

Education of the Marginalised

^aKanan Sharma, ^bSeema Sharma

^bAssociate Professor Kasturi Ram College of Higher Education Narela India

Abstract

"In too many instances, the march to globalization has also meant the marginalization of women and girls. And that must change." ~ Hillary Clinton

Education has an important role to attain the social justice. Educational Institutions bear the responsibility of holistic development of learner and equip them to their potential for ascertaining purposeful role in society and fostering an egalitarian society. In spite of taking various measures a large number of children in India are deprived of such opportunities and are not able to participate in social, cultural, political and economic activities. With this backdrop the present research article is an attempt to explore the provisions and policies made by the government in this area.

KEYWORDS: Marginalization, Downward Filtration Theory, Minority Groups.

Introduction

In general, the term 'marginalisation' describes the overt actions or tendencies of human societies, where people who they perceive to be undesirable, or without useful function are excluded, i.e., marginalised. The people who are marginalised are outside the existing system of protection and integration. This limits their opportunities and means for survival.

In other words, marginalisation is a process that denies opportunities and outcomes to those 'living on the margins', while enhancing the opportunities and outcomes for those who are 'at the centre'.

Types of Marginalisation

There are various types of marginalisation such as social, economic and political marginalisation.

Social Marginalisation- Social marginalisation involves deprivation of social opportunities to a particular group/community. They might also encounter negative public attitudes. This contributes to low self-esteem and self-concept.

Economic Marginalisation- Economic marginalisation as a process relates to economic structures, in particular, to the structure of markets and their integration. Groups are marginalised in the economy to an extent that they might even be deprived of essential commodities. The cause of exclusion may be non-economic like gender, caste or ethnicity.

Political Marginalisation- Political marginalisation does not allow the group to participate democratically in decision making, and, hence, they lose their right to social, economic, and political benefits. So far as gender is concerned, we find that participation by women is minimized across the globe. Mostly men are the ones who hold power and lead politics in the society across the world. Particularly in the third world countries women's participation in political affairs is mostly linked with the

dominant, male-oriented social cultural and religious environment. Apart from women, other groups such as ethnic minorities, migrants, disabled persons, elderly, etc. too face political marginalisation.

The Ambit of Marginalisation

Just like we see around the world how globalization, or. the influx of capitalism, information technology, company outsourcing /job insecurity, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor, impacts the lives of individuals and groups in many capacities, it can thus be stated that marginalisation is not merely an individual concept, rather it has global influences. Therefore, marginalization takes place at individual as well as national level.

Victims- Most common preys to marginalisation are women, people with special needs, ethnic minorities, so-called low castes and tribes, and the elderly.

- **Women:** They tend to face exclusion in almost all domains of public as well as private life. Be it making political decisions or be it having a say in household decisions, women are likely to be ignored.
- **Specially abled people:** People with physical/mental incapacities have needed to fight against hundreds of years of one-sided suppositions, destructive generalizations, and unreasonable feelings of dread.
- **Minority Groups:** A minority is a sociological gathering that does not constitute a politically powerful populace of a given society. Demands and needs of such groups tend to be neglected in the light of appeasement of the dominant majority.
- **SCs, STs and OBCs:** The underestimation of Dalits impacts all circles of their life, abusing essential human rights. Physical isolation of their settlements is common. Nonetheless, as of late because of governmental policy regarding minorities in society and lawful assurance, the power of standing based underestimation is diminishing.

The term '**Scheduled Tribes**' first appeared in the Constitution of India in **Article 366 (25)** as "**such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution.**" The criterion followed for specification of a community, as scheduled tribes are indications of primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, and backwardness.

OBC is a collective term used by the Government of India to classify castes which are educationally or socially disadvantaged. It is one of the several official classifications of the population of India, along with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs and STs).

