

Education and development in India: Marginalizing the margins

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of development and growth of a person from infancy to maturity. Education is a fundamental right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by United Nations in 1948 begins with the statement that everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. The United Nations Declaration of Rights of the Child in 1959 also states that the child is entitled to receive education which shall be free and compulsory at least in the elementary stages. Accordingly, right from the inception of the constitution of independent India, the Indian states are relegated to provide the children up to the age of 14 years with the opportunity to get free education. Denial of this right is enforceable in the court of justice. Practically speaking, for the Dalits and other marginalized social groups it has been denied, denied at the cost of having been benefited by other high castes for the past more than sixty years of Indian independence. Education from the start to different levels of employability hint for sharing of the developmental benefits, enshrined in the preamble of the Indian constitution. Again, deprivation of developmental benefits with equality and equity is denial of rights. Most of the excluded and marginalized in Indian society belong to what the constitution of India referred to as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). Recently the term Other Backward Castes (OBCs) has been added.

Improving educational attainment calls for achieving universal primary education, including calls for gender equality and empowerment for women (UN Millennium Goals Development)

However, in India major differences occur in the primary attendance rates across Indian states, and variability gets further accentuated when we disaggregate primary education related variables by social groups and further by gender (MDGs and The Excluded: A Critical Appraisal by Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, New Delhi). Thus, the ratio of females to male students enrolled at the primary and secondary levels of schooling is markedly lower for STs and SCs as compared to those for other social groups (Deolalikar, 2005). It is popularly viewed that arresting gender disparities in education is one of the most effective poverty reduction strategies (MDGs and The Excluded: A Critical Appraisal by Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, New Delhi). Therefore, India remains the

most iniquitous society on earth as the more changes introduced, the more they remain the same. Thus, extreme disparities in terms of wealth, health, and education have given birth to a new form of two nation theory *i.e.*, the shining India, and the suffering India. As just over ten per cent of the population, mostly from aggressive castes, with different levels of power in their hands, make sure that the rest continue to live in material and mental subjugation, and provide the 'nation' their cheap labour. While the wealth generation and development are taken up in the name of empowering the poor, such 'nation building' leaves the poor more demoralized and marginalized. They still struggle for food, drinking water, sanitation, and education. They represent more than ninety per cent, and mostly are from adivasis, dalits, OBCs, and Muslims. More so, with the globalization and growth of the economy, the liberalized markets under globalization is supposed to deliver growth by imparting efficiency and that growth can generate development, by following the much celebrated "trickle down" effect route of the beneficial effects of growth, the growth analysis, in terms of the distribution, of the output, and related changes in the level, as well as the quality of life which makes for development. The study will focus issues that contribute to widen disparities on the line of education theory of the British India between the few rich and the vast illiteracy vis-a-vis poverty in India.

Significance of the Theme :

Free Universal Primary education, as enshrined in the constitution of India has been repeatedly reminded and taken up as a part in almost all policy formulations. There is a paradoxical Gross Enrolment Ratio/Rates at this level of education relating to SCs/STs compared to the general population. GER for this social groups is indicated a sharp increase in the recent years, whereas dropout rates, before completing five years of schooling indicates as high as 34.2 per cent in SCs case and 42.3 per cent in STs case respectively against national average of 29 per cent (11th Plan 2008). Multidimensional deprivation meted out to these social groups of Indian society was further emphasized in the 11th Five Year Plan: 'Faster and Inclusive growth' targeting benefits of development and growth to be enjoyed by all, especially the margins of the society, but equally implying a paradox of inclusive growth in planning was States ratio of 10/15/25:90/85/75 with Centre. Meaning poor States will remain poorer. Compounded further by 11th Plan National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) share of Centre-State governments from 20-80 per cent to 40 to 60 per cent, aggravating the hurdles of the poor States in India. More or less is felt of the deprivation in educational levels—in school levels and higher education for the socio-economically deprived sections of the Indian society.

