

Distributive Inequality of Education in India



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Abstract

Education has the potential to build up an individual's personality in accordance with the societal value structure reflected in the knowledge content. It thereby equips and trains a person to think analytically in forming attitudes and to perform his roles adequately in specific as well as in varied situation. Indian society suffers from substantial inequalities in education, employment, and income based on caste and ethnicity. India has undergone significant educational expansion in recent years. In the present context privatization of education appears to have widen the gap between the elitist and the depressed class of the society for e.g. privatization proves to be beneficial to those who can afford education irrespective of the urban – rural difference, for e.g. students in rural areas suffer from scarcity and inadequate accessibility of schools, as well as poor quality of education, and are forced to travel large distances. Concentration of secondary and higher educational institutions in urban areas limits the participation of rural people in schooling. In this paper, after briefly explaining the present inequalities in education system in India, the author seeks to emphasize and analyze the effects of unequal distribution of education, how it creates inequalities, i.e., inequality in educational opportunity, in educational attainment and resulting inequalities outside the schools in the attainment of occupational and economic positions.

Education is an important ingredient of human development. It contributes to well-being of individuals instrumentally in terms of its contribution to higher income and intrinsically by raising capabilities and individual freedoms. Besides being valuable to individuals themselves, education affects welfare of their future generations through intergenerational transmission. (Agarwal, 2009). Compensatory or positive discrimination policies reserve some percentage of the seats in institutions of higher education and state and central government jobs for people of the lowest caste, the Scheduled Caste; similarly some percentage of the seats are reserved for the Scheduled Tribe. This discrimination is positive somewhere because the lower caste does not have sufficient resources to get the good education at all levels.

Definition of Educational Inequality

It is the difference in the learning results, or efficacy, experienced by students coming from different communities. It is a system under which all the sections of society are not given equal opportunity to get education. Much educational inequality is attributed to economic disparities that often falls along racial lines and in much modern conversation about educational equity conflates the two, showing how they are inseparable from residential location and, more recently, language. The education inequality is a major cause of poverty in different countries. In developing countries people do not have a good infrastructure and manpower for schools so they lack behind from other developed countries. Because of this reason children and adults are

bound to do unskilled work and this system continues in the coming generation also. The difference between a good and bad education significantly shows in the way children look at their future. Wealth shouldn't determine the quality of a child's education but it does. Poor children will probably always be held back due to the schools they attend. School is not just a place where children learn reading, writing and arithmetic, it's where children learn about life. If a child receives a poor education, they'll have a poor outlook on life and vice versa.

Educational Inequality in India

The twentieth century laid down the basic framework towards the growth of the modern individual. Nutrition, healthcare and most importantly education require the most attention. Indian population needs to be equipped with the knowledge required to propel and power this country toward becoming a truly global power.

The Source of inequality could be one or more of the following factors : gender, race, socio-economic status, parental background [especially educational, since first-generation learners are always at a disadvantage], religion, private/public schooling, minority/majority status, language v/s medium of instruction, rural/urban divide, learning & other physical/mental disabilities such as attention-deficit, autism, dyslexia, blindness, deaf-mute, etc. Then the question arises of how this inequality manifests itself. It may come through in ideological leanings or subliminal messages in the text, in the content of syllabi, in the teacher's background &/or prejudices, in the teacher's own level of education, teacher's interaction with class/students, the testing & grading, grouping & segregation, in community norms, educational policy, rules & regulations of the academic institution, etc. What would be some of the measures that educationists can take to minimize this inequality? How it needs to be dealt with at each level - governmental/policy, institutional, within class? How to increase multiculturalism, foster unity & intermingling, open exchange of ideas & beliefs, positive reinforcement of equality & egalitarianism,

an increased tolerance for any & all kinds of differences, Informed choices/belief systems, intervention strategies? Unfortunately, there is no clear theoretical prediction of the effect of educational expansion on income distribution (Ram, 1989). Sadly, inequalities in the field of education arise out of certain issues such as a refusal to educate the girl child, reservations and "management quota" crippling the system and, corrupting the foundation of education. However if you look at past circumstances, education in India was a privileged offering, reserved for boys belonging to the Brahmin caste. India has predominantly been a country where in the age of Vedas, only boys of Brahmin caste were allowed to pursue an education. Inequalities have gradually declined since then however they are not fully gone. The right to education is still a battle in parts of Rajasthan and Haryana: there are places in these states where they would rather get their daughters married off early than educate them. Education inequality also arises from the standard and quality of knowledge and study provided by various institutes. Although we have the Indian Institute of Technology and Indian Institute of Management, which have worldwide reputations, we are not able to provide the same from the other institutions, thereby creating a gap in the intellectual data passed and acquired.

