

IRA-International Journal of Education & Multidisciplinary Studies
ISSN 2455-2526; Vol.07, Issue 02 (2017)
Pg. no. 138-159
Institute of Research Advances
<http://research-advances.org/index.php/IJEMS>



Educational Status of Dalit Women in India - Changes and Challenges

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Type of Review: Peer Reviewed.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jems.v7.n2.p11>

How to cite this paper:

Churiyana, P. (2017). Educational Status of Dalit Women in India - Changes and Challenges. *IRA International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies* (ISSN 2455-2526), 7(2), 138-159. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jems.v7.n2.p11>

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INTRODUCTION

In an age of information revolution, education, the way of imparting and acquiring of knowledge to teaching and learning is the conscious process by which a person learns and applies the learning for his life experiences. Over the time, facilitating and providing education has become one of the most important functions of the state Education fosters personal development and self-fulfilment. It encourages the individual to develop his mental, physical, emotional and spiritual talents to the full. Education is a continuous leaning process through various stages of development of a person, as an individual or as a group adjustment with the society at large, earning and spending of the income and participation in civic affairs which involves whole gamut of issues like general welfare, freedom, appeal to reason and persuading happiness including access and entitlement to equal likes of opportunity in imparting education to all but with a forms on the development of less privileged so that they are brought on the same platform with the privileged in matters of employment and developing their skills to get suitable employment.

Education, therefore, is the most crucial tool of empowering people-the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalised adults and children can empowered and lifts themselves from the existing levels of poverty and obtain means for the growth and development of their communities. Unless these underprivileged sections of the society receive the minimum education, they cannot excise the civil, political, economic and social freedom as enshrined in the constitution of India. Ironically, the underprivileged section of the society, like the member of Scheduled caste (Dalit) in India, are subjected to various forms deprivation from centuries, education seems to be the most important tool of empowerment¹.

India, the largest democracy of the world, unfortunately the largest number of underprivileged sections of the society remained deprived to education and the heritage of their culture keeps continuing. However it is detrimental to find that why education has been denied to a substantial portion of population, based on inequalities i.e. on caste, class and gender, consequent by birth².

In India, on one hand- women Goddesses like Lashmi,Saraswati, Santoshi, Durga, Parvati etc. are worshipped, on the other hand-women are denied independent identity and status. This is strongly ingrained in the social fabric, the culture, the economy and the polity. As the code of Manu states, “A women should never be independent. Her father has authority over her in childhood, her husband in youth and her son in old age”.³ Women’s identity, freedom, access to the resources and opportunities are determined by caste and class status of the family. Marital status and their fertility provide identity to women. Married women achieve status and respect in family and society after attaining motherhood, especially giving birth to sons. This reflects that caste, class, gender and patriarchy play a significant role in determining women’s status in Indian society.⁴

The majority of this country’s populace does not think it ridiculous that their goddess of learning is a woman. Yet the girl child in their households continues to holds a broom instead of a book in her hand.⁵

Educate a girl and you educate a family⁶. According to Talcott Parson, even in modern society, socialization of the young is still one of the basic functions of the family and within the family, the

¹ncsc.nic.in/files/ncsc/new3/203 pg-113

²ncsc.nic.in/files/ncsc/new3/203 pg-113

³Manu,Manusmiriti,Dharamshastra,IX-3.

⁴Jain Laxshmi,2008, Drop out of Girl- child in Schools, Norther Book centre, New Delhi-110002,pg-1

⁵The Hindusthan Times, New Delhi, November 8. 2003

women is primarily responsible for socializing the young. Tiger and Fox were of the opinion that the mother is totally essential for the well being of the child. One factor considered to be a major determinant of child development is mother's literacy.⁷

The theme of Dalit women is of crucial importance in the contemporary Indian situation. Unlike women from other social groups in India, Dalit women face three overlapping disadvantages.

First, they face the disadvantage of being women with all the attendant difficulties of living in a male patriarchal society. Secondly, they suffer the disadvantage of being Dalit as they face the opprobrium that higher caste Hindu society instinctively heaps upon the lower castes. Thirdly, by virtue of being Dalit they are more likely to spend a lifetime in poverty. Given this trinity of disadvantages, the problems of Dalit women are distinct from, and arguably considerably more severe than, that of higher caste women who apart from gender handicap are not burdened by perceptions of inferiority or by a life of poverty.

This is evidenced by the fact that compared to higher caste women; human development outcomes are far more inferior for Dalit women. In 2011 census, a lower proportion of Dalit women (56.6%) 2001 it was 41.9% were literate as compared to 58 %, 2011 and 64.6% in 2001 for non-Dalit women. While nationally (across rural India) about 40.5 per cent of all women were underweight, the incidence of under nutrition was eight (8) per cent higher for Dalit women. Moreover, Dalit mothers and their children had relatively poor access to public health services as compared to other social groups. For example, Dalit children from these excluded groups had an immunisation rate which was 20 per cent lower than that for non-Dalit and non-tribal children.

This Chapter argues that high deprivation levels of Dalit women can be attributed to social exclusion. The social exclusion and associated discrimination of Dalit women result from their caste identity. It is this 'exclusion-induced deprivation' which differentiates Dalit women from the rest of the women. It would be naive to claim that Dalit women face problems 'just like' other (non-Dalit) women. In addition to being women, they are burdened by their caste and poverty which are concomitant of their caste and gender⁸.

Against this background, this chapter investigates inequalities persists among Indian Dalit women, who belong to different social groups and the roadblocks in attaining and accessing education. Subsequently will analyses the role of education in changing their status.

Government Initiatives for ensuring equity

The educational development programmes and schemes launched by the centre and state government have impacted on vulnerable group including SC/STs. The scholarships and other facilities make education attractive to the SC and STs. This chapter reviews the educational development among SC's with emphasis on SC women and the changes came out through education and challenges face while accessing education. Education as an instrument of socializing is considered as powerful catalytic agent of social change. This is most effective changing agent for the improvement of socio-economic condition of SCs removal of their disabilities and acceleration of the integrate process. Realizing the importance of education the framers of the constitution have envisaged a number of steps by ways of 'compensatory Discrimination'. It guarantees in a number of economic, social, and political rights to the members of SCs, Article 15 which affirms the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of caste and gender. Article 21 guarantees the right to life and to security of life; Article 46 specifically protect Dalits from social injustice and all forms of exploitation therefore, focuses on the very basic tool for empowering the member of SCs through education and economic rights. ' The State

⁶Talcott Parsons, The social system, Amerind Publishing co. Pvt. Ltd.,New Delhi

⁷Jain Laxshmi,2008, Drop out of Girl- child in Schools, Norther Book centre, New Delhi-110002,pg-9

⁸ IIDS Gender and caste based inequalities

shall promote with special care the education and economic interest of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular to the scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from special injustice and all forms of exploitation.⁹”

Art. 45: Provision for free and compulsory education for children. The State shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

There have been specific amendments to the Constitution affecting education, as can be seen in 42nd, 73rd, 74th and 83rd Amendment Acts. These amendments pertain to provisions to enable education being included in the Concurrent List, devolution of powers to local bodies and making elementary education a Fundamental Right formally (from its present status of Directive Principles though this has been ruled as such through judicial interpretation even otherwise).

