or pushed beyond, the edges of society and hinders national progress in its true sense. This paper is an attempt to discover from student teachers on their vivid domains of experiences of marginalization. A constant comparison method using Analytic induction technique was employed to analyze pre-service teachers' comments. Participants were asked to complete an open ended questionnaire pertaining to experience of Marginalization . Results of the data reveal that experiences of marginalization among students can be categorized to originating from Familial, Educational Institutions, Peer and Friends, Gender, Social/Public Institutions, Financial and Religious. Low Social Economic Status and female gender continue to experience higher social exclusion. It is paradoxical that education as an institution is supposed to play an eliminating role in exclusion effects is also amongst the forefront in promoting it.

Key words: Marginalization, Social Exclusion, Constant Comparison

Introduction

India is blessed with the youngest population as its greatest strength for developments in all sectors. This opportunity must be utilized to its zenith by making proportionate investment in human capital development. As India undergoes rapid and concurrent shifts, it must ensure that its growth is inclusive and shared by all sections of the society. In view of attaining the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015 and tipped as 'Agenda 2030', combating poverty, unemployment and social exclusion ought to be the centrality of the current development paradigm in India. SDG 4 is stated as 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. Inclusion becomes a highly relevant and compulsory solution to social exclusion by initiating attempts to bridge the remarkably wide range of social and economic problems faced by India being a multicultural nation.

Social exclusion also referred to as marginalization is defined as the process by which individuals or groups are kept at, or pushed beyond, the edges of society (Ritzer & Ryan, 2011). However, the UNESCO, defines marginalization as "a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities" (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010). In India, the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other backward castes (OBCs) are socially excluded groups (India Exclusion Report 2013-14).

Neoclassical economics trace marginalization to individual character flaws or to cultural resistance to individualism and the presence of 'culture of poverty'. On the other hand, being influenced by Marxism, contemporary social exclusion theory stresses the importance of social networks and symbolic boundaries. Social exclusion theorists like Sukhdeo Thorat, Amartya Sen, Arjan de haan, Hilary Silver etc. argue that social hierarchical structure, persistent inequality, various forms of discrimination; poverty and unemployment are the leading causes of marginalization. Also, American sociologist Charles Tilly further stresses the importance of economic structures and social networks to marginalization. These validates the argument that the nature of the concept of 'marginalization' is multidisciplinary (Jahan, Y. 2016).

Studies on social exclusion helps us understand how "the various institutional mechanisms through which resources are allocated-operate in such a way as to systematically deny particular groups of people the resources and recognition which would allow them to participate fully in the life of that society" (Kabeer, N. 2000)

Education continues to act as a major weapon to combat social issues including marginalization. Students in an Indian classroom is a representation of our society since each hails from a variety of backgrounds with respect to religion, caste, creed, socio economic status and so on. Education as defined by

all great thinkers should aim to bring out this comprehensive development. How far is this being realized as a byproduct of our educational process? Are our students who are in the higher education and in early youth challenged by the issues of marginalization? This paper is an attempt to discover from student teachers on their vivid domains of experiences of marginalization. The study tries to identify the major dimensions of marginalization affecting student teachers using analytical induction as an analysis technique.

Methodology

A constant comparison method using Analytic Induction technique was employed to analyze pre-service teachers' comments. Participants were asked to complete an open ended questionnaire pertaining to experience of Marginalization. Category construction of student responses was based upon inductive analysis, allowing for the comparison of one response to the previous one for similarity or difference.

Sample

The sample selected for the study consisted of 70 prospective teachers from Calicut district of Kerala. Judgmental sampling was utilised to identify the participants of the study. The process of collecting data ended with 70th case, where no further variation in response occurred. The final set of sample purposefully consisted of Male and Female teacher students from Forward caste, Scheduled Caste/Tribe and other Backward communities (OBC). Average age of participants were 22.

Tool

Open Ended Questionnaire developed on Marginalization among Youth Students was administered to explore the responses of the prospective teachers. The questionnaire consists of few open questions to elicit respondents own vivid experience from educational institutions regarding the feeling of social exclusion.

