

## **Awareness and Effectiveness of Educational Schemes for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes in Coimbatore District**

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### **1. Abstract**

Educational schemes for marginalized communities such as SC/ST were introduced by the Government of India with the aim of providing equal opportunity for scheduled tribe and scheduled caste to empower them with free educational facilities. For such programs to be effective, SC/ST members need to be aware of them and need to have a positive attitude towards them. However, due to the practice of untouchability and the remoteness of their dwellings, SCs and STs have suffered isolation from mainstream population for several centuries. As a consequence, they continue to suffer from a high degree of educational exclusion. Upliftment of SCs and STs, both economically and socially, will be only possible through inclusive education efforts. This study focus on the role of awareness on educational schemes in attaining primary and secondary education among SC/ST communities in two rural villages in Coimbatore. The major findings of the study reveals that most of marginalized communities continue to remain unaware of the educational schemes and are unable to utilize all the provisions of the schemes.

Keywords: educational schemes, upliftment, backward class, untouchability, low literacy, awareness

### **2. Introduction**

Education is very much important for the overall development of the nation so it should be delivered equally without showing discrimination on the basis of caste, color, creed, religion and so on. Different sets of issues are facing by the tribal group in the rural area. Due to lack of awareness, education and literacy rural villages of India are facing many constrains and pitfalls [1]. The empowerment of the disadvantaged groups will only possible through the education but it is hard to access because of lack of proper transportation and other infrastructural facilities [2].

Irula community is a primitive tribal community and is the second largest group existing in Tamilnadu usually has the habitat near the areas of Western Ghats Mountain. Tribal children those who are interested can complete the secondary level education but the problem is that they have to walk kilometers from the house to reach the schools in the cities because due to lack transportation facilities in the tribal area.

Arunthathiyar is a dalit community which is facing serious oppression and discrimination in the society. Most of the people living in the Arunthathiyar community are living in the rural areas of Tamilnadu.

In order to accomplish better literacy rates inside the nation, Government establishes certain schemes which support and helps to empower the citizen with proper accessibility to educational facilities. While considering all the citizen in a country those who are underprivileged also should get equal benefit from the schemes for acquiring free educational facilities. Even though all these provisions are present today the dropout rates and burden among parents of backward classes to send their child to school is remaining unchanged. The major root cause may be the lack of awareness among the parents on educational schemes and poor beneficial status of the schemes.

According to the policy note 2013-2014 of Adi dravidar tribal welfare department of Tamil Nadu government exhibit that funds are allocated to ensure the socio economic and educational development under various schemes for ensuring infrastructural facilities for the drinking water, link roads, house-sites, housing, schools, hostels, health centers, community halls etc. The literacy rate of the students belong to SC/ST caught a gradual increase according to the latest statistical data produced by the government of Tamil Nadu [3].

In the present era of educational expansion and the accessibility of education given the most consideration by all the groups in the society especially for the unprivileged group by introducing increased construction of schools, mid-day meal programs, increased parental demand for schooling, and growing educational requirements by employers. Thus up to a certain level, the educational attainment among the disadvantaged groups and the privileged group was in low in educational levels [4].

According to the different social class in the society better infrastructural facilities, educational quality, and language skills in English play major criteria in choosing the school [5].

The literacy rates of the unprivileged community are still behind the expected level even if the government has implemented various educational schemes for their educational upliftment. There is a need for conduction of research in this area to find out the actual cause of the educational backwardness among the SC/ST community in spite of availability of educational schemes. Thus a pilot study was conducted in this area with following objectives.

### **3. Objectives**

- > To find out the level of awareness among the parents on various educational schemes
- > To review the effectiveness of different educational programmes and their impact on SC/ST Community
- > To analyze whether the schemes make any difference or benefits to the family
- > To study the factors responsible for school dropouts among SC/ST children

#### 4. Hypothesis

Parental awareness about the various educational schemes and ability to utilize all the provisions of the schemes effectively may result in access to better educational facilities for their child.

#### 5. Research Questions

The main research questions are:

Whether the parents of SC/ST students are aware about the educational schemes?

Which educational schemes are aware to them?

Whether the parents are able to utilize the provisions of the scheme?

Do any of the schemes make any kind of difference to the family?

What are the main issues facing by the parents even if the schemes are present?

How the parents are informed about the educational schemes?

#### 6. Review of Literature

According to the latest statistics by UNESCO says that around 44 million non-school going children will be present in Asia alone itself even by 2025. Based on the Indian survey conducted by MHRD the enrollment ration among the OBC students had got increased but even though the educational facilities are present the literacy rates among the backward classes community remaining in a low level.

Article 51A (k) of the Indian constitution states that it is the fundamental duty of the parents or guardian of the child between the age of six and fourteen years should provide with opportunities for getting the education. Then also the situation of the educational status of the disadvantaged group is in a worse condition even after 70 years of Independence. In the early, stage the government has not implemented programmes for the disadvantaged community but the schemes have changed and several schemes were introduced by the government. Different factors like socio-economic condition, societal attitude, parents interest in providing educational opportunities for their child, awareness on the educational avenue which able to achieve an increase in literacy rates [6].