Objectives of The Study

1. To understand the concept of Marginalisation.
2. To know the criteria of identification of marginalised groups.
3. To study the constitutional provisions protecting rights of the marginalised.
4. To explore the provisions for the education of marginalised groups.

Inclusive Society

For sustainable development of any nation it is very much necessary that inclusion must be practiced in every aspect of life, all should get the opportunities of education, employment, food, shelter, clean air and water, irrespective of caste, religion, gender or economic status.

Constitution of India provides equality and equity to all the citizens. Following is the compilation of such provisions:

Protection of Interests of Minorities-Article 29

(1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

(2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

National Commission of Scheduled Tribes

On the **89th Amendment** of the Constitution coming into force on **19 February 2003**, the National Commission for scheduled Tribes has been set up under **Article 338A** on bifurcation of erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes **to oversee the implementation of various safeguards provided to Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution.**

The most evident area of marginalisation is education.

In India, Dalits form one of the most educationally deprived sections of the society. A survey conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research reveals that in the mid-1990s, only 41.5 per cent of Dalits in rural India were literate and 62.5 per cent of children in the 6-14 age group had been enrolled in schools at a certain point of time. Compared to the general population, the progress of schooling among Dalit children (5-14 years) has also been slow. Educational concerns of the Dalits are, thus, of critical importance.

Education as a means to promote development in social, political, and economic spheres has been gender-blind, but in the late 1970s this perspective changed. Research concluded the existence of a high correlation between an increase in women's schooling level and a decline in infant mortality and fertility rates. Women who had completed basic education were able to make use of health facilities and service for their children and had a higher interest in sending their children to school. The year 1990 was proclaimed to be the International Literacy Year by the UN. The focus on education for women continued during the 1990 and resulted in the recognition of the significance of female education, not only as a basic human right, but also as a crucial factor towards national development.

Tribal habitations are generally characterized by a secluded and interior physical location. This makes physical accessibility to schools an issue. Considering the fact that at least 10 per cent of tribal habitations have primary schools beyond a distance of 2 kms, shows how schools remain inaccessible to these children. Though, access still is far below satisfactory position, the enrolment rates among tribal population

depict a positive graph. Not only have the overall figures showed a significant improvement from 36.5 per cent in 1989-90 to 43 per cent in 1997-98, the gender gap too is seemingly shrinking.

Roots of Marginalization

This phenomenon can find its roots in the **Vedic division of 'varnas'** whereby, the Shudras were not allowed to study the Vedas and they were considered 'non-sacred' in nature.

Furthermore, the British devoted attention to education in India from 1813 to 1921. Interest in primary education greatly diminished after 1835 when Macaulay's "Minute" directed policy towards higher education premised on the "**downward filtration theory**" was introduced. This postulated that, just as in Britain, the formally educated elite would, at least theoretically, disseminate kernels of knowledge to the masses. It was believed that the technique would work in India as well. Hence, the Vedic system of enclosure was only partially broken by the British.

The pre-eminent Indian educator J. P. Naik has observed that the principal achievement of the British was in their making of non-discriminatory educational institutions, which theoretically overcame the monopoly of education held by the upper castes. However, their principal disservice was in differentiated education, which offset the advances made by permitting the upper castes to consolidate and, in fact, further formalise their power through new social arrangements.

M.K. Gandhi proposed a nationwide programme of vocation oriented primary education that was open to all children irrespective of class, caste and gender differences. He laid emphasis on the need to educate and empower women and make them politically active citizens of the country. However, he too failed to liberalize the education system and rid it of its inability to overcome the distinctions and exclusionary policies based on class, caste and gender.

Empowerment of Marginalised through Education

Amartya Sen and Jean Drez'e (2002) brought out the significance of education in terms of functioning and capability.

Functioning refers to what a person does and achieves.

Capability on the other hand refers to the range of choices and options which a person has in deciding the kind of life he/she wants to lead. Capability therefore is the real state of freedom that a person enjoys in choosing from the alternative combinations of functioning.