Delineation of the theme :

Education is an instrument of emancipation and inclusion has been appreciated and applied in most of the oppressed societies with alarming and appalling social exclusion. The unabated oppression of the Caste and Tribe victims, from time immemorial has ensured the permanence of subjugation resulting in the complete social exclusion of these segments. The multidimensional deprivation in the form of total denial of education, health, shelter has created what Paugam calls 'spiral of precariousness' (Paugam quoted in Hillary Silver's Social Exclusion, Published by Critical Quest, 2011, p. 4, New Delhi), accompanied by social and psychological forms of deprivation. Over the period of time, the Caste and Tribe victims have internalized and accepted their dehumanized slavish conditions as preordained and divine, creating a very low self-esteem, self-abnegation, and total self-hatred. The socialization of thousands of years formed innumerable layers of innocence and fragility in these oppressed communities. In the absence of access to education, wealth and

weapons (double edged weapon as rightly education is referred to as), the groups have been totally disrespectful of a dignified future and have been behaving as the obedient slaves. This has created a condition of mental blockage and the communities under perpetual oppression have remained under false consciousness of inferiority and divine subjugation. The majority of masses in India under Caste and Tribe system has been suffering from this fallacy and is engaged in the struggle to meet its bare minimum need.

Education in India has been monopolized, controlled, directed, and monitored by the Brahmins for centuries as their exclusive preserve. No occupation, vocation or profession in the world, has been so peremptorily usurped by single community as education has perpetuated the Brahmanical cultural ethos unabated notwithstanding many challenges from its victims. Educational institutions, research centres, and academic discourse have all facilitated maintaining the Brahmanical 'hegemony' to use Antonio Gramsci terminology. Education as an instrument of oppression and subjugation of defeated communities has been perfectly maneuvered with meticulous precision.

Non-realisation of self-power and self-respect by the SCs/STs in all spell of false consciousness is caused by the lack of education (about exploitation and its solution). If they are conscious of their plight and determine to overcome it, it will be the real education and that was the meaning Ambedkar attached to the education and is just not confined to securing degrees and employment alone. The philosophy of Gautama Buddha has remained the important milestone of developing culture of education ensuring subsequent assertion and creating an inclusive and sane society. The remarkable continuity speaks volume of singularity of purpose and mechanism to achieve the objective. If one is righteously educated, he becomes free, uses the brain to decipher and decides on his own. The capacity to distinguish right and wrong is education. Inculcating a passion for righteous behavior is education as perceived by Baba Saheb Ambedkar.

Education is a sword and being double edged weapon it is dangerous to wield and therefore must be used as an instrument of emancipation and inclusion and bases for establishing an egalitarian and democratic society with a sense of purpose.

The economic exclusion is experienced through discriminatory nature of inadequate access and availability of opportunities, wage inequalities and non-recognition of land rights. This promotes social discontent and unrest. Thus the need also arise to grant greater recognition to the legal rights of the economically excluded which again is connected to other dimensions such as political, religious, social and education.

Globalisation instead of promoting inclusion of the excluded resulted in atrocities against dalits with higher castes being strengthened in power with their integration into the global market and usurps the resources of the poor and marginalized for commercial exploitation, especially dalits and tribals. Definitely, the margins of the society—women, dalits, tribals, and minorities fall the victimized in social and economic exclusion. It is to be noted that Democracy without people is meaningless. Participation implies, when they participate then, they also have a share in the planning and the profit, whether it is governance, economy, or development.

Scope of the study :

The scope of the study will dwell upon the multidimensional deprivation in education and related causes of socio-economic, political and other allied backwardness of the excluded, the marginalized, and the discriminated social groups of India *i.e.*, SCs/STs and other socially deprived sections.

The study will examine the employment status of the SCs/STs in government establishments

in relation to the provisions of reservation; implication of the new economic policy on reservation; examine the trends in the employment of the SCs/STs in government services; employment growth of these groups under reservation till now and finally the emerging issues of reservation in all dimensions in relation to the process of globalised India.

