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# The Expression: An International Multidisciplinary e-Journal

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## **CASTE DISCRIMINATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: A STUDY OF TELANGANA AND ANDHRA PRADESH**

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### **Abstract**

The present paper emphasizes on educational problems in general and the caste-based discrimination in primary education in particular. The school is a modern institution to strengthen the democratic process and ensure equal educational opportunities to all. But in Indian scenario it is quite different, Indian society stratified on the basis of caste. Though several Constitutional ensures for free and compulsory education, it is a fact that the educational backwardness in the country is posing a challenge for the policy makers in India. The paper also explains commitment towards fulfillment of the constitutional assurance of social justice through education. The study depends on qualitative and quantitative nature. Primary sources include interviews of students with structure questionnaire. The nature of the format is structured with closed and open ended questions; the study also uses participant observation method. Farther the paper focuses on strengthening the accessibility of quality education for all. The strategies like sufficient funds to be allocation and spend, Common School System. Revision and upgradation of present school curriculum and it should be framed on the basis of logic, scientific and rationalist methods. Sufficient Educational Inspectors need to be recruiting for strengthening school supervising system. Adequate non-teaching staff is needed to be appointed. Teachers should keep away from non-academic activities. To promote sports and games there is a need of Physical Education Teachers in all primary schools. Art, Craft, Music and Dance should be encouraged in the schools. Special classes should be conducted for SC, ST and BC students to promote equal education. In every school there should be a Child Rights Committee to protect their rights are identified as inclusive educational strategies in India.

### **Key-Words**

Caste, Discrimination, Education, Emancipation and Inclusion.

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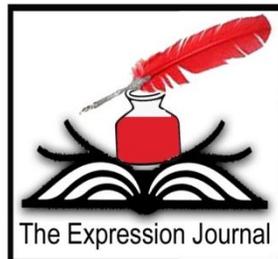
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### **Introduction**

Education can lead to overall development for humankind. The concept of education and its related terms were subjects of serious discourse for a long time in India. But unfortunately the education was monopolised by specific communities and who sought to control the entire social system through the social stratification system that is caste hierarchy. The Bahujan's education was restricted and discriminated on the basis of caste, purported sanctioned by the *Manusmriti*. From the ages of Buddha to Ambedkar several attempts were made to democratize and universalize the space of the Indian education system. The educational struggles of Dalits and other movements created an opportunity to free access the education to all.

During the post-independence period the role of state was widened by the Indian Constitution which enjoined on the state to provide free and compulsory education to the children up to the age of six to fourteen years. Though there have been diverse schooling systems in India, the dropout rate has continued to be alarming. Even though there are numerous Constitutional provisions regarding free and compulsory education to the children, the educational backwardness of large sections of society continues to be a challenge. In spite of various changes place in the education sector, the government has not been able to achieve the goal of universalisation of primary education. The present study attempts to understand the nature of schooling and caste-based discrimination in

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Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The study found that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive education policy which could address the socio-economic and cultural problems in the Indian education system.

Articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 25 and 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, lay stress on Education and Child provisions. Articles 19, 28, 29, 31, 37, and 39 of the International Convention on Child Rights, 1989, have been identified as special provisions to create a conducive and facilitative environment for the education of children.

The Constitution of India contains a number of provisions regarding the rights of children, these are Articles 15 (3), 21A, 23 (1), 24, 28 (1), 39, 45, and 350A. Though there are various rights, in general, and SC/ST, in particular. It is pity that the public institutions like schools are violating child rights in a greater manner (Joseph Benjamin. 2008, p 236).

It can be seen that there are indeed a number of provisions to protect the interests of children and ensure that they are assured of education at least till they attain the age of 14 years. However, on several occasions, these provisions are being sidelined and students are engaged in different non-academic activities.

## **Review of Literature**

A few studies have made attempts to explain the issues relating to education and discriminatory practices happening in different forms in government educational institutions. Jyotsna Jain & Mihir Shah (2005) made a study on survey reports on Madhya Pradesh's Mid-day-Meal programme. The main objective of this survey was to assess the performance of "Ruchikar" ('Relishing') Mid-Day-Meal Scheme (RMDMS) in Madhya Pradesh after 6-12 months of introduction of the scheme. According to the writers, some districts are irregular in providing the meals. A noticeable (10 per cent) proportion of the parents found the meal bad or very bad. It was slightly gratifying to note that despite the general lack of trained cooks in the schools, no parents complained of the serious illness suffered by children after eating the mid-day meal. But, an element of discrimination was found in the matter of appointing Dalits as cooks. The percentage of Dalit cooks is very low in various districts in Madhya Pradesh. Another form of caste discrimination was by way of having separate seating arrangements for the Dalits students in MDM. There is poor infrastructure in most kitchens of schools and cooking is done in temporary sheds or open spaces inside the school compound or in the houses of the cooks.

