

Disparities in educational development in India: An analysis

Sambhu Sankar Deep

Consultant in Education, Curriculum Development and Evaluation Center (CDEC), PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), NCERT, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

Abstract

The prime focus of this paper is to discuss and explore disparities in Educational development in India. With the help of secondary source of data here attempt has been made to analyse different parameters of educational development like literacy rate, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Drop-Out Rate.

Keywords: disparities, education and gross enrolment ratio

Introduction

Indian society is characterised by a high degree of structural inequalities, based on the institutions of caste and ethnicity. Although every caste (except those at the top of caste hierarchy) suffers from the unequal and hierarchal assignment of rights, it is the 'untouchables' castes – referred to officially as the Scheduled Castes (SCs) – which have suffered most. Historically they were denied the right to property, business (except some occupations considered as impure and polluting), education, and all civil, cultural and religious rights, except manual labour and service to castes above them. Untouchables also suffer from residential segregation and social isolation (Thorat, 2005) [2].

Educational imbalances in India deserve particular attention because traditional social disparities based on notions of pollution and impurity that governed caste relations are rapidly being transformed into class inequalities through differential educational attainments (Desai and Thorat, 2013) [5]. If we see the education sector overall enrolment of children in all stages of education in India has improved over the years. Such increase in school participation has been also associated with a significant jump in the literacy rate which rose from 18% in 1951 to 84.11% in 2011. However, there are disparities in participation of students among different social groups. Nonetheless, substantial gaps remain in educational outcomes across gender, caste, religion and between urban and rural inhabitants (Wu, Goldschmidt, Azam and Boscardin, 2006) [6]. Altogether these explain a large part of educational inequality in India (Thomas *et al.*, 2000) [4].

Forms of Disparities

Different types of disparities that exist in India are as follows:

1. Rural and urban divide: India is a land of villages. According to the latest Census (2011) [1], India has more than 6 lakh villages while there are around 7000 towns and urban centres. Out of a total population of 121 crores, the rural population accounts for 69% and urban population 31%. On the contrary, economic policies have primarily focussed on urban areas. It relied on the philosophy that benefits of India's high

growth and expansion of industrial urban centres would automatically percolate down to the rural areas. This has led to the unequal growth of rural areas and has resulted in a sense of deprivation and dissatisfaction amongst a large percentage of rural population. Hence a majority of rural society remains excluded from India's journey of development.

2. Social discrimination: Indian society has been traditionally highly hierarchical in nature. The caste system practiced by the Hindu society did not allow social mobility across the classes. Though other religions are supposed to be casteless, in the Indian context all religious groups covertly practice caste-based discrimination. Dalits who are outcastes are the worst victims of caste discrimination followed by the adivasis who are outside the caste hierarchy. Our Constitution has special provisions to protect the interests of these groups who are characterized as scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs). All the affirmative action in favour of them so far has helped only a small proportion of them.

The SCs, who account for over 16 per cent of the population, remain backward in economic and social development. Mostly landless and asset less being largely agricultural labour in rural areas, their living conditions and access to basic amenities of life are pathetic. As a result, the incidence of poverty, illiteracy and ill health among the SCs is significantly higher compared to the rest of the population. Though untouchability has been abolished by the Constitution more than 70 years ago, still they continue to be victims of various forms of discrimination.

3. Gender Discrimination

Every child deserves to reach her or his full potential, but gender inequalities in their lives and in the lives of those who care for them hinder this reality. Wherever they live in India girls and boys see gender inequality in their homes and communities every day – in textbooks, in movies, in the media and among the men and women who provide their care and support. Across India gender inequality results in unequal opportunities, and while it impacts on the lives of both genders, statistically it is girls that are the most

disadvantaged (UNICEF).

