

**Higher Education and Social Justice in India: A Sociological Study of  
the Marginalized Section Students**

**DISSERTATION**

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# DECLARATION

I, Vineet Tripathi, declare that the work embodied in the dissertation entitled **Higher Education and Social Justice in India: A Sociological Study of the Marginalized Section Students** has been carried out by me, under the supervision of Professor Birendra Narain Dubey, Head of the Department of Sociology, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University Lucknow.

The work included in this dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree and unless otherwise stated; original. I have duly acknowledged all the sources used by me in the preparation of this dissertation.

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the M.Phil dissertation titled **Higher Education and Social Justice in India: A Sociological Study of the Marginalized Section Students** submitted by **Mr. Vineet Tripathi** is an original research work and has not been previously submitted in parts or full for the award of any other degree or diploma be it of this and any other University.

The M.Phil dissertation submitted to Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow satisfies the entire requirement as stipulated in the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) Regulations-2015 and it is fit for submission and evaluation for awarding the Degree of Master of Philosophy from Babasaheb Bhimrao University.

Date



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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my Grandfather Mr. D.S. Tripathi.

Last, but not the least, I would like to pay my reverence to the Almighty who blessed my endeavour to materialise into a reality.

Dated:

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**Higher Education and Social Justice in India: A Sociological  
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# **Chapter I**

## **Introduction**

## **Introduction**

Education is regarded as one of the vital elements for national development. It is a powerful tool for building a knowledge-based society for 21<sup>st</sup> century. It helps the marginalized sections of the society to access the policies implemented by the government for their upliftment. In a Democratic country like India it works as a major engine to provide social justice, equal opportunity and democracy.

India already possesses a highly developed higher education system which offers training in almost all aspects of human's creative and intellectual endeavors such as arts and humanities, natural and social sciences. But even after attaining freedom for about 70 years, social inequalities in higher education are a far cry from the desirable level. Education creates opportunities, but the need of the hour is to provide job rather than being job seeker. The state has time and again shown its intent in creating opportunities for honing the skills, expanding manufacturing sector and rapid urbanization to throw ample opportunities for the marginalized sections. But one of the major challenges on offer is to develop an approach to ensure more meaningful participation of marginalized sections in the development of the country. This will help the marginalized sections to access the government put forward for their development. Perhaps, it should be a mix of traditional approaches coupled with a new architecture. *“Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the Strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom”*

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1984)

## **1.1 Higher Education and Social Justice**

Education can be defined as, “training and instruction designed to give knowledge and develop skills.” United Nations Economic Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines higher education as, “all types of studies, training, and training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent State Authorities”. Education beyond secondary level is assumed to be the door-step to social esteem, expanded life options, intellectual stimulation. The diversity in higher education covers many areas. These are engineering colleges, medical colleges, government and other management institutes, various vocational training institutes etc. It is believed that the institutions of higher education will prove to be a major engine to attain social justice by virtue of creating equality of opportunity. Higher education works like light and sound to enlighten and empower the marginalized section individual and the society. It helps the marginalized section students by enabling them to overcome limitations imposed by nature. And like sound, which seeps in through the most impermeable of barriers, it cannot be stopped or barred in any way.

Social Justice is the fair and just relation between individual and society. Social Justice derives its authority from the codes of morality prevailing in each culture. It is measured by the explicit and tacit terms for the distribution of wealth, opportunities for personal activity and social privileges and emphasizes upon the unjust relations among human beings, gender bias, race, social equality and environment. Social justice emphasizes equilibrium between access to power and its responsible use.

Aristotle, who was the main exponent of the concept of Justice, said that Injustice arises when the equals are treated unequally, and the unequals are treated equally. Justice is an equality of proportion between ‘persons’ and

'things'. By 'thing', he refers to offices, honor, ranks, money or any terms of human desire which should be distributed, not equally, but in some quality, character or achievement of the persons concerned. Aristotle points out that the basis of distribution adopted differs in different social systems. It may be birth, rank, office or wealth. It may be simply a status of a free man (as in a Greek democracy). But, at last, merit has to prevail. The notion of justice for Aristotle is equality in the proportion of merit to rights.

Social Justice in contemporary world was reinterpreted by philosophers like Bartolomé de las Casas and Plato who in his work 'The Republic', argued that an ideal state rests on four pillars i.e. wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice. The word social has been added to clearly distinguish Social Justice from the concept of Justice as applied in the law- state-administered systems, which label behavior as unacceptable and enforce a formal mechanism of control and may produce results that is not in accordance with the philosophical definitions of social justice - and from more informal concepts of justice embedded in systems of public policy and morality and which differ from culture to culture and therefore lack universality.

Aquinas (1225-1274) said, "*Justice is certain rectitude of mind whereby a man does what he ought to do in the circumstances confronting him.*" He believed that justice is natural and not to be enforced by any human-made law.

John Locke (1632-1704), an early Utilitarian theologian argued that if individuals rationally pursue their private happiness and pleasure, the interests of the society and general welfare will be looked after fairly. Locke saw utility in rewards in the afterlife for their actions on Earth.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) believed that actions are morally right if motivated by duty without any personal goal, desire, motive, or self-interest. Kant's moral theory is, therefore, deontological and based on the concept of abject

selflessness. In his view, the most important feature of moral law lied in its acceptance among the masses.

Evans (1996) opined that the notion of Social Justice was deeply rooted during the reign of sixth-century Roman Emperor Justin. However, for both schools of thought, '*Justice was about treating equals equally and only the equals as full citizens*' (Lane, 2011). These equal citizens were usually from the elite classes. So, a single definition of social justice is not justifiable.

Hobbhouse, in his monumental work, *Elements of Social Justice* has outlined following points as elements of social justice.

- (1) Institutions are not ends but means. Politics are subordinate to ethics.
- (2) One of the basic principles of harmony is that common goods cannot be opposed to individual goods or individual set-up against the common goods.
- (3) Moral freedom.
- (4) Social and political freedom.
- (5) Equality.
- (6) Personal justice.
- (7) Equal payment for equal service.
- (8) The assignment of property should be so conceived as to secure freedom for the individual and power for the community.
- (9) Social and personal factors in wealth.
- (10) Individual organization.
- (11) Democracy

According to Miller, social justice "is realistic attempt to bring the overall pattern of distribution in a society into line with principles of society" (Miller, 1987). It rests on two assumptions: first, that social processes are governed, at least in broad outline by discoverable laws, so that it makes sense to try to reshape society deliberately; second, that it is possible to find a source of power – usually in government – sufficient to carry out the reshaping. There have been

two major conceptions of social justice, one embodying the notions of ‘merit’ and ‘desert’ and the other, those of ‘need equality’.

The first conception entails that each person’s social position and material rewards should as far as possible correspond to their place on a scale of merit, an idea also expressed in demands for ‘owners open to talents’ and ‘equal opportunity’.

The second conception entails that goods should be allocated according to each person’s various needs. It is closely allied to an idea of ‘equality’, since a programmed that successfully satisfies needs, makes people naturally equal in one important respect.

The idea of need is, however, notoriously difficult to define precisely. It has to be distinguished from desire and preference, since these notions may encompass quite frivolous items; on the other hand, the needs that someone has, must clearly vary according to their basic purposes in life.

Although there is biological core to the concept of need, as manifested in needs for food, clothing and shelter, there is also a large periphery in which needs depend on culturally specific lifestyles. In place of this variability, need based conception of social justice are of two broad patterns. The more radical founded in Communism, allows each person to define his or her needs and assumes that sufficient resources can be created to meet all needs so defined.

The more cautious, found in Social Democracy, assume that a public authority must define needs according to the standards prevailing at particular time and place. The latter view may allow for a compromise between the claims of needs and those of deserts. In other words, some social resources being allocated on the basis of need through the welfare state, others are allocated according to

desert through bureaucratic processes. This is the most popular interpretation of social justice in the west today.

Outhwaite and Bottomore said that Justice was the evolution of basic social and political institutions. Particularly, the distributions of benefits and burdens are expressed in terms of justice or injustice. The concept of justice lied in the fact that each individual had to be aware of what is due to him or her (Outhwaite and Bottomore, 1993).

They further made distinction between formal and material justice. Formal justice requires distribution in accordance to the existing or agreed criteria or rules. It is often identified with legal or individual justice. This involved the standard of procedural justice ('due process' and 'natural justice') which was directed towards fairness and accuracy in the application of rules.

It entails formal equality if it assumed that every person in a society or group ought to be treated in accordance with the same rules. On the other hand, material or substantive justice concerns the identification of the appropriate distributive criteria (such as right, desert, need or choice) that constitute competing of justice. Material justice may justify substantive inequalities of outcome or redistribution between different social groups. It is often identified with social justice.

However, contemporary notions of social justice coexist with expressions of human rights, fairness and equality (Bates, 2007; Sturman, 1997). Sturman observes that Social Justice is reflected in Equity and Equality, and is often used as a synonym for "equal" opportunities or "equity". The notion of equity is manipulated politically as the concept of equality and Social Justice is fabricated in the manner it is deemed to be necessary for democracy. All

members of society deserve to be placed on equal footing so that they can realize their needs and potential.

Thus, Social Justice can be defined as a fair and just relation between an individual and society. More of the concept of fair and just would be discussed later in John Rawls Theory of Fairness.

## 1.3 Marginalized Groups

‘Marginalization’ describes the overt actions or tendencies of human societies, where some people are considered to be undesirable or dysfunctional. They are left out from the mainstream of the society i.e. Marginalized. This limits their opportunities and means for survival.

Peter Leonard defines marginality as, “being outside the mainstream of productive activity and/or social reproductive activity”. The Encyclopedia of Public Health defines Marginalized Groups as, “To be marginalized is to be placed in the margins, and thus excluded from the privilege and power found at the center”.

Latin reviews, “Marginality” as thoroughly demeaning, for economic well-being, for human dignity, as well as for physical security. Marginal groups can always be identified by members of dominant society, and will face irrevocable discrimination.”

These definitions in different context portray Marginalization as a slippery and multilayered concept. Marginalization has sociological, economic, and political aspects. Marginalization manifests itself in varying forms; from genocide/ethnic-cleansing and other xenophobic acts/activities at one hand, to more basic economic and social hardships at the unitary (individual/family) level.

### **Marginalized groups in India**

Marginalized groups in the Indian society can be demarcated as:

- 1. Women** – Under different economic conditions, and under the influence of specific historical, cultural, legal and religious factors, marginalization is one of the manifestations of gender inequality.
- 2. People with disabilities** – People with disabilities have had to battle against

centuries of biased assumptions, harmful stereotypes, and irrational fears. The stigmatization of disability resulted in the social and economic marginalization of generations with disabilities, and, like many other oppressed minorities this has left them in a state of impoverishment for centuries.

**3. Schedule Castes** –The caste system is a hierarchical social system based on underlying notions of purity and pollution. Brahmins are on the top of the hierarchy and Dalits (SC's) the bottom. Their marginalization encompasses violating basic human rights such as civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. Literacy rates among them are low. They have meager purchasing power and have poor housing conditions as well as lesser access to resources and entitlements. Structural discrimination against these groups takes place in the form of physical, psychological, emotional and cultural abuse which receives legitimacy from the social structure and the social system.

**4. Scheduled Tribes** – The Scheduled Tribes like the Scheduled Castes face structural discrimination within the Indian society. Scheduled Tribes are marginalized on base of ethnicity. They are mainly landless with little control over natural resources such as land, forest and water. Most of them work largely as agricultural, casual, plantation and industrial laborers etc. This has resulted in chronic level of poverty, low levels of literacy, unhygienic conditions and reduced access to healthcare services.

**5. Elderly or Aged People** – Ageing is an inevitable and inexorable process in Life. In India, population of the elderly group has increased rapidly because of the steps taken by the government to improve the health sector. It has led to increase in life expectancy. The rapid increase in the old age population has emerged as an area of concern for the government. The aged people are vulnerable due to increased incidents of illness and disability. They are

economically dependent upon their younger family members. According to the 2001 census, 33.1 per cent of the elderly in India live without their spouses.

**6. Children** –Child Mortality and morbidity are caused and compounded by poverty, their sex and caste position in society. All these have consequences on their nutrition intake, access to healthcare, environment and education. Poverty has a direct impact on the mortality and morbidity among children. The manifestations are various, ranging from child labor, child trafficking, to commercial sexual exploitation and many other forms of violence and abuse.

**7. Minorities** - Minority group in India have long been marginalized on following counts

- 1) They face racial discrimination and subordination.
- 2) Their physical and cultural traits set them apart from the dominant groups.
- 3) They share a sense of collective identity and common burdens.
- 4) They have their own specific shared social rules.
- 5) They have a tendency to marry within the group.

The dominant group are suspicious of the minority groups because of their different traits and so marginalization the minorities. This is an example of shifting phenomenon linked to social status.