Nidhi Kotwal & Neelema Gupta (2006) conducted a study in the Kathua district of Jammu & Kashmir State. Fifty dropout girls and fifty parents were selected as respondents for this study. The writers pointed out that the majority of the parents (72 per cent) expressed family circumstances as the reason for sending their children for household works. Due to poor economic conditions, the parents had to work in the fields and factories and so the girls had to help in the households activities. Many factors like reluctance of parents to work, unfair behaviour of the teachers, disinterest of the children in studies,

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poverty, death in family, and illness of parents force the children to become child labourers. Since the parents of majority of the SC and ST students are working in the unorganized sector, due to economic constraints, children are being forced to engage in domestic work. The caste-based professions of the households are impacting the educational status of the children.

B. K. Anitha's study in Tumkur district of Karnataka covered nine schools, with 42 different variables to assess the educational facilities in some selected schools. The study described the dual approach of education policy, which were creating disparities in Indian education system. On one side, there are high quality schools and, on the other, low quality of large schools in primary education. Social factors are impacting both the access and the quality of education in rural primary schools. The rural primary schools are characterized by poor educational facilities under the community influence. More than 60 per cent of the rural schools do not have playgrounds of their own. Majority of the rural primary schools do not have proper drinking water and toilet facilities. In such a situation, the style of functioning of the teacher is a significance factor that is contributing to the school quality. So far, the various educational policies have not adequately addressed the structural issues related to low quality of primary education. The study has brought out the lack of local planning to coordinate the quality issues in primary education in rural areas.

The study also brought out that the majority of schools are single teacher ones, with multi-grade teaching. The number of study hours in SC and ST populated area is less compared to the predominantly upper caste areas because of the caste mind of the teachers and their and negative attitude towards lower caste children. In a society ridden by caste hierarchy, it is imperative to understand how caste plays a significant role in determining the accessibility to education, the quality of interaction that takes place in the classroom and the response of the local community and teacher to education. The study highlighted the low performances of SC/ST concentrated villages, compared to diversified caste villages. The location of the school and the involvement of upper caste community is positively impacting the attitude of the teachers towards quality of education, whereas the lower caste 'dominated' villages are unable to change the caste mind set of the teachers, because of the historical social disadvantage experienced by them. Majority of the teachers do not stay in the village and belong to dominant castes, and display a distinctive negative attitude towards the education of the lower castes. School-community relationships were found to be hostile. The school-community relationship is reflected in classroom teachings and is also impacting the teacher-students relationship. Caste discrimination does not have a direct effect on students, but it has its own ways to operates it in the school and community. Caste discrimination is the outcome of socio-economic and cultural dominance by the upper caste people on the lower caste people in the study area.

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Ganshyam Shah and others edited book *Untouchability in Rural India* focused on different types of discriminations in rural India. The study also emphasised on the following discriminations in the school related aspects: a) Seating arrangement of students in the primary school, b) Use of drinking water facility for the students in the village primary school, c) Eating together in the primary school (MDM), d) Relationship and interaction between *savarna* students and Dalit teachers in primary schools, e) Interaction and relationship between *savarna* teachers and Dalit teachers in schools, f) Relationship and interaction between *savarnas* and Dalit primary students outside the school, and h) Housing for Dalit teachers in the village.

Nandini Sunder (2004) argues that there are different school systems to protect the socio-economic and political interest of the particular groups and dominate others. The Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has long recognised the centrality of education to any project of gaining power and reorienting the political arena. Its educational front, Vidya Bharati, runs one of the largest private networks of schools across the country, catering mainly to lower middle class students. Other RSS fronts providing education include the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA), which specialises in hostels for Adivasi children among other activities; Sewa Bharati (for Dalits), and the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, which runs single teacher pre-school centres where children are taught basic reading, writing, Sanskrit and 'sanskars,' or good behaviour.

## **Objectives**

To study the caste-based discrimination in selected government schools in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

To study the impact of caste discrimination in primary education.

To estimate the gaps of inclusive educational strategies in primary education for all.

## **Methodology**

The data pertaining to the paper is collected from six schools and the respondents selected from three districts Adilabad (Telangana), Kurnool and Vizianagaram (Andhra Pradesh) on the basis of the socio-economic profiles of those districts and also the development indicators such as education, income, industrial population, literacy rate, sex-ratio, development programmes implemented, proportion of the SC, ST population to the total general population, etc. From each of these districts, one revenue mandal has been selected for two villages. Some of the villages are predominantly rural in nature, which the other some semi-urban nature. The different categories of respondents include: students (120) who are attending the respective schools located in the particular selected village and teachers (28) from the respective schools were presented for the academic year 2013-2014.

