



EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF ADOLESCENTS IN DALIT COMMUNITY IN INDIA: ATTAINMENT AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract:

The word Dalit is used for the untouchables, ill-treated and humiliated castes. Who is untouchable, an untouchable is one who is culturally, socially, economically and politically suppressed and exploited in the name of religion. Normally Non-Dalit writers and intellectuals have invited its root in Sanskrit and considered its meaning as broken, crack, split and as adjective they have given this word the meaning of burst, split, broken or torn asunder, downtrodden, scattered, crushed, destroyed etc. Adolescence is a period of rapid change physiological, psychological, moral & social. Concept of psychological maturity includes emotional maturity, sexual maturity, social maturity, intellectual maturity, interest in practicable occupation, interest & understand general principles of life, identification of self & social relationship. It is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. There is growth spurt during adolescence a resulting changes in body & voice, physical energy and sexual maturity.

Education represents one way to break out of cycles of poverty and distress, but it is also a by-product of such economic condition. Even when Dalits are allowed access to school, Dalit students face substandard condition. Ninety-nine percent of Dalit students comes from contrast, it is common for Non-Dalit children to seek private tutoring or to access private education of generally better quality. The motivation to do so comes from the fact that most primary government schools are considered low quality. Few Dalits are able to access such supplementation to their education, this furthers the education gaps. Once enrolled, discrimination continues to obstruct the access of Dalit children to schooling as well as to affect the quality of education they receive. The importance of education was duly acknowledgement in the Indian constitution. Present paper is focusing the educational status of Adolescents in Dalit Community in India: Attainment and challenges and what growth or progress they have achieved till now and what are the challenges this community have during attainment of education.

Key Words: Dalit, Adolescence, Upper Primary & Secondary Education

Introduction:

The word "Dalit" comes from the Sanskrit root 'Dal' means "broken, ground-down, downtrodden, or oppressed." Those previously known as Untouchables, Depressed Classes, and Harijans are today increasingly adopting the term "Dalit" as a name for themselves. 'Dalit' refers to one's caste rather than class; it applies to members of those menial castes which have born the stigma of "untouchability" because of the extreme impurity and pollution connected with their traditional occupations. Dalits are 'outcastes' falling outside the traditional four-fold caste system consisting of the hereditary Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra classes; they are considered impure and polluting and are therefore physically and socially excluded and isolated from the rest of society. Dalits represent a community of 201 million in India, constituting 17% of the population. One out of every six Indians is Dalit, yet due to their caste identity Dalits regularly face discrimination and violence which prevent them from enjoying the basic human rights and dignity promised to all citizens of India.

Concept and Meaning of Adolescent:

The term adolescence derived from the Latin word ‘adolesco’, meaning “to grow” or “to grow to maturity” term adolescence has a broader meaning; it includes mental, emotional and social maturity. Adolescents account for one fifth of the world’s population and have been on an increasing trend. In India they account for 21% of the population (According to the Planning Commission’s Population projections, census of India 2011). This implies that about 253, (133 million Male, 119 million Female) million Indians are adolescents in the age group of 10 to 19 years. If we see the population of SC Community’s adolescents, they have 44 million (23 million Male, 21million female). Adolescents have very special and distinct needs, which can no longer be overlooked. It is also essential to invest in adolescents, as they are the future of the country. They need to be helped to help themselves and to be helped to do it alone. By addressing their needs one would not only be contributing to the socio-economic development of the country but also to other societal concerns like social harmony, gender justice, population stabilization and improving the quality of life of our people. It has often been said that in India there is no phase such as ‘adolescents’ – from a child one becomes a young adult. Adolescent sex experience numerous developmental challenge sat varying pace, including: increasing need for in dependence; evolving sexuality; transitioning through education and commencing employment; consolidating advanced cognitive abilities; and negotiating changing relationships with family, peers and broader social connections (Cameron and Kana barrow, 2003).

Literacy Rates of Scheduled Caste in India:

Before knowing about the education status of adolescent we to have a glimpse about literacy rate of SCs. Literacy is an ability to both read and write a simple message with understanding in any language. It is regarded as one of the sensitive indicant of progress for any society and essential pre-condition for raising the status of weaker section such as Dalit. The World Bank extols the importance of literacy as its Presidents James D. Wolfensohn said, “Literacy is pivotal to human progress. All agree that the single most important key to development and to poverty alleviation is education. Adult education, literacy and lifelong learning must be combined with the fundamental recognition that education of women and girls is central to development”(John Dewey, 2014).