Disparities in Different Educational Parameters

Disparities in education have been discussed with different parameters like literacy rate, Gross Enrolment Ratio and Drop-Out rate.

a. Literacy Rate

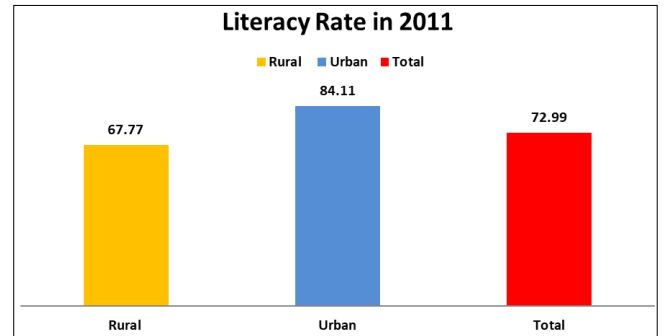
Table 1: Literacy rate by sex for rural and urban areas 2001 and 2011

Year	Total			Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2001	75.26	53.67	64.84	70.07	46.01	58.74	86.03	72.09	79.92
2011	80.89	64.64	72.99	77.15	57.93	67.77	88.76	79.11	84.11

Source: Census of India, 2011.

Table.1 shows comparative picture about literary rate among female and male, rural and urban. From the table it is clear that in 2011 over all literacy rate of female (80.89) is less as compare to that of male (64.64). The table also highlights about rural urban disparities in both the census of

2001 and 2011.



Source: Census of India, 2011

Graph 1: Literacy Rate in 2011 Census

Graph 1 state that according to 2011 census only 67.93 percent rural people are literate as compare 88.11 percent in urban areas.

b. Gross Enrolment Ratio

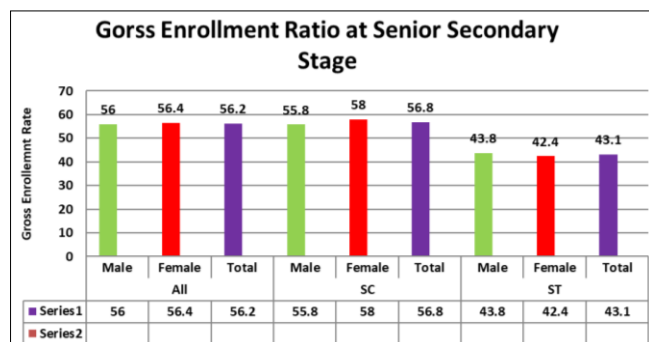
Table 2: Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): 2015-16

Stage	All			SC			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Primary (I-V)	97.9	100.7	99.2	109.5	112.4	110.9	107.8	105.7	107.7
Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	88.7	97.6	92.8	97.8	107.7	102.4	95.4	98.2	96.7
Elementary (I-VIII)	94.5	99.6	96.9	105.3	110.8	107.9	103.4	103.1	103.3
Secondary (IX-X)	79.2	81.0	80.0	83.9	86.9	85.3	73.7	75.4	74.5
Senior Secondary (XI-XII)	56.0	56.4	56.2	55.8	58.0	56.8	43.8	42.4	43.1
Higher Education	25.4	23.5	24.5	20.8	19.0	19.9	15.6	12.9	14.2

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance (2018), MHRD, GOI

The above table shows about Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) at different stages of education. The table highlights that the GER of SC and ST students at Elementary stage are high as compare to overall enrolment at elementary stage. The situation is such because of large enrolment drive after implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009. However, as the stages of education increasing GER of all categories is decreasing. But GER of SC and ST students are decreasing at a higher rate as compare to overall GER.

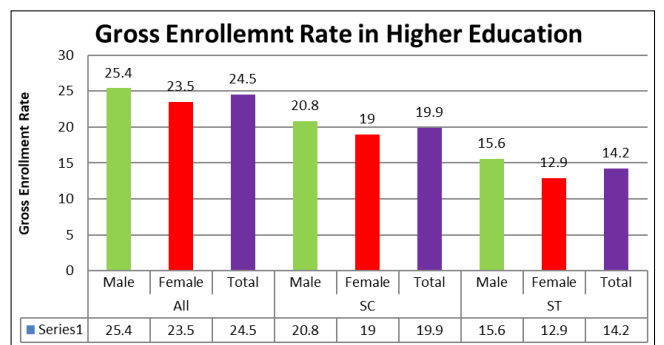
are very less as compare to overall as well SC students. Participation of ST students is less because of drop out at the elementary and secondary stage of education.



Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance (2018), MHRD, GOI

Graph 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio at Senior Secondary Stage

Graphs.2 highlights about Gross Enrolment Rate at Senior Secondary stage. From the graphs it is clear that ST students



Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance (2018), MHRD, GOI

Graph 3: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education

The above graphs show inequality among different categories of students. The graphs highlights that GER of SC and ST students at higher stage are very less as compare to overall GER. At higher education stage overall GER is 25.4 but the GER of SC and ST students are only 19.0 and 14.2 respectively. Social inequality has been an issue of debate since centuries and still it persist in India in different sectors.

c. Drop-Out Rate in School Education

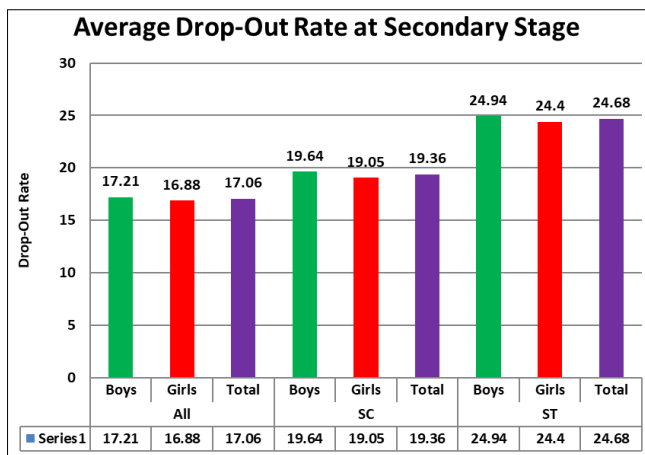
Table 3: Average Annual Drop-Out Rate in School Education: 2014-15

Level	All			SC			ST		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary	4.36	3.88	4.13	4.71	4.20	4.46	7.02	6.84	6.93
Upper Primary	3.49	4.60	4.03	5.00	6.03	5.51	8.48	8.71	8.59
Secondary	17.21	16.88	17.06	19.64	19.05	19.36	24.94	24.40	24.68

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance (2018), MHRD, GOI

The above table shows about average annual drop-Out Rate in school education. From the table it is clear that as students are moving higher classes their dropout rates are increasing.

- “Measuring Education Inequality: Gini Coefficients of Education”, World Bank Working paper no 2525, 2000.
- Thorat S. Persistence of poverty: why do scheduled castes and scheduled tribes stay chronically poor? Chronic Poverty Research Centre Working Paper, London, 2005.
- Wu Kin Bing, Pete Goldschmidt, Mehtabul Azam, Christy Kim Boscardin. “Girls in India: Poverty, Location, and Social Disparities”, in M. Lewis and M. Lockheed (eds.), Exclusion, Gender and Education: Case Studies from the Developing World, Center for Global Development, Washington, DC, 2006.
- <https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/gender-equality>



Graph 4: Average Drop-Out Rate at Secondary Stage

The above graphs highlights about average dropout rate at secondary stage of education. The graph also highlights that drop-Out rate are high among the ST students at the secondary stage.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it is clear that even after large expansion of education system in India there are inequalities among social groups in different parameter of education. Therefore, proactive policies and steps must be taken by the Government at different levels to eliminate the educational gap among different social groups in the country. Without educational development of all sections inclusive and sustainable devolvement is impossible. India population is among the youngest in the world i.e. a larger portion of the population is in the productive age. Hence there is need for GER to increase at more rapid rate to gain advantage of the demographic dividend.

References

- Census of India, Report on Post Enumeration Survey. Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India 2/A, Mansingh Road, New Delhi-11001, 2011.
- Desai S, Thorat A. Social Inequalities in Education. India Infrastructure Report-2012: Private Sector in Education. Routledge. New Delhi, 2013.
- Government of India. Educational Statistics at a Glance. Ministry of Human Resource Development. Department of School Education & Literacy. Statistics Division. New Delhi, 2018.
- Thomas, Vinod, Wang, Yanling, Fan, Xibo.