
UNIT 15 PROBLEMS OF DEPRIVED STUDENTS

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15.1 INTRODUCTION

Educationally deprived students in India largely consist of children belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the girls. The Constitution of India has listed a number of castes as scheduled castes and tribes as scheduled tribes in different states. These castes and tribes, which are in the Schedules of the Constitution, qualify for certain special consideration in matters of education and other empowering programmes.

The Article 46 (under the Directive Principles of State Policy) of the Constitution says that the State shall promote with special care educational interests of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

The Article 45 of the Constitution lays down the Directive Principle for attaining universal elementary education among the children up to the age of 14, within 10 years of promulgation of the Constitution. The Government have been extending the target date, and now the target date for attaining elementary education is by the year 2005.

There are certain major problems in attaining this goal in matters like enrolment, retention and achievement among the children belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and the girls. Various incentive schemes such as free text books, uniform, free tuition fee etc. are in vogue to promote elementary education among the children of these categories, under Ministers of Welfare, Human Resource Development etc.

15.2 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- understand and state the special reasons for the educational under development of education of the Scheduled Tribes;
- understand and state the special reasons for the educational underdevelopment of the Scheduled Castes;
- understand and state the reasons for the educational underdevelopment of the Girls;
- understand and state the educational problems arising out of these reasons;
- understand and enumerate various schemes to ameliorate these problems; and
- analyse cause and effect relationship and possible corrective measures.

15.3 PROBLEMS OF DEPRIVED STUDENTS

You may imagine the problems faced by one:

- if he/she staying in a remote area,
- if he/she belongs to a community or society looked down by others,
- if a superiority label is attached to a particular gender by birth in the society,
- and so on.

There is a big list of questions or issues. All of us are aware of some of them. In this block, so far you might have gone through the Units 13 and 14 titled Behavioural Problems of Students and Socio-Emotional Problems of Students with Handicaps respectively. These units might have given you an account of the various problems faced by children in general and children with special needs in specific. This unit will acquaint you with the problems faced by students of certain groups and castes. In our society, we have been experiencing that gender discrimination is on decline in urban areas but the situation is not the same in rural and remote areas. Therefore, female population belonging to these population also faces the problems faced by female children in the society. Here, attempts have been made to highlight the problems by these groups of students i.e. SC, ST and girl children of school going age-group and also the various incentives and facilities provided by the Centre, State and others bodies for their educational development.

15.3.1 Education among the SC Students

The scheduled caste student have been handicapped in matters of education because of socio-economic and cultural reasons. They are mostly first generation learners, that is, they do not have the tradition of learning, reading writing and arithmetic. The parents are mostly illiterate. Please note that literacy and education are not synonymous, though to a great extent they are inter-related intrinsically. As such, even if the SC children are enrolled in schools, they do not find any family support in terms of learning atmosphere or home support to augment or supplement the learning in schools.

The social distance between non-scheduled castes and scheduled castes is also a major reason. The attitudinal distance between the two are quite marked, which has been perpetuated for quite a long time and still persists between the students of the two categories, and also between the non-scheduled caste teacher and the scheduled caste children. This apathy acts as disincentive to schooling of these children.

The division of labour or the vocation in which such families were involved traditionally, were such that they did not require schooling as a basic pre-requisite. Most of them were engaged in unskilled or semi skilled jobs which were acquired without the use of literacy and numeracy attributes. Most of them were landless labourers or belonged to other professions specially assigned to them by tradition. So lack of educational environment at their homes were also a major causal factor for either negative or indifferent attitude towards education. The case of SC girls was all the more difficult as women were confined to household chores, service, labour, etc.

In the present day situation education is an empowering tool for development. You may be knowing that literacy is one of the most important indicator of the level of development of any nation. It is also now fully established that education and development are intrinsically related to each other.

The SC children who have been brought into the network of education, generally achieve lower than their counterparts. **Can you think of the reasons for this?** The most important reason is that they are mostly first generation learners. Second, the time that they devote to studies is much less as compared to other sections of population. It is so mainly because of home environment. Also, the SC children are mostly engaged in economic pursuits in their non-schooling home because of the poor economic conditions of the family.

Activity

1. These activities are suggestive in nature. You can undertake the ones that are easy to do in your school context.
 - i) Develop a tool for socio-economic survey of the SC students.
 - ii) Make a socio-economic survey of the SC students in your school.
 - iii) Develop and apply an achievement test for students at a particular stage of education based on competencies expected to be mastered at that level.
 - iv) Analyse the mean scores of SC and non-SC students on the test developed and compare the results.
 - v) Relate your findings with the findings of the socio-economic survey.
 - vi) Work out the correctional teaching-learning strategy to overcome the learning inadequacies of the SC students.