Table No 1:

Indicator	Literates		Literacy Rate		Change in Literacy Rate
	2001	2011	2001	2011	
Total Population					
Total	56,06,87,797	76,34,98,517	64.8	73.0	8.2
Rural	36,17,36,601	48,26,53,540	58.7	67.8	9.1
Urban	19,89,51,196	28,08,44,977	79.9	84.1	4.2
Scheduled Castes					
Total	7,53,18,285	11,37,59,907	54.7	66.1	11.4
Rural	5,58,06,266	8,20,20,232	51.2	62.8	11.6
Urban	1,95,12,019	3,17,39,675	68.1	76.2	8.1

Source: Primary Census Abstract for Total population, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 2011 Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India

Table-1 gives the number of literates and literacy rates for the latest census years, 2001 and 2011 for the SC, and General population by areas, rural and urban. The figures

reveal how all these social categories SCs, and Non-SCs have progressed during these decades in terms of literacy. Although the literacy rates among SCs remain well below the rest of India's population, the gap has closed significantly in the last decade.

Upper Primary Education in Adolescent:

Upper Primary education is starting stage of adolescence period. Universalisation of elementary education implies universal enrolment, universal retention, bridging gender and social category gaps in primary and upper primary education and elementary education. Indeed, tremendous quantitative expansion of all categories of schools imparting upper primary education has taken place during 2001-14 as shown in Table-2. The total number of schools imparting upper primary education increased by 185.9% during this period.

Table 2: Number of Schools Imparting Upper Primary Education

Year	No. of Schools Imparting Upper Primary Education
2000-01	206,269
2001-02	219,626
2002-03	245,274
2003-04	262,285
2004-05	274,731
2005-06	288,493
2006-07	305,584
2007-08	445,108
2008-09	476,468
2009-10	493,838
2010-11	535,080
2011-12	569,697
2012-13	577,832
2013-14	589,796

Source: Statistics of School Education, 2007-08, MHRD, GoI; and Unified District information System for Education (U-DISH), National University of Education Planning and Administration (NUEPA).

Table 3: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Upper Primary Education of SC children (2000-01 to 2013-14) (%)

Year	Upper Primary Education (Class 6-8 th)		
	Boys	Girls	Total
2001	76.2	53.3	65.3
2001-02	80.3	57.7	69.6
2002-03	63.2	48.6	56.3
2003-04	79.4	63.4	71.9
2004-05	77.9	61.5	70.2
2005-06	81.0	65.1	73.5
2006-07	83.1	63.3	75.7
2007-08	82.1	78.1	80.2
2008-09	86.8	83.6	85.3
2009-10	90.5	86.6	88.6
2010-11	93.8	90.6	92.3
2012-13	96.7	103.0	99.7
2013-14	95.0	101.9	98.3

Source: Statics of School Education, 2007-08, MHRD, Gol; Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2011, MHRD, Gol; Statistics of School Education, 2010-11, MHRD , Gol; U-DISE, NUEPA. Between 2000-01 and 2013-14, the GERs for SC children in upper primary education have registered steady increase (Table-3) The GER for upper primary education has increased by 33% points. The increase in GER in upper primary education was higher for SC girls (48.6% points) than the SC boys (18.8 % points) during this period.

Secondary Education in Adolescence:

There has been huge quantitative expansion in the secondary and higher secondary school system too. Table-2 shows that the number of secondary and higher secondary school has increased from 126,047 in 2000-01 to 237,111 in 2013-14. Correspondingly, it has pushed the enrolment in secondary/higher Secondary education by 32 million. The enrolment of boys has increased by 14.6 million where as that of girls increased by 17.4 million during this period. The percentage increase in number of schools was 88.11%, the enrolment had increased by 117.31%, It was much higher for girls (162%) than that for boys (86.4%) during the period.

