

**PARTICIPATION OF SCHEDULED CASTE CHILDREN
AND TEACHERS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION – A REVIEW**

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BACKDROP

Scheduled Castes (SCs) group is among the most socially and educationally disadvantaged groups in India. According to the Census 2011 SCs account for 17 per cent of the total population. The SCs participation in schooling has remained very low, despite several provisions made since independence in the Constitution. The Constitution of India through various Articles guarantees the protection of every citizen from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article 46), with equality before law (Article 14), and enjoins upon the State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds of caste (Article 15 (1)). Abolition of untouchability and its practice in any form is totally forbidden (Article 17) and Constitution made it mandatory that no citizen on grounds only of caste or race, be subjected to any disability and restriction (Article 15 (2)). It also empowered the State to make provisions for reservation in educational institutions (Article 15 (4) and (5)), and in appointments for posts in favour of SCs (Articles 16 (4), 16(4A), 16(4B) and Article 335). The Parliament has enacted the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955, renamed as Protection of Civil Rights Act, in 1976. To check and deter atrocities the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 has also been enacted.

The affirmative action of the Government has been instrumental in bringing about changes among the status of Scheduled Castes over the decades since independence. With all these Constitutional

provisions and safeguards in place, the education sector has made special provisions of scholarships and many other incentives for escalating the participation of SC children in education. The Scheduled Castes are notified in 31 States/UTs of India and there are altogether 1,241 individual ethnic groups notified as Scheduled Castes in different States/UTs. The growth rate for the SC population has been recorded at 21 per cent between the decade from 2001-11. During the same time frame the literacy rate for the SC population has increased by 10 points from 56 per cent in 2001 to 66 per cent in 2011. (GoI 2011)

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 also made special emphasis for the upliftment of the SCs and stated that “the central focus in the SCs educational development is their equalisation with the non-SC population at all Stages and levels of education, in all areas and in all the four dimensions - rural male, rural female, urban male and urban female.” (GoI: 1986, p. 6) The modified policy in 1992 further stated that “the new policy will lay special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity by addressing to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far.” (GoI: 1986, p. 7) In the context of teachers it pronounced that “the status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society; The methods of recruiting teachers will be reorganised to ensure merit, objectivity and conformity with spatial and functional requirements.” (GoI 1986, p. 21)

This preview suggests for a status review of the SC students and teachers to analyse as to why despite the Constitutional provisions since independence the SCs are still lagging behind in the education sector. It also needs to be analysed the issues due that are critical for enhancing the development of SCs in education both for children as well as teachers which needs to be traced in totality. Since the NPE there has been a consistent expansion of education among the SC students which is evident from the gross

enrolment ratio which has increased from 68 in 1986 to 117 in 2011. The enrolment of SC children at the primary stage increased by 28.8 per cent during the period from 2000-01 to 2012-13. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for SC children at the upper primary stage also increased by 24.9 percentage points during the period 2000-01 to 2012-13. At the elementary stage GER for SC children increased by 22.1 percentage points during the same period. (GoI 2012).

Similarly the participation of SC teachers in schools increased from 6 per cent in 1978 to 11 per cent in 1986 and subsequently to 12.45 per cent in 2005. (NCERT 2005 and GoI 2011) In terms of policy directives it has been stated that recruiting teachers from marginalized communities is vital for achieving the goal of bridging the gap between the SC and the non SC children. It may be restated that as state is committed for providing services to the excluded groups by appointing teachers from the similar background as it is assumed that the teachers from the similar background as of the students would enhance the participation of children from the disadvantaged groups. The data indicates that the SC teachers in schools have more than doubled from 1978 to 2003 from 7 per cent to 11 per cent. (GoI 2011) The participation of SC teachers has been almost similar in terms of numbers since 2005. The data on the SC teachers collected by the District Information System for Education (DISE) since 2006 reveals a different trend as the percentage distribution of SC teachers to total teacher's account for 12.88 in 2011-12 which has decreased to 12.44 in 2013-14 (NUEPA 2014).