The study will also deal in conclusion with the rhetoric on empowerment of the Caste Indians and the Tribes and the existence of extensive laws and provisions, as against which not much has been achieved in actual terms. Besides, should reservations be continued as it is felt it immensely contributed towards the representation of the marginalized groups in public sector employment?

For globalization, instead of bringing development in economic sphere causes the poor poorer and the rich richer, through interaction affluences and growth of financial aspect.

The study will also emphasize that mother tongue education plays importance in the countries, both India and others countries like Thailand and other Southeast Indian Countries, in adhering to the mandate of the UN and signatory countries, with employability prospects creating vernacular based manuals and teaching-learning pedagogy. And thus, create inclusive, integrated, holistic, and comprehensive model of education must be pursued with quality education. In this study comparison of the Mother Tongue Education where skilled-based Model of education, related mostly with Southeast Asian model except Middle-east Israeli model and Indian Model based on attempt to educate by focusing on inclusive Mother Tongue Education of the various ethnic conglomeration existing in these comparative studies. How far these countries follow system, based on multi-lingual and multi-cultural identity in consonance with UN Declaration under Article 27 of the International Rights, which states: in those states in which linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in communities with other members of the group to use their own language.”

Objective of the study :

The objective of the study is to address the historical injustices meted out to the certain social groups as part of the prevalent practices of Caste system and perpetuation of social exclusion through deprivation of developmental benefits as enshrined in the constitution of India. The main objective of providing reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Government services is not only just to give jobs to some persons belonging to these communities, and thereby increase their representations in the services, but also to improve the status of these people socially and educationally so that they can take their rightful place in the mainstream of the society.

1. To discuss caste discrimination in India;
2. To analyze education effect of the reservation policy and how it helped reduce the caste based discrimination in India; and
3. To examine why education and reservation policy are still needed and how can it be extended in private sector.

METHODOLOGY

Method adopted would dwell upon extensive dependence on primary sources and secondary sources available in Annual Plans of the government, and other related sources from data providers as outsourced by the government. Besides, sample questionnaires will be prepared and interview conducted with sample size of 5-10 house-holds of respective social groups. Also Internet sources will also be judiciously utilized related to the topic of study. Random comparative analyses will too

be undertaken with other Southeast Asian Countries where similar discriminations are meted to certain section of these societies. This will be represented analytically in the Mathematical jargon. Thorough comparative analysis aimed at to bring out what kind of balancing act can further be initiated through the already evolved mechanism and enshrined in the constitution of India. This will required adequate references made to the relevant Articles of the constitution. And how far such provisions laid down are implemented in letter and spirit of the constitution. Private Sector survey will be a difficult task, yet the study will make use of intake procedures adopted by the companies so as to ascertain the quota for the Dalits and SCs/STs. Theoretical thoughts would involve various social emancipation of the general public in addition to constitutional provisions. Constitution itself is the document evolved from various political theories. However, specifically thinkers like John Locke's writings which revolutionized the Western Revolutions that brought individual rights and constitutional government will be studied and used for the study of this project. Besides, John Rawls writings on social justice will also be used for this study. Karl Max and other economists contributing in the social justice segment will be all studied and represented by applying the relevance of the writings.

Justification/Rationale :

Create Equal opportunity as enshrined in Indian constitution. There was a bio gap between two particular sections of society. On the one hand there was a group who were educated, have social prestige and privileges and on the other section who were another section who were deprived of all these. They were not given equal opportunity to come to the mainstream. So there was a need to equalize that gap. Obviously there was a need to treat unequally to bring those in the mainstream of Indian society. In other words, the idea of equality of opportunity demanded unequal treatment "protective discrimination". Protective discrimination or positive discrimination later took the form of the reservation policies for the deprived section of the society. Various provisions in the constitution have been made to undo the past discrimination. The most important aspect of inequality is the gap between haves and have-nots. So it was a felt-need that the disparity of wealth and income must be narrowed down so that economic opportunities are brought towards equality. Because, the equality of social status can never be achieved, unless there is a reasonable representation of that segment of society who has been kept out of power from time immemorial (Chiriyankandath, 1999.)