The constitution of India provides numerous initiatives, programmes and policies to raise the educational level of Scheduled caste and with special provisions for scheduled caste women.

Incentive Schemes

One way of getting Scheduled Caste students into school is through the provision of various incentives. Incentives can be categorised in a variety of ways – they can be tangible or intangible, financial or non-financial, direct or indirect. The four major categories are:

1. *Financial Interventions*: cash transfers directly to a family/child or in a bank (to access later); scholarships/stipends; provision of textbooks, stationery and uniforms; school vouchers and transport assistance (bus passes/cycles).
2. *Provision of Mid-Day Meals* and other health related interventions: provision of free meals, food distribution to families, provision of Iron and Vitamin A tablets, inoculation and vaccination, separate sanitation facilities and provision of water.
3. *Social Welfare Intervention*: provision of hostels and interventions for children with special needs.
4. *Additional Incentives* aimed at qualitative improvements: improving infrastructure, provision of quality teaching-learning, introduction of computers, sports facilities and remedial teaching (Educational Research Unit, 2006)

Variety of these types of incentives schemes have launched by the central government in order to attract students from Sc communities, including free education at primary level, scholarships, hostel facilities, mid-day meal schemes, free uniform, free textbooks and attendance based scholarships for girls. Mid day meal scheme is the largest and most ambitious programme ever attempted to achieve universal elementary education.

Education policies for the upliftment of the educational status of Scheduled castes in India

1. National Policy on education (NPE), 1986

The NPE lays emphasis on the attainment of the minimum levels of learning at all stages of education-primary, middle and secondary- and on the overall personality development of the child.

⁹ncsc.nic.in/files/ncsc/new3/203_pg-113

Pursuant to the NPE, the following special provisions for SCs have been incorporated in the existing schemes of the Department of elementary education and literacy and the Department of Secondary education and higher education¹⁰:

1. Relaxed norms for opening primary schools
2. A primary school within 1 km walking distance from habitations of 200 people instead of 300.
3. Incentives like free textbooks, uniforms, stationery and school bags to students from the SC community.
4. Priority given to areas with high concentration of SCs in major programmes of the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy like the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), LokJumbish, ShikshaKarmi, Non –Formal Education (NFE) and the National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NPNSPE).
5. Abolition of tuition fees in government schools in all the states, at least up to the primary level. Most states have abolished tuition fees for SC students up to the senior secondary level.
6. Of the 43,000 scholarships at the secondary stage for talented children from rural areas, 13000 scholarships are reserved for children from SC/ST community, and 70 scholarships are reserved for SC/ST candidates under the National Talent Search Examination (NTSE).
7. Strict observance of reservation of seats for SCs in central government institutions such as the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Regional Engineering colleges(RECs), Central Universities, Kendriya Vidyalayas and Novodaya Vidyalayas. In public educational institutions, apart from reservation, there is also relaxation in the minimum qualifying cut-off percentages for admission. The University Grant commission (UGC) has established SC/ST cells in 103 universities, including central universities, to ensure proper implementation of the reservation policy. A standing committee has also been set up by the UGC to review the implementation of the reservation policy in various public educational institutions.
8. Remedial and special coaching is provided to improve the academic skills, linguistic proficiency and levels of comprehension of SC students. The IITs have a scheme under which SC students who fail by a small margin in the entrance examinations are provided a year's preparatory course.
9. The UGC has also formulated a scheme for providing coaching to candidates from the SC/ST community to prepare them for the National Eligibility Test (NET) and to subsequently provide from among them adequately qualified candidates for recruitment as lecturers.
10. SC candidates are also provided relaxation up to 10 percent in the cut –off marks for the Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) test. All SC candidates who qualify for the JRF are awarded fellowships.
11. The UGC provides a relaxation of 5 percent marks-from 55 percent to 50 percent at the master's level to SC/ST candidates for the appointment as lecturers. For SC/ST students, the UGC has also reduced the minimum percentage of marks required to appear in NET to 50 percent.

Special Educational Schemes

The Ministry of social justice and empowerment (MoSJE) implements various centrally sponsored schemes for the educational development of SCs through state governments and union Territory (UT)

¹⁰Thorat, Sukhdeo,2009 'Dalits in India Search for common Destiny', Sage publications India Pvt ltd, New Delhi.Chapter-2- Government Strategy Against Discrimination and for empowerment. Pg-17

administrations¹¹.

2. Central sector schemes of up gradation of merit of SC students

This scheme was started in 1987-88 by the ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in the Department of education and was transferred to the Ministry of welfare (Mow) in the middle of 1993-94.

The objective of the scheme was to upgrade the merit of SC students by providing them with opportunities for all- round development through education in residential schools. The scheme intended to remove their educational and social deficiencies and attempted to facilitate their entry into institutions/courses where admissions were on a competitive basis. Under the scheme, 100 percent central assistance is released to states/UTs to arrange remedial and special coaching for SC students studying in class IX to XII.

While remedial coaching aims at removing deficiencies in subjects taught at school, special coaching is provided to prepare students for competitive examinations for entry into professional courses such as engineering and medicine.¹².

3. Centrally- sponsored coaching and allied scheme

Under this scheme, funds are released for Pre- Examination Training centres (PETCs) in various parts of the country to prepare SC candidates for competitive examination held by the Union Public Service commission (UPSC), the state service commissions (SSCs) etc. The objective of the scheme is to improve the representation of candidates belonging to the SC community for whom posts are reserved in the State/ Central services.

The ongoing scheme was modified in September 2001 to ‘coaching and allied assistance for weaker sections including scheduled castes, other backward castes and Minorities’ to make a scheme more cost- effective and result- oriented. Under the revised scheme, the grant-in- aid is given to a state government on a matching basis over and above its committed level of expenditure and 100 percent assistance is provided to UTs. In the Case of directly-run centres, assistance through universities/ institutions is on 90 percent basis.

The salient features of the scheme are as follows.

1. Assistance is provided for preparation for recruitment to all services in Group ‘A’ and ‘B’ under the central and state governments, PSUs bank and the private sector.
2. Assistance is also provided for entrance examinations to educational institutions that run professional courses in the areas of medicine, engineering, etc.
3. Coaching is emphasised for emerging areas such as information technology (IT) and other service sector activities.
4. Coaching centre are entitled to financial assistance of Rs. 8000 per student per course for training in Group ‘A’ services, Rs 6,000 per student per course for group ‘B’ services and for all other government service examinations.
5. A stipend of Rs 700 per student per month for Group ‘A’ service and entrance examinations is provided for outstation students. In The case of local students, Rs 225 and Rs 125 are

¹¹Thorat, Sukhdeo, 2009 ‘Dalits in India Search for common Destiny’, Sage publications India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi. Chapter-2- Government Strategy Against Discrimination and for empowerment. Pg-18

¹² Ibid. Pg-19

provided for Group 'A' and 'B' services with entrance examinations respectively.