This paper is an attempt to review the status of participation of SC children and SC teachers in the school education since the improvement at the participation level is visible numerically for both the teachers as well as children yet remarkable change has yet to be attained. The change must not be limited merely in the quantitative terms but it must also be visible at various levels from

social as well economic spheres which makes positive impact on the development and status of the SC population. Researchers often point out that the increase in the teachers from the same group would bring a positive impact in the status of the SC group which is a policy prescription as well, but what has been the progress so far needs to be examined.

This paper focuses on trends in participation of the SC children as well as SC teachers in school education in five sections. First section puts in place the policy perspective in relation to the SC group. The second and third section traces the participation of the SC children and SC teachers in schools. Fourth section presents the issues related to the participation levels of the SC children and teachers and finally what could be the way forward for the progress in education for the SC group. It is expected that the review displays an overview regarding the development of the SC children as well as teachers in the school education.

POLICY PRESCRIPTIONS FOR ENHANCING SC PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

The Indian Constitution is committed to provide equality to all the citizens of the nation under Article 46 of the Constitution as mentioned earlier. On similar lines the Directive Principles of the State Policy also focuses on providing education and economic security to the weaker sections of the society. To quote Article 46 “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 Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of social exploitation.” For achieving the stated goal, Articles 15 (4), 15 (5), 16(4), 16 (4 A), 16 (4 B), 164(1) proviso, 275 (1) first proviso, 243 D, 243 T, 330, 332, 335, 338 to 342 and the entire Fifth and Sixth Schedules of the Constitution deal with special provisions for implementation of the objectives set forth in Article 46. The constitutional commitments made in favour of SCs prompted the

policy makers and the planners to accord high priority for the welfare and development of these groups right from the beginning of the country's developmental planning, launched in 1951. During the fifties the general developmental programmes were designed to cater adequately for the SCs. Efforts were also made to ensure that the benefits of economic development accrued more and more to the relatively less privileged classes of the society in order to reduce inequalities. The developmental programmes were gradually diverted towards the basic goal of achieving a rapid increase in the standard of living of these people through measures which promoted equality and social justice. During 1979, an innovative strategy of the Special Component Plan (SCP) for SCs was launched. The special strategy was expected to ensure that all the general development sectors, both at the Central and State levels, earmark funds for SCs in proportion to their population so that adequate benefits from all the concerned sectors flow to the disadvantaged group. In support of the special strategy of SCP the Government of India has also been extending Special Central Assistance (SCA) to the States and the UTs, as an additive to fill up the gaps, especially in the family-based income generating programmes. As a result, there has been a substantial increase in the flow of funds for the development of SCs besides enlargement of the share of benefits for SCs under all the development programmes. In the year 1985-86, the former Ministry of Welfare was bifurcated into the Department of Women and Child Development and the Department of Welfare. Simultaneously, the Scheduled Castes Development Division was moved from the Ministry of Home Affairs and a separate Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment was established in May, 1998 to ensure a focused attention in improving the Scheduled Caste Community. Special focus was laid in the Northeastern regions under guidelines issued by the Planning Commission by which all the central government departments have to earmark 10 per cent of their gross budgetary support for specific programmes for the development of Scheduled Castes. This is significant, given that the Scheduled Caste

population comprises only 2% of the total population in this region. Moreover, the region had been identified as an untouchability and atrocity-free area. In 2006 the SCP was renamed as Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) to ensure proportionate flow of Plan resources for the development of Scheduled Castes. (GoI Annual Report, 2013)

Literacy among Scheduled Castes

The overall literacy status for the SCs has improved from 37 per cent in 1991 to 55 per cent in 2001 and 66 per cent in 2011 which accounts for increase by 29 points since 1991. The gap between the rest of the population for the same period also decreased by 7 points. (Table 1) The enrolment for the SC children increased at a faster pace during this period happened due to various factors. One, the period from 1991 to 2001 laid special drive for achieving the universalisation of school education. Secondly, there was launch of various programmes across nation which resulted in the improved literacy rate with the support of the international funding like World Bank through District Primary Education Project (DPEP). It may be noted that the literacy rates among the SCs has increased over the years but the levels are still very low. The gap in educational status between SC males and females remains the same in 1991 and 2001 but has reduced in 2011. Census data shows that there is severe gender gap in literacy rate is a reality among SCs with the gap of 18 points. The literacy levels have improved drastically but it still far away from the rest of the population which stands at 74 per cent according to Census 2011 (Table 1).

