

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: A STUDY OF SCHEDULED CASTE CHILDREN OF SHRAWASTI DISTRICT

**ABSTRACT OF
Thesis**

**SUBMITTED TO THE
BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY
LUCKNOW**

**BABASAHEB
BHIMRAO
AMBEDKAR
UNIVERSITY**



**प्रज्ञा शील करुणा
ESTABLISHED 1996**

FOR AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

**Doctor of Philosophy
IN
SOCIOLOGY**

SUBMITTED BY

Siddharth Kumar

ENROLLMENT NO. 587/12

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

Prof. Bibhuti Bhushan Malik

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
SCHOOL FOR AMBEDKAR STUDIES
BABASAHEB BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY**

(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)

**VIDYA VIHAR, RAEBARELI ROAD, LUCKNOW-226 025
UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA**

2018

ABSTRACT

Social Exclusion and Elementary Education: A Study of Scheduled Caste Children of Shrawasti District

This study seeks to understand and analyse the process of social exclusion faced by Scheduled Caste children in elementary schools in Shrawasti district of Uttar Pradesh. This study is based in Uttar Pradesh, which has a huge number of Scheduled Caste population. It constitutes 21.1 percent of the total state's population (Census of India 2001). Shrawasti is the district has also a significant population (16.94 percent) of Scheduled Caste. The overall literacy rate of Shrawasti district is 46.74 percent (males - 57.16 percent and females - 34.78 percent), which is lowest in the state. However, average literacy rate of Uttar Pradesh is 67.7 percent respectively. In case of Scheduled Caste literacy in Shrawasti it is 40.9 percent, whereas the total SC literacy in the state is 60.9 percent. The lowest literacy rate in the district as compared to the state level necessitated to conduct research in the Shrawasti district.

The notions which led to conduct this study are the consistent lower literacy rate of the Scheduled Caste children in the district as well as in the state. To illustrate this, the 86th Amendment to the Constitution, the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 received presidential assent on 26 August 2009, taking forward the agenda of free and universal elementary education. It incorporates the idea that "every child of the age of six to 14 years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education" (Jha and Parvati 2010:20-21). Though, RTE Act 2009 was introduced to make the atmosphere to avail education to all in equitable manner. However, Ramachandran writes that provisioning is not the whole thing which ensures education it also need financial sums as well as academic resources to create good quality schools accessible to all children. She also writes that it is the poor and marginalised who will bear the brunt of this neglect since these are the children who are mostly enrolled in government schools (Ramachandran 2009:155). Similarly, Govinda and Bandhopadhyay (2013) argued that it is mostly the Scheduled Caste who are on the edge of the education system and many times find themselves out of this system in various ways. Though, the state's agenda was made to provide free and compulsory education to all but why it is not achieved yet? Is it only the total

magnitude of financial resources provided by the government for education continued to be far below the often repeated level of six percent of nation income in the 1990s and even later as argued by Jha. et.al (2008). Here, can we think of inequality or social exclusion?

However, in Indian context, education and such other services cannot be seen in isolation from the society which solely based on caste hierarchies. If caste inequality persists, it has debilitating effects on Scheduled Caste as whole, in such a scenario then SC children are far more vulnerable because they face multiple interlocking forms of violence. Through this study, an attempt has been done to find out the reasons behind the discrimination among Scheduled Caste children in government schools. This study attempts to analyse and understand the socio-economic background of Scheduled Caste children and their educational status. It also tries to find-out the access to school facilities by Scheduled Caste children. Similarly, this study attempts to explore participation of Scheduled Caste children in various kinds of activities in the schools. In addition, it seeks to understand the kind of relation Schedule Caste children have with teacher and peer groups. Last but not the least, it tries to identify the provisions of Right to Education Act– 2009 and its implementation for inclusive kind of elementary education for Scheduled Caste children.

