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A STUDY OF POST MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME FOR SCHEDULED CASTES: ACHIEVEMENTS AND BARRIERS

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Abstract: The issue of educational development of Scheduled caste is a major issue. The low enrolment in higher education, higher stagnation and wastage are the problems of SC higher education in India. Overall educational status of SCs is not so impressive. Post Matric Scheme as a positive discrimination policy spending large amount on educational empowerment of SC students in India. This had resulted gradual increase in the numbers of beneficiaries i.e. the students taking higher education. As well as expenditure on the scheme shows increase. There are various barriers in the implementation of the scheme. Still scheme find very useful for the students from rural backgrounds and for those who are not able to enroll and pursue the education without the scheme.

Keyword: Scheduled Castes, Post Matric Scholarship Scheme, Higher Education, Educational Empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the most significant indicator of development. It brings social changes by breaking social barriers, increases social mobility, improves the quality of human resources, gives economic power and brings cultural advancement. Thus, education is important for socio-economic securities and multidimensional development of individual and society.

It is fact that no country in the world has been able to educate all its children without state intervention. It is true about India also, because larger section of Indian population is deprived from basic social, economic and political rights and thus called as backward castes in India. These castes are categorized as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Castes. To make these castes educationally empowered, central government and state governments are implementing various schemes.

Present study is related with the 'Centrally Sponsored Post Matric Scholarship Scheme (PMS)' for Scheduled Caste Students in India. The objectives of the study are 1. To study educational status of Scheduled Caste students in India. 2. To study budgetary allocation, total expenditure and numbers of beneficiaries of PMS in the period 2002-2011. 3. To study the barriers in the implementation of PMS.

To study the barriers in the implementation of the PMS, reference of the study on PMS in Maharashtra by Wankhede-Velaskar(1999) has been used as main source, because the experiences of the students observed by Wankhede and Velaskar about the process of obtaining PMS, are observed by author of this paper while doing surveys for her doctoral research in Pune City (2013).(The research is ongoing.)

Linking caste and Education:

In India Veda, Varna and Vidya are interlinked from the beginning of the caste system. The education of vedas was formal education and the education which is useful for

the life of merchants and artisans was not available in ancient times. Thus, merchants and artisans managed to transmit traditional knowledge of occupations to their heirs only. The education of veda in the vedic period was open for all the varnas. From post vedic period onwards Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya were allowed to take education, but studying the Vedas and hearing or recitation of Veda was strictly prohibited for shudras. If shudra disobeyed it, the offence was punishable to direct penalties. Thus, Shudra was totally deprived from education.[Jadhav 2008, Wankhede 2010] Shudras today called as SCs are the victims of rigid, occupation based, hierarchical caste system in which the relative place of a caste in the social hierarchy was determined largely by their traditional occupation. In particular those performing unclean or polluting occupations regarded not only as low castes but as untouchables. The practice of untouchability resulted in great injustice to the members of the concerned castes because it denied ownership of productive assets like land, as well as the basic rights like education and equality, which resulted in continuation of their extreme socio-economic deprivation. The English education called as modern education was introduced in the British period. It was restricted to particular section of the Indian society. There was a tendency of caste organizations to enter into education to spread education through the establishment of institutes by building schools and hostels for their own caste children. Due to the efforts of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar it became possible for Shudras to enter in the schools in British period.

Further, in 1931, the untouchable castes systematically categorized as depressed classes. Thereafter, the government of India Act, 1935 for the first time provided for notification socially disadvantaged castes as Scheduled Castes, and a list of such castes was accordingly notified in the government in the government of India (Scheduled Castes) order 1936. Thus, 'Scheduled Castes' are defined in article 366(24) of the constitution of India as "such castes races or tribes or parts of or groups within such castes, races

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or tribes as are deemed under article 341 to be scheduled castes for the purpose of the constitution.”