15.3.2 Schemes For Promotion of Education

There are several centrally sponsored schemes for this purpose :

- i) Free Education : The SC children are exempted from payment of any tuition fee for entire education right upto the university level.
- ii) Free textbooks etc. : At the elementary stage, they are entitled for free text books and learning materials.
- iii) Free Mid-day meals : Under the new schemes, all children in primary schools are covered under free mid-day meal programme, which covers the SC children.
- iv) Free Uniforms : There is a scheme of providing two sets of free uniforms to the children belonging to SC in elementary schools.
- v) Stipends : The SC children are entitled to stipends at varying scales at different stages of education.

15.3.3 Problems due to Educational Backwardness

- a) The content of education is, at times, not related to the experiences of the SC child, particularly their socio-economic background. The content is mostly urban based experiences and the SC child finds it difficult to relate it from its own "known level".
- b) The home-study or homework approach in most cases of SC children does not work well because of lack of home support for such an approach.
- c) The economic engagement of most of the SC children does not provide opportunities for necessary educational activity which tends to be more academic than problem-solving in actual life situations.
- d) The economy of SC families is of "here and now" nature and education is considered to be a long term human resources investment with doubtful economic return in posterity.
- e) Education, as it is, develops a negative attitude towards working with hand, which is against the social practices (ethos) of the SC society. So education is at times considered as a process which makes the child unfit in his/her own social environment.

15.3.4 Steps Undertaken for Educational Development

- a) Decentralisation of curriculum and material development process wherein competencies are given in terms of minimum levels of learning (MLLs) with flexibility to develop content according to local specific needs, particularly at the elementary stage. Can you think of its implications? The implications are that pupil evaluation process examination and certification will have to be decentralised and continuous and comprehensive evaluation, with diagnostic and remedial approach.
- b) No "home work", that is, the teaching-learning process has to be comprehensive enough so as to provide enough opportunities and time to the student to practice and to solve

difficulties through teacher assistance. Some definite strategy need to be evolved to solve such problems.

- c) The instructional material and teaching-learning strategies have to be remodelled/ restructured so as to relate to the life needs as are faced by the children and addressed to the problem-solving approach.
- d) Educational processes could be so structured that some economic returns are immediately available to the child. The relevance of the basic education and of work experience is of special significance in this regard. It has implications of far reaching consequences and logistic problems of marketing the products, etc. Also, such an approach cannot be for sectoral sections of children (SC in this case) and it has to be for all children including non-SC children. The latter section, which has more vocal parents, form the resistance group. This is the major reason for its non implementation inspite of Kothari Commission recommendations to this effect.
- e) The elitist character of education has to be changed for which concerted efforts need to be made at the implementation levels. The policy resolve as stated in the National Policy of Education 1986 (NPE 1986) and the Programme of Action 1992 (POA 1992), have certainly made a move in this direction and the revision of textual materials in the light of MLLs are a foot in many states. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Bihar Education Project (BEP), U.P. Education for All (UPEFA), Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP) are all making strides in this direction but it is too early to see its impact, because it takes time to make any attitudinal change in the community.

Activities

- 2. Find out the details of various incentive schemes that are operated in your area for promoting education among SC children (hints: mid-day meal, free textbooks, free uniforms, stipend etc.) and compare them with those that are make available by the Central Government. Find out the gaps between those that should be available and the actually available and the issues related with timely supply of these incentive schemes.
- 3. Find out the effectiveness or impact of these schemes on enrolment, retention and achievement of the SC children in your school.

Check Your Progress

- Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

- 1. List the three causes of educational underdevelopment of the Schedule Caste children in your region?

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- 2. Suggest briefly any two measures — both short term and long term, to ameliorate these causes.

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15.4 PROBLEMS OF SCHEDULED TRIBES (ST)

STUDENTS

The students of the scheduled tribes are characterised by factors of relative isolation compared to scheduled castes, who have been living in the society along with the mainstream. The scheduled tribes have been largely living in areas relatively remote, and can still be found in compact and exclusive habitation. Such areas are commonly known as tribal areas.