4. Pre- Matric scholarship (PMS) for children of those engaged in unclean professions

The scheme was introduced in 1977-78 with the objective of financially assisting the children of scavengers of dry latrines and sweepers who had traditional links with scavenging, flaying and tanning, irrespective of their religion, to pursue education up to matriculation. Students with disabilities among the target groups were also assisted.

The Scheme is implemented by state governments and UT administrations. Central assistance is provided to the state governments on a 50:50 percent matching basis and on a 100 percent basis to the UT administrations over and above their committed liability.

The Scheme covers day scholars from class I to X with the Scholarship rates ranging from RS 25 per month for classes I to V, Rs 40 per month for classes VI to VII, to Rs 50 per month for classes IX and X. The scheme also covers hostellers from class III to X, with scholarship rates for hostellers from class III to VIII being Rs 200 per month and for those in classes IX and X Rs 250 per month. The Scholarship is provided for 10 months in a year. Besides the Scholarship, an annual ad hoc grant of Rs 500 is also provided to day scholars as well as hostellers.

The scheme was last modified with effect from 25 February 1994, following which there is no income ceiling prescribed. Up to two children of the same parents can get benefits from the scheme if they are pursuing education in class IX and X. Although no such restriction has been placed on children who are pursuing education up to class VIII, an additional/ Third/ subsequent child born after 1 April 1993 will not benefit from the scheme¹³.

5. Post Matric scholarship

The Objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to students belonging to the SC/ST category to pursue post matriculation education in recognised institutions, including correspondence courses with in the country.

The financial assistance under this scheme includes provision of the maintenance allowance, reimbursement of compulsory non –refundable fees, thesis typing/printing charges, study tour charges, book allowance for the students pursuing correspondence courses and special provisions for students with disabilities such as reader charges for the blind students. The scheme has been implemented by various state governments and UT administrations, which receive 100 percent central assistance, over and above their committed liability, for the north- eastern states, there is no such liability.

6. Book Banks for SC students

This scheme is intended to provide SC/ST students access to the latest textbooks in medicine (including Indian systems of medicine and homoeopathy), veterinary, engineering agriculture and polytechnic courses that require expensive books. The book bank scheme also encompasses law, chartered accountancy, management and bio-sciences. Provisions have also been made in the scheme to include Braille Books/talking books/cassettes to help visually-impaired students. Each set of books provided through this scheme is shared by two students at various stages except in the case of post

¹³Thorat, Sukhdeo, 2009 'Dalits in India Search for common Destiny', Sage publications India Pvt ltd, New Delhi. Chapter-2- Government Strategy against Discrimination and for empowerment. Pg-20

graduate courses and chartered accountancy, where in each student is provided one set.

The scheme is open to all those who received post-matriculation scholarships. The life period of a single set of books has been fixed at three years, and the ceiling cost per set of textbooks varies from Rs 2,400 to Rs 7,500, depending on the course. The Scheme also provides Rs 2,000 towards the purchase of cupboards. The Scheme is implemented by the state governments and UT administrations. Central assistance is provided to the state government on a 50:50 percent matching basis and on a 100 percent basis to the UT administrations.

7. Scheme for girls/Boys hostels students

The main objective of this scheme is to provide hostel facilities to SC students while they are studying in middle, high and secondary schools, colleges and universities. The Scheme is implemented by the state governments and UT administrations.¹⁴.

8. National Overseas Scholarship for SC students

The National overseas Scholarship is a non-plan scheme under which 17 scholarships of 30 are awarded annually to SC students. The scheme, which also includes SC converts to other religions, intends to provide financial assistance to meritorious SC students who have no means to fund themselves for higher education abroad in courses for which adequate facilities are unavailable in India.

Under this scheme, the government meets a student's entire tuition fees, provides a maintenance allowance, a contingency allowance and air passage both ways once a year. There are some subject restrictions for bachelor's, master's, doctoral and post- doctoral courses .Certain courses pertaining to science, technology, medicine, agriculture, engineering and Indian studies are excluded from the list. Specific subjects are prescribed every year in consultation with the MHRD to pursue master's and bachelor's courses. Preference is given to candidates pursuing Ph.D. and post- doctorates in the fields of Science, technology and engineering.

The maximum duration of Scholarship varies for different degrees. The qualifying criteria, SC candidates are required to obtain 60 percent in the qualifying degree along with 2 years research/teaching/work experience for the bachelors, masters and Ph.D. degrees. A candidate's age should not exceed 35 years and the annual income of the applicant should not exceed Rs 60,000. Only one child in a family can avail of this award. The selected candidates are given award letter that facilitates their seeking admission abroad. Since award is valid for three years, excluding the year of selection, it gives the students ample time to secure the necessary admission. The scholarships are forwarded to the students abroad by the Indian missions in the countries of their study¹⁵.

9. Dr. Ambedkar National merit Scholarship

This scheme has been instituted from 2003 with the objective of recognising, promoting and assisting meritorious students belonging to the marginalised communities to pursue higher studies.¹⁶.

¹⁴Thorat, Sukhdeo,2009 'Dalits in India Search for common Destiny', Sage publications India Pvt ltd, New Delhi.Chapter-2- Government Strategy Against Discrimination and for empowerment. Pg-21

¹⁵ Ibid. Pg-21

¹⁶ ibid. Pg-21

10. Tenth Plan Provisions: Empowerment through Education

In order to create an enabling environment for the welfare and development of the socially Disadvantaged Groups by removing the still existing inequalities, disparities and other persisting problems, besides providing easy and equal access to basic minimum services, the Tenth Plan has focused on these aspects-

- Education being the most effective instrument of empowering the socially Disadvantaged groups, all-out efforts will be made to improve the educational status of these Groups, especially of women and the Girl child.
- Universalization of primary education by 2007 and at elementary stage by 2010 with a special focus on low literacy pocket and educationally backward communities Viz. Scheduled castes, OBCs, Minorities and women with a special focus on the Girl child.
- Improving enrolment/retention rates of these Groups in schools and thus reduce school drop-out rates through special incentives/ support services like hostels, financial assistance, Scholarships free books, uniforms etc and thus improve the educational status of these groups, especially of the women and the girl child.
- Vocational Training/ education to improve the technical and productive capabilities of these Groups, suiting local needs and marked demands
- 'Reaching the Un-reached' Viz. scheduled caste/OBC/Minority groups, those living in the most backward and neglected areas, in general and their women and the girl child, in particular through the universalized/Expanded programmes of ICDS, RCH, supplementary Nutrition Programme, Mid-day Meals, PGMY, NHM etc.
- Encouraging the participation of the socially disadvantaged groups in the planning and developmental process at every level through ensuring their adequate representation in various democratic decision making Institutions like Panchayati Raj local bodies, state assemblies/Parliament etc¹⁷.