After independence period, national progress was the aim of policymakers and in order to achieve this, formulation of national policies on education became important. But the achievement of educational development was impossible without including backward sections of the society, i.e. SC, ST and OBC in the mainstream educational development. This induced government to implement educational schemes for rapid educational development of these groups. [Wankhede 2010, Report of MSJ&E 2010-11] Scheduled Castes and Educational Status:

The scheduled caste constitutes 16.2% of the India population in 2001. There are noticeable state and regional variations in terms of these proportions. Punjab has the highest proportion at 28% and Gujarat has lowest 7.41%. The economic exploitation, economic disadvantage, continued concentration in menial occupations, degraded social position and low level of education mainly in the rural areas are the features of the SC population in India.[George-Naseen, 2010] The educational status of SCs is depicted in the following tables.

Table No. 1.

Literacy (%) among General castes and Scheduled castes in India, 2001

Category	Male	Female	Total
General Castes	75.3	53.7	64.8
Scheduled Castes	66.6	41.9	54.7

Source: Census of India, 2001.

Table No. 2

Dropout rates (%) of SC Students in Primary, elementary and secondary classes in India in 2001

Category	Primary(I-IV)			Elementary (I-VIII)			Secondary(I-X)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
SC	43.7	47.1	45.2	58.6	63.6	60.7	71.1	74.9	72.7

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. Of India, 2003 -04

Table No.3

Enrolment rates (%) of SC Students in Higher Education, 2001 -02

Student	XI-XII	UG	PG	PH.D	Professional	Others*	Total Enrolment in Higher Education
Male	9.95	13.98	14.00	6.82	8.81	16.13	13.33
Female	9.08	8.17	9.72	4.26	9.10	16.08	8.79
Total	9.61	11.56	12.28	5.89	8.90	16.11	11.52

Source: Govardhan Wankhede(2012)

*Included the courses like Art, Agriculture, Veterinary, Law etc.

Above data reveals that compared to general category, literacy among scheduled caste is lower. Literacy gap among categories and male female literacy gap is the fact of Indian education. In the case of dropout rates, dropout among SC increases sharply as we go primary to secondary classes. In the higher education level, enrolment in higher education from standard XI onwards is not satisfactory and there is declining percentage of enrolment from higher secondary stage to Ph.D. level. Enrolment among female students is lower compare to male, but enrolment among females in professional courses is higher compare to males. This shows that representation of SC students in higher education is lower compare to 15% reservation.

The reasons for low literacy, high dropout and low enrolment in higher education are adverse economic condition or poverty, illiteracy of parents, discrimination in higher education, language problems, gender and caste biases in the society and historical facts related to caste and

education in India. Thus, to change this situation and to increase enrolment in higher education govt. provides financial help to SC students through the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme.

Post Matric Scholarship Scheme-Introduction and Objectives:

The scheme of PMS was introduced before independence in the year 1944, with a few takers and was an ad hoc provision. The scheme was finally incorporated into the constitution in 1950. This is a centrally sponsored scheme. 100% central assistance is released to state governments and UTs for expenditure incurred by them on PMS. The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to the SC students studying at post matriculation level or post secondary level, to enable them to complete their education. The financial assistance includes maintenance allowance, reimbursement of non-refundable compulsory fees charges by the educational institutions, book bank facility and other allowances. The scholarship available for studying in India only and are awarded by the government of the State and UTs to which the applicant actually belongs.

According to the modifications of 01.04.2003 all Post Matric courses are grouped under 4 groups I, II, III, and IV. The income ceiling has increased from Rs. 1.00 lakh p. a. to 2.00 lakh p.a. in December 2010 and the rates for maintenance allowance and other allowances has been revised as follows.[Report of MSJ&E 2010-11]

Table No.4

Revised rates of Maintenance allowance from December 2010

Groups*	Day Scholars	Hostellers
Group I	Rs.550	Rs.1200
Group II	RS.530	Rs.820
Group III	Rs.300	Rs.570
Group IV	Rs.230	Rs.380

Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Report 2010-11, P.63

Delivery Mechanism of PMS:

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, government of India allocates budget to State and UTs for PMS. The State government and UTs allocates this fund to the Social Welfare Department through State Welfare Ministry. The Social Welfare head office further allocates fund to all divisions of the department of the state. The divisions further allocate it to the district level officer. After scrutiny officer sanctions scholarships on ad hoc basis to colleges and institutions. The Colleges release amount of scholarship on following conditions:

- The Maintenance allowance should be distributed to the eligible students monthly.
- The amount should be paid to the students through bank or post office accounts and smart cards in the name of beneficiary.
- When payment is to be made the ad hoc account of the student will be adjusted to the time of passing final awards, and the balance amount needs to be refunded by the institution to the government by way of challan.
- The institution should immediately submit utilization certificate of the entire amount sanctioned during the year on the prescribed form with the list of students.