Various types of incentives have been launched by the central government in order to attract the scheduled caste and scheduled tribal communities towards education [7].

The provision of the incentive schemes is not only for the development of the child in education but it also supports parents by reducing the cost of the child to send to school. A large number of parents are there who is unaware about the schemes; those who are aware about the schemes are significantly acquiring the benefits [8].

Even though the government has introduced several schemes and spending enormous expenditure on incentives for the educational purpose the target group including parents belonging to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes wanted to spend money for the educational attainment of their child mainly because of the irregular and inappropriate distribution of the schemes [9].

In different social strata, there is educational inequality which results in the widening of educational growth based on the research on educational stratification [10].

To reduce the educational inequality need- based actions or positive approach should be practiced as an alternative to available policy intervention if the educational policies and schemes fail to eradicate the disadvantages of unprivileged groups [11].

During each five-year plan, the government has been allocated fund for the expenditure for special educational schemes for the marginalized group on Fifth Five Year Plan (1974–1978) allocated 0.6% whereas the Eighth Plan (1992–1997) allocated 1.67%, and the Ninth Plan (1997–2002) allocated 1.97%. Scheduled tribal students have less access towards elementary education than scheduled caste students [12].

Scholarships and fellowships, mid-day meal, uniforms, stationary and books included in the provision of the educational schemes, among these mid-day meal scheme initiated by the government is the largest programme in order to achieve universal education for all [13].

Educational schemes providing free textbooks and meals for the children belong to the tribal and dalit groups in primary level education will boost the upper educational levels among the children together with the provision of residential middle schools (ashram school), reservations in higher education and scholarships. Many families do not want to send their child to the ashram schools because of the poor educational quality, lack of infrastructural facilities and distance of school from the habitat which leads to increased number of dropouts [14].

On the other side, the tribal and the dalit group criticizes on the educational schemes by highlighting about the poor implementation and ineffectiveness of these schemes [15].

Even though the government has brought up different schemes such as reservation of seats among the college level education, the primary schools will showcase discrimination which prevents the unprivileged to utilize and get the benefits of the provision of the schemes. According to the argument of Mendelsohn and Vicziany(1998) the policies directly treat the whole population but not the disadvantaged group even if the parents show a desire for their child education [16].

## **7. Research Methodology**

### Research Design

Exploratory research design was used as research design.

### Sampling procedure

Random sampling procedure was used to collect the sample for this study.

### Sample population

A total number of 40 parents were selected for the conduction of survey in which 11 fathers and 29 mothers participated. 57.5% selected samples belonged to scheduled caste and 42.5% belonged to the scheduled tribal community. Scheduled tribe belongs to Irula community and scheduled caste belongs to Arunthathiyar community.

### Tools

Self-made survey questionnaires were used for data collection. Open ended questions were included to collect Qualitative data and for exploring possibilities of any other related concepts for future studies.

### Data analysis

Quantitative analysis of data was done by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences software application. Open question component were analyzed qualitatively.

## 8. Result

In this study, the results show that 27.5% of father and 72.5% of the mother have participated because mothers were agreed more to attend the survey than fathers. 15% of parents have age below 40 age of the parents below 30 were about 16%. 18% of parents belonged to age group of 31-40 of the sample undergone the survey. Among the total respondents, 80% of fathers going for manual work and 20% of them are doing agricultural work. 60 % of occupations of mothers are manual work and 27.5% are housewives, 5% of the mother doing occupation as part of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), remaining 7.5% mothers have other work such as tailoring, agriculture etc. it is clear that in majority of the family both parents are going for occupation.

While considering the days of absence in the school during the last academic year 72.5% students were absent between 1-15 days, 20% of students were absent between 16-30 days, 5% of students absent for 31-40 days, 2.5% students were absent for 46-60 days the reason for the absenteeism during the academic year is due to lack of transportation facilities and long distance of walking to hire the bus to school also creating health problems in children. 92.5% of children went to school from home. Only 7.5% of children is staying in the hostel for study purpose.

Around 87.5% students enrolled in government schools while only 12.5% students were enrolled in private school. Poor financial capability of the parents is the reason behind the increased enrollment of children in a government school. Some parents enrolled their children in private school because they wanted their children to access better educational facilities that provided than a government school.

Majority of the parents want to educate their child up to higher education (57.5%). According to the interest of the child, parents like to send their child comes around 27.5% may be because presently parents are aware of the need of the education.

Parents are facing some issues regarding sending their child to the school. Poor financial assistance has graded as the highest issue (40%) secondly comes lack of transportation facilities (32.5%). 47.5% of parents are unaware about the free transportation facilities scheme. 37.5% have free transportation facilities to send their child to school parents because those who are eligible for the provision of transportation scheme may decrease in number. 52.5% of parents reported that free transportation was not available to send their child from home. 42.5% of parents are facing issues regarding lack of transportation facilities. Issues reported by the parents includes unavailability of free transportation facilities to male child and more than one child from the family will do not get the provision of free transportation scheme. 60% of parents told that scheme only making a small difference to them the percentage of availability of free transportation itself projects that the scheme is very poor in delivering benefits to parents.