11. Universalization of Elementary Education

Universalisation of elementary education in India implies universal access and enrolment, universal retention, bridging gender and social category gaps in primary and upper primary education, and elementary education of satisfactory quality.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has been supporting several interventions to facilitate universal access and enrolment. These interventions have contributed substantially to the expansion of primary and upper primary schooling facilities and increase in enrolment. One of the key SSA priority tasks for achieving universal elementary education has been to ensure that all children in the age group 6-13 years have access to schools imparting elementary (primary and upper primary) education within a reasonable distance from the residence of children. The RTE Act provides for children's access to elementary schools within the defined area or limits of neighbourhood. A neighbourhood school is a school located within the defined limits or area of neighbourhood, which has been notified by the State Government under the RTE Rules¹⁸.

The norm followed by most States is to ensure availability of schools imparting primary education within a distance of 1 km. and schools imparting upper primary education within a distance of 3 km. from the habitation of residence of children. In the case of hilly terrain, sparsely populated and urban areas etc. relaxations in the distance norm have been made.

¹⁷ncsc.nic.in/files/ncsc/new3/203 pg-128

¹⁸ncsc.nic.in/files/ncsc/new3/203 pg-129 (National commission for Scheduled caste in india)

The SSA interventions which had a direct bearing on the progress towards the goal of universal access and enrolment include the following:-

- *Opening of new upper primary schools:* Since the commencement of the SSA, a total of 159,499 new upper primary schools were sanctioned under SSA to cover unserved habitations. Of the new upper primary schools sanctioned, 155,363 (97%) schools have been opened and made functional up to the academic year 2013-14. About 96 per cent of rural habitations have an upper primary school within a distance of 3 km.
- *Construction of additional classrooms:* Up to 2013-14, sanctions were issued for construction of a total of 1,603,789 additional classrooms. This has contributed to substantial improvement in the average Student Classroom Ratio (SCR), which improved from 36 in 2006-07 to 28 in 2013-14.
- *Provision of residential schools and hostels in remote tribal/forest/hilly/desert areas:* In view of the fact that there are many sparsely populated areas with low density of population and there are many children in urban areas in need of care and protection, the SSA has provided residential facilities. Up to 2013-14, a total of 790 residential schools with an enrolment capacity of 86,750 students were sanctioned. Of the residential facilities sanctioned, 767 facilities (97.1 per cent) have been established.
- *Transportation/escort facilities:* Transport/escort facility was sanctioned for 147,600 children living in sparsely populated areas wherein opening of schools is not viable and for urban deprived children. A total of 55,647 children were provided transport/escort facility by the end of 2013.
- *Provision of uniforms:* Financial provisions were made for provided two sets of uniforms to all girls, SC/ST children and children belonging to Below Poverty Line families, wherever the State Governments have incorporated provision of school uniforms as a child's entitlement in their State RTE rules, and where the State Governments are not already providing uniforms from the State budgets.
- *Special training for mainstreaming and age-appropriate admission of out-of-school children:* The RTE Act makes specific provision for special training for age-appropriate admission for out-of-school children. During the year 2012-13, financial provision was made for providing special training to 2.8 million out-of-school children, including never-enrolled children and those who dropped out before completing elementary education¹⁹.

Impact of the government initiatives on Dalit women's education

There is the growth in number of schools imparting primary education

During the period 2000-01 to 2013-14, the total number of primary schools (Schools with only primary section) has increased by 34.5 percent (From 638,738 to 858,916 schools). The total number of schools imparting upper primary education has increased by 185.9 percent (from 206,269 to 589,796), while the total number of schools imparting elementary education (schools with primary or upper primary sections, schools with primary and upper primary sections, and secondary/ higher secondary schools with primary and or upper primary section) has increased by 71.4 percent (from 845,007 to 1,448,712) during the same period. Shown in the Below Table.

¹⁹ Education for all Towards quality with equity India, 2014, NUPEA, New Delhi, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Table 4.1: Numbers of primary schools, schools imparting upper primary education and schools imparting elementary education (2000-01 to 2013-14)

| Year | Number of Primary School(Schools with only primary section) | Number of schools impacting upper primary education | Number of Schools impacting elementary education |
|---------|---|---|--|
| 2001-01 | 638,738 | 206,269 | 845,007 |
| 2001-02 | 664,041 | 219,626 | 883,667 |
| 2002-03 | 651,382 | 245,274 | 896,656 |
| 2003-04 | 712,239 | 262,274 | 974,525 |
| 2004-05 | 767,520 | 274,731 | 1,042,251 |
| 2005-06 | 772,852 | 288,493 | 1,061,061 |
| 2006-07 | 784,852 | 305,584 | 1,090,436 |
| 2007-08 | 805,667 | 445,108 | 1,250,775 |
| 2008-09 | 809,108 | 476,468 | 1,285,576 |
| 2009-10 | 809,974 | 493,838 | 1,303,812 |
| 2010-11 | 827,244 | 535,080 | 1,362,324 |
| 2011-12 | 842,481 | 569,697 | 1,412,178 |
| 2012-13 | 853,870 | 577,832 | 1,431,702 |
| 2013-14 | 858,916 | 589,796 | 1,448,712 |

Source: statistics of school Education, 2007-08, MHRD, GOI, and Unified District Information system for Education (U-DISE), National University of Educational Planning and Administration. (NUPEA)

The progress towards Universal enrolment in Primary, Upper Primary, Elementary, Secondary and Senior Secondary of General category Student and Scheduled caste children in India. During 2000-01 to 2013-14

Progress Towards universal Enrolment

Enrolment in primary education (Class I-V): Between 2000-01 and 2013-14, enrolment in primary education increased steadily up to 2010-11 and then showed a declining trend in below table. The enrolment in primary education reached the highest level in 2011-12 (137.1 million) and then declined