Analysis and Discussion

Inorder to analyze the factors leading to marginalization among teacher educators analytic induction of the responses followed by percentage analysis was used. Each of the response were coded and constructed categories from these responses using constant comparison method. For illustration, if the first response on affective factors of social exclusion is categorised as familial reasons, the next participant's response will be compared to the previous one and if it similar, it will be included under the same category, if it is a different response a different category of response will be constructed by the response. Analytic induction continued until no further variation occurred in the responses. After category construction, the were classified into gender and social groups. Seven categories of responses were identified from the analytic induction and results are presented in Table 1

Table 2*Affecting Factors of Marginalization among Student Teachers in Categories*

Sl.No	Gender	Female						Male					
		SC/ST		OBC		FC		SC/ST		OBC		FC	
	Categories	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Familial	4	40	12	60	0	0	3	60	5	50	1	20
2	Educational Institutions	8	80	15	75	0	0	4	80	5	50	0	0
3	Peers and Friends	7	70	15	75	4	20	3	60	4	40	1	20
4	Gender Related	7	70	14	70	3	15	2	40	2	20	2	40
5	Social/Public Institutions	8	80	11	55	0	0	4	80	3	30	0	0
6	Financial	8	80	13	65	1	5	4	80	6	60	1	20
7	Religious	7	70	14	70	0	0	2	40	1	10	0	0

Student teachers have expressed their opinion based on their experiences of life regarding the various instances where exclusion has been affected. The qualitative data collected from students, both females and males included students from various social backgrounds- SC/ST (Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe), OBC (Other Backward Class) and FC (Forward Caste). Data collected from students mentioned the various instances of having faced exclusion and has been inductively analysed into various categories, viz,

Familial factors. Relates to exclusion experiences from family members such as poor support for education and other progressive participations, compelling for marriages (especially girls), gender biasing,

Factors related to Educational Institution. Relates to prejudiced behaviours from the educational institutions including teachers, administrative staffs and so on. Partiality of teachers to students having higher academic performance, hailing from well off families, based on gender, based on appearances and skin tone continue to pervade.

Factors related to Peers and Friends. Relates to experiences of exclusion from class mates, friends and other students in the educational scenario like social distancing, being unacceptable for some due to differences in socio economic backgrounds.

Gender factor. Relates to concerns of gender preferences in course selections, choosing profession, space and role in power structures, gender in culture and traditions.

Social/Public Institutions factors. Effects of media in sidelining certain communities based on their religion, difficulties in having to receive services from village offices and other such public institutions (universities), constraints in using public vehicles, dealing with people and officials from upper class and accessibility to public spaces like parks, shopping malls.

Financial factors. Financial constraints is amongst the root cause of marginalization. Differences between have's and have not's affects individual in all spheres of life- access to resources (material/economic and social), participation(economic, social, cultural, political and civic) and quality of life (living environment, food, health and well being)

Religious Factors: Students feels they have been discriminated on grounds of being orthodox and using religious symbols especially in terms of appearance and dressing like use of head scarfs, loose and lengthy outfits, wearing a beard and skull cap. SC/ST students report religious caste based discriminations.

Conclusions

Issues of Marginalization exist explicitly even today as it existed before. The data is collected from students who have been in the education process for nearly 15 to 19 years (since some students enrol for the course after having completed their UG and others after PG). The average values of above 50% indicates SC/ST Girls and Boys and OBC Girls feel the effects of social exclusion from various instances profoundly. Extremely low values are exhibited from students from Forward Castes with 5% and 14 % for girls and boys respectively. This indicates that exclusion is directly linked to social status. Data from the table makes it evident that females experience marginalization than males when compared for the whole data or category wise. Category wise analysis points that Educational Institutions besides all the other factors have been a leading factor in sustaining the marginalizing effects among the deprived classes. It is paradoxical that education as an institution is supposed to play an eliminating role in exclusion effects is also amongst the forefront in promoting it. Students from the forward caste are luxurious enough to be not facing exclusion at all in the categories educational institutions (girls and boys), family (girls), social/public institutions (girls and boys) and religious (girls and boys).

Data reveals that there are many causes of marginalization experience. It is the need of the hour to tackle them effectively by integrating government services and applying broader social policies which will not only improve people's lives but also increase the nation's prosperity by bringing people into the workforce and expanding our economic capacity. For those people who are severely involuntarily marginalized, their selfhood, their humanity, is threatened (Charlesworth.S.J, 2000).

The flip side of social exclusion is social inclusion. Social inclusion is about everyone being able to participate fully in social and economic life- by getting a good impartial education, receiving an adequate income, having a job and being closely connected to family, friends and the community. The ultimate

measure of any education system should not be just how many children are in school, but what – and how well – they learn. The world is moving more quickly to get children into school than to improve the quality of the education offered. (UNESCO, EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010)

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