15.4.1 Education among Scheduled Tribe Students

Areas which are predominantly tribal in habitation are known as Scheduled Areas and are notified as such in the Constitution of India. The tribal society is governed by their traditional custom and culture. Their religion is specific to their denomination, their social organisation is different from tribe to tribe and from the mainstream. Many of the tribes do not have scripts/dialects of their own. They have spoken language which they use in daily life.

The economy of most of the tribes is a subsistence economy, often not sufficient to meet their needs for all year round. Quite a few of them depend on forest produce like tuber, roots and leaves to meet their needs.

Tribal societies had some organisation to prepare their young children to take their places as socially useful and productive citizen of their own society, known by different names in different societies. If this can be termed as education, then they had educational organisation. But all of these were without literacy skill, that is, these societies were characterised by absence of writing skill and, therefore, by implication the reading skill. Why was it so?

These societies were living in closed compact groups. Their communication need was met by spoken language. The oral traditions were exceptionally strong whereby necessary heritage and knowledge was passed on from one generation to the other in the forms of folk tales, folk songs, riddles etc. So major part of educational functions were achieved. (Compare the situation with Hindu society in Vedic era before the Vedas were written, circa 4000 B.C. to 2000 B.C.). This is the background in which education in the modern sense, where 3 Rs are essential, has to be seen. Much of the problems emanate from this background.

15.4.2 Problems of ST Students

- Problem of medium of instruction and the mother tongue of the child.

The child grows up and socialises during the process of development in a language spoken by its parents, family and neighbours. So the language and vocabulary that s/he builds around him/herself is the tribal language through which s/he operates in his/her society. When s/he goes to school, the language of the book, the basic vocabulary on which the primer is made, the language spoken by the teacher is all unintelligible to him/her. The result is that the child finds him/herself in a suffocating atmosphere and leaves the school at the earliest opportunity.



- Realising this, the Govt. of India, has issued policy directive that the mother tongue of the child would be the medium of instruction written in regional scripts in atleast first two years of schooling, and from the third year onwards the regional language would be the medium of instruction. Some further problems arise out of this: (i) there is non availability of primers and texts in as many dialects as there are tribes, some of which are small in population there are not enough qualified teachers knowing the tribal language and regional language to function as teacher in schools.
- The tribal societies have their own specific learning styles. Most of them learn by imitation. The learning styles followed in school is suggestive i.e. do this, don't do this etc. This is not in their psychology. Hence difficulty in learning.
- No tribal society subjects its children to physical punishment or ridicule. The school follows the punishment, ridicule or reward system in teaching-learning process. A tribal child will leave the school as soon as s/he is given a punishment because not even his/her father punishes her/him for errant behaviour. The entire socialisation process is conditional by imitating the elders - what elders do is right and is worth imitating and copying!
- The tribal habitat is in the thick of the 'Nature'. Nature plays an important role in the entire learning process of the tribal child. Our school basically is constructed as a building with four walls. The tribal child can not remain confined to the four walls for long. The major problem is taking the school out of the four walls. The content of education will have to be redefined in terms of experiences rather than knowledge acquisition by instruction. This has implications for evaluations and examination. The native characteristic of learning (experiential) is more attuned to continuous comprehensive evaluation procedure.
- The value system of tribal societies is often very drastically different from the mainstream societies. For example, some tribes are matrilineal and matriarchical. That is, the property goes from mother to daughters, the woman marries man and man goes to his wife's place to live (example, Garo, Khasi). Some tribes are polyandrous, that is, the woman marries more than one man, generally brothers, and the children are known to be that of the eldest brothers (example, Jaunsar Bawar, Toda, Tharu etc.). Most of the tribes allow pre-marital sexual relationship with one or more persons of the same tribe, but do not allow extra marital relationship. Now such values of mainstream societies form the basis of content and attitude build up and, therefore, they ridicule the tribal way of life, causing an aversion to education among the tribals. The teachers, who are very often non-tribals, also try to impose their own values on the tribal children, which creates a social distance and, therefore, an apathy towards the teacher and the school. There is, therefore, an urgent need of orienting the teachers with tribal ways of life with do's and don't, and also reexamining the content of textual and other materials from this angle.
- Many of the problems enumerated under the section of Scheduled Caste children's education, such as first generation learning, lack of family support, etc. are also applicable in this case too. You may go through that section and examine which one of them are common in the case of Schedule Tribes also.

Activity

4. Identify a few tribal students in a school and interview them. Bring out a list of educational problems particular to that tribe.