Table 4.2: Enrolment in primary, upper primary and elementary education (2000-01 to 2013-14) (In Millions)

| Primary | | | Upper Primary | | | Elementary | | | |
|---------|------|-------|---------------|------|-------|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total |
| 2000-01 | 64.0 | 49.8 | 113.8 | 25.3 | 17.5 | 42.8 | 89.3 | 67.3 | 156.6 |
| 2001-02 | 63.6 | 50.3 | 113.9 | 26.1 | 18.7 | 44.8 | 89.7 | 69.0 | 158.7 |
| 2002-03 | 65.1 | 57.3 | 122.4 | 26.3 | 20.6 | 46.9 | 91.4 | 77.9 | 169.3 |
| 2003-04 | 68.4 | 59.9 | 128.3 | 27.3 | 21.5 | 48.8 | 95.7 | 81.4 | 177.1 |
| 2004-05 | 69.7 | 61.1 | 130.8 | 28.5 | 22.7 | 51.2 | 98.2 | 83.8 | 182.0 |
| 2005-06 | 70.5 | 61.6 | 132.1 | 28.9 | 23.3 | 52.2 | 99.4 | 84.9 | 184.3 |
| 2006-07 | 71.0 | 62.7 | 133.7 | 29.8 | 24.6 | 54.4 | 100.8 | 87.3 | 188.1 |
| 2007-08 | 71.1 | 64.4 | 135.5 | 31.0 | 26.2 | 57.2 | 102.1 | 90.6 | 192.7 |
| 2008-09 | 70.0 | 64.5 | 134.5 | 29.4 | 26.0 | 55.4 | 99.4 | 90.5 | 189.9 |
| 2009-10 | 70.8 | 64.8 | 135.6 | 31.8 | 27.6 | 59.4 | 102.6 | 92.4 | 195.0 |
| 2010-11 | 70.5 | 64.8 | 135.3 | 32.8 | 29.3 | 62.1 | 103.3 | 94.1 | 197.4 |
| 2011-12 | 70.8 | 66.3 | 137.1 | 31.8 | 30.1 | 61.9 | 102.6 | 96.4 | 199.0 |
| 2012-13 | 69.6 | 65.2 | 134.8 | 33.2 | 31.7 | 64.9 | 102.8 | 96.9 | 199.7 |
| 2012-14 | 68.6 | 63.8 | 132.4 | 34.2 | 32.3 | 66.5 | 102.8 | 96.1 | 198.9 |

Source: Statistics of school Education, 2007-08, GOI; Educational statistics at a glance, 2011,

MHRD, GOI; Statistics of school education, 2010-11, MHRD, GOI; and U-DISE, NUPEA.

Table4.3: Enrolment in Primary (class I-V), Upper Primary (class VI-VIII) and elementary (class I-VIII) education (SC Children) (2000-01 to 2013-14) (In Millions)

| Year | Primary Education (class I-V) | | | Upper Primary education (class VI-VII) | | | Elementary Education (Class I-VIII) | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------|--|------------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total |
| 2000-01 | 12.1 | 9.1 | 21.2 | 4.1 | 2.6 | 6.7 | 16.2 | 11.7 | 27.9 |
| 2001-02 | 12.3 | 9.3 | 21.5 | 4.6 | 2.9 | 7.5 | 16.9 | 12.2 | 29.1 |
| 2002-03 | 11.9 | 9.7 | 21.7 | 4.4 | 3.1 | 7.5 | 16.3 | 12.8 | 29.1 |
| 2003-04 | 12.8 | 10.4 | 23.1 | 4.7 | 3.3 | 8.1 | 17.5 | 13.7 | 31.2 |
| 2004-05 | 13.8 | 11.0 | 24.8 | 5.1 | 3.6 | 8.7 | 18.9 | 14.6 | 33.5 |
| 2005-06 | 14.0 | 11.3 | 25.3 | 5.3 | 3.8 | 9.1 | 19.3 | 15.1 | 34.4 |
| 2006-07 | 14.4 | 11.8 | 26.2 | 5.4 | 3.9 | 9.3 | 19.8 | 15.7 | 35.5 |
| 2007-08 | 13.7 | 12.5 | 26.2 | 5.3 | 4.6 | 9.9 | 19.0 | 17.1 | 36.1 |
| 2008-09 | 13.8 | 12.7 | 26.5 | 5.6 | 4.9 | 10.5 | 19.6 | 17.6 | 37.2 |
| 2009-10 | 13.8 | 12.7 | 26.5 | 5.8 | 5.1 | 10.9 | 19.6 | 17.8 | 37.4 |
| 2010-11 | 14.1 | 13.0 | 27.1 | 6.0 | 5.3 | 11.3 | 20.1 | 18.3 | 38.4 |
| 2011-12 | 14.2 | 13.3 | 27.5 | 6.1 | 5.8 | 11.9 | 20.3 | 19.1 | 39.4 |
| 2012-13 | 14.1 | 13.2 | 27.3 | 6.4 | 6.2 | 12.6 | 20.5 | 19.4 | 39.9 |
| 2013-14 | 13.6 | 12.7 | 26.3 | 6.6 | 6.3 | 12.9 | 20.2 | 19.0 | 39.2 |

Source: Statistics of school Education, 2007-08, GOI; Educational statistics at a glance, 2011, MHRD, GOI; Statistics of school education, 2010-11, MHRD, GOI; and U-DISE, NUPEA.

During the period 2000-01 to 2013-14, Number of SC girl’s enrolment in primary section of education was increased from 9.1 to 12.7, whereas SC boys enrolment increased from 12.1 to 13.6, enrolled in primary education while the number of SC girls in upper primary education increased from 2.6 to 6.3 and SC boys enrolment was increased from 4.1 to 6.6. The number of SC girls enrolled in elementary education increased from 11.7 to 19.0 and SC Boys enrolment increased from 16.2 to 20.2 during this period.

Tracking the Progress on Growth of Education among Scheduled caste

According to the census of India, ‘Literacy’ is defined as an ability to read and write with an understanding in any language and is applicable to the population aged seven years and above. A literate population, therefore, includes all those persons who have acquired literacy through means of formal education or other-wise, irrespective of the stage of education.

Literacy Rate All India Level

As per 2011 census, literacy rate in India has been reported as 74.04% with a 14% increase to that in 2001, whereas the hike is maximum for rural women at 26% in the last decade, which may be attributed to literacy mission of Government of India. Overall female literacy rate in India is much lower than that of male literacy rate. The female literacy levels according to the Literacy Rate 2011 census are 65.46% whereas the male literacy rate is 82.04%.

Kerala is the state with highest literacy rate at 94% and Bihar with the lowest literacy rate at just 63.82. Being a very vast country with second largest population, India has limited resources to make aware it’s below poverty line population about the Government interventions and the law providing them the Right to Education.

The highest male literacy rate is also observed in Kerala at 96.1% followed by Lakshadweep at 95.6%

and minimum for Bihar & Arunachal Pradesh. Female literacy is maximum for Kerala, followed by Lakshadweep and lowest for Bihar & followed by Rajasthan.

Table 4.4 - Literacy Rates in Post Independent India

| Year | Rural | | | Urban | | | Combined | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total |
| 1951 | 4.87 | 19.02 | 12.1 | 22.33 | 45.6 | 34.59 | 8.86 | 27.15 | 18.32 |
| 1961 | 10.1 | 34.3 | 22.5 | 40.5 | 66 | 54.4 | 15.35 | 40.4 | 28.31 |
| 1971 | 15.5 | 48.6 | 27.9 | 48.8 | 69.8 | 60.2 | 21.97 | 45.96 | 34.45 |
| 1981 | 21.7 | 49.6 | 36 | 56.3 | 76.7 | 67.2 | 29.76 | 56.38 | 43.57 |
| 1991 | 30.17 | 56.96 | 36 | 64.05 | 81.09 | 67.2 | 39.29 | 64.13 | 52.21 |
| 2001 | 46.7 | 71.4 | 59.4 | 73.2 | 86.7 | 80.3 | 53.67 | 75.26 | 64.83 |
| 2011 | 58.75 | 78.57 | 67.8 | 79.92 | 89.67 | 84.1 | 65.46 | 82.14 | 74.04 |
| % Increase in 2011 over 2001 | 26% | 10% | 14% | 9% | 3% | 5% | 22% | 9% | 14% |

Source: Census of India, Office of Registrar General, India.