Table 1
All India Literacy Rates for Scheduled Castes (%)

Year	Literacy Rate of SC			Rest of the Population			Gap Between the Rest of the Population		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1991	37	50	24	52	64	39	15	14	15
2001	55	67	42	65	75	54	10	8	12

2011	66	75	57	74	81	65	8	6	8
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Source: Census of India, various years.

The Government of India has introduced various schemes and reservation policies for mainstreaming the SC students in the education sector as discussed in the earlier section. The government provides a number of incentives to the SC children in the form of stipends and scholarships, books and equipment grants, uniform etc. for retaining SC students at all stages of education. Such incentives attract the children to schools but there are other social and economic issues that restrict children from coming to school who belong to the disadvantaged groups as most of them are from poor background.

Participation of the SC Children in Schools

As has been discussed at the policy level there have been various measures for protecting the SCs as a group and to bring and retain SC children in the schools. But it must be considered that apart from social reasons there are other issues as well which are related to the economic reasons as well due to which the SC children are unable to continue at the higher levels of schooling. The children belonging to the SCs are from the poor families. Most of the policy interventions have been made context specific specifically for the children from remote areas and migrated population which makes an effort to address such issues. The Government has made certain specific strategies in practice such as the provision of adequate infrastructure for elementary schooling in districts with concentration of SC population. This strategy goes beyond the access as it further provides financial assistance to each district for special innovative activities to promote education of SC children. Several programmes are also designed to sensitise teachers to promote equitable learning opportunities and to address issues relating to class discrimination. In addition to this there also has been representation of SC members in Village Education

Committees and School Management Committees as prescribed under the constitution (GoI 2013).

Enrolment

All the interventions boosted the enrolment rates among the SC children at the primary level between the years 2000-2014 it increased from 97 per cent to 113 showing the improvement by 16 points

Table 2
Gross Enrolment Ratio of SC Children in Elementary Education (%)

Years	Primary			Upper Primary			Elementary		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2000-01	107.3	85.8	96.8	76.2	53.3	65.3	97.3	75.5	86.8
2001-02	103.1	82.3	93	80.3	57.7	69.6	95.7	74.6	85.6
2003-04	93.1	83	88.3	79.4	63.4	71.9	89	77.2	83.4
2005-06	126.3	110.2	118.6	81	65.1	73.5	109.5	93.7	102
2007-08	125.5	124.3	128.9	82.1	78.1	80.2	109.3	107.3	108.4
2009-10	127.8	128.7	128.3	90.5	86.6	88.6	113.9	112.9	113.5
2012-13	115.9	117.7	116.8	96.7	103	99.7	109.1	112.6	110.8
2013-14	112.1	114	113	95	101.9	98.3	105.9	109.7	107.7

Source: Statistics of School Education, 2007-08, MHRD, GoI: Educational Statistics at a Glance 2011, MHRD, GoI: Statistics of School Education, 2010-11, MHRD, GoI: and U-DISE, NUEPA

. It may also be noted that there has been a considerable progress in the participation of girls by 28 points during the same period

which may be the results of the specific focus on the girls in all the programmes. (Table 2) During the same time higher enrolment for girls has been recorded by 49 points whereas for boys it increased by only 18 points at the upper primary level. Such an increase may be attributed to the *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abiyaan* which has been implemented since 2009. The analysis of the data at elementary level illustrates that for the same period the total enrolment of SC children increased by 20.9 points for total SC children, 34.2 points for girls and for boys by 9 points (Table 2).

The SC children enrolled in the year 2013-14 as percentage of total enrolment in elementary education was 19.72 per cent while the share of SC population in the total population was 16.6 per cent in 2011. (Census 2011) Girls constituted 48.46 per cent of the total SC children enrolled in elementary education during the year 2013-14 (U-DISE, NUEPA). At the secondary level GER of SC students increased by 22.2 points from 45.4 per cent to 67.6 per cent during 2004 to 2012 and for girls it increased by 25.9 points and 19 points for boys. At the senior secondary level GER increased by 12.4 points from 23.2 per cent to 35.8 per cent. The GER increased by 10.8 points for boys and for girls increased by 14.4 points. In total the GER for both secondary and senior secondary level increased by 19.2 percentage points from 32.6 per cent to 51.8 per cent (Table 3).