To empower historical depressed social groups :

Reservation is a catalytic to SCs/STs and OBCs empowerment and growth in India. Empowerment enhances education and consciousness to understand their rights and duties as citizen of India; to organize them to fight against exploitation; oppression, and become assertive to their rightful assets accession.

Research Questions :

1. Was education denied to the Dalits as the injunction of the religion?
2. Did the British India not perpetuate the Brahmanical education in India?
3. How have the Dalits affected so much by such discriminatory practices when they are outside the fold of caste system in India?
4. Can we say it was the import of Greek city states, where education was designed only for the so-called Guardians (Philosopher Kings)?
5. When education is made a fundamental right, why does educating the Dalits take that

much time till now?

Hypothesis :

1. Dalits and other socially depressed sections in India are meted historical injustice by denying education which is the instrument of human development index.
2. Lord Macaulay education theory is a flaw one as education does not entirely have trickledown effect to Dalits and other socially depressed section of Indian society.
3. Constitutional provisions of free and compulsory elementary education has not much meaning when children are created to make barrier that results in high drop-out rates of the children from socially depressed section.
4. To compare analytically the historical and continuity of the prevalence of castes-based segregation on occupational lines in Indian society.

Review of Literature :

Ambedkar (1917), *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*, Dalit Book Trust, New Delhi, discussed India as land of anti-Indians because every Indian practices caste. They may change their religion but do not, rather cannot, change their caste. They practice it in their religion. Caste makes them mutually warring nations thus weakening the social and national fabric. The booklet said that Ambedkar described Caste system not only a division of labour but also a division of labourers. If it is looked more closely at it, it would be realized that it is not only a division of labour and labourers but also a division of power. If caste divides labour or reasonability to the society it also divides power to fulfill that responsibility. It gives to each labourer the power that he requires to do his job. A Brahmin gets intellectual power while the Khsatriya gets administrative and military power; the Vaishya gets economic power and the power to set up and run industries, the service sector represented by the Shudra gets labour power which is the most powerful and deadly power—deadlier than all the above three ‘high caste’ powers. The book further exemplified that if scavengers stop working, no amount of medicine, medical care or armies of doctors of the ‘intellectual’ professions can stop people from sickness, ill-health and death. If workers, the ‘Shudras’ in a factory, stop working the Vaishya’s financial power will go waste and become a noose around his neck! Similarly the Khsatriya will also die if he has to live in dirty, unhygienic conditions. His Kshatriyahood depends upon his health which can be guaranteed only by healthy conditions and environment. So the Shudra is the foundation of all life and he is the most powerful of the four. His power is the most powerful and deadliest.

Prof D.T. Lakadwala traces in chapter III “Objectives and Paths of Development in Asia” : “In the last twenty five years amidst its many problems of internecine wars and conflicts there is some achievement of which Asia can justly be proud. In spite of the fact most of its countries belong to the developing world its rate of economic growth was among the highest.”

“Educating the Girl Child”, *Innovations in Governance: Sharing of Experiences with the nation*, Government of Gujarat, wherein it is said that if a girl child studies, two families prosper. In Gujarat, attention is on those families who are either aware of the importance of the education but lack opportunities as well as those who lack both awareness and opportunities. While Gujarat is emerging as a developed State in the country, the State’s performance *vis-à-vis* male and female literacy has not been very encouraging. The biggest lacuna has been the enrollment and retention of children in school, especially that of the girl child. The pamphlet stated that this is directly linked to the availability of educational infrastructure and awareness among parents. The focus of the State Government

on the deliverables is showing results. Further, over the last two years, Gujarat celebrates “Shala Prveshotsav” by taking out “Kanya Kelavni Rathayatra” during 13th-15th June every year to spread awareness in the society and to ensure enrollment of eligible children, especially in the schools.

