



SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND SCENARIO OF SCHOOLING OF PRIMARY LEVEL IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT :

Social exclusion describes a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live. Discrimination may occur in public institutions, such as the legal system or education and health services, as well as social institutions like the household. The growing body of work suggests how social exclusion affects the attainment of developmental goals (Kabeer, N., 2006, Lennox, C., 2003, Thomas, P., 2005). The merit of the social exclusion concept is that it is seen as a long-term multidimensional process that focuses not only on who is being excluded, but also on the institutions and resources from which they are denied access. It also helps to identify the power structures, institutions and political actors who maintain and encourage processes of exclusion.



KEYWORDS : *power structures, institutions and political actors.*

INTRODUCTION :

In India, caste, tribal ethnicity, religious minorities and gender across all social groups remain strong markers of disadvantage. Exclusion in Indian context revolves around the societal interrelations and institutions that exclude, discriminate, isolate, and deprive these groups (Thorat, S, 2003) as a result of which they get exploited in the matter of taking advantages of development.

Scholars¹ have analyzed that the unequal forces embedded in the socio-economic system and also political organization, had resulted in deprivation and disadvantages for them. The Government of India from time to time though, has been giving due importance to the developmental needs of such vulnerable groups, however, much is still needed to be done as for as their social, political and economic well-being is concerned.

Most of the works at global level have linked social exclusion to poverty, inequality and justice (Kabeer, N., 2000, De Haan, A., 1999, Saith, R., 2001, Sen, A, 2000). In Indian context, the understanding of social exclusion sheds light on caste, poverty, labour market, earning among different religious groups, social security in unorganised sector, reservation policy, economic isolation and deprivation etc. While doing so, most of both such national as well as international studies have mainly focused on adults, since major indicators of disadvantage and social exclusion directly affects adults. While a count of adults at risk of social exclusion is important, it is also equally important to consider the children for social exclusion analysis. However, application of social exclusion in the case of children has seen very little discussion. The studies trying to understand what could be meant by exclusion of children are rare. One of the reasons for this may be because of lack of a precise definition of social exclusion of children. However, it is noted that scholars link the concept of social exclusion to existing measures of child well-being. Current international work on indicators of child well-being include poverty, access to health care, housing, child care services, education and conditions of work. While other indicators of child well-being are

¹ Thorat, S, 2000, Mohanty, 2000, Sankaran, 2000.

equally important to be considered for social exclusion analysis, nature and dimension of exclusion of children from education, needs particularly, to be conceptualized.

REVIEW:

The studies in Indian context while using the data from the macro-level surveys such as the national sample survey (NSSO), the census, the national council for applied economic research (NCAER) and the national family and health survey (NFHS) I and II etc have identified the socio-economic factors as important determinants of schooling. For instance, Filmer & Pritchett based on NFHS I data, showed that there is a strong effect of household wealth on the probability of children's enrollment (Filmer & Pritchett, 1999). The World Bank report on primary education, quoting NCAER household data of 1992-93, states that the drop-out rate for poorer children, from families with low per capita income was higher than for the children of richer households with higher per capita income (World Bank Report, 1997). Analyzing the NFHS II data, Ramachandran, V, gave prominent reasons for non-attendance by children as i) high schooling costs like books, stationary and cloths ii) lack of interest in studies iii) children being used to contribute to the household income (Ramachandran, V, 2002). Tilak has analyzed the NSSO data of 1986-87 and 1995-96. According to him, the important reasons of never enrolment of children in rural areas are i) non-availability of schools in 1986-87, which was however not the case in 1995-96 ii) economic factors such as opportunity costs, participation in household economic activity, domestic chores and other economic reasons were the most important factors in 1986-87, however, the data in 1995-96 showed only 23.6% accounted for economic factors iii) another important reason being the lack of interest on the part of both child and parent in education.(Tilak, 2000). Based on census data for 1981 and 1991, Jayachandran, U, investigated the socio-economic determinants of school attendance in the age group 5-14 years for boys and girls. Some important results are adult female work-force participation, adult (parental) education, school accessibility, poverty, household size, gender bias etc (Jaychandran, U, 2001).

DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOLING:

In the present paper an attempt is made to understand the schooling scenario of SC, ST, girls and children belonging to religious minority group i.e., Muslims. The results are based on the analysis of education data from NFHS II and NFHS III for rural India. The analysis is carried out on major states in India namely Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, TamilNadu, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh.

Table 1 Determinants of school attendance in some states (Rural) NFHS II

Determinants of school attendance in some states (Rural), NFHS 2								
Attributes	Bihar	Karnataka	MP	Maharashtra	Rajasthan	TN	WB	UP
Sex of children								
Male	2.140*	1.282	1.440*	1.287	4.417*	1.343	1.437	2.207*
Female#								
Religion								
Hindu	0.219*	—	0.099*	0.552	0.236		0.480	0.424
Muslim	0.534	—	0.197*	1.258	0.838	1.252	0.723	1.019
Others#								
Caste								
SC	0.607*	0.632	0.671**	0.984	0.731**	—	1.661	0.887
ST	0.502*	0.368*	0.243*	0.485**	0.586*	—	0.222*	0.744
OBC	0.405*	0.460**	0.482*	3.097	0.672*	—	0.556***	0.767**
Others#								
Sample	5456	1631	4283	1479	4361	1178	1315	5857
R Square	0.1701	0.1268	0.0824	0.104	0.1656	0.057	0.0941	0.0894

Dependent Variable 0= not going to school, 1=going to school, # = Reference Category, *= Significant at 1% Level, **= Significant at 5% Level, ***= Significant at 10% Level,

Table 2 Determinants of school attendance in some states (Rural) NFHS III

Determinants of school attendance in some states (Rural), NFHS 3								
Attributes	Bihar	Karnataka	MP	Maharashtra	Rajasthan	TN	WB	UP
Sex of children								
Male	0.869	1.064	0.630	1.428	2.688	0.137	1.694	1.840158
Female#								
Religion								
Hindu	—	—	—					
Muslim	—	—	—	0.567	—	—	0.211	—
Others#					—	—	4.689	—
Caste								
SC	0.764	1.099	0.204	0.617	1.283	—		
ST		0.866	0.125	0.403	0.356	—	0.031	1.356279
OBC	1.362	0.716	0.635	0.640	1.447	—	0.089	
Others#								0.491222
Sample	942	1413	1412	962	1416	974	1014	4024
R Square	0.093	0.0419	0.081	0.1271	0.12	0.2048	0.1439	0.0708

Dependent Variable 0= not going to school, 1=going to school, # = Reference Category, *= Significant at 1% Level, **= Significant at 5% Level, ***= Significant at 10% Level.

Table 1 and 2 predict those attributes that enhance the chance of going to school at primary level in rural India according to NFHS II and NFHS III. The dependent variable is coded as 0 if the child is not going to school (i.e. illiterate and drop outs) and 1 if the child is presently going to school. Among the demographic variables, to a great extent, sex of the children, caste and religion are important predictors of school attendance. The probability of school attendance for boys is significantly higher than girls with varying extent across states. For example, according to NFHS II, in Rajasthan, the chance for boys to attend school is 4.4 times higher than girls in rural areas while in Uttar Pradesh it is 2.2 times more. According to NFHS III, in Rajasthan, the chance for boys to attend school is 2.7 times higher than girls in rural areas while in Uttar Pradesh it is 1.8 times more. According to NFHS II and NFHS III the chance of going to school is less among the ST, SC as well as OBC children of 6 -10 years against the general caste with varying intensity across states both in rural as well as in urban areas. Also is the case for children belonging to Muslim religious group who have less chance attending school in comparison with children from Hindu religious group.

CONCLUSION:

It can be understood that in India even today the caste, gender and religion remains important determinants of schooling at primary stage. There is a strong need to apply social exclusion perspective to the understanding of child well-being measured through education deprivation. This approach, first of all, may require estimating the number of children who are facing the 'education deprivation' in the target group. This gives an understanding of the magnitude of the problem. Secondly, reasons why children are found in these situations will be required to be explored. Further, the achievement of educational goals depends on the delivery system, the state level educational leadership, and capacity to adopt innovative approaches. Therefore it is very useful also to capture, the delivery of primary education, the features and approaches adopted by the State to tackle the problem of social exclusion of children belonging to weaker sections of the society from primary education.

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