For 1951, the population male, female and persons refers to effective literacy rates and the break up of Rural, Urban and male- female components are crude literacy rates.

Notes: 1. Literacy rates for 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged 5 years and above whereas literacy rates for 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 relate to the population aged 7 years and above.

- (a) The 1981 literacy rates exclude Assam where the 1981 Census could not be conducted.
- (b) The 1991 literacy rates exclude Jammu & Kashmir where the 1991 Census could not be conducted due to disturbed conditions.
- (c) The 2001 and 2011 literacy rates exclude Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul Sub-divisions of Senapat district of Manipur.

Table 4.5: Literacy Rates of SC/ST by Sex and Urban-Rural Distribution

| Scheduled Castes | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|-----------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| Year | Rural | | | Urban | | | Combined | | |
| | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total | Female | Male | Total |
| 1961 | 2.52 | 15.06 | 8.89 | 10.04 | 32.21 | 21.81 | 3.29 | 16.96 | 10.27 |
| 1971 | 5.06 | 20.04 | 12.77 | 16.09 | 38.93 | 28.65 | 6.44 | 22.36 | 14.67 |
| 1981 | 8.45 | 27.91 | 18.48 | 24.34 | 47.54 | 36.60 | 10.93 | 31.12 | 21.38 |
| 1991 | 19.45 | 45.95 | 33.25 | 42.29 | 66.90 | 55.11 | 23.76 | 49.91 | 37.41 |
| 2001 | 37.84 | 63.66 | 51.16 | 57.49 | 77.93 | 68.12 | 41.90 | 54.69 | 34.76 |
| 2011 | 52.60 | 72.60 | 62.80 | 68.60 | 83.30 | 76.20 | 56.50 | 75.20 | 66.10 |
| % Increase in 2011 over 2001 | 39% | 14% | 23% | 19% | 7% | 12% | 35% | 38% | 90% |

Source: Census of India, Office of Registrar General, India

The literacy rate among scheduled castes and tribes remains well below the rest of India's population, but the gap has closed significantly in the last decade. During this period (2001-2011), SC women made the most rapid progress, latest census data reveals. Data shows a 39% percentage point increase in literacy among SC Rural women over the decade, compared to a jump of 14 percentage points for rural males. The literacy rate of total SC has jumped from 54.76% to 66.10% from 2001 to 2011 respectively. SC women showing a higher increase in literacy holds well across almost all states, and in both rural and urban areas. Of course, the base was very low to start with in the case of both women and men in the SC communities, compared to the general population. Bihar, with around 16% of its population comprising SCs, shows the biggest increase in literacy among SCs - a jump of 20.2 percentage points, from 28.5% in 2001 to 48.6% in 2011.²⁰

These above mentioned Schemes and programmes launched by the government to ensure change and raise literacy level among scheduled castes have no doubt impact positively on educational development of SC and SC women in terms of literacy rate but still there is a need of effective implementation of such programmes and look after the issue of drop outs, problems and challenges in accessing education.

Challenges of Dalit women in accessing education

There are range of problems most of which have roots in their historical backwardness and Isolation due to their caste status and isolation, class (economic difficulties i.e. poverty), and also due to difficulties in comprehending the subject.

1. Availability and accessibility of educational institutions this plays a vital role especially in case of Dalit girls for their education. As Dalit parents do not encourage or permit their girls to go far places for attaining education. Education is considered important or relevant only for boys and not for girls as girls are considered as 'Parayadhan' and after their marriage; girls education will not be fruitful for any of the family. Girls are considered to be meant for household work, child rearing and bearing, look after the siblings. So with this thought pattern it leaves little time for Scheduled caste and specially Scheduled caste girls for studies. Even if they get enrolled in schools the most serious problem that SC students face is the Discrimination.

2. Awareness or the attitude of the parents towards the need of education. The majority of SC households are engaged in some form of manual labour – cultivation, grazing, mining, scavenging, construction work, or metal, leather or brick work. Mainstream education is singularly focused on building mental skills, however, and so manual skills are generally ignored and devalued. Understandably, SC children internalize the hierarchy of mental skills versus manual labour and learn to consider the latter as inferior.

In the experience of Scheduled Castes therefore, failure to get a job in the modern economy means a double loss, because the 'educated' child is ill-equipped and/or unwilling to participate in the economic activity of the household. Studies also document that caste and political networks are crucial elements for competing successfully in the job market, and that even SC youth who complete high school are often unable to secure jobs due to the lack of such social capital (Subramanian, 2005; Jeffery et al, 2002).

Due to the poor economic status Dalit parents lacked ability to pay school fees or to buy uniform or

²⁰Rema Nagarajan, TNN | Nov 10, 2013, 08.01AM IST (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/SC/STs-take-rapid-strides-close-literacy-gap/articleshow/25536193.cms>)

books. In most cases Dalit girls were able to enter the portals of education only when free schooling was available to them. In most cases the parents of the first generation learners were illiterate and had no understanding of the educational process. Despite this, many recognised the importance of education and accepted that their daughters should attend such free schools (M. B. Chitinis 1973, quoted in Joshi 1986, 43-45). Parents are unaware that free education was provided even at college level. One of the example is quoted from the narratives from shailja Paik

Urmila Pawar reported (2004):

It was only when I came to Mumbai that I felt that I was so close to the college. It had an evening programme; I did not have to pay any fees like the others. So I told myself of this significant opportunity. Earlier, when I was in my village, I did not want any of this. But when i was in Mumbai, working, I understood the importance of higher education and the concession given. We have free scholarships that have come to us on their own, so why not to use them prudently?

Only a few, however, took advantage of the various other concessions that were available on paper. As most of them are unaware of them. Parent's failure to take advantage of these concessions often had a very detrimental effect on children's education.

3. Difficulties at home/ home environment prevents them from donating enough time for study or sometimes these children are forced to help their parents in agriculture or other household work and this is very common among Dalit girls as Indian society is patriarchal in nature Home environment plays an important role in attaining and accessing education for Dalit's and especially dalit girls. Dalit's lived in poor home environment that is not conducive to education. Subsistence and indebtedness are perennial problems and the home could hardly provide a space where difficulties pertaining to home work or school could be solved.

