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EDUCATIONAL PERFORMS OF THE SCHEDULED CASTE IN INDIA



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Abstract: Inequality of educational opportunities is a reality in India for generation. In the traditional Caste system in education was the prerogative of the upper castes. The British policy of providing education and that too English education to elite resulted in directed neglect of mass education. In view of this various positive measures have been instituted within the educational system in India after independence for enabling the members of the scheduled caste to improve their educational status.

Keywords: educational , social status , egalitarianism , Scheduled Caste .

INTRODUCTION

Education has been an important issue of discussion and programme of action in the context of inequality throughout the world. Modern society views education as an important societal resources and a means achieving the goal of egalitarianism. Education is looked upon as a means of raising the social status of an individual in various ways. It is seen to provide the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for an individual to lead a really human life in socio-economic and political environment. Equality of educational opportunities is one of the goals of the ideology of egalitarianism. However, the case of the scheduled castes in India is an example of inequality of educational opportunities and efforts to remove the same.

The Scheduled Castes

The Scheduled Castes belong to the groups that were once to the groups that were once subjected to the unjust practice of untouchability in the traditional caste system of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, called them Harijans. The expression of 'Scheduled Castes' was coined by the British Simon commission and was embodied in the Government of India act of 1935 to refer to the groups which were then known as the depressed classes.

The Constitution of India adopted the usage of scheduled caste the usage of scheduled castes. Article 341 of the Constitution empowers the President of India, after consulting the heads of the different states of the union to notify by an order certain groups as scheduled castes. Thus, officially the scheduled castes are groups as are named in the scheduled castes order. Practically these are caste groups that have been backward as a result of the traditional practice of untouchability which was based on the notion that certain caste groups were impure and contact with them would pollute the others as well. the educational inequality experienced by the scheduled castes is reflected at every level and type of education. It is especially marked in the case

of professional education.

The British Period

The colonial rule exercised its own impact on equality of educational opportunities in India. One of the main features of the British policy on education in India was its adherence to what is called the downward filtration theory. It consisted in providing education to the few elite who turn were expected to educate the masses. Macaulay's famous minute of 1835 which laid the foundation for the British policy on education in India, in no uncertain terms, thus stated the objective of education in British India. The British government accepted Macaulay's minute as its educational policy. At the time of independence India inherited this very type of educational system that was to the advantages of the upper sections of the society and virtually neglected the lower sections.

Educational Situation in India

Independent India was quick enough to realise the educational situation of the masses, especially the deprived sections and to take appropriate steps. The Constitution of India, which came into force in 1950, directed the state to provide free education to all the children. Article 45 of the Constitution of India reads. The State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. This is known as the constitutional directive on universalisation of elementary education. The nation hoped to achieve this universalisation of elementary education within a period of 10 years. Steps were taken to expand elementary education in vernacular media. Some of the State Governments of the Indian Union even enacted legislations to ensure that parents send their children of the age group 6-14 years to school. While central and state governments make these provisions for the education Scheduled Castes.

Educational Performs Of The Scheduled Caste In India

An educational scheme for the scheduled castes meant to directly ensure access to education is reservation of seats in higher education especially professional education like Medicine and Engineering. At the national level, 15 per cent of the seats are reserved for the members of the scheduled castes. This is considered to be the most important means providing the scheduled castes.

Performs of the Scheduled Caste

While there has been a significant rise in the enrolment of scheduled castes in education, it is important to find out what has been the situation of the scheduled castes with the educational institutions. The relevant questions here are whether the scheduled castes remain within the educational institutions to complete the expected course of study and how well they perform in the studies.

The findings of various studies show that one should not be too complacent with the improvement in the enrolment of the scheduled castes. There is reason to be concerned about the retention rate of the scheduled castes in educational institutions and their performance in studies. Most of the scheduled caste students stagnate or drop out. A study of the scheduled caste students often colleges in Bombay, conducted from smaller sample of 1276 scheduled caste students showed that 52 percent of them dropped out from the college within three years.

Reason for the Continued Backwardness

The continuance of the relative educational backwardness of the scheduled castes means that India has not yet achieved the goal of universalisation of elementary education. It is always the socio-economically backward section of which the scheduled castes form the major component that gets left of the scheduled castes population as a whole. Certain factors can be mentioned as responsible for this situation. Poverty has been a major obstacle to the educational development of the scheduled castes. They are so poor and so much preoccupied with their struggle for the basic need of human life. They do not demand education, although they need it. The ultimate function of education—its contribution to improvement in the quality of human life—is not immediately perceptible to the poor.

The Future Challenge of Scheduled Caste Education

Putting together expected developmental changes in the next century and the fundamental requirements of sustainable development of Scheduled Caste education, the future challenges of education may be described as:

1. Training youngsters in logic, the manipulation of abstract symbols and increasingly language skills too.
2. Ensuring flexibility in syllabus and installing a management structure which accommodates change with ease.
3. Re-training the entire population frequently.
4. Imparting training in social skills.
5. Imparting knowledge of religious other one's own and training students to tolerate, if not appreciate, multiplicity of religious experiences.
6. Sensitising students to the issue of the critical balance

between environmental preservation and economic progress.

All these issues pose complex philosophical problems and raise difficult policy issues. Instead of expanding further on these controversial issues, we shall now concentrate on one topic and use it as an illustration of the meaning of paradigm shift in resolving ticklish issues. The topic chose for this purpose is the conflict between merit and social justice in context of admission of students to higher educational institutions.

CONCLUSION

Cultural prejudices, social practices and political factors have variously contributed to the educational backwardness of the scheduled castes in India. There have been concerted efforts by the State, voluntary organisations and individual social reformers to improve the situation of the scheduled castes over the years. These efforts have produced notable results in raising the educational status of the scheduled castes continue to experience inequality of educational opportunities in matters of accesses to various types and levels of education and academic performance. So far little attention has been paid to the inequalities existing among the scheduled castes themselves. This has particularly contributed to the persistence of the scheduled castes. The important dimensions need to be added to the policy and practice in regard to the educational advancement of the scheduled castes. These steps are likely to have significantly positive in reducing the scheduled caste inequality of educational opportunities within the larger society.

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