**8. Sexual Minorities** – Another group that faces stigma and discrimination are the sexual minorities. Those identified as gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, experience various forms of discrimination within the society. Due to the dominance of heteronymous sexual relations as the only form of normal acceptable relations within the society, individuals who are identified as having same-sex sexual preferences are ridiculed and ostracized by their own family and are left with very limited support structures and networks of community that provide them conditions of care and support. Their needs and concerns are excluded from the various health policies and programs.

In my work, I have focused on four groups namely:

- (a) Schedule Castes
- (b) Scheduled Tribes
- (c) Minorities (Focus on Muslims)
- (d) Gender

## 1.4 Review of Literature

The literature on Social Justice and Education exists in a complex space that focuses on the development of society and the role of education in creating just social structures.

According to Marxian perspective, Social Justice is based on economic equality of all members of society. Marxists' claim that some people make money and property which is not owned rightfully. He contends that the concept of Social Justice lies in economy and economic class warfare. In other words, "the privileged class" uses the concept of private property to oppress "poor."

**Samuel Bowel and Herbert Gintis'** in their book '**Education and Inequality**', investigate unequal access of education in United States, especially those who lag behind on basis of class, race, sex, etc. they observe that the quality of education is compromised for unfair reasons which pertains to artificial inequalities. Bowles and Gintis felt that Politics of Education is understood better in terms of the need for social control in an unequal and rapidly changing economic order.

Bowles and Gintis raise the question that the disadvantaged sections of the society have little access to quality education to reach the higher ladder of the society. Education provides tools needed to eradicate poverty and uplift the weaker sections of society to coexist with their privileged counterparts. According to the contemporary studies, the number of years of schooling is directly proportional to the parents' educational background and socio-economic status.

**Durkheim** views education as an agent of proliferating social solidarity, in society. It transmits shared culture, beliefs and values. Schools are like miniature society. They promote cooperation, interaction, rules and universalistic standards of the society which help in specialization of skills which helps in division of labor **Parsons'** views education as a function of

meritocracy. Education acts as a bridge between family and society. He opined that education instills sense of competition, equality and individualism. In meritocracy system, everyone has equality of opportunity. The achievements and rewards attained are based on effort and ability i.e. – achieved status. Parsons' is supported in these views by Duncan and Blau.

Davis and Moore felt that education sifts and sorts according to ability. Education transmits the ruling class ideology. They stressed on role allocation. They believed that education picks individuals based on ability and allocate them important roles in society. But this view on education was influenced by social background.

**Melvin Tumin** believes that jobs are only functional if they provide proper rewards.

**Dennis Wrong** viewed students as puppets who were forced to passively accept and adhere to the school's norms and values.

**McInerney** identified three types of injustice which manifested on the basis of education i.e. socio-economic, race and culture. In her manifestation of Social Justice and Literature, McInerney focused on the need for holistic form of school and curriculum reform; pedagogy and response to government policies were strategies of social justice based on education.

**Raewyn Connell** pointed the cultural hegemony of dominant class. Connell advocated for reforms in curriculum and demanded that curriculum should be based on redistributive approach for social justice.

**Bates** focused on Primary and Secondary systems and emphasized on redistributive and recognitive approach to Social Justice in Education. He said educational institutions directly reflect and shape social, cultural and economic activities of the society.

**Singh** examines complexity in higher education. The goal of Social Justice was to promote inherent facets of democracy i.e. Inclusiveness, fairness and fraternity.

**Gale and Densmore** explained Social Justice in context of education and categorized social justice in following perspectives as tabulated:

Table 1.1: Distributive, Retributive and Recognitive perspectives on Social Justice

Perspectives of justice	The will. What should social justice desire? Whose desire?	To render. How should social justice be achieved?	To everyone. Who should social justice benefit?	Their due. What should social justice deliver?
Distributive	Freedom, social cooperation and Compensation. Individuals/groups represented by government or authorities	Proportional distribution.	Disadvantage d individuals groups.	Basic material and social goods/ opportunities
Retributive	Liberty, protection of rights, punishments for infringements. Individuals in free market	Open competitive and government protection of life and property.	Individuals who contribute to society.	Material and social goods/ opportunities commensurate with talent and effort.

Recognitive	Means for all to exercise capability and determine their actions. All people within and among social groups.	Democratic processes that arise from the interests of the least advantaged.	All people differently experienced within and among social groups.	Positive self-identity. Self-development; self-determination
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**Suresh Babu, G.S.** argued that higher education was an effective tool to promote mobility and social development. Thus its effect is positive and productive for the society. So, there should be large amount of investment in higher education. Thus, political economy of higher education stands rationalized. However, one cannot deny the repercussions of higher education. These are alarming rate of unemployment, increasing social unrest, stagnation of economic growth and increase in economic disparity. So, quality education should be imparted in an effective manner. A set of policies, particularly financing and access to higher education has become that more important. So, the private sector should be allowed to enter in the sector of higher education. This will help in mass participation.

**Srivastava and Sinha** focus on diverse forms of inequalities. He says that there is a perpetual domination of elite on one side and deep inequality in access to higher education among the marginalized sections of India. So, privatization of higher education would not be beneficial for a democratic society.

**Reed and Mukherjee** are of the opinion that in 90's, India embarked upon a series of policy reforms to fine-tune development. But these reforms were contrary to the democratic principles. This included higher education also. Therefore higher education is perceived as an indicator for economic restructuring. Knowledge automatically triggers demand in market. It helps to

reshape higher education as a commodity. This will help to combat the pressures of capitalistic market. This adversely affects the system of Higher Education adversely and its objective. Thus it downplays the socio-cultural objective of higher education.

**Arul raj Solomon, David** in his book, **Social Responsiveness of higher education: Access, Equity and Social Justice**, emphasized on multiple perspectives on the trends and developments with the perspective of access to higher education. He cites access, equity and equality to attain social justice in higher education. Higher education institutes in India generally take three approaches. One is classical approach that calls for meritocracy or the elitist way; second is social responsiveness or positive discrimination i.e. the door of reservation and the third is economic approach i.e. process of financial help which combines above approaches. These approaches depend on other factors too i.e. social status. These institutions are classified as public, private aided and private unaided. He said that along with the rise of privatization of higher education and emergence of self-financed programmes and institutions, the concept of social justice is facing a huge threat. He argues that it is important for the institutions imparting higher education to uphold the principles of social responsibility, equity and social justice. It is also important that the stakeholders of higher education should take cognizance of the sense of social responsibility. This will help in broadening of various perspectives which results in the formation of a fair and just society.

**Rout, Bharat Chandra** in his book **‘Educational and Professional Status of Scheduled Castes/Tribes: Attainment & Challenges’** said that the caste system was a rigid form of social stratification whose essential characteristics was caste-based hierarchy with division based on rigid occupational entitlements and the notions of birth. Caste identity is depends upon endogamy and lack of social mobility. The dominant and depressed caste groups in India

are characterized by unequal access to the public resources, societal opportunities and entitlements in comparison to control and access of major social and public resources.

**Kalyan Shankar, V.** in his book **‘Who Studies What, Where and Why? Study systemic inequalities beyond affirmative action policies in Indian Higher Education, Forum Trans Regional Studies’** addressed the access of higher education in India and said that attempts have been made to counter social inequalities. This was possible by affirmative action. It was done by applying the principle of positive discrimination i.e. favoring the disadvantaged. Lack of access to education is a problem which is not been properly dealt with. Due to these reason, there has been problem of access, inadequate representation and participation of marginalized section students.

The state has intervened to address this situation through constitutional provisions and by providing reservations. But implementation of reservation policy has been inappropriate with new pressure groups demanding reservations for their community as well. In addition to the this conspicuous divide of affirmative action versus meritocracy, academic enquiries is based on the issues of reservations on grounds of caste versus class and expanding ambit of reservations to a wider segment of the society. Also, when the conversion of academics to employment has been manifested in many recent judgments of various courts, the inadequacy and irrelevance of affirmative action comes to the fore.

**Bandyopadhyay, Madhumita** in her book **‘Education of marginalized groups in India** argued from the perspective of social justice’ claims that higher education plays a vital role in achieving enhanced social justice. The educational institutions are expected to equip knowledge in students and secure a meaningful place in society. This would help to foster and develop an

egalitarian society. The existing educational patterns have failed to cater the needs of the students of marginalized sections who are vulnerable and face exclusion from the society. This has affected the interests of marginalized section students and increased marginality. Unplanned expansion of Colleges and Universities without adequate infrastructure and finance has diluted the quality of education. It has also failed to cater to the needs of the marginalized section of the students. Instead it has increased the difficulty to access higher education thereby increasing the social divide.

## **1.5 Statement of Problem**

The numbers of institutions providing higher education have increased at a rapid pace. The list of achievements is also quite impressive, but, the failures seem to be more appalling. Not only some problems have proved to be intractable, some new problems have also cropped up. Given the socio - economic conditions and cultural traditions of the country, one can be skeptical of the potentials of formal education, especially in its contemporary form as an agency of progressive social change.

It is a serious matter of concern that, there has been a dearth of research in the field of higher education. The reports of the various commissions and committees which have been set up time and again to improve higher education both at the central and state levels have proved to be eyewash. Few studies have been conducted at micro-level and their focus area is very circumscribed. This hardly permits any generalization. The policies should be relevant to all agents of the relation between education and social change. But as of now, they deal with the sole aspect of the problem, i.e. the reciprocal impact of higher education and increased marginalization and its implications on social change.

Nowadays, it can be observed that the interpretation of the term social inclusion has changed from specific groups of students to more general form. For example, a diversified interpretation is now used for the students of marginalized sections. This applies for provision of higher education to multiple groups of students based on various norms. The shortcoming of a distributive approach to social justice is that, it overlooks the role that the processes and social structures of institutes which impart Higher education, act in a manner that results in an inequitable distribution of resources. Theoretically, it is argued that education acts as an equalizer by removing inequalities. Particularly, higher education is the gateway for upward social mobility for the marginalized

sections of the society. But some questions even then remain unanswered. What happens in a society that is characterized by widespread social inequality? And what about the latent consequences of higher education where there are many existing inequalities. It points out the existing situation prevalent among the students of marginalized sections of the society in higher education in India. It figures out the measure carried out by the Central and the State Governments through various promulgations and provisions in the Constitution. Prominent among these are the reservation policy and its socio-economic and political impacts on the marginalized social groups in particular. The situation is even worse in the rural areas. India is a country of villages. The poor state of higher education in rural areas in the marginalized section students is an inevitable consequence of the socio-economic condition and cultural traditions. In a country where the majority of the population resides in rural areas, the need for improvement in the higher education sector seeks proper attention. Higher education in rural areas is not only neglected, but in its contemporary form, it is facing serious problems.

## **1.6 Objectives of this study**

The core objective of my study is to focus on higher education and social justice with reference to the Marginalized section students.

- (a) To understand various theories of social justice relating to higher education.
- (b) To examine the present status of higher education in India.
- (c) To analyze educational status of marginalized sections at higher education.
- (d) To examine the linkages between social justice, access and gender issues at higher education in contemporary India.

## **1.7 Hypotheses**

- (1) Higher education in India has been discriminatory in nature so far.
- (2) Representation of marginalized section students at higher education is disproportionate to their population.
- (3) Socio-economic inequality in higher education is reflected in gender disparity.
- (4) Marginalized section students are lagging behind on vital issues like access, equity and quality.

## **1.8 Research Methodology**

This is a descriptive study based on the analysis of secondary data. Specifically, secondary analysis of existing data involves obtaining datasets from various reports, government documents and research studies pertaining.

### **The Techniques of Data Collection**

All the secondary data has been collected from various government reports, gazettes, records of University Grants Commission and reports of Ministry of Human Resource Development. Valuable information has been collected from internet, Jstor, NUEPA Journal and Indian Journal of Political Science and various other sources.

Most of the data published in these records was in the form of tables. Intensive reviews of the related literature have been done to identify the tables and make them coherent with the objectives of the study. These identified tables mostly represent the status and conditions of marginalized section of society in higher education. These tables have been reproduced in this study for analysis.

### **The Technique of Data Analysis**

All the tables have been looked into to capture the pattern of disadvantages faced by the marginalized section of students in higher education. The picture depicted in one table is consistently compared with the picture depicted by other tables. These tables were then critically compared with each other with the help of results of other research work already published. The result thus arrived at, is used to test the hypotheses of the study and develop the broad pattern of marginalization in higher education.

## **1.9 Chapterization**

The whole text has been divided in following chapters

1. Introduction
2. Social Justice and Education – A theoretical Framework
3. Higher Education and Marginalized Sections in India
4. Higher Education, Access, Inequality and Social Justice in contemporary India
5. Conclusion

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Social Justice and Education – A Theoretical Framework**

## **Social Justice and Education – A Theoretical Framework**

In this chapter, effort has been made to understand various theories of social justice. Some of the popular theories pertaining to education and social justice are:

### **Utilitarianism**

The early protagonists of utilitarianism were J. Bentham (1748-1832), James Mill (1773 -1836), John Austin (1790-1859) and J.S. Mill (1806-1873). They viewed virtue and justice in terms of practice and utility. The notion of Justice was to provide a common platform for the masses to raise their voice for their rights. The benefit to significant number of individuals was perceived to be the basis of justice. Utilitarians measured the justice in terms of what was good, right, ethical, progressive and just. Bentham stressed that “justice must be demonstrated and steps should be taken for public welfare of the needy and destitute”. The utilitarians argued that whatever was futile, obsolete, unethical, alien and unjust should be reformed in the larger interest. Thus, the Utilitarian theory of social justice is a typology of society which conforms to “the larger quantum sum of happiness”.