Shailaja Paik 2014 in one of her interview of Dalit women Meera, She Stated:

'My father was a drunkard and beat up my mother. My mother used to run to her aunt's place along her children to protect herself from her drunkard husband. It was difficult to attend school. I never studied at home. There was no space at home. Whatever was taught was only at school. I also did not like to study at home because of some comments people made. Our relatives used to visit us sometimes. If they saw me with books at all, they used to ask me what future I had with those books. We were to sell kaagad- kaach-patraa(Paper-glass-tin-rags), they said, why study then? They also told my mother that I should not be educated much and suggested that she stop my schooling. But my mother did not listen to them.

Dalit girls like Meera had nobody to ask them about their education, to talk to them or guide their studies. The lack of physical space at home made the school seem very spacious in comparison, so they engaged in studies only at school. One can imagine what kind of learning did they acquire in such circumstances?

4. Apartheid in Times of Equity Tilak's (2002) analysis of the NCAER survey data states that there is nothing like 'free' education in India. He reports that household expenditure on education is sizeable; households from poor socio-economic backgrounds (i.e. Scheduled Castes) often spend considerable amounts of their income on education. This includes elementary education, which is supposed to be provided free by the government. Significant expenditure is made on books, uniforms and fees.

5. Sitting Arrangement Shailaja Paik 2009, in one of the interview a Dalit women said ... "I have never been to School, but i remember that my brother sitting in the corridor outside while the teacher taught inside the classroom:

‘The Brahman sat in front, then the Maratha, finally the Chambhar, Mahar and the Mang in the dust, at the doors of the school. Outside (.....). “Kai aaikuYenar o Yevhadyalamba, tumichsangakasashikaichaann kay shikaicha?,mulinna tar baherjayalamani, gharkaamphakta! (How and what could a student learn from so far? You tell me how to study and what to study? Moreover, girls were not allowed to go outside, they were to work at home)²¹

From the above text one can imagine the status of Dalit and specifically Dalit women in India, where the Educational institution i.e School which is known for equality leading to discrimination and symbolic and psychological violence which is some time hurtful and corrosive than physical violence, as it permeated deep into both the conscious and the subconscious, instilling a sense of insecurity and inferiority. Today, this social and cultural violence is experienced as being more dehumanising than economic exploitation.(Uma chakravarti 2003)²²

6. Attitude and Quality of Teachers

ShailajaPaik 2009, some teachers enjoyed their position and power and did everything possible to maintain their exalted position and refused to befriend the student and made every effort to present the image of strict disciplinarian.²³Shailaja Paik argued in her article ‘ Chhadi Lage Chham Chham, Vudya Yeyi Gham Gham (The Harder the sticks Beats, the faster the flow of Knowledge) is an old Marathi proverb. It refers to the corporal punishment rampantly practised by teachers and parents in order to discipline the children, where chhadi signifies the disciplining of Dalits through overt and covert means, through methods of verbal and psychological/mental crippling carried out by the larger society and how ‘untouchability’ is re-visioned and reproduced within formal institutions. Teacher often force pupils to learn lessons by rote rather than trying to help them understand a topic and students do not ask their doubts, economically well off students, general category student can afford to attend tuition classes or coaching classes and can clear all their doubts and problems related to studies but this luxury are not with scheduled caste students especially Scheduled caste girls, which are somehow managing their school fees and stationary etc. If these student dare to ask their doubts the response by the teachers are so harsh, that either they don’t reply or insulted them. Dalit girls were at a greater disadvantaged and could not voice their question in the class at all. It would be blasphemy for a Dalit girl, ‘the slave of the Slave’ to question the upper-caste teacher.

Kaul’s,2001;Thorat 2002 highlights that many Scheduled Caste children were scared to talk about the unequal treatment meted out to them, such as verbal abuse, physical punishment or avoiding touching, by some of the upper caste teachers in their schools. In only a few cases did children speak out. Some SC students from a government school, for example, complained that although prejudices and discrimination were not practiced very openly in the classroom and the peer group appeared friendly in school, attitudes changed outside the school. Children of upper castes did not invite the Kuruba or Scheduled Caste children home to play and there was no social intermingling outside the school²⁴.

7. Curriculum and Pedagogical Issues

The marginalisation of Scheduled Castes is closely related to their low occupational status, which is

²¹Paik,Shailaja 2009. Chaddilagechamcham, vidyayeyiGhamGham (The harder the stick Beats, the faster the flow of knowledge): Dalit women’s struggle for education. Indian journal of gender studies.Sage publications CWDS.P. 185

²²Ibid p.180,

²³Ibid p.186

²⁴Sedwal, Mona. Kamat,sangeeta.May 2008 Education and social Equity with special focus on Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribes in Elementary Education. CREATE pathways to Access Research Monographs No- 19 pg.34. NUPEA, New Delhi.

predetermined by caste ideology. In the agricultural sector, Scheduled Castes are mostly landless and marginal farmers, while in the non-farm sector they work in jobs that are seen as demeaning and 'dirty', such as street cleaning, sewage and sanitation work, as cobblers, etc. School curricula are heavily biased in favour of middle class professional households. Textbooks represent middle class lifestyle and preferences, and often portray them as models to emulate. The explicit discrimination faced by Scheduled Caste students from teachers and students is therefore implicitly legitimated through the curricula used in schools.

The absence of any positive representation of the labour of the working poor, and especially of 'untouchable' Scheduled Castes communities, alienates SC children from their own communities and families and negatively affects their self-esteem. At the elementary school level, the curricula do not teach about their struggles for equity and dignity or the oppressive nature of the caste system, and it is barely dealt with at the secondary level either. Further, school curricula are restricted to bookish and abstract learning, and do not utilize local examples, materials and modes of learning to teach these concepts.

8. Sharing/Serving Food in School: Mid-Day Meal Scheme

The Mid day meal scheme also a failure as it was launch for the intention of providing nutritious food and inculcate the feeling of sharing among children but these common practices in school like not permitting a Dalit as a cook, not allowing the Dalit children to enter the kitchen while it was possible for other caste children to do so, and Dalit children's not allowed and involved in the serving of food and other works in MDMS. Dalit students are not allowed in School Ceremonies and not being allowed to serve guests during the annual celebrations of national festivals.

There are various cases reported in the Newspaper related to the unequal access to the government facilities or schemes, and Discrimination at school.

(<http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/himachal/education/mid-day-meal-students-facing-caste-based-discrimination/18133.html>) (Bhanu P LohumiTribune News ServiceShimla, December 14 (Posted at: Dec 15 2014 12:04AM) <http://infochangeindia.org/human-rights/analysis/schools-of-discrimination.html>) Infochange News & Features, January 2013caste, gender discrimination rampant Anubhuti Vishnoi : New Delhi, Mon Nov 26 2012, 00:26 hrs(<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Caste-gender-biases-blight-mid-day-meal-scheme-in-four-states/articleshow/15347784.cms>)

9. **Prejudice attitude towards SCs** – There are pre conceived notion about academic calibre of the SCs students and hence they are labelled as 'academically backward'. Today in college these student identity manipulated as 'reserved quota' students. Thus, in spite of academic competence comments like 'these reserved chaps will never be as good as us' are passed. Another issue is the non- admission of 'merit' students in the 'open' category, despite a central direction that they must be. It is always thought why enrol low caste student when we already have to admit a certain number of them?