Table 3
GER of SC Students at Secondary Levels (%)

Year	Classes IX-X			Classes XI-XII		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2004-05	52.2	37.6	45.4	26.6	19.1	23.2
2007-08	55.8	48.9	52.6	30.1	25.3	27.9
2009-10	71.2	63.5	67.6	37.4	33.5	35.6

Source: GoI: Educational Statistics at a Glance 2011, MHRD

At the secondary and senior secondary levels too there has been a substantial increase in the enrolment of the SC students but when is compared with the elementary level it is not at the similar pace. The GER increased by 17.3 percentage points for boys, while the GER for girls increased by 21.9 percentage points during this period. There is a steep increase at the elementary level as compared to the senior secondary level.

Drop Out

The drop-out rates for the SC children declined by 18.5 points at the primary stage during the period 2000-2008. At the elementary stage during the same time it declined by almost 13 points from 60.7 per cent to 47.9 per cent. This trend may also be attributed to the focused programs which have been implemented across the nation for the SC children. Through various programmes focusing on the retention of SC students in schools such as bridge courses have been operational across the nation.

Table 4
Drop-out Rates of Scheduled Caste (SC) Students in
Primary/Elementary and Secondary Classes in India

Year	Primary (I-V)			Elementary (I-VIII)			Secondary (I-X)		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
1990-91	46.3	54.0	49.4	64.3	73.2	67.8	74.3	83.4	77.7
1996-97	41.0	45.2	42.7	61.9	68.3	64.5	75.5	81.0	77.6
1999-00	42.9	44.9	43.8	60.5	65.0	62.3	72.7	77.0	73.4
2003-04	36.8	36.2	36.6	57.3	62.2	59.4	71.4	75.5	73.1
2005-06	32.11	33.81	32.86	53.68	57.12	55.17	68.16	73.76	70.57
2009-10	25.3	32.7	29.3	52.0	50.6	51.3	59.7	58.5	59

Source: Selected Educational Statistics, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, 2011.

In Table 4, it is revealed that the dropout rates of the SC students are much higher at the secondary level as compared to the primary level and the elementary level. There has been a remarkable

change of 20 points in the last two decades in the dropout rates at the primary level from 49.4 in 1991 to 29.3 in 2009-10 as the data illustrates. Though the dropout rates may have been reduced quantitatively yet the achievement levels of the SC students are low in the results due to various economic and social factors.

Out of School Children

Similar to the trend of the drop-out rate the number of out of school children have also declined for the SC category. According to IMRB Survey in 2005 the out of school children were 13.46 million which was declined to 8.15 million in 2009 for all categories. The decline was across the disadvantaged groups including gender, Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Muslims. For SCs the decrease in the out of school children accounted for 25.5 per cent from 2005 to 2009 (Table 5).

Table 5
Out-of –school Children in the Age Group 6-13 Years in
Different Population/ Social Categories (2005 & 2009)

Category	Out-of-School Children (in millions)		Decrease (absolute number) (in millions)	Decrease (%)
	2005	2009		
All	13.46	8.15	5.31	39.4
Total Girls	6.69	4.04	2.65	39.6
SC	3.10	2.31	0.79	25.5
ST	1.66	1.07	0.59	35.5
Muslim	2.25	1.88	0.37	16.4

Source: SSA, Government of India: “Planning Commission Working Group on Elementary Education”, 2011

Disaggregation by Social Group shows that the maximum proportion of out of school children is within Scheduled Tribes (4.20 per cent), followed by Scheduled Castes (3.24 per cent), OBC (3.07 per cent) and Others (1.87 per cent). (SRRI and Ed.CIL: 2014) There are several economic as well as social reasons due to which the SC groups lag behind the general

population. The major reason is the poverty as most of the SC children belong to this category.