**John Stuart Mill’s** Utilitarianism is perhaps the most persuasive of the Utilitarian theory. According to him, Utilitarians had a firm belief that there was no significant difference between the concepts of justice and morality. Utilitarians viewed justice as an integral part of morality which was not confined to give priority or was just concerned with ethics. Particularly, utilitarians sought to promote welfare. Many believed that goodness is akin to a virtue which could be observed through happiness, feeling of well-being or the desire for satisfaction. Utilitarians also interlink the idea of law, economic distribution, and politics.

Utilitarians voiced their concern for social welfare which was in line with the moral interest and general public welfare. It seemed a proper way-out to ensure that the interests of the public flourished to a minimal extent. Utilitarians often raised their voice in favor of free trade due to the following reasons-

- (a) Free trade helps the masses to get proper remuneration. It also encourages the masses to be a productive and to be an active participant of the system.
- (b) Free market allows for a greater degree of freedom.
- (c) Freedom generally paves the way for prosperity.
- (d) Freedom has a direct relation with human nature. Greater the degree of freedom, greater is the happiness quotient.

### **Self-Perfectionism**

**F.H. Bradley** (1846-1924) in his theory of **Self-Perfectionism**, stressed upon the fact that if each and everyone performs his expected role, it leads to the creation of a just and egalitarian society. He considered his theory of “**my station and its duties**” to be the foundation of social justice. Since all individuals differ in ability and capacity, their roles also differ. This should be in accordance with the role he has been assigned. Bradley added that every person had the right to choose his own set of duties and can pursue any course of his liking. Once his position in the society is confirmed, he must contribute for the progress of society. Thus, the ambit of social justice gets expanded. In Bradley’s view, this was the right track to achieve welfare of individual and society. However there is no contradiction between the two. Thus, moral ideal of Bradley was grounded in Justice. In his life, mainly the moral duties strive to put themselves in order the professions. There is a general authority designated as state which provides the mass, a life of right and dignity by means of laws, institutions and consciousness.

## **Marxism**

The Marxist view of social justice focuses on the fact that the idea of justice had developed through generations and economic structure played a significant role in it. The 'haves' and 'have nots' are continuously in struggle through generations. In each stage, the 'have nots' have been exploited by the bourgeoisie. Thus, cause of exploitation laid in the economic structure. The Marxist relate the concept of justice with idea of liberating exploited class. Social justice peaks in communist society. In communism, the modes of production is owned by masses and discrimination disappears (**Rosenthal and Yudin**). According to Marxists, existing social system is based on private property. The propertied class exploits the landless labor class. Thus, justice is not fully possible and exploitation goes on unabated. Exploitation reaches a point where the exploited proletariats decide to rebel against the dominant Bourgeoisie. This proletariat revolution results in the overthrow of the capitalist order. This results in establishing an egalitarian society based on principles of communism. It results in abolishing the private property and all inequalities based on class. Thus, it helps in attaining social justice. Through their different works, Marx and Engels have outlined theory of exploitation and its remedy, i.e. communism. Post-Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, contributed significantly in spreading communism.

**Laski** eulogized the socialism of Karl Marx. He held a **Humanist** approach. Laski added freedom to economic equality and said that equality involves sense of identity and responsibility of primary needs. This is the concept of justice. Significance of freedom is that, it encourages people to work for equality. Laski held that socialism and fellowship were same and equal. Socialists were devoted for formation of an egalitarian and just society.

The recent theories of communism hold that notion of justice in a sphere, in which equal distribution is possible. Economic and political justice is distinct.

Justice is always relative for the contemporary and specific societies. The Marxian notion of communism and justice varied time to time and place to place. But the crux i.e. human welfare remained intact.

### **Ambedkarism**

Ambedkar agreed with Bergson's idea of justice and said that Justice evokes equality. Equity signifies equality in rules and regulations and concerns values. If equality prevails, men are of the same essence and are entitled equal rights and equal liberty. "Justice", for Ambedkar was synonymous to liberty, equality and fraternity.

According to Ambedkar, democracy exists if it is based on the principles of social democracy which is based on equality, liberty and fraternity. The ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity can't be viewed separately in a trinity. So, democracy was an essential ingredient to attain social justice. Ambedkar, believed that liberty also shaped human personality. It expressed itself in expression of thought, belief, faith and worship. A person grows in stature when he expresses himself in different manners. It gives ways for art, literature and talent to be expressed through liberty and a man has the choice to shape his destiny. To achieve absolute liberty, equality is must. It unites men and groups and promotes mutualities, cooperation and social sympathy. Citizens cannot live in crippled condition. Equality depends on obligation and recognition of rights that bind the members of society. Fraternity is the feeling to provide an atmosphere where people enjoy liberty and equality. For Ambedkar, fraternity meant brotherhood. It is this principle which leads to unity and solidarity. Thus, Ambedkar concludes that principles of trinity cannot be defragmented from each another as they supplement and complement themselves. Ambedkar's concept of social justice meant a way of life so that a man gets his righteous place in society. Their perceptions may differ; they live with honor, give mutual respect and give everyone their due without any

discrimination. Other highlights of social justice are supremacy of constitution, equality before law, fundamental rights, adherence to legal and social obligations and strong belief in justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and dignity towards all.

Justice in Ambedkar's view was not a problem in distribution of physical rights. It should basically be a mode of life based on mutual respect and regard, a feeling of harmony and equality among the members of society. Hence, the measure of social justice is not materialistic, but proliferation of human values. His concept of justice was holistic and concerned social transformation.

### **Existentialism**

According to existentialism, man is fundamentally free. Man makes his own ideals with a view to bringing about a particular social system in future. It holds that man's life is a continuous struggle amidst the process of choice. In **Jean Paul Sartre's** view, one can-not take away the right to freedom of life from another person. Freedom is perennial and can't be restricted by any law or moral obligation. Neither can it take away by coercion idea or system of obligations. However, this does not exonerate man from his responsibility which is the basis of this concept. Man is responsible for all his deeds and ideas which he follows to be a free human being. These ideals may relate to justice, morality, democracy or economic welfare. Man's concept of just ideals or unjust systems inspires him to pursue his own course of action.

### **Post-Modern Theory**

The theory can be associated with Social Justice Education Theory as it questions, "not only the authority of traditional science, but the legitimacy of any authoritative standard or canon—be it art, music, literature, science or

philosophy” (**DeMarrias and LeCompte**). Postmodern theory argues that dualism of mind or logic is partially true and portrays a blurred picture. **Lyotard** and other postmodern theorists argue that meta-narratives are partial and should not be treated objectively. This is because it has no such thing which can be identified as objective logic. According to postmodernists, a narrator’s personal experiences and historical and cultural location in the society shape all narratives (**Lather**). Postmodernists contend that, both, the students and the teachers should engage in deconstruction of grand narratives and be cognizant of the relationship between the relation of power and knowledge which **Foucault** termed as “**Regime of truth**”. He said that each society had its regime of truth and the type of discourse which it accepts. **Chomsky** referred “**regimentation of minds**” as a grand lie. It disseminates impartial information as partial and subjective information as objective. Thus, it allows the dominant group to control the society.

**Gramsci** termed the passing of dominant ideology as hegemony. Postmodernists said that schools were responsible for socialization of youth. So they were the vanguard of regimentation of minds which formed the core of power structure. Postmodernists pointed out that knowledge is located within the power structure. This differs from the term “**knowledge is power**”, as said by Foucault. Gramsci said that power and knowledge are different. “There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (**Foucault**). So the powerful had the ability to postulate what was the valid form of knowledge. Thus, knowledge can be regarded as the reflection of those who possess power.

### **John Rawls Theory of Fairness**

John Rawls in his concept of Social Justice drew Utilitarian ideas from Bentham and Mill, Social Contract ideas of Locke, and the categorical imperative ideas of

Kant. In his book '**A Theory of Justice**', Rawls described his theory of Justice as "**Justice as Fairness**". He argued that, "Each person possesses an inviolability based on justices who even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason, justice denies the fact that loss of freedom for some is made right by a greater good shared by others." His ideas were further reflected in his work **Political Liberalism**, where he perceived society "as a fair system of co-operation over time, from one generation to the next." All societies, be it formal or informal, have a basic social, economic, and political structure. Justice should arise from the masses and not be enforced by law. Rawls agreed with **Nozick** that Justice was entirely different from morality. He too rejected the Utilitarian concept of Justice. He suggested a position of origin to investigate the notion of justice. This original position referred to a group of people who will have the right to decide the principles of justice. These people would be kept ignorant of their position. This was the term referred to as the '**veil of ignorance**'. He argued that due to the veil of ignorance, these people will not be biased. This is because they are ignorant of the category to which they belong. As far as self-interest was concerned, Rawls argued that this group would want the principle of justice to be upheld. He said that certain goods and values concern everyone which he referred to as "**Primary Social Goods**". He argued that the people in the 'original position' would discuss the principles of justice best suited to them before choosing them. This will lead them to a point referred as "**reflective equilibrium**". Here, the intuitive principles will be favored and the incompatible principles will be rejected to maintain coherence. Rawls argues that two intuitive principles of justice in particular will reach reflective equilibrium:

Each person has to have an equal right  
for the most extensive total system of equal  
basic liberties compatible with similar system of liberty.

(1) Social and economic inequalities have to cater to two conditions. Firstly, they will have to be attached to the positions and offices which are open to all.

These conditions are the fairness of equality to opportunity for all. (2) Secondly, they are likely to be benefitted most by the least advantaged sections of the society.

Rawls gave priority to the first principle over the latter for societies which had achieved a moderate level of affluence. Rawls had in mind negative rights i.e. the right to freedom of thought. Distribution of societal goods includes education, food and shelter. These can be considered as positive rights. The second principle refers to restriction. This is known as “**difference principle**”. It will benefit the worst off group that faces social and economic inequalities. It seems that total communism is just for all, because this system had no room for economic or social inequalities. Inequalities require rationale. Capitalism is justified only if it benefits the least advantaged group. Inequality could be rewarded till the point that people be productive and share their wealth with the poor. The economic situation of the privileged class will remain static till the surplus was not equally distributed.

Rawls agrees with Nozick, that the rights we have are generally negative rights. He argued that social and economic inequalities are unjust unless they meet certain requirements. There must be equal opportunity in public education. Negative rights must benefit the worst off group. Rawls disagreed with the Utilitarians, that economic inequality was justified if it maximized happiness. It gives rewards to the privileged sections of society. The reason being, this type of inequality doesn't help the bottom most section of the society. Utilitarians argue that a lesser degree of inequality was necessary to benefit a large section. Rawls stresses upon the fact that no one should live in poverty. He was of the view that the capitalistic system may actually go on to help the “weakest section” to a greater degree. This could be achieved by giving incentives to the weaker and the marginalized sections of the society; thus empowering them. There are six ways through which Rawls theory of justice are applied.

## **Libertarianism and Social Justice**

The relationship between libertarianism and social justice can be pointed out as-

1. **Moral standards vs Public Policies** – There should be a moral standard in respect of which the various public policies or the rationale of the larger social/economic/political institutions should be evaluated. To be committed to the agenda of social justice is to hold that a policy or institution must work in the interest of the vulnerable sections of the society.
2. **Social Justice as a Foundation and Limit to Libertarianism** —Social justice, is an important part by which the public policies and Social institutions are assessed. Utmost priority to social justice with empirical data justifies the sharp limits on the extent to which libertarian policies are justified. Social policies must empower the vulnerable sections of the society. If they don't benefit the vulnerable class, government intervention is warranted.

These views were reflected in the ideas of Adam Smith, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, Richard Epstein, etc.

Libertarians have been hostile to the concept of social justice. This was illustrated in Friedrich Hayek's *Constitution of Liberty* and Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia*. Both Hayek and Nozick viewed social justice as a form of *distributive justice*, i.e., how to distribute wealth among people. Social justice is instead understood to be independent of individuals from oppressive relationships.

Hayek in his work "**Mirage of Social Justice**," proposed that, "demands for equality was the professed motive of those who desired to impose upon society a preconceived pattern of distribution. Our objection is against all attempts to oppress society with a deliberately chosen pattern of distribution, whether it is an order of equality or of inequality." Given the inherent inequalities between individuals, Hayek argued that attempting to impose a far-reaching material

equality would require unequal treatment before law. This would be like a cure worse than the disease.

### **Entitlement theory**

Nozick was the protagonist of the theory of natural rights and private property. He advocated it with his idea of three forms of Justice which dealt with distribution of property:

- (a) **Justice in acquisition:** The process by which a person achieves right over property.
- (b) **Justice in transfer:** The process to acquire transferred property allotted to him by the concerned person.
- (c) **Rectification of injustice:** The process to restore property rights to its righteous owner in case injustice has been done in acquisition or transfer.