In India changes in political, economic and social life are as a result of educational inequality. Those who are educated take the maximum benefit out of the system and take maximum concessions from those in authority. Due to being better educated they have better economic status can spare time for the activities and institutions which can bring changes in society. Educational inequality has made some powerful enough to amass wealth and with that dictate and change economic policies to suit their interests. In the rural areas, educated children leave their parents and migrate to cities.

The educational inequality is also responsible for resisting changes. Elite of the society and the bureaucrats who are

educationally superior as compared with other sections of the society try to resist changes. They wish to maintain the statuesque and are opposed to social changes. The main reason being they do not want others to challenge their status and position within the society. The villages do not have better schools or colleges for the children. Most of the schools there lack even basic infrastructure like furniture or manpower like teachers thus fostering inequality in the level of education offered. It is common to find children dropping out of schools after primary education due to lack of secondary or higher secondary schools. The studies of Checci and Peragine (2005), Lefranc (2008), Ferreira and Gignoux

(2008) have developed and implemented indices of inequality of opportunity that handle multivariate sets of circumstances that quantify for inequality of opportunity.

Causes of Education Inequality in India

Poverty

India is a developing country. People are having less employment resources. Due to this they are not having good income sources. It's tough for them to have good quality food. In such condition these people cannot afford the education expenses. These expenses are like a burden for them. India's more than half population resides in rural area.

Percentage and Number of Poor Estimated by Tendulkar method, using Mixed Reference Period (MRP)

| | Poverty Ratio (%) | | | Number of Poor (million) | | |
|------------|-------------------|-------|-------|--------------------------|-------|-------|
| | Rural | Urban | Total | Rural | Urban | Total |
| 1. 1993-94 | 50.1 | 31.8 | 45.3 | 328.6 | 74.5 | 403.7 |
| 2. 2004-05 | 41.8 | 25.7 | 37.2 | 326.3 | 80.8 | 407.1 |
| 3. 2011-12 | 25.7 | 13.7 | 21.9 | 216.5 | 52.8 | 269.3 |

Source: planningcommission.nic.n

In these areas people like to engage their wards in agricultural activities. Such children drop their school after 3-4 years. Even if they are engage then also they don't go to school. Their parents also feel happy if their kids bring some money for family or work in field.

Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination is also a major cause of education inequality. According to Census 2011 we have 940 females per 1000 males. "Woman are made for household work", it's a common thinking of Indians. People don't like give birth a female child. They either kill them before birth or after birth. They kill them due to dowry and other expenses. If a new born child is

a female then parents think that one day she will leave the house after her marriage. If she gets a good education then also it's a big problem for her parents to find a perfect match for marriage. Due to these thinking they don't prefer to educate a female child. From her childhood she used to hear the same words from her elders that she has to prepare food for her family and engage herself in other household works, and after her marriage she has to perform the same task for her husband and his family. Parents think that if they give her good education then at her earning stage she will get married and then her in-laws will enjoy her earning. If they are only expending the money on her then why they will do it.

Literacy Rate in India, Census 2011

| Rank | State | Literacy Rate (2011 Census) | Male Literacy Rate (2011 Census) | Female Literacy Rate (2011 Census) |
|------|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Bihar | 63.8 percent | 73.5 percent | 53.3 percent |
| 2 | Arunachal Pradesh | 67.0 percent | 73.7 percent | 59.6 percent |

| Rank | State | Literacy Rate (2011 Census) | Male Literacy Rate (2011 Census) | Female Literacy Rate (2011 Census) |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 3 | Rajasthan | 67.1 percent | 80.5 percent | 52.7 percent |
| 4 | Jharkhand | 67.6 percent | 78.5 percent | 56.2 percent |
| 5 | Andhra Pradesh | 67.7 percent | 75.6 percent | 59.7 percent |
| 6 | Jammu and Kashmir | 68.7 percent | 78.3 percent | 58.0 percent |
| 7 | Uttar Pradesh | 69.7 percent | 79.2 percent | 59.3 percent |
| 8 | Madhya Pradesh | 70.6 percent | 80.5 percent | 60.0 percent |

Source: www.census2011.co.in

Caste and Religious Inequality

India is a stratified society. Since historical times, the social fabric of Indian society has been crafted on the basis of caste system. The contemporary reality of India may, well be understood by the phenomena of class, there is little doubt that caste and religion form major axes of social stratification in contemporary India (Gupta 1991; Hasan 2001; Sharma 1999), but the lower sections of society still recognize and function on the basis of caste system. Caste has played a major role in deciding the distributive pattern of education to different sections of Indian society. Educational inequalities between upper caste Hindus and other religious and caste groups on the one hand and Dalits and Muslims on the other remain evident throughout the pre-independent and post-independent India. Much of what is known about the educational differences between these social groups comes from the published tabulations of census and other governmental data or from cross-sectional analyses. (Kulkarni 2002; Menedelsohn and Vicziany 1998; Nambissan and Sedwal 2002; Sujatha 2002).