62% strongly disagreed that they are not aware of the free hostel scheme only less number of children staying in the hostel for study purpose (7.5%). 55% parents neither agree nor disagree about toward the question that whether the scheme can make any difference due to lack of proper awareness. 22.5% parents were only strongly agreed that the scheme makes a big difference, parents of children those who are staying in the hostel agree that from the scheme they are able to educate the children.

62.5 % strongly agreed that they are aware of the scholarship scheme. 37.5% told that they are not satisfied with the amount of scholarship because 67.5% told that they have a

financial problem even if they have scholarship and time delay of scholarship availability as part of corruption. 60% strongly agreed that they got help for applying for the scholarship.

60% of parents are aware of the free textbook and uniform.

Parents strongly agreed (55%) that they have heard about the mid-day meal scheme. Only 27.5% parent only agreed that their children like the meals delivered from the school because 55.5% children have health-related problems due to the intake of meals delivered from school so 57.5% students carry meals from home.

Parent got information from teachers (77.5%) neighbor (7.5%) and children (15%). According to the parents, the main reason for the school dropout is lack of ability to grasp lessons (25%), the medium of instruction (22%), lack of transportation facilities (20%).

80% of the parents agreed that they are interested to attend the awareness class sessions on various educational schemes.

## 9. Findings & Discussion

The key findings evolve after this study explain that most of the parents are suffering a lot to send their children to the school even the educational schemes are existing for the children to pursue a good education. Majority of the parents are highly motivated to send their child to school for getting a higher education. Some of them reveal that according to the interest of the child they support the children in accessing education.

Poor financial stability leads to increasing number of dropouts among children after the primary education. Parents do not have a perfect awareness about the educational scheme, in the other case the educational scheme that is aware to them has a minor effectiveness in making any difference that has the capability to decreasing the burden of sending the child to school because the ratio of benefits from the educational schemes was not satisfactory. Lack of transportation facilities from the home to school creates a big burden to send the children to school safely. This was act as the core factor for the irregularity in attending the class by the children.

According to the parents, the payable auto service is only up to class five; those who are studying in the higher classes want to walk a long distance to hire a bus to reach the school. Because of peer pressure creates a tendency to wandering in between the way to the school increases absenteeism, health issues occurs due to tiredness of walking to a long distance to the bus stop.

While considering the hostel scheme most of the students are not admitted to the hostel facilities.

Lack of awareness is one of the major reasons for the decreased number of admitting the children into the hostels for the education purpose. The ill feeling among the parents on security issues especially in the case of girl child the parents refuse to admit them to stay in the hostel which increases the dropouts among girl child. Proper counseling sessions with parents can act as a technique to change the attitude of parents towards admitting the children in the hostel and able them to make utilize the provision of the hostel scheme.

Scholarship deliverance to the girl child in the family helps to reduce the gender inequality in accessing education. But some of them are not getting the scholarship. Parents of the eligible children for getting the scholarship are not satisfied with the scholarship amount because the amount of scholarship fails to tackle the financial issues of parents for child education. The teacher is the only source or point of contact that deliver the awareness

about the scholarship towards directly to the parents or through the students and helps in applying for the scholarship.

The supply of food to the students according to mid-day meal scheme makes an only slight difference. Some of the students refuse to take the mid- day meal due to impurity it also reasoned for causing a problem to the stomach. Free-textbook and uniforms are accessible to all the children that make satisfied benefit while comparing to other schemes.

In the earlier time incentives and awards are delivered to all the students who passed the higher education, now the government had reduced the provision of delivering incentives and awards to the students who score higher marks in the board exams. So the beneficial status of the incentives and awards also reduces to a great extent. Parents those who are motivated by understanding the value of education admitted their children in private schools for getting a better quality education without considering the burden of the family mainly because of two reasons such as they want to make their children to learn English and due to the unhygienic condition of the toilet facilities in government schools. According to the parents, the children's who studies in the private school does not get any support from the government because the provisions of the educational scheme are only applicable to the students those who are studying in a government school. The students who study in private school not even getting scholarship amount whether he/she belongs to Scheduled Caste. Dropouts among the backward community are also mainly because of the reasons such as lack of ability to grasp lessons, the medium of instruction in schools and lack of transportation facilities.

## 10. Conclusion

Education is the fundamental right of every citizen in the world. Only through education, people can able to empower in the society for achieving better quality life. The role of education is inevitable for attaining economic and social comfort of the backward classes in the coming generation. The respected authorities for welfare deliverance towards the unprivileged group in the society want to generate awareness among the people in the weaker section on the need of education and the available educational provisions and schemes that supports the upliftment and reduces the burden of the parents who have school going children. This pilot study has revealed that lack of awareness on the various educational schemes and their ineffectiveness. Further studies should be conducted in this area for advocating for the community and providing policy level suggestions to the government departments for improving the educational outcome of unprivileged community.

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