### **Social Justice as the abolition of oppression**

Nozick argued that ‘*material equality*’ or any other type of distributive justice will run against deep intuitions we have about how an “*identifiable differential contribution lead to some differential entitlement.*” But distribution on account of meritocracy doesn’t work either as touted by Hayek for planned economy. This was, because there was no reliable reason. Difference between merit and luck can be demarcated only when knowledge was at the disposal of the concerned person. This includes knowledge of not only skill and confidence; but also his state of mind, his feelings, conditions, his energy and persistence level. Thus, the true judgment of merit depends on the presence of precisely the conditions whose absence were the main argument for liberty.

**Elizabeth Anderson** was also not a libertarian but her perceptions were quite similar to it. She affirmed a robust concept of economic liberty to be an important domain of agency. It includes the freedom to create, own and operate the means of production. In her work, **What is the Point of Equality**, Anderson

launches a scathing attack on the prevalent “egalitarian” theories of social justice. Instead, Anderson proposed her own theory based on “relational equality.” In it, she formulates social justice as the abolition of “oppression – a form of social relation in which some people dominate, exploit, marginalize, demean and inflict violence upon others. Egalitarians have sought a social order in which person stood in equality. They seek to live together in a democratic community.

Anderson refer to the “five faces of oppression” cataloged by **Iris Marion Young in ‘Justice and the Politics of Difference.** Young was a feminist and critical

theorist who believed there was far more to social justice than just distribution.

These are:

(a) **Exploitation:** Young pointed that “Some people exercise their capacities under the control, according to the purposes, and for the benefit of other people.” **Michael Munger**, put forth the concept of exploitation based on “euvoluntary” exchange. It appends to the notion of voluntariness and considered power imbalance between concerned parties or the differentials in variety and quality of options available to each party.

(b) **Marginalization:** If a person is exploited on the basis of gross power imbalance, steps should be taken to stop him from being marginalized by providing employment or other remunerative options. This could be attained by direct discrimination, institutional racism, sexism, onerous regulation etc.

(c) **Powerlessness:** Young’s concept of powerlessness lacks clarity. It refers specifically to the lack of autonomy, development opportunities, and social status that the professionals have.

(d) **Cultural Imperialism:** “Cultural imperialism involves the universalization of experience and culture of dominant group, and its establishment as a norm.” Members of the dominant group are free to live as individuals. But the members of culturally marginalized groups are marginalized and

stereotyped. If a Christian goes on a killing spree, he will be termed as a “disturbed individual” while a Muslim if commits a similar act would be termed as an “Islamic terrorist” whose nature exemplifies the “violent nature of Islam.” (e) **Violence:** Members of some groups are attacked randomly and unprovoked

with a motive to damage, humiliate or destroy the person.

**Miller** conducted an empirical research and put forth his theory of justice which was distributive. It focused specifically on the scope of social justice. Interpreting Rawls, Miller contended that society will attain social justice only if both individuals and institutions adhere to the principle of social justice. The three main constituents miller’s concept of distributive justice are: reward based on performance; Need for lacking basic necessities in danger of being harmed and equality which refers to the social idea that society regards and treats its citizens equally.

**Lummins** called for a Reformist approach to social justice. **Gale** labeled this approach as Recognitive perspective.

### **Critical Theory**

According to this theory, Social Sciences or Human Relations, such as Education are not understood from a scientific, objective or rational point. Instead, they are understood by the discernment of human relations. It requires identification of subjectivity and recognition of historical, economic, and political influences on human relations. Critical theory concerns with the role of institutions, such as schools, in promoting and propagating economic, social, and political inequities. **Hooks** (1994) asserted that Marxist focus on economic exploitation denied the issues of gender, race and nationality. The **concept of Critical Consciousness** was central to critical theory according to **Freire**. He asserted that the traditional method of schooling was undemocratic in nature because of its ‘Banking method’ of education. The

teachers used to act as bankers of knowledge and promoted the culture and ideas of the dominant groups. Freire asserted that the curriculum ought to be reflective of contributions from all the sections of the society. **Hooks** in his book ‘**Teaching to Transgress**’ compared classrooms to be the hierarchical equivalents of society. The dominant groups, who veiled power, dictated and ideologically controlled the marginalized section students from occupying higher positions of the society. She emphasized that education should promote democratic principles, not replicate the existing social inequalities. She asserted that democracy would work, only when both, the students and teachers partake equally in engaged pedagogy. This included curriculum reform and removing the social bias which promoted dominant belief and culture. This inculcated new measures to reach the marginalized section students.

**Chomsky** opined that the traditional method of teaching held the position of teachers as doctrine managers. They promoted the epistemology, belief and values of dominant group. They ensured that students from all the sections of the society adhered to the ideology of the dominant section. It ensured that this process was consistently monitored and managed.

**Giroux** said that teachers should disseminate knowledge like a torchbearer. They should make the students aware of situations of oppression and domination. They should also suggest measures to combat oppression. The teachers should also strive create an environment in which all students have equal access of opportunity, right and knowledge to become practical and equal citizens. The role of students is to inculcate and evolve their own and separate beliefs, values, norms and ideologies. They would help them to locate and examine the prevalent power structure.

Like other critical theorists, Giroux too envisioned students and teachers going beyond what he called “the language of critique” of the dominant culture and moving on from the traditional form of education to “the language of possibility.” According to him, implementation of critical theory meant more

than identifying the differences. It should analyze the existing stereotypes and most importantly, understand, engaging, and transform history and cultural narratives. It should examine the institutions that give rise to racism and other forms of discrimination. Critical theorists also argue that schools should promote democracy and strive for social justice in higher educational institutions. For this several changes have to be made. First, the teachers and students should evolve a sense of critical consciousness. They should have a direct interaction or a dialogue with each other. Secondly, teachers should not follow banking method of education. They should act as disseminators of knowledge, rather than depositors of information. Third, the curriculum should reflect the discrimination and inequalities prevalent in the society. Fourth, the societal structures and their functioning have to be scrutinized. Finally, the teachers and students should view themselves as the torchbearer of democracy.

### **Multicultural Education Theory**

Multicultural theory rejects the current system of education and call for schools to be congruent with the democratic ideals which are the two essential ingredients of social justice education.

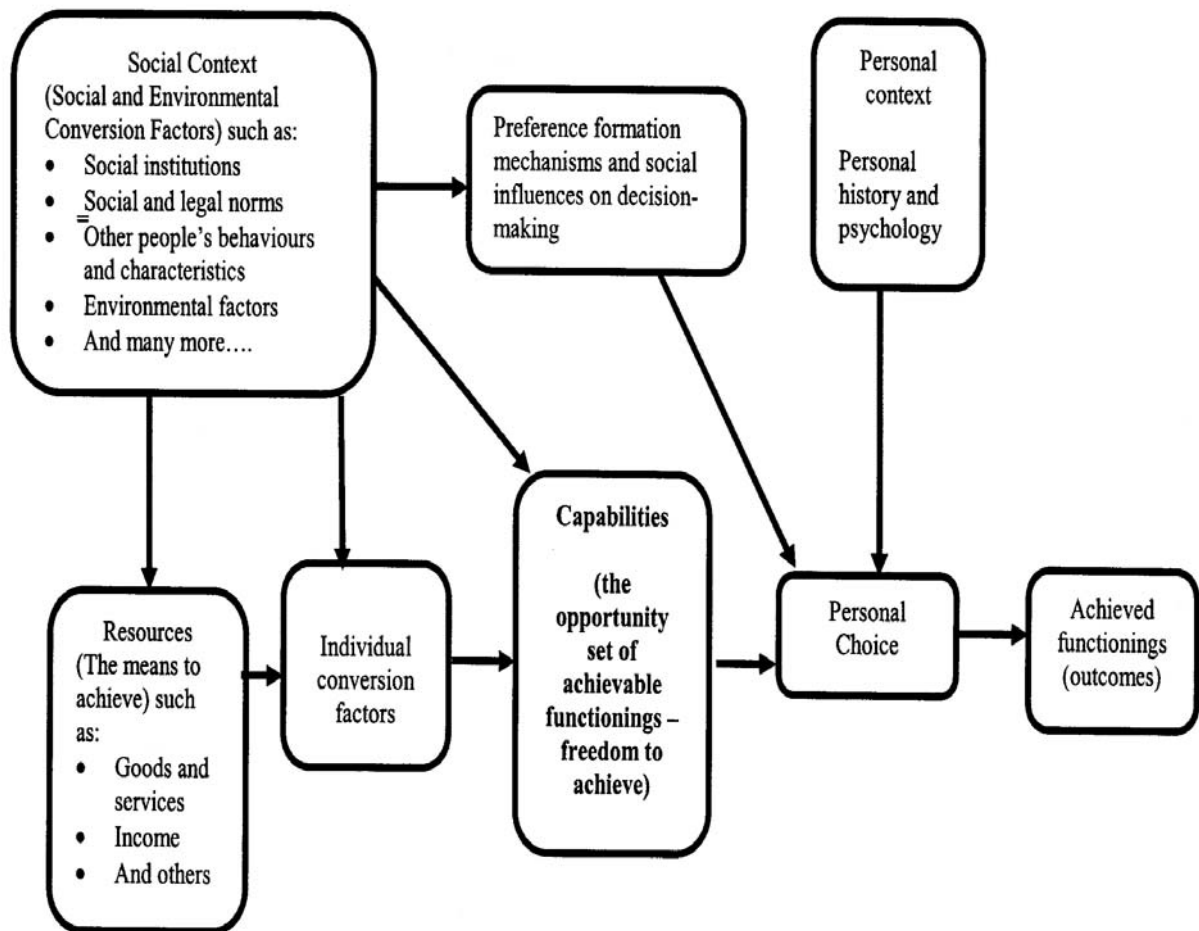
### **Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Education**

Sen proposed that Competition defined the characteristic of Anglo-Saxon capitalist models of universities and institutes imparting Higher Education. Most of the policies of higher education are in cognizance with the instrumental view of education. They prioritize development of human capital, with the objective to promote economic growth. His perspective views education as a right. Sen's Capability Approach of higher education gives a broad and multi-dimensional framework which answers the need for a normative ideal. It focuses on social justice as a criterion for shaping universities. He also assumes that education addresses not only need of human capital, it should also cater to

the needs and aspirations of individuals as invoked by Capability Approach. The Capability Approach integrates Social Justice in the list of priorities and raises some other questions that cross the mainstream neoclassical boundary. The most notable of them being: How do the Institutions imparting higher education contribute to build a just society by taking into account dignity and social welfare? It highlights the neoclassical economic theory which underlines the competitive higher education models in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Sen's capability approach also provides theoretical and conceptual insight in capitalist models in general, and university and higher educational institutions in particular. This approach considers education as intrinsically important in diverse ways. It also views the instrumental role of education which surpasses the neoclassical view and emphasizes upon the transformative potential.

## Flow Chart for understanding Amartya Sen's Capability Approach



## Conceptual and Structural Framework

**Functionalism:** It believes in maintaining the existing social and political order. It assumes that there exists a consensus on values and beliefs in society, especially on allocation and use of power (**DeMarrias and LeCompte**). Functionalism asserts that schools must ensure that existing social and political structures are not disturbed (**Morrow and Torres**). They should facilitate the assimilation of students in a national culture or the dominant culture. **Hirsch et al.** said that “the acculturative responsibility of the schools is primary and fundamental”. They must nurture citizens in various occupational slots to prepare them for existence in the Capitalistic System (**Spring**). This is done by categorizing students in accordance to their academic ability and then lead them towards their career goals.

**Structural Functionalism:** Structural functionalism is quite similar to functionalism. It maintains that the schools should play a role in-

- (a) Maintain the status quo by sorting students into future workplace positions.
- (b) Train the students to obey the authority and powerful figures.
- (c) Assimilate the new students in accordance to the dominant culture.

Structural functionalism contends that schools should function to assimilate students into the dominant culture. It contends that schools should instill the existing thought process, beliefs, and values. This will help in maintaining status quo (**Parsons, 1961**).

**Sleeter and Grant** conducted a meta-analysis of multicultural education.

They analyzed it through five approaches-

- (a) Teaching the exceptional and the culturally different.
- (b) Human Relations.
- (c) Single Group Studies

(d) Multi-Cultural Education.

(e) Social Reconstructionist education.

The first approach concerned with assisting the students who did not possess what **Bourdieu and Passeron** referred to as the **Cultural Capital** or the dominant culture prevalent in schools. This model called for the assimilation of culturally different students into the prevalent dominant culture. In other words, this approach calls for embracing the dominant culture. Further studies also revealed the positive correlation between the minority and marginalized section students' willingness to embrace the dominant culture to strive for academic success (**Anyon; Au and Jordan; Bourdieu and Passeron; Fordham and Ogburn; Villegas**).