Singh *et al.* (ed.), (2002) *Approaches to Higher Education*, Sunrise Publications: New Delhi gives an account of the various writers, where K.D. Gaur and Rachita Rana in their paper, “Higher Education Reforms: Indian Experience” examines various aspects of higher education in India. According to them bearing in mind the correlation between education and the society, the basic feature of higher education, social value of higher education and good nature on one hand and the needs of new economy which is globalized, liberalized and privatized; the policies be formulated for the balanced development of higher education system. The imbalanced development may lead to wastage of resources, improper use of infrastructure and dropouts. The government’s role should be confined to enabling policy environment and influencing the decisions of students and institutions indirectly through incentives. Broadening the social base of participation in higher education is important for social stability and economic efficiency. But it is not possible to achieve equity in higher education without ensuring access to quality public education at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels to the disadvantage sections of the populations—women, ethnic minorities and rural residents. Further, higher education should become dynamic and the perspectives match with the country’s development and economy. The growth of higher education system should be in a balanced manner keeping internationalization and revolution of education in mind but react locally.

Gaur and Singh in their paper, “Education and Development: lessons from Developing Countries,” discussed various issues and aspects related to education and development with special reference to developing Asian countries in the 21st century. They depicted that there has been drastic changes in educational development due to globalization, liberalization, privatization and competition at national and international level. It may be stated that globalization may bet to further internationalization of higher technology. There has been a revolution in information technology. They are influencing various dimensions of life such as economic, social, psychological and cultural. This is a fact that information technology might become the single most important determination of progress of nations in the 21st century. Further, the role of state may become quite important in terms of all the three functions, *viz.*, provision, funding and regulation/population,

Gore *et al.* “Social Implications of Development: The Asian Experience”, 1988, Indian Academy of Social Sciences, in its brief survey of region-wise development in Asia has been made in the introductory chapter by Professor Girijesh Pant where acknowledging considerable development in most of the Asian Countries he argues, “...with the exception of Japan and to certain extent People’s Republic of China most of these Countries have not been able to build a self-reliant national economy...” What is the nature of development in Asia? According to him it is “lopsided”. He suggests a close link between “lopsided” nature of development and “rising of authoritarian tendencies and higher sense of uncertainty leading to artificial hike in prices, narrowing down of equality base, sense of deprivation.” Prof Gore drew attention of the delegates toward commonality of goals and differences in paths of development in Asian countries. To the question ‘why’ he says, “because they differ in their historical experience, their natural endowments in material resources, the extent of the homogeneity or heterogeneity of their population. They differ in the very size of their domains as sovereign nations.” In most of the Asian Countries “the words of democracy, socialism and secularism have attained a degree of non-specificity that is at once convenient and confusing.”

Sen *et al.* (1999) *Omnibus*, explore the economic, social, and political roots of deprivation in

the modern world, and the role of public action in addressing this problem. It is Sen's classic exposition of 'entitlement approach' to the analysis of hunger and deprivation. This approach focusses on the ability of a person to acquire food and other relevant commodities within the prevailing economic, social and legal arrangements. The implications of this approach are illustrated through detailed case studies.

Conclusion :

The representation of the SCs/STs remains at levels below those for the Non SC/STs in all categories of jobs and for all sectors under the government. Therefore, it is desirable that the reservation policy sector jobs be implemented in its entirety so as to realize the social justice and egalitarian aims of the Government of India.

Education and development is two sides of the same coin. Education without employability through lag of skills or lack of opportunity is weakness of the education system and governance and mismanagement. More severe is the case that where there is rampant disparities owing to faulty distributive mechanism. In India education is one-sided and benefits only the rich at the cost of depriving the poor. When over ninety percent of the populace is from socially depressed section, and there is deliberate policy to exclude them in the developmental changes in the country, that too by further worsening the plight of the Dalits, SCs/STs and other backward classes, it is indeed a historical injustices meted out to them by being designed through a policy that was in colonial time being endorsed by independent India.

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