The study has relied on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources include interview formats, which will have been prepared separately to interview different

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groups. The nature of the format has been structured with closed and open ended questions. The study has also used participant observation and case study methods. The questionnaire covered the various aspects of education and socio, economic and cultural conditions of the respondents. The secondary sources include books, journals, newspapers, pamphlets, internet and reports of Government and Non-Government Organisations.

## **Impact of Caste Discrimination on Schooling**

Caste discrimination in the schools leads to several negative consequences in the society. It is become a cause to drop out of SC, ST students from the schools. Caste discrimination also tends to be a serious violation of Human Rights, in general, and Rights of Child, in particular. Castes-based discrimination caused to decline of standards of learning capacities of the students. It's an obstacle to innovative thinking of child towards her/his studies. And it is creates a great hurdle to reach the goals of social justice in India. When the teachers practice the caste discrimination in the schools it's become a hostile environment between teachers and parents of the student. It undermines the question of merit in the society. It rises against to the spirit of democratic educational values. Caste discrimination can be pathway to degradation of Dalits and women in the society. It creates a falsehood among the higher caste people. Caste has being an integral part of Hindu religion, when it discriminate on the grounds of caste, people will search for a new religion which leads to religious conversion. Caste discrimination has undermined the abilities and aspirations of the students. It will also suppress the people an account of caste segregation. It is never allowed people to get equal opportunities in the society. The caste discrimination ultimately leads to the question of unity and integrity of the national development. Abolition of caste discrimination in the school is possible when the policy makers have to consider *annihilation of caste* is a prime goal of comprehensive public policy in the field of education.

## **Findings of the Study**

- The majority students studying in government schools belong to SC, ST and BC communities.
- The students are deprived of sports and games, music, drawing, and craft, all of which are very essential for developing innovative thinking, teamwork and leadership qualities in the students. These facilities are not provided by any of the selected school in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- Since primary school students are of a tender age, there is need for including resting hours in between the classes. However, such a requirement has not been identified and included in the school curriculum.
- It was very shocking to note that students, almost invariably those belonging to the SC/ST categories are being forced to perform tasks like sweeping classrooms, cleaning toilets and bringing MDM provisions.

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- Educational facilities were found to be inadequate in the schools. Unscientific pedagogical practices are in existence in these schools. Social reality is not being reflected in the school curriculum.
- Subject-wise teachers are lacking and multi-class rooms are common in all these selected schools.
- Lack of educational facilities and widespread discriminatory caste practices.
- Caste discrimination leads to dropouts in SC and ST students. It's also negative effect on students' innovative and analytical thinking in the school. Where the dropout rate is less there is a possibility of higher standard of schooling and quality of education.

There is an urgent need of inclusive policy intervention to tackle the problems emerged out of the field study.

## **Suggestions and Strategies for Inclusive Education**

- ❖ Sufficient funds need to be allocation and spent (6 per cent of the GDP). Also, there is a need to be introduced Common School System, as suggested by Kothari Commission.
- ❖ The present *School Curriculum* should be revised and upgraded according to social needs and realities. The curriculum should be framed on the basis of logic, scientific and rationalist methods.
- ❖ Caste sensitisation training workshops need to be arranged for the teaching community. Village level awareness camps on the problems of caste system should be organised.
- ❖ There should be a provision for resting hours for primary school children between the class hours.
- ❖ Sufficient Educational Inspectors need to be recruited for strengthening the school supervising system.
- ❖ The remuneration of Teachers should be linked with the child's performance to promote quality education.
- ❖ There is a need for a Government Act that all government officials' children should study in government schools only.
- ❖ Adequate non-teaching staff is needed to be appointed to prevent students being forced to perform non-academic activities in the schools.
- ❖ The school construction norms should be revised. Playgrounds should be made compulsory for all the schools. Construction of residential accommodation for the teachers could engender better student teacher interaction. At present, most teachers commute from distant areas and are in a hurry to go back to their homes after school hours.

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- ❖ Teachers should keep away from non-academic activities such as being deputed on different surveys conducted by government.
- ❖ Subject wise teachers need to be appointed on a regular basis. A separate classroom for each class has to be allotted.
- ❖ To promote sports and games, there is a need for Physical Education Teachers in all the, primary schools.
- ❖ Art, Craft, Music and Dance should be encouraged in the schools.
- ❖ Special classes and remedial coaching should be conducted for SC, ST and BC students to promote equal education.
- ❖ In every school there should be a *Child Rights Committee* to protect their rights.

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