Gender Parity

The participation of females in the education has illustrated the positive increase in the education as literacy rates for females increased by 16 points from 39 per cent to 65 per cent from 1991 to 2011. Yet there is a gap of 9 points between the all India figure and the SC females. The enrolment of SC girls has increased substantially which is also reflected in the GPI for GER that increased to more than 1 at all the levels which is almost equivalent with the girls from all categories (Table 6).

Table 6
Gender Parity Index (GPI) for GER

Year	GPI (All Categories of Students)			GPI (SC Students)		
	Primary	Upper Primary	Elementary	Primary	Upper Primary	Elementary
2000-01	0.75	0.75	0.80	0.80	0.70	0.78
2004-05	0.95	0.88	0.93	0.87	0.79	0.85
2009-10	1.00	0.93	1.00	1.01	0.96	0.99
2013-14	1.03	1.08	1.02	1.02	1.07	1.02

Source: Statistics of School Education, 2007-08; MHRD, GoI; Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2011, MHRD, GoI; Statistics of School Education 2010-11, MHRD, GoI; U-DISE, NUEPA.

Gender Parity Index (GPI) for GERs in secondary and higher secondary education has also increased progressively since 2000-01. The GPI for GERs in both secondary and higher secondary education for SC students improved from 0.72 in 2000-01 to 1.02 in 2013-14. Further the SC girl's enrolment as percentage of total

SC enrolment improved substantially at upper primary level by 10 points. When compared with the ratio to SC boy's enrolment it confirms a sharper increase by more than 25 points at the upper primary level (Table 7).

Table 7
SC Girls Enrolled as Percentage of
Total SC Enrolment and Ratio to SC Boys

Year	SC Girls Enrolled as Percentage of Total SC Enrolment			Ratio of SC Girls' Enrolment to SC Boys' Enrolment		
	Primary	Upper Primary	Elementary	Primary	Upper Primary	Elementary
2000-01	42.9	38.8	41.9	0.75	0.63	0.72
2004-05	44.4	41.4	43.6	0.80	0.71	0.77
2009-10	47.9	46.8	47.6	0.92	0.88	0.91
2013-14	48.3	48.8	48.5	0.93	0.96	0.94

Source: Statistics of School Education, 2007-08; MHRD, GoI; Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2011, MHRD, GoI; Statistics of School Education 2010-11, MHRD, GoI; U-DISE, NUEPA

Participation of the SC Teachers in School Education

Teachers play a crucial role in retaining students in the schools as well as students interest in studies. At the policy level there are certain measures in practice like the recruitment of teachers from the same community preferably women for making the students comfortable with the learning. If the teacher belongs to the same community to which the students come from helps in communicating in known language with each other and there is a close bond anticipated in the process. It cannot be over ruled that at the policy level various methods are in place to provide equality as well as equity to all the children specially the children belonging to the SC group. It is pronounced that the recruitment of women teachers in schools result in the increase of girl's students.

Table 8 reflects the percentage of SC teachers in schools for the two time lines based on the survey conducted by NCERT known as All India Educational Survey which highlights that there has been a marginal increase in the SC teachers at two points of time at 1992 and 2002. The sixth survey reflects that there were 9 per cent SC teachers which increased to 10 per cent during the seventh survey for all the teachers at all levels and management. In different management schools the proportion of teachers from the SC community is highest in the local body schools at 13 per cent at all levels in 2002 except at the higher secondary schools where the SC teachers are higher in the government managed schools. Another major trend is that all the SC teachers have high concentration in the rural areas across all the levels of school education.

Table 8
Percentage of SC Teachers in Schools

School Category	Area/Management	Percentage of SC Teachers	
		1992	2002
Primary	Rural	12.49	13.62
	Urban	7.06	8.11
	Total	11.32	12.45
	Government	11.56	12.79
	Local Body	12.47	14.45
	Private Aided	8.19	8.17
	Private Unaided	6.45	9.02
Upper Primary	Rural	9.88	11.67
	Urban	6.82	7.47
	Total	8.96	10.43
	Government	8.73	12.01
	Local Body	11.79	12.27
	Private Aided	6.11	7.01
	Private Unaided	5.19	7.37
Secondary	Rural	7.15	9.27
	Urban	5.23	6.50
	Total	6.46	8.20
	Government	7.41	9.40