### **Cultural Relativism (Leistyana)**

This approach pointed out the diverse culture of the students and called for embracing an equal culture. It encourages the students to be receptive of other cultures. Sleeter and Grant argued that discussion of respect for non-dominant cultures is superficial when it takes place in the absence of discussions of institutional barriers that exist for people of color and does not call for transformation.

The third approach, single-group studies, pays attention to power relations amongst different cultural groups. It recognizes the hegemonic role of schooling and seeks to provide counter-discourses to enable students to assume the agency role in challenging and demystifying the dominant discourse. However, this approach tends to target members of one marginalized group; for example, women's history targets mainly women and men who are interested in women's issues. According to Martin (1993), this tendency has limitations because it preaches to the converted and in schools it may be an elective rather than a compulsory course. Members of the dominant culture need exposure to issues

that women and people of color face. The single-group approach reinforces the peripheral status of women and people of color by the not being part of the mainstream curriculum. Furthermore, this approach has been criticized as essentializing, treating groups as monolithic and reductionist, and ignoring intra-group diversities (Sleeter and Grant 1988). This approach has a tendency to homogenize groups which is anti-social justice education.

According to the fourth approach, the Multi-cultural approach, Greene (1996) said, that in trying to construct a democratic community, we should not ascribe fixed essences to people and treat them as 'representative' of given groups, cultures, and even genders. Treating them as various and situated, we have to take into account a diversity of perspectives and realities (cited in Leistyana 1999, p. 34). To view groups as monolithic and without intra-group differences is to presume that all group members have similar experiences and their individual histories do not affect their experiences. Structural inequalities in this approach are only addressed minimally. Focus is on celebration and affirmation of cultural differences. Unlike the human relations approach whose objective is to teach tolerance, this approach reveres all cultures, thus teaching acceptance instead of tolerance of cultural differences. This approach embraces a curriculum that is inclusive of racial groups that have been historically marginalized. This widely used approach is not in alignment with social justice education because it minimally addresses structural inequities and does not call for transformation of oppressive structures and practices.

There is another approach, the Multicultural Social Reconstructionist approach (Martin 1993). It also encourages students and teachers to be agents for social change. Implementation of this approach requires that students and teachers engage in four exercises. According to Sleeter and Grant (1994), self-analysis is critical because, when students and teachers are aware of their positionalities, then they can take action against oppression. The third goal is to develop social

skills, which includes the ability to interact with people from various social classes and racial backgrounds. Students must be empowered to engage in introspection, self-analysis, and to practice democracy. Such empowerment is generated in the classroom that becomes a microcosm of the society, “a training ground” (Sleeter and Grant, 1994), for shaping students to be active democratic citizens. Fourth, they are to unify regarding race, class and gender. Addressing issues of class, gender, race encourages coalition of those battling against oppression. Challenging the dominant culture and encouraging individuals to become social change agents positions the MCSR approach in accord with social justice education. Sleeter and Grant’s (1988) typology revealed that teachers use multicultural education as a term for various approaches to education.

Banks (1996) conducted a study examining all the social study approaches. He identified five strands of multicultural education.

The first strand, which is commonly used in schools, is Content Integration. Banks (1997) also referred to this strand as the contributions approach, whereby teachers disseminate information about heroes, lifestyles, and artifacts from various cultures. This approach is not congruous with social justice theory as it celebrates cultures without unveiling and seeking to transform oppressive structures and practices.

Banks’ second strand is Knowledge Construction. According to it, Teachers and students work together to understand how one’s positionality and how one’s views informed by one’s gender, social class, and race, shape one’s understanding of societal issues. This approach stresses that process of knowledge construction is intimately connected to the knowledge of the constructor’s positionality. That is, students’ and teachers’ worldviews are shaped by their experiences as members of various groups in society. While it has elements of social justice education, this approach does not advocate for

transformation of oppressive structures and practices; understanding how knowledge construction occurs is inadequate for considering this approach as oriented toward social justice education.

Banks' third strand is equity pedagogy, which is about teaching methods and classroom practices which are inclusive of students from all backgrounds. Banks asserts that this strand is not about including histories of disadvantaged groups but socialization of all students in the classroom, especially those who are historically marginalized. While this strand has some elements of social justice education, it does not meet the criteria for social justice education as it leaves knowledge power structures undisturbed.

The fourth strand is prejudice reduction. It calls the students from dominant culture to embrace the people who have been marginalized cultures and to formulate positive attitudes about them. It encourages students from the dominant culture to embrace the students of the marginalized sections and those who are subject to racial and cultural abuse. But this approach does not meet criteria for social justice education as it does not interrogate cultural power disparities and does not call for transformation of the status quo.

Banks' fifth strand is empowering school culture and social structure. This strand involves transformation of the whole school culture in order to make it socially receptive and academically rewarding for students from multiple backgrounds. Banks states that a school empowers school culture. This has a visible effect on the social structure and has a visible affect on the administration, curriculum and the school practices.

Thus, it is the school that goes beyond a mission statement that declares respect for diversity. It is also the school which promotes diversity. Aspects of this strand include interrogation of dominant culture's ways of knowing. This strand of multiculturalism meets criteria for social justice education as it interrogates and transforms social injustices, albeit at a school level.

Banks (2008, 2009) introduced the Concept of Multicultural awareness for social justice. This concept addresses skills and mindset required for navigation of the pluralistic and global society in which we exist. Banks asserted that one requires not only social and cultural awareness, but also inclusive communication skills and social action to change the aligned educational practices with the agenda of global social justice. The concept of multicultural awareness for social justice meets the criteria as it advocates for transformation of education practices.

Other works categorized as multicultural education that meet the criteria for social justice education include Gay's (2001) notion of cultural responsive teaching; Ladson-Billings' (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy, McLaren's (1995) critical multiculturalism, and Suzuki's (1984) social class multiculturalism.

Gay's (2001) concept of culturally responsive teaching and Ladson-Billings' (1995) theory of culturally relevant pedagogy recognize inequities in the curriculum, and advocate for inclusion of course materials that affirm all students. Both Gay and Ladson-Billings contend that school culture is not universal and objective, but reflective of societal power structures. They proffer pedagogical alternatives that are more inclusive and reflective of the student body.

**McLaren** critical multicultural education is geared toward achievement of equity through economic and socio-political change. Critical multicultural theorists embrace the idea of schools as sites of transformation in order to facilitate transformation of oppressive socio-political and economic structures. Teachers who embrace this line of multicultural education examine the role of language in construction of meaning and background. They also devise new ways to disseminate various forms of knowledge. Eurocentric knowledge forms

have been used to obliterate some people and affirm others. Central to this form of pedagogy is the notion of praxis, which entails continuous reflectivity and action.

**Suzuki** asserted that the economic system of capitalism is the root of social inequities and therefore, any multicultural discourse should begin with a critique of the economic structure that legitimizes and perpetuates asymmetrical power relations. She contended that inequities in the society are perpetuated in schools through the curriculum and the unequal distribution of resources and disparities in educational funding. This leads to the fact that those who are marginalized have no access to the economic resources. This, in turn, perpetuates the cycle of economic disparity and unequal distribution of wealth. She suggested that examination and advocating for eradication of capitalism as a system based on economic inequality, exploitation of women of all colors, and people of color, are appropriate steps toward abrogation of oppression.

## **CHAPTER 3.**

### **Higher Education and Marginalized Sections in India**

## **Higher education and Marginalized Sections in India**

In the previous chapter, we had discussed about the various theories which try to explain the correlation between education and social justice. It gave us a broad view of how education will help to attain social justice. In this chapter we will examine the current status of higher education in India and how it has benefitted the marginalized section students.

From ancient Bharat to modern India, higher education has always occupied a place of prominence in Indian history. In ancient times, Nalanda, Taxila and Vikramsila were well-accomplished universities. They not only attracted students from India but also from Korea, China, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Tibet and Nepal. Even now, India boasts of one of the largest organized higher education system in the world.

The present system of higher education in India dates back to Mount Stuart Elphinstone`s minute of 1823, which stressed for establishing schools for teaching English and the European sciences. Later, Lord Macaulay, in his minutes of 1835, advocated effort to make natives of the country thoroughly good English scholars. Sir Charles Wood`s Dispatch of 1854, famously known as the `Magna Carta of English Education in India`, recommended creating a properly articulated scheme of education from the primary school to the university. It sought to encourage indigenous education and planned the formulation of a coherent policy of education. Subsequently, the universities of Calcutta, Bombay (now Mumbai) and Madras were set up in 1857, followed by the University of Allahabad in 1887.

An Inter-University Board was established in 1925 to promote university activities, by sharing information and cooperation in the field of education, culture, sports and allied areas. But the first serious attempt to formulate a national system of education in India was done in 1944, with the publication of

the Report of Central Advisory Board of Education on Post War Educational Development in India, also known as the Sargeant Report. It recommended the formation of a University Grants Committee, to oversee the work of the three Central Universities of Aligarh, Banaras and Delhi. In 1947, the Committee was entrusted with the responsibility of dealing with the then existing Universities.

Post-Independence, a University Education Commission was set up in 1948 under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan "to give a report on the condition of Indian university education and suggest improvements that may be desirable to suit the present and future needs and aspirations of the country". This commission recommended the setting up of a University Grants Committee in India on the lines of the University Grants Commission of the United Kingdom with a full-time Chairman and other members to be appointed from eminent educationists.

In 1952, the Union Government decided that all cases pertaining to the allocation of grants-in-aid from public funds to the Central and other Universities and Institutions of higher learning will be referred to the University Grants Commission. Consequently, the University Grants Commission (UGC) was formally inaugurated by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Minister of Education, Natural Resources and Scientific Research on 28 December 1953.

The UGC was formally established only in November 1956 as a statutory body of the Government of India through an Act of Parliament passed in 1951 for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university and higher education in India. The main functions of UGC are to provide funds, coordinate and maintain the high standards of institutions providing higher education. Its main provisions are:

- (a) To promote and coordinate university education.
- (b) To determine and maintain high standard of teaching, examination and

research in universities.

- (c) To frame regulations on maintaining minimum standards of education.
- (d) Monitor the development in the field of higher education and disbursing grants to the universities and colleges.
- (e) It serves as a vital link between the Union and state governments and institutions of higher learning.
- (f) Advising the Central and State governments on the measures necessary for improvement of university education.

UGC has established a University Activity Monitoring Portal which serves as a one point stop for events/activities undertaken by higher education institutions from time to time. This portal facilitates the universities to upload the details of various events and measures undertaken by them to improve the standard of education. Universities have to login to this portal with the allotted user id and password which is provided to them by the University Grant Commission for the UGC University portal (<https://www.ugc.ac.in/uniportal/>). The Universities must mandatorily update their contact details on this portal.

Looking at the numerical aspect, at the time of independence, there were an abysmal number of 20 universities and 500 colleges in India. According to a data released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2014, the number of universities increased by about 34 times to 677. The number of colleges providing Higher Education rose to approximately 34,000 in number. According to the stats provided by the UGC, the numbers of institutions imparting higher education in the country have witnessed a comprehensive rise from 595 in 1950 to 42,388 in 2016-17. While the number of universities has shot up from 30 in 1950-51 to 895 in 2016-17. Out of these institutions imparting higher education, 87 institutes have been given the status of National Importance.

## The Globalization effect

In the aftermath of Globalization, the numbers of institutions imparting education at higher level have increased at a tremendous pace. This is clearly stated in the following tables:

**Table 3.1**

<b>Growth in Universities and colleges in India (2008 – 2016)</b>				
Institutions	2008	2016	Increase	Increase %
Central universities	25	47	22	88%
State Universities	228	345	117	51%
State Private Universities	14	235	221	1579%
Institutions deemed to be Universities	103	123	20	19%
Total	370	750	380	103%
Colleges	23,206	41,435	18,229	79%

**(Source: UGC report on the total number of institutes of Higher Education)**

The table 3.1 clearly shows the remarkable increase in the number of institutes providing higher education in India. In a short period of 2008-2016, the numbers of universities have increased from 370 to 750 which is a remarkable increase percent of 103. While the number of institutions providing higher education has increased from 23,206 in 2008 to 41,435 in 2016 with a meteoric rise of 79 per cent.

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**Table 3.2**

<b>Growth in Students' Enrollment by Level of Education in India (2008-2016)</b>				
Level of Education	2008	2016	Increase	Increase%
Graduation	11,908,151	24,593,321	12,685,170	107%
Post-graduation	1,489,685	2,764,866	1,275,201	86%
Doctorate	95,872	180,957	85,085	89%
Others	148,100	945,582	797,482	538%
Total	13,641,808	28,484,746	14,842,938	109%

**Source: UGC Report on the Total Number of Higher Education**

As we can see in Table 3.2, the total numbers of students enrolled at the level of higher education have also witnessed a significant increase. If we talk in terms of the absolute numbers, we can see that the total number of students enrolled in higher education sector has increased from 13,641,808 in 2008 to 28,484,746. This is a whopping 109 per cent rise in a very short duration of 8 years

**Table 3.3**

Field of study	2008	2016	Increase	Increase%
Arts	5,875,532	10,271,296	4,395,764	75%
Engineering and technology	1,313,706	4,885,134	3,571,428	272%
Science	2,612,406	5,417,464	2,805,058	107%
Commerce/Management	2,486,901	4,637,317	2,150,416	86%
Education	286,478	1,085,876	799,398	279%
Medicine	446,087	1,118,178	672,091	151%
Others	620,698	1,069,481	448,783	72%
Total	13,641,808	28,484,746	14,842,938	109%

**(Source: UGC report on the total number of Higher Education)**

If we take a look at the Table no 3.3 we can observe that there has seen a rise in the subjects which have a specific specialization. The job oriented courses like Engineering and technology, Medicine and Education have witnessed a fast rate of increase in comparison to the non-technical courses.

