

## Scheduled Castes in Higher Education

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### Introduction

The development of any country mostly depends upon its growth of education in society. Progress of a society is possible only when its citizens are dynamic, resourceful, enterprising and responsible, without such citizens progress of country cannot be achieved in any field. In the development of any country, primary education helps in creating base while higher education is important for providing cutting edge. Higher education institutions are contributing much to the national development by the way of providing specialized knowledge and skilled manpower therefore, higher education is considered to be an important Instrument for the development of any country, particularly for a developing country like India. Education in this respect is conceived as an instrument of social and economic change for the future democratic society. Today illiteracy and low level education is a general problem for the country which is critical across caste, religion and region. Even though this is an issue of national concern, it is also a reality that education has proved to be the most powerful instrument for social and psychological changes among different communities in India including scheduled castes.

It has also influenced productivity and has brought economic changes among the scheduled castes it is observed that now their educational standards have been upgraded and they can acquire better positions in society along with the others still, there is a need and scope for improvement in socio-economic conditions of this group because all the people of scheduled castes are not

incorporated in the mainstream of higher education. This study is an attempt to find out higher education status among scheduled castes in India.

### Objectives of the Study

The following are the main objectives of the study.

1. To understand the meaning of Education and the concept of Scheduled Castes in India.
2. To find out higher education status among scheduled castes in India.

### Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of the study is

1. Education is the tool for overall development of society.
2. Large numbers of people of scheduled castes are not incorporated in the mainstream of higher education.
3. Higher education is considered to be an important instrument for the development of any society.

### Research Methodology

The present study is based on secondary data would be collected from Books, Thesis, Dissertation, Journals, Newspaper and articles etc.

### Meaning and Definition of Education

**Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar**, the frontier of Dalits emphasizes on the need of education He compares education with the milk of tigress and adds that one who will drink it would not seat calm but agitate.

**Mahatma Gandhi**: 'Education is drawing out of the best in child and man body mind and spirit'

**Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**: 'Education is a weapon of creation of mental and educational development, weapon of eradication of social slavery of economic development of political freedom'.

**Gordon M.**: 'Education is a philosophical as well as sociological concept denoting ideologies, curricula and pedagogical tech of the inculcation and management of knowledge and the social reproduction of personalities and cultures'

### Concept Scheduled Caste

In 19<sup>th</sup> century the social reformer of Maharashtra Mahatma Jotirao Phule coined the term '*dalit*' for all oppressed classes.

Daring the first half of the 20th century 'depressed class' exterior castes, and scheduled castes, these terms have been used as synonymous for *dalits*. Mahatma Gandhi called *dalits* as '*Harijans*'.

**Gupta S. K.** defines the term scheduled castes primarily as an administrative category used in the constitution of India. They are castes identified by the president of India under article 341 and put under a scheduled. The British Government in the Government of India act. 1935 used the term

for the first time before this, some of these classes were labelled as ‘depressed classes’ and the term was used for the 1st time in the beginning of this century the term of scheduled castes is firstly used by Simon commission in 1927.

### Importance of Scheduled castes in Higher Education

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar highlights on higher education system, according to him, ‘The education in University should be society oriented. It should be scientific and away from prejudice, it should not be limited with the benefit of certain classes in society He also adds that the aim of education is not only to teach thermos but it should enable to increase their intellectual capacities’.

He felt if the dalits are educated than they could leave their traditional occupation and take up secular accusations thus this breaking the age old caste based structure of division of labour in our society.

Great social reformer Mahatma Jotirao Phule also desorbed the indis pencability of education for the redemption of the dalits in the following words:

‘For want of education, their intellect deteriorated for want of intellect, their morality decayed, for want of progress, their wealth vanished all their sorrows sprang from illiteracy’.

### Population of Scheduled Castes in India

Table No. 1 (Figures in %)

Census year	Percentage of total population of India
1991	16.48
2001	16.20
2011	16.60

Source: India statistical abstract 1991, 2001 and 2011

The above table shows the increasing in the population of SC between 1991 and 2011. The percentage of scheduled castes population to total population of India was 16.48 percent; this has increased to 16.60 percent in 2011.

### Literacy Rates of Scheduled Castes

Table No. 2 (Figures in %)

Year	Total population	Scheduled Castes Population
1961	28.30	10.27
1971	34.45	14.67
1981	43.57	21.38
1991	52.21	37.41
2001	64.80	54.69
2011	74.0	66.10

Source: census of India 1961-2011

The above table shows that the literacy among scheduled castes has been slowly increasing over a period of time the literacy is not enough to achieve better social and economic status.

### Gross Enrolment Ratio of Scheduled castes in higher Education

Table No. 3 (18 to 23 years age group)

Year	General category	Scheduled castes
2001-02	8.07	5.76
2002-03	8.97	5.97
2003-04	9.21	6.44
2004-05	9.97	6.72
2005-06	11.35	8.37
2006-07	12.39	9.35
2007-08	13.58	11.62
2008-09	13.8	11.0
2009-10	15.0	11.1
2010-11	21.44	13.5
2011-12	23.27	14.9
2012-13	23.59	15.12

**Source:** compiled from various reports of the ministry of human resource development of India.

The above table shows that the gross enrolment increasing trends during the period of 2001-02 to 2007-08 there after it has declined.

From the above data on education it can be concluded that there is lowest enrolment at higher levels of education compared to primary education level and other levels of education also enrolment in higher education is lower.

### Factors affecting higher education among scheduled castes in India

Following factors, which are affecting on the education status i.e. enrolment, dropout and academic achievements of scheduled castes in India.

#### A. Family background:

Family plays important role in shaping personality and determining the wellbeing of the children. In the case of SC students parental academic background is not good hence at all educational level including higher education, low enrolment, poor academic achievement and high dropouts are the results.

#### B. Discrimination in Education:

The practice of untouchability, caste and casteism prevails in the inequality of opportunity and caste based discrimination are responsible for the low education status of Scheduled castes. This affects their educational achievement, mental health, creates inferiority complex and force to suicide also.

### **C. Reservation policy:**

The private financing as well as public financing institutions reservation policy has not followed properly even government department, schools, universities and colleges has not considered caste quota in some states after 2000. Thus, positive discrimination policy itself had led to negative discrimination.

### **D. Government Facilities or provisions:**

Governments provide many programmes and schemes for SC students but these programmes had very limited implementation and their operation suffered from harsh bureaucratic apathy.

### **E. Adverse Economic Condition:**

High dropout and lower enrolment rates are natural outcomes of poverty and unemployment among scheduled castes in India.

### **F. Language Problem:**

Scheduled caste student having poor language backgrounds mainly English language did not feel comfortable to answer in English and denied access to higher education.

### **G. Syllabus/curriculum:**

Scheduled castes sought education as a mechanism to transform as well as enter mainstream society but in the educational institutions the ideas of dominant group, their culture, religion, language etc. Is reflected in the curriculum the knowledge which is considered as useful is that which is linked to the values and lifestyle of dominant groups. The scheduled castes and their issues and problems have remained unimportant to the curriculum and their representation if at all has been weak and vague.

### **Conclusion:**

Above study shows enrolment among scheduled caste students in higher education in India is showing positive trend but the increase in Gross enrolment ratio is gradual. If Government implements reservation policy, various programs and policies for the educational development of Scheduled castes students increase the gross enrolment ratio and the decrease dropout. Modern education has brought the changes in the social and economic life of the Scheduled caste community in India but all the castes included under the category of scheduled caste category in not incorporated in the mainstream of higher education.

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