- Institutions should credit ad hoc cheques to the banks within certain time period. Outdated cheques will not be accepted by the district social welfare officer.[Wankhede 2012, Report of MSJ&E 2010-11]

Budgetary allocation, Expenditure and Achievements:

Table No.5
Budgetary allocation, Expenditure and Beneficiaries of PMS in India, 2002-2011

Year	Budget allocation(Rs.Crore)	Expenditure(Rs.Crore)	Beneficiaries(lakh)
2002-03	150.00	153.04	18.94
2003-04	260.00	264.99	19.83
2004-05	319.55	330.27	22.64
2005-06	379.59	548.09	25.41
2006-07	450.00	526.03	26.43
2007-08	625.00	875.08	31.59
2008-09	750.00	645.49	34.36
2009-10	750.00	1015.96	40.24
2010-11	1700.00	2097.21	46(estimated)

Source:Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Annual Reports2004-05,2009-10,2010-11 George-Naseem, 2010

Table no.5 shows that budgetary allocation of funds, expenditure and beneficiaries are increased substantially in the period 2002-2011. The expenditure always exceeded budgetary allocation except in the year 2008-09. In the period 2002-03 to 2006-07 numbers of beneficiaries increased gradually. In the period 2006-07 to 2010-11 numbers of beneficiaries increased substantially. So, we can conclude that according to the expenditure numbers of beneficiaries are increasing, it reveals that the scheme is giving opportunity to SC students to take post matriculation education and as numbers of beneficiaries are increasing enrolment in higher education i.e. XI onwards is increasing.

Though, the data reveals positive result about financial and physical achievement of PMS in the year 2002-03 to 2010-11. But on different levels SC students are facing many problems during the procedure of access, claim and obtaining of Scholarship for which they are entitled. These problems or the barriers in the implementation of PMS, are as follows:

Obtaining Certificates

Caste certificate and the income certificate are the basic certificates required to access for scholarship. Caste certificate is the proof that student belong to particular category and can approach for the scholarship. Income certificate is the proof of income of the student or his parents from all sources, which should not be more than the prescribed limit of government for access of PMS.

To obtain these certificates students have to face bureaucratic procedures, humiliation and have to spend extra money and his time. Generally the issuing authorities are located far from the colleges that student attend. It becomes inconvenient for the students as it take extra time and money. These authorities issue certificates based on supporting documents, affidavit etc. from village panchayat, revenue clerk and then submit to the higher authorities. At both the levels personnel take their own time, asks for bribes and force students to visit their offices several times which

pressurize student. Many times students are not able to submit certificate on time thus miss the scholarship opportunity. Thus, in the procedure of obtaining the certificates students have to spend extra money, which is indirect cost of availing scholarship, which he has to bear before releasing scholarship amount.

Formalities at the college and institutional level

The student has to submit scholarship application form before the last date. It must be submitted through college to district welfare office. Students can get it free of charge in the college office. However, the forms generally are not available in the colleges and welfare office in time. Sometimes students have to pay charges for the forms. The completed form has to be submitted to college with required certificates of caste, income, date of birth and Photograph. Before the submission it has to endorse from the principal of the college. At this stage he face humiliation from the principal and clerks of the college as it take long time for this procedure.

Sanction and disbursement of Scholarship

The applications are sent to the welfare office for scrutiny which requires more time. During scrutiny, due to errors and non-submission of documents applications are rejected. For accepted forms a scholarship is sanctioned in lump sum, in the name of head of the college. But college authorities use this amount for other purposes and release it after six months or after the academic year over. Studies show that some students ask to pay bribes and are paid less than the amounts which they are entitled.

Method of Payment of Scholarship

To avoid manipulation government has instructed the scholarship payment through bank or post offices. But to open bank account and pay charges of bank find difficult for the students who cannot pay charge due adverse economic condition. The procedure of opening of account proves very difficult for some students.