Notably, educational transitions in India differ from those observed in other countries. In general, educational transition rates decline as student's progress along the educational ladder. However, in India, both entering and completing primary education seem to pose a substantial hurdle, but after a student completes primary school, his or her likelihood of completing middle school does not decline perceptibly. This may be because some villages have no primary school, but villages that are closely connected to

towns have both primary and middle schools, or because after children obtain primary education in the village, it may be easier when they are slightly older to send them outside of the village to attend a middle school. An alternative explanation may be related to unobserved individual characteristics associated with early school success. Given the high degree of social stratification, poor and marginalized children may never progress beyond a year or two of school and may drop out, but those who figure out how to navigate the school system are able to get through primary as well as middle school.

Reservation Quota

Reservations are another reason why inequality of education arises. This action followed the report of the Mandal Commission and led to widespread riots in 1990. The resentment flared up again as the government sought to introduce quotas for other backward castes in highly competitive engineering and management schools in 2006. This dissent has unified higher caste Hindus against affirmative action and led to increased sabotage at the local level, where these policies are to be implemented. Upper caste Hindus express their resentment by arguing that while compensatory discrimination seeks to redress the inequities suffered by dalits and adivasis, the individuals taking advantage of these benefits belonged to a rich "creamy layer" and were never subject to the severe discrimination faced by their poorer brethren. These critics are highly vocal, and the public discourse is rife with prejudice against dalit and adivasi students, whom they view as undeserving and as taking away the privileges of the deserving upper caste Hindus.

A student belongs to a high profile family will get a quality education and a bright student from a poor family cannot get a seat for himself. This is a common issue in India. Student who belongs from a rich or high class family reserve this seat in good education institute by money power. In high education institute some seats are reserved for such kind of people. A student from a poor family works hard for the seat but cannot occupy it due to reservation quota. Such ancient break the moral of the bright students. Meritorious students have to face tougher competition. These permutation and combination of quota assigned are politically motivated and have no effect on the real imparting of education. Management or paid seats as they are referred to, contribute to the inequality of education. Students can buy their way into an institute by securing a seat or obtain admission by means of monetary power. This on the other hand reduces the chances for the deserving individuals to obtain a deserved education. Schools are the preliminary foundation towards the future of the individual. In place of providing better access to the cadre of the demography who cannot afford top notch institutes, buffet varieties of institutes are being introduced for the evolving tastes of modern learners. International Baccalaureate schools are now booming all over India. Less attention is being paid to the class who can barely afford education and it can be said that there is some red tape when it comes to founding the educational schemes introduced by the government. Provisions of electronic teaching aids have been made but there is no significant impact on the change in level of literacy in our country. On the other side, dalit and adivasi critiques of affirmative action charge that these policies are poorly implemented and have had very little effect. While the government reserves seats for dalit and adivasi students at college level, village schools continue to discriminate, preventing them from taking full advantage of these reservations (Galanter 1997)

What we can do?

This is our collective responsibility to increase the education level and remove the inequality in our education system. We are one of

the youngest nations to have achieved a literacy rate gap-closing to 70 percent and studies say we should be able to achieve over 85 percent literacy by 2020. We too share a certain responsibility in this goal. First of all we should give the equal opportunities for male and female child. We should improve the level of our education, and it should be job oriented. There are many graduate students who are having degree but with empty hands. Such degrees only increase the frustration in their mind and this frustration opens the ways of many unsocial activities.

Certain organizations are leading campaigns where they are providing education to all. Teach for India, Reliance and various others have joined this as a part of their corporate social responsibility initiative. P& G also works for woman education and provide scholarship for bright students. Akshaya Patra is providing the food free of cost to poor students so they their parents encourage sending them to school. We also need to know that for the most common problems in our country, education is the answer to all. It has the potential and will provide equality amongst everyone and propel us forward. Education is a right and this right should be fiercely guarded. There is a lot to be done and we all can play a much greater role in educating the youth of tomorrow.

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