India is a country with more than one billion people. Its population has experienced higher growth rates since independence largely owing to declining child and adult mortality rates as a result of improvement in health facilities and awareness. Social justice issues can be delineated into two co-dependent categories: Inter-Social Treatment and Unequal Government Regulation.

**Inter-Social Treatment** is the basis for this unequal treatment is usually rooted in caste, race, sex and similar factors while **Unequal Government Regulation** involves laws and regulations that purposefully or otherwise that discriminate a group from the same opportunities and resources based on class differences.

### **Current status of the marginalized section students in the present scenario**

**Gender:** According to a data provided by the, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, the total enrolment of male students is 55% while the female students constitute 45%. Out of this the female representation is equal or sometimes more in courses like B.A, M.A, B.Sc and M.Sc which are not considered to be job oriented. In the technical and professional courses, male students constitute a whopping 2/3<sup>rd</sup> percentage.

A recent study carried out by MHRD, found that the proportion of girls enrolled in higher education has declined from 0.72 in 2003-04 to 0.69 in 2005-06 in general candidates and from 0.64 in 2004-05 to 0.63 in SCs between 2004-05 and 2005-06. This is a very disturbing fact considering the various steps taken by the government to enhance the status of women in society. The gender parity index, however, remains static in case of STs between 2004-05 and 2005-06. It

is difficult to guess the reasons for the same. This also reflects in the gender parity index. It has declined from 0.72 in 2003-04 to 0.69 in 2005-06 in general candidates and from 0.64 in 2004-05 to 0.63 in SC candidates between 2004-05 and 2005-06. The questions for this fact remain unanswered. This may be a reflection of structural changes which have occurred due to increased privatization of education in the recent past.

**Social Category-wise Distribution:** The population percentage of Schedule caste is about 20%, Schedule Tribes is 8.7% and the Other Backward Classes constitute over 41% of the population. The enrolment of students belonging to SC category is 12.2% while ST category students constitute a mere 4.5%. 30.1% of the total enrolled students come from the OBC category. This is a far cry from the population percent.

**Minorities:** Muslims, who are the dominant minority, constitute 14.2% of the population. But their enrolment ratio is 3.9%. The other minorities fare well in accordance compared to their population.

The process of collection of data on socio-economic and educational status of minority Muslim community has commenced from 2001 Census. According to the latest available figures, Muslim literacy stands at 59.13 per cent. The literacy rate of Muslims with respect to others has increased from 28.3 per cent in 1961 to 65.4 per cent in 2001. Though the achievements are laudable, the country has still to make concerted efforts to make all the people literate.

**Table 4.1: Population by Caste, Gender, Muslims and Literacy in India**

Year	Population					Literacy				
	Total	% of SC to Total	% of ST to Total	% of Female to Total	% of Muslims to Total	Total	SC	ST	Female	Muslim
1961	439234771	14.7	6.8	48.48	..	28.31	10.27	8.53	15.35	..
1971	548159652	14.6	6.9	48.18	..	34.45	14.67	11.30	21.97	..
1981	683329097	15.3	7.6	48.29	..	43.56	21.38	16.35	29.76	..
1991	843387888	16.4	8.0	48.10	..	52.11	37.41	29.60	39.29	..
2001	1028610328	16.2	8.2	48.26	13.43	65.38	54.69	47.10	54.16	59.13

**Source: Census of India (various years), Govt. of India, New Delhi.**

Table 4.1 demonstrates the growth and composition of population in India vis-a-vis the various categories of population. It may be noted that the composition of population is mildly changing in favor of SCs and STs. The proportion of SCs increased from 14.7 per cent in 1961 to 16.2 per cent in 2001. Similarly the proportion of ST also slightly increased from 6.8 to 8.2 per cent between 1961

and 2001. The literacy rate of population including those of marginal groups has also improved partially. For example, in the case of SCs, the literacy rate has increased from a little over 10 per cent in 1961 to 55 per cent in 2001. In case of STs, it increased from less than 9 per cent to 47 per cent during the same period.

### **Constitutional Safeguards and Provisions for Education, Equality and Social Justice**

The Indian Constitution enacted in 1949 and adopted in 1950 enshrines equality and social justice as the cardinal principles of the Indian democratic system. The unique feature of the Indian Constitution is that, it upholds the principle of equality before law and provides for affirmative discriminatory actions to uplift the social, economic and educational well being of disadvantaged groups. The Constitution recognizes the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and educationally Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Minorities and Women as disadvantaged groups.

The ultimate objective of the Constitution framers was to establish a casteless society and creation of a welfare state by eliminating caste hierarchy, caste distinction and caste stigma gradually. This would ensure the dignity of the individual and equality of status for all the citizens of India.

The Preamble of the Constitution also assures Justice; Social, Economic and Political, as well as the Equality of Status and Opportunity with a view to promote among all its citizens the notion of Fraternity or brotherhood which would help in assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

These ideas are clearly reflected in different articles of the Constitution. **Article 14** guarantees Equality before the Law and Equal protection of Law to all persons. **Article 15(1)** prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of Religion, Race, Caste or Sex. **Article 16(1)** guarantees Equality of Opportunity

for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

In order to make the Fundamental Rights to be meaningful for the Marginalized sections of the society, particularly those who have been maltreated and subjugated to social discrimination for ages, the Constitution has provided several provisions in the constitution to safeguard their interests so that they may live with dignity and respect.

**Article 17** provides for abolition of untouchability, and enforcement of any disability arising from it was made punishable as an offence according to law.

**Article 15(4)** was not mentioned in the Constitution when it was enacted. It was introduced as a first amendment to the Constitution. It enabled the government to make special provisions for the advancement of backward classes including the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). As per Article 16(4), the Government was empowered to make reservations to favor the backward and marginalized classes.

Political representation was guaranteed for SCs and STs through the proportionate reservation of seats in all elected legislative bodies from Parliament. At Village Councils, it incorporated the women also. Not only that, the Government of India instituted a programme of 'Compensatory discrimination'. This was an Indian version of affirmative action, which provides for 15% reservation to SCs and 7.5% reservation to STs in all public services as well as in admissions to all public universities and colleges. Article 46 of the Constitution clearly states that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the SCs and the STs, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. The 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution inserting Article 21 (A), in 2002, making eleme

nt- -ary education a fundamental right has made a positive impact on the education of SCs, STs, OBCs and women.

From time to time, the Government of India has launched a number of schemes and programmes for the purpose of enhancing the participation of deprived classes in higher education. Due to the efforts of the Indian government, there is a tremendous increase of participation of marginalized section students in the institutions of higher learning including universities, institutes of national importance and colleges. The Government has made it mandatory for all the institutions imparting higher education to provide 15% reservation to SCs, 7.5% reservation to STs. Apart from reservations, there is also a relaxation given in the minimum qualifying marks for admission for these children. Besides, there is reservation of seats in the hostels for these groups of children as well. These measures will certainly help to make substantial improvement in the participation level of underprivileged sections of the society in higher education.

The SC and ST class students who have secured admission in the notified institutions are given scholarship to meet the requirements of filling the tuition fee, living expense, books and stationery. The scholarship, once awarded, continues till the completion of the course, subject to satisfactory performance. Under the 'Book Bank Scheme' for technical education, the SC and ST students who are pursuing Medical, Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary, Polytechnics, Law, Chartered Accountancy, MBA and Bio-Sciences courses are provided free books. This Scheme also has the provision for sharing of text books by two students at undergraduate level and separate set of books at Post-Graduate level. Not only this, the Government of India provides 17 overseas scholarships each year to the meritorious SC and ST students who wish to pursue higher studies abroad. The SC and ST students pursuing higher education are also provided free remedial coaching to enable them to upgrade their merit. Besides, they are also provided free coaching for entry into services.

In order to provide relevant and good quality higher education in an equitable manner the Government has proposed a number of measures to remove regional, social and gender disparities. The government has proposed to establish 370 new colleges imparting higher education in districts with Gross Enrollment Ratio less than the national average, 14 world class universities and 16 Central Universities in the hitherto uncovered states. The government has also committed itself to provide increased financial assistance institutions located in border, hilly, remote and educationally backward areas. The central government is also going to provide increased support to institutions with large percentage of SC, ST, girls and minority population. Besides, the government is also committed to build more hostels for the students belonging to marginalized sections of the society.

To provide emphasis education at the research level for the marginalized sections there a number of seats reserved and a number of fellowships are awarded. This includes the Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for the schedule caste students, scholarship for Scheduled tribes and for single girl child at the research level. H.R.A and allowances for stationeries are also granted along with these scholarships.

Besides, the National Policy on Education (1968) has called for strenuous efforts to be taken to remove regional imbalance and inter-group disparities in education. Reinforcing the 1968 resolution, the National Policy on Education and Programme of Action (1968/1992) laid emphasis on the removal of disparities and equalization of educational opportunities by addressing the specific needs of those sections, which have been denied equality so far. Both the policies deal with the educational needs of the SCs, STs, Women and Minorities in a comprehensive manner. Special concern has been paid for the neglected sections like nomadic tribes and de-notified tribes. Based on the constitutional commitment and policy directives, planned efforts have been

made since independence to promote educational development in equitable manner. This has resulted in a considerable improvement in the educational status of the deprived groups.

The government had already established that all education till the age of fourteen would be provided free and should be considered mandatory. Although, enforcement of the same has not been done. In order to incentivize the enrolment of girl students, a token amount could be provided to all girl students between the age's of 14 and 18. This could be in the form of monetary terms, free stationary, uniforms and anything else which is desirable. The state governments should be financed adequately to afford and materialize these programmes successfully. This suggestion is based on the following facts which are quite encouraging i.e. Enrolment in India rose significantly after the introduction of the free-midday meals; so, more perks just for girls might give better results. Also the age of fourteen is recommended because it usually around that age, when girls switch over to work in the informal sector (India Together Report, 2008). Also, the public sector institutions have also opened regional career help centers. These centers have helped the women to pursue alternative careers in the formal sector and help them in training themselves successfully so that they can find employment in various sectors in which females has a prominent presence. These sectors could be nursing, teaching, etc. The same centres have also successfully provided counseling for employment and placements for alternative careers of women such as radiographers in medical clinics, receptionists, assistants, etc. It would convince the families of the marginalized sections that facilitating their daughters for higher studies might be a blessing along with a large opportunity.

Thus we see that there has been a vast improvement in the field of higher education. All reforms and suggestions should focus on increasing the education of marginalized section of India and not just the literacy rate. Pragmatic and often suggested measures (From NGOs like the Azad India Foundation and also

UN-Women) include increasing the number of schools that exclusively teach girls, give scholarships to the minorities and SC and ST candidates and establishment of institutions in rural areas and in those areas where the census indicates a low level of female literacy. This could sufficiently motivate the students of marginalized students especially girls to pursue study and work simultaneously. These institutions could create a sustainable model of scholarship for those who wish to pursue higher or university education. This would add as an added motivation. After a general analysis, there could be a certain benchmark of average marks across the nation which can be set by each state government. The marginalized section student scoring above that level should be provided a scholarship worth a suitable amount (varying from region to region). In order to continue the receiving of funds, they should maintain the standards. This will promote quality of effort put in by the marginalized section students at the schools and colleges. Certain scholarships are already provided by the H.R.D Ministry, but access and availability needs to be made uniform across the nation. Funding for the same could come from the ministry itself, state education boards and international funds such as UN-Women fund for Gender Equality.

Despite all the articles the steps taken by the government for improving the representation of the Marginalized section Students, a lot of steps are desired and remain to be taken. In the next chapter we will see the obstacles which are coming in increasing the educational status of the marginalized section students.

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Higher Education, Access, Inequality and Social Justice in Contemporary India**

## **Higher Education, Access, Inequality and Social Justice in Contemporary India**

In the last chapter we have seen that several efforts have been made by the government and many Policy Interventions have been done to promote equality and social justice at higher education level. But, it is a pity that even after more than 70 years of independence, there is no single article in the constitution which directly adheres to the cause of these marginalized sections at the level of Higher Education.

There is a false notion which prevails in India concerning education. Literacy and formal education are considered to be the same. While literacy rates just show the number of people who can read or write with a certain amount of understanding as per the Indian Census since 1991, inspired by the UNESCO definition, education is a more comprehensive and holistic concept which also includes skill development, ability to transfer and independently gain knowledge and more.