Other barriers

- Students are not aware about the rate of maintenance allowance. They are also not aware about other charges like study tour charges etc.
- The spending on education is higher than the amount of scholarship. It is not increasing according to cost price index.
- Government staff, college staff and the public do not have will power to implement this scheme efficiently and effectively, due to the ignorance, bureaucratic attitude or the social biases against backward communities . [Wankhede2012]

Thus, the problems which students are facing to obtain Scholarship are the barriers in the implementation of PMS. Because, it not only impose burden of expenditure on students, humiliation at different level may give feeling of inferiority and isolation to the student and can also declines the satisfaction which they will get from taking education. This can be obstacles in the educational empowerment of SC students.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"> A STUDY OF POST MATRIC SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME FOR SCHEDULED CASTES: ACHIEVEMENTS AND BARRIERS Lata Digambar Dhendea </p>	<p>Indian Streams Research Journal ISSN 2230-7850 Volume-3, Issue-6, July-2013</p> <p>The major finding of this study are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The educational status of SC is improving but higher dropout and lower enrolment at school and higher education level are lower. ● The budgetary allocation, expenditure and beneficiaries of PMS in the period 2002-2011 has increased. But it increased substantially 2006-06 onwards. ● The numbers of increasing beneficiaries is the proof of usefulness of scheme. As this scheme find very useful for the students from rural backgrounds and for those who are not able to enroll and pursue the education without the scheme. ● The procedures in obtaining certificates, formalities at college level, procedure of sanctioning and disbursement scholarship have serious drawback. ● Government staff, college staff etc. are not following conditions of government. Thus, delay in releasing fund; less amount of scholarship, rejection of applications of scholarship etc. are the general problems students are facing. ● Unawareness of students about scholarship amount and procedures, bureaucratic attitude, social biases etc. and above mention procedures are the barriers in the successful implementation of PMS <p>CONCLUSIONS:</p> <p>The study has focused the educational position of SC students. The higher education level among SC is not so impressive due to various socio-economic reasons. So, by implementing positive discrimination policies, government targeted to achieve the educational empowerment of SC students, which is reflected from the budgetary allocation, actual expenditure and numbers of beneficiaries of PMS. Though there are weaknesses and barriers in implementation of this scheme, it helps to students to achieve the target of higher education in the environment of caste, culture, language, gender based inequalities and economic disparities. The achievement in the higher education may lead to better social economic life of SCs, which will be the real outcome of the implementation of various educational empowerment schemes including Post Matric Scholarship Scheme.</p> <p>NOTES AND REFERENCES:-</p> <p>i. Government of India(2004-05)Report of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment ii. Government of India(2009-10) Report of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment iii. Government of India(2010-11) Report of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment *According to the Report Group I courses (for UG,PG and all research degrees),are Medicine , Engineering, Technologu, Agriculture, Veterinary and allied sciences, Management, Computer Science etc. Group II includes Other Professional and technical UG, PG and all research degrees not covered in group I, all UG, PG level Diploma and Certificate level courses, all certificate level courses, Group III covers all other courses leading to a graduate or above degree not covered in group I & II e.g.BA, B.Sc. B.Com etc,</p> <p>Group IV includes all matriculation level courses before taking up graduation like classess XI and XII, intermediate exam. Not covered in group II or III. ITI courses, other Vocational courses etc. iv. Governement of India, (2003-04) Ministry of Human Resource Development v. Government of India (2001), Census of India. vi. Wankhede, G(2012). Accessing Higher Education, Affirmative Action and Structured Inequality: India Experience in Allen-Teranishi-Hammarth(Ed.)As the world turns implications on global shifts in higher education for theory, research and practice, Emerald group publishing Ltd., UK, 2012. vii. Wankhede, G.(2010). Caste and Education in India, in Peterson-Baker-McGaw(Ed.)International Enclyopedia of Education, Volume1, pp.589-594, Oxforf:Elsevier viii. George, S. & Naseem D.(2010). Hostel Schemes for Dalit Students : How Inclusive and Incetive for Higher Education, Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, working Paper, Volume IV ix. Position Paper of National Focus Group on Problems of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Children by NCERT, New Delhi, 2010. x. Jadhav, P.(2008). Scheduled Castes in Rural India, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4</p>
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