Table 4: Number of Secondary/Higher Secondary Schools and Enrolment in them- 2001 to 2013-14

Year	No. of Secondary/Higher Secondary Schools	Enrolment in Secondary/Senior Secondary Education (in millions)		
		Boys	Girls	Total
2000-01	126,047	16.9	10.7	27.6
2001-02	133,492	18.4	12.1	30.5
2002-03	137,207	19.5	13.7	33.2
2003-04	145,962	20.6	14.4	35.0
2004-05	152,049	21.7	15.4	37.1
2006-07	159,667	22.3	16.1	38.4
2007-08	169,568	23.0	16.9	39.9
2008-09	172,990	25.2	19.3	44.5
2009-10	193,200	25.6	19.9	45.5
2010-11	190,643	26.7	21.5	48.2
2011-12	200,184	28.3	22.9	51.2
2012-13	228,914	29.0	25.6	54.6
2013-14	237,111	31.5*	28.1*	59.6*

*Enrolment figure for 2013-14, include enrolment in secondary/higher secondary schools and enrolment in courses offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2011, MHRD, Gol; U-DISE, NUEPA

Gross Enrolment Ratio in secondary and Higher Secondary Education:

Table-4 provides data on enrolment of SC Adolescence boys and girls in secondary and higher secondary classes for the year 2004-05 to 2013-14. The data shows substantial rise in GER. For the secondary classes, in case of boys, it rose by 27.3% points but in case of girls in increased by 32.0% points more than double of that of boys. The higher secondary classes have showed still better result. The enrolment of boys has increased by 23.4% points and the enrolment of girls increased by 32% points again more than double of that for boys. As such investment in expansion of the school

system level substantially for all students including the SC ones. More importantly this enrolment growth has been substantially higher for girl students than boys.

Table 5: Gross Enrolment Ratio in secondary and Higher Secondary Education for the Scheduled Cast Student for the year 2004-05 to 2013-14 (%)

Year	GER in secondary education in Adolescence (classes 9-10) (Age 14-15 years)			GER in higher secondary education in Adolescence (classes 11-12) (Age 15-17 years)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2004-05	52.2	37.6	45.4	26.6	19.1	23.2
2005-06	54.8	40.3	48.1	27.9	20.9	24.7
2006-07	58.3	44.6	51.9	29.2	21.8	25.8
2007-08	55.8	48.9	52.6	30.1	25.3	27.9
2008-09	57.4	51.8	54.8	30.9	26.6	28.9
2009-10	71.2	63.5	67.6	37.4	33.5	35.6
2010-11	74.0	67.5	70.9	40.3	36.1	38.3
2013-14	78.2	79.4	78.7	50.0	51.1	50.5

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance, 2011, MHRD, Gol; U-DISE, NUEPA

Challenges:

There are various challenges for the Schedule cast or Dalit, for their education status one of the major challenges is drop-out rate in adolescent.

- ✓ **Drop-Out Rates in Scheduled Caste Adolescents:** Drop-out rate in Schedule Caste group student is very unexpected. In the first year of their enrolment in School, it remains very high gradually in coming year it goes down. As we have found that in upper primary education level total Gross Enrolment Ratio is 98.3%, but in secondary education GER is low with 78.7%, higher secondary education GER is more poor with 50.5%.
- ✓ **Discrimination in Education:** Education represents one way to break out of cycles of poverty and distress, but it is also a by-product of such economic condition. Even when Dalits are allowed access to school, Dalit students face substandard condition. Ninety-nine percent of Dalit students comes from contrast, it is common for non-Dalit children to seek private tutoring or to access private education of generally better quality. The motivation to do so comes from the fact that most primary government schools are considered low quality. Few Dalits are able to access such supplementation to their education, this furthers the education gaps. Once enrolled, discrimination continues to obstruct the access of Dalit children to schooling as well as to affect the quality of education they receive.

There are some other challenges which also obstruct the SCs adolescent to attain the education at all level, these are:

- Illiterate or less literate parents.
- Lack of awareness in community about education.
- Casteism in community.
- Supremacy of parents.
- Exploitation of Adolescent in family & community.
- Lack of confidence, proper education and training.
- Lack of awareness to known to their rights.
- Lack of support from the villages.
- Lack of Cooperation from the Party Leaders.

- Prevalence of early marriage in SCs community.
- Prevalence of tension of earning money.
- Violence in the community and educational places.
- Gender discrimination within inter group and intra group of SC Community.

Conclusion:

The Adolescents have always been neglected in all society. The situation is more worst in Scheduled Caste adolescents than general caste. Albeit government has been trying to major changes in their Policies and Programs but more growths need to be taken with regard of Schedule Caste adolescent. Educational status of Schedule Caste adolescent girls is also challenge for government these girls affected by the discrimination of all level. Viewing the above data we can say that improvement and effective action need to be done by government.

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