Over the last few years, India has been touted to become a significant global power and one of the beacons for other developing nations. The high rate GDP growth rate in 2011-12 (8.2% as per the Economic Outlook by the Government of India) and recent years and its induction in some of the world's elite group of nations, i.e. the BRICS reflects it. All such indicators seem to suggest that India is currently on a path towards becoming a developed nation. But this image could be misleading. There are several key concerns that the Government of India and international developmental organizations must focus on in order to propel India even higher. The foremost concern arose due to privatization of education.

## **Enacting Social Justice within Higher Education**

The higher education sector has responded to public policy-driven social, political and economic imperatives to both increase participation in and broaden access to post secondary education. This section focuses on the second domain of literature, the manifestation of social justice within higher education context. Strategies fall into two general categories — social inclusion and widening participation of students from under-represented social or cultural groups while widening participation strategies aim to increase the participation of non-school leavers in higher education with the aim of increasing the proportion of people in the population who have post-secondary qualifications. Using historical analysis of the evolution of greater access to higher education and outlining of international case studies exemplify the ‘equity principle’ in terms of how access to higher education is organized. Social inclusion is a way ‘to progress fairness’ and that it is advanced by the broadening of access of under-represented groups. Widening participation, that extends and enhances access and the chance to experience the benefits of higher education, and achievement due to higher education of the people of the marginalized sections from under represented and diverse social backgrounds, families, groups and communities. Widening participation also accounts for the emergence of two trends.

Firstly, we can say that the new norms concerning access have led higher education now being described as moving from selective or elite to mass and now universal.

Secondly, globalization has made education more accountable to public scrutiny, international evaluation and comparisons.

## **Privatization and its Consequence**

In the 1990’s, India invited the private companies to invest in higher education sector also. This was done to ease the existing pressure on the then existing

institutions of Public sector. But it had some negative consequences which we will point out later.

Privatization precisely means a form of free market capitalism that signifies the centrality of merits, efficiency and competition regulated by the state apparatus. Its process underlines several dimensions and reflections of society. However, at the policy level, the process is much more complicated. For instance, it asks for selling the whole or part. Like charging for services, contracting out, buying out existing interest groups and repealing monopolies for diluting the public sector, encouraging alternative institutions, withdrawing state institutions, and disinvestment. The public on the other spectrum tends to interact differently or divert their imagination and education starts to be viewed as a commodity. Students in the context of privatization are viewed as inputs and examinations as a measured value for successful output.

**Grace** locates these new objective formations by a robust way of thinking and encouraging academics who engaged in research activities of this kind. Hence, it is a clear fact that there are social implications of the conceptual divide between private and public domain and there are boundaries drawn between these two critical domains. For analytical purpose, private education explains how public education is carried out through private means. In this scheme, public subsidies including tax rebates and land acquisition are handed over to the private education institutions. This has attracted a significant number of entrepreneurial groups to operate education in the private sector. However, the private sector interference has enabled them to impose different kinds of fees upon the students. These practices correspond to a capitalist market situation and results in commodification of knowledge. When pillars of education are reduced to commodities, social values of education are eventually replaced by market values. Who benefits is a fundamental question which lies. It is alleged that the process of privatization has inbuilt class interest. Pooling resources into the privileged top stream of educational institutions for the elite sections will

fundamentally be determined by one's capacity to pay. This allowed the private sector players to thrive and legitimize its interest. The structural changes which occur through investment in higher education demystifies education as a object of public welfare since the major share of the cost is borne by the public, to benefit the private sector and the students pay the major share of the cost.

### **State Minimization for Market Maximization: Changing Commitments in Education**

The recent shift in the Indian economy opened up yet another entry for private universities, both domestically and globally, to enhance qualitative human resources and to contemplate with a new set of requirements in society. The state too has made couple of attempt to rationalize privatization of education. To begin with, while presenting country paper in the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in 1998, HRD ministry of India proclaimed that 'efforts have been mounted for mobilization of resources and recommended for a firm commitment to higher education, institutions of higher education should make efforts to raise their own resources by raising the fee levels, encouraging private donations and by generating revenues through consultancy and other activities'. Following it, the debates on private members Bill for Private Universities in the Parliament in 1995 and the new Act on the Establishment and Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities Regulations, 2003 can be seen in this context. Moreover, the Supreme Court verdict in favor of the private players in education showed the attitude towards private investments in higher education. The basic objective of privatization of higher education in India was to reduce the number of public funded colleges and universities, authorize decentralization of academic administration and promote creativity, innovation and higher standard. In post-reform period, the state brought about new avenues to mobilize alternative resources by raising fee levels, mobilization of internal

and external sources such as sale of output, voluntary donations from industry, student's loan and consultancy. In other words, establishment of self-financing colleges which had twin advantages in effects. Obviously, it reduced the burden of the state, but at the same time these colleges were granted the permission to charge high fees and mobilize their own resources. But the concept of autonomous college and program for their establishment brought severe criticism mainly because of the failure of delivering better education. Moreover, though the proclamation of government was to encourage private funding without commercialization, the real intention was to commercialize education system. Entrepreneurs were invited to decide the fate of the education policy, leading to a new shift in history of higher education in India. The logic was to make education as profitable market venture in favor of industrialists and in an increasingly based market driven economy, open new avenues for market expansion.

There are various interpretations of social justice that exist in the context of education and higher education in particular. Practically, the term social inclusion is used while referring to initiatives which are targeted to create a socially just educational system. This refers to social inclusion of an individual, group or any particular community of society in general and of higher education in particular. **Singh (2011)** provides a response to this conflict by considering social justice in terms of higher education's socio-economic role in establishing knowledge societies in a globalized world.

### **Access and Inclusion**

Access and inclusion needs to be structured within the purview of knowledge societies, noting 'Social justice has kinships and associations with notions of human and socio-economic rights, social inclusion, equity, and access to

resources and capabilities for human wellbeing'. Moreover, social justice in higher education 'requires a multi-faceted, holistic, and contextual approach to understanding the concept of social justice in a broader sense'. Education must deliberately advance towards a social justice agenda which comprises of more theoretical scholarship and data driven research, grounded in social justice that can implement policies and practices, and decisions that influence postsecondary institutions. The higher education policies and practice should embrace a recognitive perspective on social justice so that public policy initiatives aimed at widening participation and social inclusion take into consideration the systemic processes leading to disadvantage which is not constructed in terms of the comparative merit of various groups.

### **Problem of Access**

#### **Enrolment**

The institutions imparting higher education during its initial years largely catered to the elite sections of the society. However, with the adoption of several policies towards inclusion and diversify the intake of higher education institutions, the winds of change are slightly blowing to favor the marginalized social groups including women also. The composition of student community began to change since independence. Now, one can find more number of girls and students from marginal groups on the campuses than what they used to be six decades ago.

**Table 4.1 Enrolment in Higher Education**

<b>Year</b>	<b>PG and Ph.D.</b>	<b>Graduati on</b>	<b>BE</b>	<b>B. Ed</b>	<b>MBBS</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>A. Total Enrolment</b>						
1970-71	136825	1363060	88494	48893	78244	1715516
1980-81	316788	1886428	103195	68250	67822	2442483
1990-91	387684	3285776	241368	92217	84393	4091438
2000-01	692342	7244915	418193	121733	148699	8625882
2002-03	847947	6864812	708643	118593	208465	9516773
2003-04	872252	7052274	772923	114681	223236	9035366
2004-05	845619	6728029	696609	155192	256748	8682197
2005-06	1230054	6741592	1681716	199676	308705	10161743
<b>B. Share of Girls' Enrolment (%)</b>						
1970-71	25.8	24.4	1.0	37.3	22.4	23.6
1980-81	31.7	27.8	3.6	40.9	24.3	27.5
1990-91	32.2	34.7	10.9	44.2	34.3	33.2
2000-01	36.7	37.4	22.3	42.8	40.6	36.8
2002-03	42.3	42.0	22.6	52.0	41.6	40.1
2003-04	42.8	41.5	23.8	49.9	42.0	45.3
2004-05	44.2	41.2	26.4	36.9	36.5	40.1

2005-06	33.6	41.9	26.0	43.7	47.5	38.5
<b>C. Share of Enrolment of SCs (%)</b>						
1990-91	8.7	8.7	5.7	8.4	8.6	8.5
2000-01	10.1	9.6	8.7	12.3	9.6	9.7
2002-03	11.4	12.0	6.7	13.9	13.2	11.3
2003-04	11.6	12.0	6.3	15.7	13.0	11.5
2004-05	12.5	12.7	8.5	12.9	11.5	12.3
2005-06	9.5	13.3	9.7	16.2	14.5	12.3
<b>D. Share of Enrolment of STs (%)</b>						
1990-91	1.8	2.2	1.1	2.3	0.7	2.1
2000-01	2.6	3.0	3.3	5.3	3.6	3.0
2002-03	2.7	3.7	3.2	5.0	4.9	3.6
2003-04	2.8	3.8	2.0	5.5	4.5	3.6
2004-05	4.0	4.4	3.1	5.9	3.7	4.2
2005-06	3.2	4.6	3.5	4.7	6.2	4.3

**Source: Selected Educational Statistics (various years), MHRD, New Delhi.**

As we can infer from the Table 4.1, that the total number of students enrolled at the higher education level has increased significantly as evident from the numbers 1715516 in 1970-71 to 10161743 in 2005-06. This was a ninefold increase. If we take a deep look at the table, we can easily say that the year

1990-91 was a watershed year in the field of higher education. This was the year when India opened its market for the private sector. In 1990, the total number of students enrolled in higher education were 4091438 which increased to 10161743 in 2005-06. Thus in a short span of fifteen years the number of students witnessed a 250 percent rise.

Private sector invested a great deal of capital in the higher education sector. This was because it needed highly skilled resources in terms of man power to keep its progress at a fast track. The privatization of education led to the opening of a large number of colleges due to which a greater degree of enrollment of students was made possible in the sector of higher education. This is evident in the growth of the engineering section which increased from 241368 in 1990-91 to 1681716 in 2005-06. This was seven fold increase. The medical sector and the education sector also saw a significant rise. The total number of students enrolled at the Post Graduation and Research level has also increased significantly from 1990 onwards.

Thus we can see that the higher education sector benefitted after opening the market to private sector. But whether its fruits reached to the marginalized section would be observed later in the subsequent sections of the table.

We can see that the girls ratio in p.g and research level is almost stagnant as compared to 1990-91. It has witnessed a steep fall from 2004-05 to 2005-06. At the graduation level the ratio has been almost stagnant from 2001 to 2005-06. Only Medical and education sector have seen a gradual increase in girls participation ratio. It is a pity that post globalization, the ratio of girls to boys in higher education has remained static with only an increase of 5 percent. This depicts a very sorry situation which entails immediate address.

If we talk about the SC category students, there has been a partial increase in ratio in higher education in comparison to their general counterparts. They have witnessed a fall when compared to 2001 to 2005 in the post graduation and

research courses. But the overall percent when compared to the share in the population is not compatible and presents a sorry picture.

While if we talk about the ST students, they have also experienced a slow growth in the higher education sector.

Thus from the above data, it is quite evident that there is a huge gap in the ratio of population of the marginalized section vis-à-vis their participation ratio in the sector of higher education. If we translate the ratio into real figures we observe that the gap between the privileged class students and the marginalized section students have increased. This is a staggering reality which means that we are far from achieving social justice via the medium of higher education. This gap can only be filled if there is a sustained and concerted effort from the state. The state should ensure that these section of students reap the benefit of the schemes which are been run by the state and central government to promote higher education in the marginalized section students.

Though the Indian higher education system is considered to be the largest system in terms of number of institutions, but in relative terms, only a small proportion of corresponding age population is enrolled in higher education. The data on GER at higher education level are available only for the last three years. The same is given in Table 4.2. The GER at higher education level increased from 9.2 per cent in 2003-04 to 11.6 per cent in 2005-06.

## Gross Enrolment Ratio of Marginalized Section Students in Higher Education

**Table 4.2: Measure of social parity**

General Population					
Year	Girls	Boys	Total	Gender Parity Index	Measure of social parity
2003-04	7.65	10.59	9.21	0.72	..
2004-05	8.17	11.58	9.97	0.71	0.67
2005-06	9.37	13.63	11.61	0.69	0.72

Scheduled Castes					
Year	Girls	Boys	Total	Gender Parity Index	Measure of Social Parity
2003-04	..	..	..	..	..
2004-05	5.20	8.10	6.72	0.64	0.67
2005-06	6.42	10.16	8.39	0.63	0.72

Scheduled Tribes					
Year	Girls	Boys	Total	Gender Parity Index	Measure of Social Parity
2003-04	..	..	..	..	..
2004-05	3.45	6.31	4.86	0.55	0.49
2005-06	4.69	8.59	6.61	0.55	0.57

Source: Selected Educational Statistics (various years), MHRD, New Delhi

However one can also notice from the table 4.2, that there are substantial disparities between gender and castes. The Gross Enrolment Ratio for girls is 9.4 per cent compared to 13.6 per cent for boys in 2005-06. Similarly the Gross Enrolment Ratio for Schedule Caste girls is 6.4 per cent compared to 10.16 per cent for boys in 2005-06. The Gross Enrollment Ratio for Schedule Tribe girls is 4.69 per cent compared to 8.59 per cent for boys in 2005-06. It shows that the GER for girls is almost 4 percentage points lower than the GER for boys across various social groups. Concerted efforts are required to close these gender gaps on the one hand and increase their participation rates on the other.

