

Deprivation of India's Scheduled Caste Children from Primary Education

Lakhan Singh¹

Research Scholar, International Institute for Population Science, Mumbai

As per the Census 2001, the total population of the Scheduled Castes (SC) in India is 166,635,700, which is 16.3 per cent of the total population (Registrar General, 2005). The 60 per cent of all SC children of primary school-going age (6-10 years) residing in the six states of India; Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh which are most backward states in terms of socio-economic indicators. Although, the 83rd constitutional amendment recognizes that education as a fundamental right of all Indian citizens, disparities continue to be pronounced in primary education between the upper caste and lower castes. Moreover, Government of India has a provision in constitution, which contains explicit state obligation towards protecting and promoting social, economic, political and cultural rights. "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation" (Directive Principle of state Policy, Article 46). However, the gap between upper and lower castes children with respect to completion of primary education is still persisting due to various socio economic factors.

Objective

The objective of the present study has been formulated In view of above mentioned review literature. The broad objective of the study is to understand the underlying causes of disadvantaged in primary education for scheduled caste children.

Data source:

The data for the present study has been taken form third National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), 2005-06 of India which is equivalent to Demographic Health Surveys (DHS). Apart from individual level information, NFHS-3 has collected household level information also which covered information about 500000 persons from all over India. The unit of analysis is household member who is usual resident as well as visitors who stayed in the selected households the night before the household interview.

Variables used for analysis:

The following variables are used in analysis in order to achieve the study objective: Age of Household members, sex of household members, type of place of residence, Household head's religion, household head's caste, highest education level attained, school attendance status, wealth index of household,

highest year of education completed, state, and variable of main reason not attending school.

Statistical techniques:

Keeping the objective in mind the frequencies are generated. Bi-variate and tri-variate analysis has also been done. To find out most significant predictors for attending primary level schooling logistic regression analysis were also carried out.

Result and discussion:

Scheduled caste (SC) children remain disadvantaged across many social indicators. Estimates from the National Family Health Survey 2005-06 suggest that 28 per cent of the SC population belong to lowest wealth quintile households. Analysis of data shows that 67 percent of children ages 10-12 years have completed primary education which is 29 percentage points up from NFHS-2. Literature suggests that the disadvantaged children are suffered from multiple forms disadvantages, example being SC, girls, poor, living in a poor and/or remote location, etc. Therefore, multiplicity forms of deprivation have been examined in this study.

It is observed from analysis that SC population is disadvantaged when compared to other castes. Just 21 percent of SC children have completed primary education compare to 70 percent of children belonging to other caste. Similarly in case of SC girl, this percentage is 22 vs. 69. Although it is important to mention here that ST children are in some ways even more disadvantaged than SCs in terms of education status. Further analysis has been carried out to see the type of outcomes of schooling by castes of children age 5-18 years. It was found that only 64 percent SC children age 5-18 years are currently attending school compared to 72 percent of other castes groups and 22 percent of SC children have never attended school compared to only 16 percent of children from other caste. Percentage of dropped out from schooling is also higher for SC children (15%) compare to 12 percent of other castes children. Deprivation from primary education in SC children was also examined by their households' economic status. NFHS-3 has defined economic status of household by taking household assets and housing characteristics. The analysis indicates that completion of primary education among SC children is lower is in all categories of economic status compare to other castes children. There is hypothesis that dropped out from schooling is generally high for SC children than other caste children, the study finds the same. In order to understand why this drop out is higher for SC children an analysis were carried out. Table shows that the cost of education is a single variable which is significantly affecting the dropping out from schooling for SC children than children of other casts.

Reasons for dropping out from schooling, Percentage of children age 5-18,
NFHS-3

	SC	ST	OTHERS	Total
School too far away	2.56	3.21	4.15	3.69
Transport not available	0.74	0.63	1.05	0.94
Further education not considered necessary	3.0	2.5	4.3	3.8
Required for household work	10.4	14.2	11.0	11.2
Required for work on farm/family business	4.9	7.1	5.8	5.7
Required for outside work for payment in cash or kind	6.1	4.5	6.6	6.3
Costs too much	22.4	12.9	15.9	17.1
No proper school facilities for girls	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.1
Not safe to send girls	1.1	0.6	1.5	1.3
No female teacher	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
Required for care of siblings	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.5
Not interested in studies	28.3	29.6	27.5	27.9
Repeated failures	6.6	8.0	6.0	6.3
Got married	4.7	3.6	5.2	4.9
Did not get admission	2.6	4.4	2.8	2.9
Other	4.9	6.5	5.6	5.5
Don't know	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7
	100	100	100	100