	Local Body	7.69	9.59
	Private Aided	6.17	8.59
	Private Unaided	3.82	6.09
Higher Secondary	Rural	7.59	9.67
	Urban	5.37	6.57
	Total	6.26	7.87
	Government	7.74	10.98
	Local Body	8.07	9.13
	Private Aided	5.81	7.56
	Private Unaided	2.26	4.11
	Total	Rural	10.34
Urban		6.14	7.12
Total		8.99	10.24
Government		9.39	11.80
Local Body		11.85	13.04
Private Aided		6.31	7.86
Private Unaided		4.77	6.73

Source: All India Educational Survey, NCERT various years.

Since 1990 the teacher recruitment is done on the contract basis to overcome the shortage of teachers in the schools. It is assumed that the contract teacher if selected from the same community brings favourable results like the increased enrolment of the SC students. Further the issue of teacher motivation and salary are also reflected as an impediment to the quality of education in general. Appointing teachers on contract as a cost-saving measure under exploitative conditions of service is essentially done in schools where children from the poorer sections of society study. (Govinda and Josephine, 2005, p. 213) But during the 1990 to 2000 various schemes across the states were floated where the contract teachers with different nomenclatures like *shiksha karmis*, *shiksha mitra*, *para* teacher etc. were appointed. The presumption was that most of the contract teachers would be from the disadvantaged sections due the poverty and would be paid less salary as compared to the regular students.

The socio cultural circumstances are the benchmark for assessing teachers under such situations as where the contract teachers and

students shared the same social background, a sense of belonging existed between them. Nevertheless, attempts at the policy level to address the problems of caste bias and prejudice of teachers. It has been pointed out that teachers and students who share a common primary language, cultural understanding and experiences are better able to relate to one another, facilitate communication in class, and incorporate students' experiences in the classroom, thereby legitimizing their culture and world view. It is also empirically established that teacher's lack of knowledge of students' languages, cultures and communities result in deficiency in perspective and inhibits close relationship with students (Pandey, 2006).

Table 9
Scheduled Caste Teachers in India

Sl. No.	State	2007-08	2011-12
1	A & N Islands	0.43	0.00
2	Andhra Pradesh	12.90	14.32
3	Arunachal Pradesh	1.77	1.51
4	Assam	5.80	5.65
5	Bihar	14.66	15.08
6	Chandigarh	7.92	7.96
7	Chhattisgarh	13.25	12.83
8	D & N Haveli	6.16	5.78
9	Daman & Diu	7.90	8.30
10	Delhi	11.93	9.64
11	Goa	1.16	1.10
12	Gujarat	10.34	10.12
13	Haryana	10.41	10.71
14	Himachal Pradesh	14.38	15.41
15	Jammu & Kashmir	4.87	4.76
16	Jharkhand	8.48	7.50
17	Karnataka	11.47	13.18
18	Kerala	3.85	3.94
19	Lakshadweep	0.18	0.56
20	Madhya Pradesh	13.44	13.04
21	Maharashtra	11.22	12.25

22	Manipur	4.19	3.50
23	Meghalaya	1.65	1.24
24	Mizoram	1.14	0.60
25	Nagaland	4.23	3.07
26	Odisha	11.97	12.45
27	Puducherry	14.24	12.74
28	Punjab	19.92	16.55
29	Rajasthan	15.07	14.21
30	Sikkim	3.95	3.49
31	Tamil Nadu	13.16	14.43
32	Tripura	13.62	14.65
33	Uttar Pradesh	14.05	14.97
34	Uttarakhand	11.30	11.24
35	West Bengal	19.45	19.30
	INDIA	12.25	12.88

Source: DISE Data various years.

The data on teachers provided by DISE from 2006-2012 reflects that across the nation almost half of the states witnessed decline in the SC teachers and the rest had a marginal increase. Overall the SC teachers increased by 0.63 points during the same period as illustrated in Table 9. This may be due to the marginal increase in the population or no new recruitments during the selected time period. A study conducted by Kingdon states that there have been two primary objectives of the Government of India's education policies: to increase school attainment and to reduce schooling gaps, particularly those based on gender and caste (Rawal and Kingdon, 2010).