10. **Discrimination at higher level of teaching** – Thorat committee was appointed by the government to find out the reported discrimination in India's most reputed All -India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) in New Delhi. The report revealed that, the struggle that SC/ST students face to enter premier institutions of the higher learning seems mild compared to what they have to put up with later. On top of coping with academic challenges and a totally unfamiliar environment, many dalit students have to deal with the hostility that comes with being a 'reserved category student'. Most of the students complained that teachers were inaccessible and indifferent to them. The committee found that over a period of time, SC/ST students have moved from their allotted rooms to be closer to other SC/ST students. The one-month of ragging to which the authorities turn blind eye is sheer hell for these students since they are publically subjected to caste-based questions, taunts and jeering. Many of the students said they moved because their rooms would be locked from outside repeatedly while they were in, vulgar abuse would be scrawled on the doors and it would be made clear that this would stop only if they moved to floors where other SC/ST students stayed. They also faced social

isolation, refusal to share books and notes and objections to sharing seats in class. As far as SC?ST faculty are concerned , their written complaints to the committee are of serious nature, ragging from non-filling of reserved posts to denial of opportunities to develop better skills and gain future experiences. Similar situations were revealed in the IIT Powai, in Mumbai two year back.²⁵

Problem of Retention

Thus such above mentioned qualitative information is relevant to understand the humiliation that Dalit student face in school and to critically analyse the reason for rising dropout rates rather than just blame them for their non attendance in schools or question their merit. Such children are very often persuaded sometimes by their upper caste teachers and sometimes by their parents to believe in their lack of aptitude for education.

Table 4.6:Drop-out Rate at Different Stages of School Education

| Year | I-V Classes | | I-VIII Classes | | I-X Classes | |
|---------|-------------|-------|----------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male |
| 2000-01 | 41.90 | 39.70 | 57.70 | 50.30 | 71.50 | 66.40 |
| 2001-02 | 39.88 | 38.36 | 56.92 | 52.91 | 68.59 | 64.16 |
| 2002-03 | 33.72 | 35.85 | 53.45 | 52.28 | 64.97 | 60.72 |
| 2003-04 | 28.57 | 33.74 | 52.92 | 51.90 | 64.92 | 60.98 |
| 2004-05 | 25.42 | 31.81 | 51.28 | 50.49 | 63.88 | |
| 2005-06 | 21.77 | 28.70 | 49.00 | 48.67 | 63.56 | 60.10 |
| 2006-07 | 26.80 | 24.60 | 45.20 | 46.40 | 61.50 | 58.60 |
| 2007-08 | 24.41 | 25.70 | 41.34 | 43.72 | 57.33 | 56.55 |
| 2008-09 | 25.80 | 29.60 | 36.90 | 41.10 | 54.40 | 54.00 |
| 2009-10 | 28.50 | 31.80 | 44.20 | 41.10 | 51.80 | 53.30 |
| 2010-11 | 25.40 | 29.00 | 41.20 | 40.60 | 47.70 | 50.20 |
| 2011-12 | 5.34 | 5.89 | 3.20 | 2.13 | NA | NA |
| 2012-13 | 4.66 | 4.68 | 4.01 | 2.30 | 14.54 | 14.54 |

Source: Elementary Education in India 2013-14, Ministry of Human Resource Development. Statistics of School Education 2010-11 Flash Statistics 2013-14

Note: Total dropouts during a course (stage) as percentage of intake in the first year of the course (stage) has been taken. Primary, Middle and Secondary stages consist of classes I-V, I-VIII, I-X, respectively.

Neglect and outright discrimination by teachers against Sc Students, calling them by their caste name, practice of untouchability, inculcation of the feeling of inferiority and backwardness in them are the major reason for high level of drop outs (Dreze and Gazdar, 1997, Batre 2005)²⁶

Drop-out Rates

The Drop-out Rates were observed to be 4.66 and 4.68 in the classes I-V, 4.01 and 2.3 in classes I-

²⁵Thorat Committee report , EPW june2, 2007

²⁶Sedwal, Mona. Kamat,sangeeta.May 2008 Education and social Equity with special focus on Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribes in Elementary Education. CREATE pathways to Access Research Monographs No- 19 pg.34. NUPEA, New Delhi.

VIII for females and males respectively indicating that the drop out at primary level is at par for both the genders but the gap increases in higher classes (details may be seen in below Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Dropout Rates (%) for SC Children at Primary and Elementary Stages

| Year | Primary | | | Elementary | | | Secondary | | |
|---------|---------|--------------|-------|------------|--------------|-------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total | Boys | Girls | Total |
| 1990-91 | 46.3 | 54.0 | 49.4 | 64.3 | 73.2 | 67.8 | 74.3 | 83.4 | 77.7 |
| 1995-96 | 43.7 | 48.5 | 45.7 | 64.7 | 70.5 | 67.0 | -- | -- | -- |
| 2001-02 | 43.7 | 47.1 | 45.2 | 58.6 | 63.6 | 60.7 | 71.1 | 74.9 | 72.7 |
| 2002-03 | 41.1 | 41.9 | 41.5 | 58.2 | 62.2 | 59.9 | 69.7 | 74.9 | 71.9 |
| 2003-04 | 36.8 | 36.2 | 36.6 | 57.3 | 62.2 | 59.4 | 71.4 | 75.5 | 73.1 |
| 2004-05 | 37.2 | 36.1 | 34.2 | 55.2 | 60.00 | 57.3 | 69.1 | 74.2 | 71.3 |
| 2005-06 | 32.1 | 33.8 | 32.9 | 53.7 | 57.1 | 55.2 | 68.2 | 73.8 | 70.6 |
| 2007-08 | 34.37 | 24.52 | 30.09 | 53.56 | 51.12 | 52.47 | 68.05 | 68.90 | 68.42 |

Source: Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Selected Educational statistics, 2007-08 (Reference Rural Development statistics)

Reasons for Dropouts

Economic pressures force a large number of Scheduled Caste children to leave school at an early age. However, this is not the only reason that children leave. Memories of humiliation can also play an important role in the decision to leave, albeit a less visible one (National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1998). The poor quality of education is another critical factor that leads to lower retention. Research has found that the majority of students from Scheduled Caste communities study in government schools that are badly-equipped in terms of the number of teachers, infrastructure and school environment. Discrimination against under-privileged groups is endemic, and takes numerous forms (PROBE, 1999)²⁷

Dropout rates have been decreasing over a number of years for Scheduled Castes, has been particularly noticeable since 2001. A state-wise analysis of dropout rates reveals that Bihar has the highest rate of Scheduled Caste drop out. The lowest dropout rates for Scheduled Caste students are in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Maharashtra, Tripura, Karnataka, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.(See De et al, 2002)²⁸

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²⁷Ibid. p.21

²⁸Ibid. p.21

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