The information has been collected through both primary and secondary method of data collection. Primary sources used are: (a) Interview Scheduled, (b) Observation and (c) Case studies. The secondary sources included various journals, Census of India reports, Yearly socio-economic report of the district, books and scholarly articles regarding social exclusion in elementary education etc. The Hariharpur Rani block has lowest literacy rate 42.16 among four other blocks, which is lowest in comparison to overall Shrawasti (46.74 percent) literacy rate. The process of selection of the block is on the basis literacy rate. This study was conducted in fifteen village sites of Hariharpur Rani Block of Shrawasti district. These villages have been selected on the basis a large number Scheduled Caste population followed by upper castes (Brahmins) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs). The study has been conducted in the village premises out of the school boundaries since the children shall unable to freely express their views and interact in schools during school hours. After selecting fifteen villages a list of Scheduled Caste government school going children in the age group

6-14 years is prepared for each villages. Thereafter 20 children are selected systematically from each village including their parents along with school functionaries such as teachers, cooks at school midday meals, School Management Committee (SMC) members. These interviews have been conducted through a list of questions (open and closed ended).

This study is divided into six chapters. Chapter one portrays the background of the study; it includes the conceptual framework of the study, and discusses the methodological framework of the study.

Second chapter deals with the analysis of existing literature on social exclusion and elementary education with regard to caste discrimination. The Second chapter also maps the scope/space social exclusion offers for politics of availing education in the line of anti-caste struggle. This chapter further discusses Social Exclusion in the European and in Indian context with a special reference to Uttar Pradesh and the study area. This chapter also examines how social exclusion takes place in elementary education and its impact on educational and social conditions of Scheduled Caste children in India. This chapter suggest that the concept of inclusive education needs to be understood and conceptualized hence there is a utmost need to change in existing teaching methodologies to benefit all children including children with disabilities. Provisions for quality teaching and learning in the classroom are required to help all children learn together. This type of teaching should involve allowed space and opportunity for each learner to precede according to her/his ability and pace. It also means using active learning approaches where children learn together in groups through play, projects and various other activities.

Third chapter traces the socio-economic and educational background of Shrawasti and in brief Uttar Pradesh in order to highlight the educational status of the Scheduled Caste household. This chapter is organised into three sections where the first section provides a snapshot of demographic, economic and administrative order. Second section focuses on educational status of Uttar Pradesh and third section particularly deals with socio-economic condition of Scheduled Caste in Shrawasti. According to the chapter, Uttar Pradesh is one of most backward states in that particularly eastern UP has insignificant economic growth. In context of education in UP social group disparities in literacy continue to be very large. When it comes to the Shrawasti

Scheduled Caste Children household's socio-economic status continue to be at par since 83% earn less than 5,000 per month. Therefore, how can we think of spending more on education rather to focus on their livelihood? Though, elementary education is free of cost but the kind of segregation they face in the school due to their caste and class can never be neglected.

Chapter four delineates the process of social exclusion on Scheduled Caste children in elementary education in schools of Shrawasti, Uttar Pradesh. The chapter is based on three sections i.e. (i) issues of "Access" to infrastructural facilities in school and (ii) "Participation" in the school day to day activities and (iii) the relations of Scheduled Caste children with their teachers and peer group followed by conclusion. Section one includes the themes related to issues of "access" in terms of; "access to class room and its impact on children's learning", "access to sit in front row", "access to Mid-Day Meal", "access to School Uniforms and Study Materials", "access to Drinking Water", "access to Toilet", and "access to Gaming Materials and playground". The second section is "participation" which shall be discussed through various themes in section two such as "occurrence of morning assembly in schools, participation of these children in daily prayer", "who offers prayer in the morning assembly?", "segregation in sitting arrangement", "participation in extra-curricular activities", "silence" "mid-day meal", "children as sanitation worker", "children-teacher relation", "children-peer relation". Third section explains about the relations of Scheduled Caste children with their teachers and peer group. This chapter also brings the difference of subjectivity by Scheduled Caste children in relation to availing elementary education. This chapter basically highlights the level of discrimination/social exclusion in accessing education and participation faced by scheduled caste children in different spheres of elementary schools.

As this chapter holds the crux of this study as it captures attitudes of Scheduled Caste children everyday social exclusion in the school and their parents' perception about that experiences. According to the findings of this chapter, Social exclusion in elementary education is seen as integral part of it. Education is the way through which one can improvise his/her social and economic condition in the society. But it is a fact that education was and is in the hands of powerful such upper caste and class. So, here, in Shrawasti parents do not send their children to get educated even after the enrolment of their children had had in the school. Instead, they send their boys to

work and keep their girls into houses to prevent them from the kind of everyday exclusion occurs in the school. However, there is a large scale of practice to attract masses by saying and also making education for all through various policies and programmes. It can be also said that education system is not knitted in that way which could capture the socially disadvantaged. Through this chapter it is clear to understand that occurrence of social exclusion is very much prevalent in elementary schools of Shrawasti which needs to get eliminated from roots. The central government along with state and community participation could enhance the quality of complete elementary education for scheduled castes in Shrawasti as well as across other parts of Uttar Pradesh and India too.