First we will discuss Gender Disparity. Gender Disparity is manifested in several forms in the Indian education system. Therefore, the solution which seeks to be addressed has to be multi-faceted as well. With strong chauvinistic cultural influences and paucity of social motivation for the 'Under-privileged' Households, the task to address the issue of gender disparity becomes even more difficult and simultaneously more important. This is an issue of issue to which utmost importance has to be given. According to UNESCO, only two from five women in India can read or write. It also reports, that 40% of Indian girls under the age of 14 don't go to school. Also, out of the remaining 60% population of girls who go to school, a major portion belongs to the middle or the higher class families.

Despite several efforts by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (India), their own records reveal that more than a quarter of the girls schools drop-out before completing higher education (25.42%). Severe infrastructural deficits have acted as a deterrent when it comes to reduce the gender disparity. The number of all-girls schools is abysmally low according to Azad India Foundation, which is an independent NGO. Credible analysis carried out by IUFW-India which is an international NGO of high repute has analyzed the statistics given by the census carried out by the Indian government in every

decade. It shows that while the overall literacy rate from 1971 to 2001 has grown from 34.4% to 64.4% while the Male-Female Literacy gap in absolute numbers has decreased from 23.98 million to 21.69 million. Keeping in mind the rapid growth of India's population and the Sex-Ratio on an average, one could interpret that a decrease in the absolute number of illiterate women in India is a reflection of the successful efforts made by the government and other relevant organizations. But if we compare the difference in male and female literates, there is still a huge gap. Also, this gap will only widen as World Bank reports (1999-2000) as the male enrolment is 16.6% greater than female enrolment in the Indian school system.

The last reform that completely focused on the girl child was the addition of the articles. After the National Policy on Education as given in 1986 concerning the girl child's education which was Modified in 1992, it has been more than twenty years that the government has not taken any significant measures since them to amend or update its policies. This is a developmental concern for several reasons. The foremost being the fact that a considerable amount of India's greatest asset, i.e. its Human Resource is going to waste. With less women educated we find that even as 'home-makers' women don't act as producers or service providers in the economy but consumes none-the-less. This state of pseudo-dependency is a sociological, economical and developmental nightmare. Other drawbacks of disparity have been eloquently put by the India Development Gateway (A Government of India initiative) in the following words-

"Numerous Studies show that the illiterate women generally face high levels of maternal mortality, poor nutritional status, low earning potential and little autonomy within the household. A woman's lack of education also has a negative impact on the Health and well being of her children." Another negative effect of the same is the cyclical nature of the issue. An uneducated or illiterate woman would be raised in the same orthodox notions. This hampers

her development as an individual and any offspring. Especially the girl-child is also likely to be brought up devoid of any formal education with the traditional belief that social role and cultural burdens are the priority of women and they don't need any formal education. This traditional part includes child-bearing, cooking, house-keeping etc. This outlook has been jaded for decades now. But it is still prevalent in large sections of the country; especially rural and semi-urban areas.

### **Higher levels of Student Engagement leads to High-Quality Learning**

The commitment of institutions to fostering student engagement is also seen to be a critical factor in retention. **Democratization of Education** (2010) by the state can be a helping hand and that the private institutions should take responsibility for and encourage student engagement, in a more specific vein. Universities need to instigate, sustain and promote students personal, social and academic engagement, particularly those students who face the greatest challenges in transition. Similarly, curriculum should be such that the interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimize the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students. Education should be such that 'the time and effort students devote to activities are empirically linked to the desired outcomes.

Theory of Higher Education requires the embodiment of the students' social and cultural knowledge. It is about how we structure the student learning experience in ways that open it up and make it possible for students to contribute from who they are and what they know approach to engagement. **Trowler (2010)** emphasizes on the importance of student engagement in the context of equality and social justice and cites 'we are persuaded by a large volume of empirical evidence that confirms that strategizing ways to increase the engagement of

various student populations, especially those for whom engagement is known to be problematic, is a worthwhile endeavor. **Zepke and Leach (2005)** go further and suggest that rather than expecting students to fit into the institutional culture, the institutions should adapt their culture to promote the engagement of all the students. In this context, good practice in retention initiatives has been described by **Coley and Coley (2010)** as institutions that ‘have determined a clear methodology to define and identify “at-risk” students, to reach out to students with appropriate resources and support, and to track and monitor student engagement’.

Thus, we can conclude that indiscriminate privatization without considering its fallibility has led to widening of the gap between the marginalized class students. Also, the cultural and social traditions of our country have had a great effect on the education of the girl child. There is no dearth of schemes from the government side, but the modus operandi to approach and access those scheme is missing. So we can conclude that until the socio-cultural tradition of the country is not going to be reformed, the access to higher education will be a mirage.

## **CHAPTER 5.**

## **CONCLUSION**

In the previous chapters we have tried to study the condition of the marginalized section students of India. This study elaborately and conclusively points out the disparity amongst the Marginalized Sections of the Indian Society as far as Higher Education is concerned. The India government has carried out many programmes for the upliftment of the marginalized classes. but due to various reasons the results have not been achieved. One of the foremost reason being the faulty implementation of the government officials due to which the desirable results have not been achieved. The main problem in improving the condition of marginalised section students is that they have no access to the existing government policies so they are unable to take advantage of these policies and improve their condition. Although, the situation of the marginalized class students has improved quite a lot, there is more room for their upliftment. when India adopted the Constitution on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1947 it became the largest working Democracy in the world. More than 350 Articles were enshrined in the constitution to achieve its aim of becoming a welfare state where all the citizens were treated equally without any discrimination on the basis of any ground.

Since, the implementation of the policies by the successive governments for the upliftment of the marginalized groups has been faulty in nature, the gap between the privileged and the marginalized groups has widened. As far as higher education is concerned, the students from the marginalized sections are discriminated vis-à-vis their counterparts in other societies.

In the era of Globalization, India also adopted the market economy in early nineties. It was then that the state started withdrawing its hand gradually from the field of Higher Education. Since then, the private sector displaced public sector in majority of the field in Higher Education. The intention of the government behind inviting private players in the field of higher education was to provide international expertise and exposure in India's lagging higher education. But this led to widening of the huge gap for the marginalized

sections as they already lagged behind on the social index indicators. The private players, while trying to accommodate the elites class in the institutes of higher education left little room for the the marginalized classes. many factors were responsible for it. The Private institutions charged exorbitant fees and other charges which added to the ply of the marginalized section students. The higher education in contemporary India has become a very expensive affair. Marginalized societies find it extremely difficult to survive in the current economic scenario. So they are gradually withdrawing their aspirations in the field of higher education as they lack the resources to meet the expenses required for achieving higher education.

**(1) Higher education in India has been discriminatory in nature:** The ultimate objective of the Constitution Framers has been to establish a casteless society within the framework of a welfare state by gradually eliminating caste hierarchy, caste distinction and caste stigma; thus providing equality of status to all its citizens. The Preamble of the Constitution ensures Justice; social, economic and political and equality of opportunity with a view to promote among all its citizens; Fraternity, their dignity and unity and integrity of the nation. These ideals are clearly reflected in different clauses of the Constitution too. But even after the passage of more than 75 years of achieving status of welfare state, many loopholes remain that do not reflect the vision of the constitution as far as discrimination in many areas and marginalization of weaker section is concerned. The study reveals some of the glaring issues in context of the current scenario. The Indian Constitution enacted in 1949 and adopted in 1950 enshrined equality and social justice as the cardinal principles of the Indian democratic system. The unique feature of the Indian Constitution is that while it upholds the principle of equality before law, it also provides for affirmative discriminatory actions to uplift the social, economic and educational well being of the Marginalized sections of our country.

The Indian Constitution recognizes the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and educationally Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Minorities and Women as disadvantaged groups. The constitution is reflection of our priorities and objectives as a nation. It is the collective will or the conscience of the people of India. Although the Indian constitution has made provisions for primary education, it lacks to provide Marginalized sections of the society any cover as far as higher education is concerned. In Constitution, there is no Fundamental right or any article which is exclusively devoted for accomplishment of this objective. There is no binding clause for the government to remove social disparity in the field of higher education and to use it as a tool for upliftment of the students of the marginalized sections. It is a pity that even though a number of amendments in the Indian constitution since its inception were passed, not a single amendment has been devoted to remove this staggering void.

No single article is devoted exclusively for equality in the field of Higher Education. Also, no measure has been suggested to achieve these objectives. The government has implemented various measures to improve the status of marginalized section students.

It is alleged that the process of privatization has inbuilt class interest as well. Pooling resources into the privileged top stream of educational institutions for the elite sections will fundamentally be determined by one's capacity to pay. This would allow private sector to grow and legitimize class its interest. Structural changes that are being carried out in the investment in higher education, demystifies education as a public good (major share of the cost borne by the public), to private benefit (students pay the major share of the cost).

The syllabus of the Indian education system is also a reflection of the role models of the Indian society. But most of the role models come from the elite

sections of the society. Representation of role models from the marginalized section is restricted and at best missing. This flaw demotivates the marginalized sections and further leads to widen the gap in higher education. Thus, we can see that the marginalized section of india has been improved slightly. The government on its front took several steps to emancipate the condition of the marginalized sections. Several steps were taken. Privatization was done to uplift the condition of the marginalized section students. But its effort were adverse. It widened the already existing gap between the privileged and the marginalized sections of the society. So we can say that the hypothesis is not fully true. This is because the government on its own tried to give special privileges to the marginalized sections.

**(2) Representaion of Marginalized sections students at higher education is disproportionate to their population:** The representation of the marginalized section students in Higher Education is not in accordance to their population. According to the census 2011, while the population percentage of SC's is more than 20%, ST is 8.7% and the OBC constitute 41% of the population, the enrolment of students belonging to SC category is 12.2% while ST category students constitute a mere 4.5%. 30.1% of the total enrolled students come from OBC category. This is a far cry from their population percent. While the Muslims who are the dominant minority constitute 14.2% of the population, their enrolment ratio is 3.9%. so, we can say that the hypotheses, that the representation of marginalized section students is not in proportion to their population.

**(3) Socio-Economic inequality in higher education is reflected in Gender Disparity:** Gender Disparity is the most staggering form of discrimination in the Indian society. Even amongst the marginalized sections, the worst

represented are the women. Gender disparity is the single biggest factor for poor status of social justice amongst the members of the Indian society. Women constitute 49 percent of the Population. But a data of the Ministry of Human Resource Development reveals that the total estimated student enrolment male students are 55% while the female students constitute 45 percent. Even this figure does not depict the clear picture. Most of the representation of the women in the field of higher education comes from the families who have a high socio-economic status. Other section of the society, it is not felt obligatory to educate the girl child as they are not considered to be bread winners. So, it is not felt necessary to educate them till a higher level.

**(4) Marginalized section students are lagging behind on the vital issues like access, equity and equality:** The government in the 11th Plan, chalked out the goal to expand inclusive and quality education. This would essentially mean that increase in enrolment will have to come from the groups whose GER is low. These groups include schedule tribe, scheduled caste, women, religious minorities like Muslims, OBC's. To provide quality education to these sections who constitute lower access to higher education is a serious issue has that has to be paid attention. An improved access to quality education will require special attention for improvement in the language skills and other capabilities so that they are able to cope up with the education system in the universities and colleges. The issue of quality education cannot be de-linked from that of inclusiveness. In the 11th plan, there has been a proposal to set up Equal Opportunity Office to deal with all schemes for these social groups. These will help to promote inclusive education with quality. Another important constituent for improvement of quality in higher education is the initiative for academic and administrative reforms in universities and colleges education system. It is also envisaged that initiative should be taken for the promotion of relevant education. The Plan recognized that relevant education will involve not only

providing knowledge to the students but also imparting the skills associated with the subjects. The UGC took stock of the curriculum at various level of higher education and set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor Yash Pal to come with a framework. In the spheres of vocational and technical education, initiatives have been taken by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to expansion of vocational and technical education. But despite these efforts, the enrolment ratio of the marginalized section students have increased only by a small margin. Even if look at the increase in enrolment, we observe that it has been in non-technical courses like Social Sciences etc. So we can conclude, that on the vital issues like access, equity and quality, the hypothesis that Marginalized section students are still lagging behind in comparison to the students of the forward stratum holds true.

So, we can conclude that education in general and higher education in specific has always been a means of achieving higher mobility for the marginalized sections of the society. It provides a level playing field and a spring board to all those who aspire to live a life with dignity, success and social justice and equality. It is pertinent therefore, that the marginalized societies should be given opportunity to pursue higher education to bring paradigm shift in the social structure and to make them equal stake holders in the development of the nation. Thus it is vital for the government to take vital steps to ensure parity among all the section of the society.

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