15.4.3 Schemes for Promotion of Education

Like the schemes for promoting education of the Scheduled Caste, incentive schemes are available to scheduled tribes also. The schemes described earlier are also applicable in the case of scheduled tribe students. Besides these there are certain additional programmes which are given below :

- Preparation of text books in tribal dialects
As a policy the Govt. of India, it has been resolved to prepare text books in tribal dialects - firstly for the tribes having more than one lakh population. Under this programme the

NCERT and many other agencies like the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore and State Governments are preparing textual materials in Santali, Gondi, Trula, HO, Kurukh, Mindari, Kharia and many other dialects.



- Orientation programmes for teacher educators in tribal life and culture.

The NCERT conducts a programme of orientation for teacher educators in tribal life and culture to make them sensitive to tribal societies. The non-tribal teachers posted in tribal areas are also eligible for their facility.



- Supplementary readers on tribal customs/tribal heroes etc.

The NCERT has developed specific literature as supplementary readers written in Hindi for promoting better understanding of tribal life, culture, values, heroes among the tribal and non tribal children for better understanding of tribal way of life. A compilation of folk tales and folk songs in Gondi dialect has also been developed and published by the NCERT.

Check Your Progress

- Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

3. a) Enumerate the two special problems of tribal education

b) List down three schemes available to overcome the problems of tribal education.

c) Suggest any two steps can be undertaken to increase the enrolment, retention and achievement among tribal children.

15.5 PROBLEMS OF GIRL STUDENTS

If you analyse the status of girls education, the social norms or traditional attitudes are the main factors. For example, it is said that “girl have to manage home, so no higher education for them”.

Analyse it and you will find it goes back to the root of division of labour. Take any argument that is usually advanced against spread of girls education and it could be traced to the root of division of labour.

Now to counter these arguments, one would need to shatter the myth of women being confined to homes. If the very foundation of such stereotypes (commonly held beliefs without sound logic) are attacked, much of the attitudinal change can be brought about.

The second root cause for the apathy or negative attitude towards girls education emanates from the stereotype that women are “weaker-sex”. This again leads to protectionist attitude and, therefore, they cannot be sent to schools away from the village whereas boys can be sent. A rural girl who works in the field, does household chores, prepares cowdung cakes, feed the cattle etc. has more physical strength than many of the boys of their age. How could one brand her as of weaker sex?

If you now analyse any of the social causes for educational under-development among the girls, you will find that the causes could be traced to the roots of these two stereotypes do not hold good in majority of the situations. As such, the causal forces impeding education can be overcome by mass mobilisation and conscientious efforts to promote education of girls.

Further, the programmes of girl education would call for, as in the case of SC and ST, examining the curriculum and instructional materials to remove any gender biases and making them suitable to the learning styles of girls in particular. Relevance is another consideration for such an exercise. The NCERT has been subjecting such materials to this kind of scrutiny.

Promotional programmes like motivation, making schools available to girl child, providing lady teachers, etc. are some of the schemes and programmes specially intended to attract the girl child to schools and holding them there.

Of late, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has been specially addressing itself to this task of increasing the enrolment and retention of the girl child in primary school by readjusting the curricula, appointing lady teachers etc. The operation blackboard (OB) in pursuance of the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 has been stressing the need of atleast one lady teacher in primary schools wherever there are two male teachers. In fact it has been emphasised that all primary schools should have as many lady teachers as possible. for academic reasons like children can be better handled by them through their innate love affection.

The Non Formal Education and Alternative Schooling (NFE & AS) strategy is also aimed at providing educational opportunities to children who are out of school. It may be noted that a large proportion of such children are girls, SC and ST. To a certain extent, NFE and AS can be said to be a strategy aimed at providing educational opportunities to the unreached sections of population who incidentally largely belong to these categories.

Check Your Progress

- Notes : a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

4. List the two major causes for low enrolment and retention of girls in schools?
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5. Suggest curriculum modification that may lead to greater girl enrolment and retention in schools?
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15.6 LET US SUM UP

The unit focusses on the deprived students from different categories of the society. It also tries to highlight the problems of deprived children in SC and ST children in particular. The problems of girl child in general and more specific from SC and ST categories. The different incentives provided by Centre and State governments have been also listed.

15.7 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Survey few out-of-school girls belonging to SC, ST. Find out the reasons for their non-attendance in schools and or NFE and AS systems. Try to analyse the reasons and find out the root causes. Prepare a report in 1000 words.
2. Examine any one of the school text books of your teaching subjects and mark the portions which have gender biases. Prepare a report.
3. List out some practical measures for increasing enrolment and retention of girls in your schools.