ISSUES RELATED TO SC STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Participation of SC children in schools have increased multi fold since the time of independence as discussed in the earlier sections but it was not the case with the teachers. The increase in participation levels is due to the favorable policies and the affirmative action embedded in the Indian constitution. Education is on the concurrent list due to which the state provides the support to the SC group as per its policy norms. There are variations

across the state in defining the provision for SC students since there are central scheme as well that determine the funds for respective incentives. With the enforcement of the Right to Education Act, 2009 it is mandatory for all the children in the age group of 6-14 years to be in the schools. It is interesting to analyze that all the states have adopted the RTE but according to the state policy norms. Also the definitions of the disadvantage groups are also state specific depending on the representation of different groups of population in the state. Both the definitions are critical while analyzing the situation of SC children in the school education. SC children are provided free education, text books, uniform, meals, scholarship and various other incentives for enhancing their participation in schools.

The analysis points out the policy pronouncements and the actual participation of the SC teachers and students in the school education is an indicator for the development of SC community. The teachers as well as students are given special provisions due to their socio economic deprivation and histories of exclusion. Yet the benefits of the policies are taken by a limited number of SC communities who are aware of such policies. As mentioned earlier there are as many as thousands of communities belonging to the SC group yet there has not been any comprehensive analysis available on the participation of SC communities at different levels in the school education. For instance there are instances that many parents are aware of the incentive schemes available to their children and have benefitted significantly (Sedwal and Kamat: 2008).

The number of main Scheduled Castes has increased from 1,221 in 2001 to 1,241 in 2011. (GoI: 2011) It points out that the SCs do not represent a homogenous group and there is a need for disaggregated data for tracing the growth at the group wise development both at the rural as well as urban habitations. This also points to the issue of rural, urban, inter and intra caste variations in receiving the government provisions to the group which is heterogeneous. For instance within the Scheduled Caste

community, sub-castes and hierarchies are even more pronounced and significant like the sub-caste known as 'Balmikis' is considered the lowest among Scheduled Castes, while 'Jatavs' are higher in status. The former are engaged in manual scavenging jobs, while the latter are engaged in leather crafts, indicating that status within the Scheduled Caste community is closely linked to Brahmanical notions of purity and pollution (Nambissan and Sedwal, 2002). Such variations across the states are witnessed that has an impact on the progress of the SC group.

At the policy level there have been several provisions yet the implementation as its impact has not been achieved as was expected during the planning. What are the reasons due to which such provisions have not improved the status of the SC population? There is a need to generate an insight for understanding the participation of SC children and teachers in the school education that would provide a better understanding on the issues related to the SC group. Student, teachers and their backgrounds should be researched in order to identify their perspectives (Sedwal: 2011) There is a need to address the research gaps to be filled with further prescriptions in the education sector for the SC group. There is also a need for comparative research between states based on qualitative and ethnographic methods both on students and teachers from SC group to examine the untouched areas for effective policy interventions with substantial documentation of best practices.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of data reveals that since the year 2000 the enrolment of SC students increased multi fold in the school education. But during the same time the teachers were not recruited at the same pace as prescribed by the policy proclamation. The trends of participation in school education for the SC children and teachers are not in tune with the policy directive of the proportion of SC

teachers for the SC children. It is revealed by various researches that the teachers' empathy with children from diverse or disadvantaged backgrounds is important in providing an education service which is attractive to marginalized groups. Though there is a need for specific areas related to SC participation with various indicators to reach a holistic perspective. There are various schemes and strategies in place for attracting the SC children to schooling but is there any such move for the SC teachers as well? Similarly the number of SC teachers in schools also indirectly affects the participation of SC student as well as their retention in the schools. The participation levels of the SC student and teachers have increased substantially since 2000 due to the introduction of various scheme and incentives provided by the central and the state governments. The issue of teacher's shortage has been surfaced for quite some time in the country. Many reasons for such a situation have been argued to justify it yet it has not been satisfactory. The inter caste as well as intra caste variations also needs to be examined for analysing the trends at the regional and state level for factual analysis. The change in the status of teachers in terms of their connectivity with the community to the state reflects that teaching as a profession had the changed dynamics which needs to be contextualised.

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