Access and participation is important because there are abundance of government school to provide free and compulsory education to all but till what extent it has been succeed in its promises. Does provision assures access and participation really? Through this study, it seems completely blurred because children from scheduled caste community face everyday exclusion in schools whether it is in terms of acquiring knowledge or participating in the national or cultural festivals held within the schools. It is also a fact that where we live, we make some bonds with others. It also happens with school going children as they are also humans regardless of their caste and gender identity. In Shrawasti children have harsh/abusive kind of relationship with their peer groups and with their teachers also, as many children complained that their teachers use abusive words to call them. They also do not boundless to make friends in their schools because children from upper caste or OBC differentiate them on the basis their caste identity.

Chapter five depicts the idea of introduction of Right to Education Act and Schedule Caste educational status in that framework. It also explores the backdrops of implementation of RTE Act (2009) on Schedule Caste children's educational status in Shrawasti district. This Chapter advocates that it is need of the hour to invest more on the most disadvantaged and deprived to ensure that they could access the best quality elementary education so that we can proactively break the barriers, accumulated distortions of the past, this may impose a huge challenge on education planners and policy makers. Instead of pushing the burden of finances on each other, the central and state government must ensure that they shall provide better kind of education to its citizens. For that the government has to make availability of resources and to

achieve it we have to create a strong and autonomous quality assurance mechanism, where all schools are made accountable to ensuring children learn and are provided a nurturing environment for development. Since the right to education is not about optimal allocation of funds rather it is about ensuring that every single child has access to education of comparable quality at all levels and it will start from the elementary level. It will be going against the spirit of this right, if we relegate the poor to as numbers for achieving goals not as citizens who needs quality to life.

Chapter six summarises and discusses the main arguments of the study to ultimately produce related suggestions. The arguments this chapter proposes are; despite these opportunities, since the structure and organization of the school the quality of education and teaching, physical and social access to school were influenced by the caste practices and belief that scheduled caste to be excluded from the educational process – this resulted low enrolment, attendance and completion rate and high drop out among scheduled caste in elementary level as compare to general students. It needs to be point out that elementary education can be made accessible and meaning full to scheduled caste only through the Common schooling pattern based on neighbourhood education in which all caste, creed, community children are go to the same school without any form of hierarchy in access and participation to school activities. Effective implementation of policies and programme that are meant to protect and empower scheduled caste. Initiatives on the part of the government to promote good quality elementary education as well as free and compulsory education till 12th standard with facilities catering to the interests of the marginalized groups. Education up to 12th standard is really basic for scheduled caste because it opens the doors for employment opportunities and social mobility.

Here, the situation makes force to pose question, where do these Scheduled Caste children stand in the education system even in the 21st century. Despite of various policies and programmes (SSA, RTE Act, 2009) related to elementary education issues of social exclusion have been noticed among the school going SCs children of 6-14 years of age in Shrawsti. The place like which is already a most backward region in Uttar Pradesh needs to look up for its welfare specifically in terms of education. The broader issue which needs to be dealt with regard to Scheduled Caste children's elementary education is to provide equitable environment. Moreover, availability of equitable environment does not necessarily mean enrolments; however, it also ensures

quality education with dignity to the SC children. Since, Right to Education Act, 2009 does not proposed specific remedies for occurrence of discrimination led out to social exclusion (perpetuated by school teachers, their peer groups, who comes mainly from upper caste background) on the basis of their caste identity. So, through this study, I try to suggest that issues of social exclusion, related to one's caste identity in elementary schools should be diminished through specific monitoring. Last but not the least, this study suggest that those children (6-14) who are out of school, one can easily found them roaming in village locality even if they are enrolled into the school should be bring back to school. Since, it is not only their economic status which push themselves out of the school system rather their caste status in the form of social exclusion.