For example a young child may be deprived of school education due to several constraints like poverty, social prejudices, family issues etc.

Sen and Drez'e refer to such a case as 'capability deprivation' which may be understood as a severe limitation of freedom and an overall state of incapacitation to

live and perform dignified labour. The expansion of human capabilities can be enhanced by important social opportunities like education and health care. These are perhaps ends in themselves.

Constitutional Provisions Challenging Marginalization in the Area of Education

When the Indian government made the right to education for all children aged 6 to 14 years

an enforceable legal right under **Article 21A** of the Constitution in **2002**, it became one of

the few countries in the world where elementary education is a fundamental right.

The Constitution also contains **Article 46**, which stipulates that the Indian state will promote

with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, in particular that of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and protect them

from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

The government has an obligation not only to ensure universal elementary education, but also to take special measures to enable socially marginalised children to enjoy their right to education. Strengthening this obligation, under **Article 28** of the **International Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989** the Indian state recognises children's right to education and commits to achieving this right on the basis of equal opportunity. An important aspect of this right is that education must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable children, in law and in fact, without discrimination.

Policy Initiatives

The National Policy on Education (1986) and its POA, 1992 advocate for the provision of essential facilities for attaining universal access to education of comparable quality.

Further, the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE), 1992 recommended for the adoption of a holistic approach to address the educational needs of children who resort to work for their livelihood, girls, disadvantaged and marginalized groups and considering issues of quality, process, and content more efficiently.

Drawing experiences from all the earlier programs and projects, **District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)** was introduced in selected districts in a joint partnership of government and international organizations in 1994.

This project was later merged into another national program, **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**, which is followed by **Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA)**.

These programs have stressed the reduction of the social and gender gap in elementary education.

Education is understood to be a crucial factor in at least five distinct ways

- (i) **Intrinsic importance:** Education leads to personal growth and self-development, which has an intrinsic worth of its own.
- (ii) **Instrumental personal roles:** Education provides one with an appropriate set of skills, knowledge and information that enables him/her to make best use of economic opportunities and get into a profession of his/her own will.

- (iii) **Instrumental social roles:** Education also brings along with it social awareness and politically assertiveness. An educated person is more aware of his/her social needs and political rights and asserts for them both on an individual as well as at the collective level, which strengthens democracy in a country, consequently leading to prosperity.
- (iv) **Instrumental social processes:** Education gives one the grounds and means to reject and fight against oppressive socio-cultural practices. It is a powerful tool of getting rid of social evils like gender based discrimination, child labour and so on. This would lower the number and extent of deprived and deprivation.
- (v) **Empowerment and distributive roles:** Greater literacy and educational empowerment enables emancipation of the marginalized sections of society by integrating them in the mainstream. It also has a socially redistributive impact. It would lead to a fairer deal for the marginalized, not only at the level of a population or a group but also at the level of the family and the individual.

Thus, education is an instrument for the empowerment of the marginalized, as it leads to an expansion of choices, freedom and real opportunity. In other words it leads to a greater capability to enable the individual to lead a valued and valuable life.

Way Forward

Despite of the achievements in rowing the marginalised from the shore to the centre, we are yet to reach the very centre. In other words, there are still some groups that are marginalised and need to be uplifted for the overall development of the economy as well as the society.

Two key steps are needed.

- First, proposals for country programming could entail a participatory decision-making process that includes representatives of both minority and majority groups.
- Second, an impact assessment of proposals for country programming could measure the possibility of direct or indirect discrimination from the proposal, consider the impact on relevant minority rights and include disaggregated data.

Policies aimed at ‘excluded groups’ or ‘vulnerable groups’ may not necessarily benefit them.

Often a combination of both targeted and inclusive approaches will maximize the benefits to minorities and minimize tensions with majority communities. For example, a programme on education could aim to support all poor people to access education; poor minorities will be among the intended rights-holders to benefit from such a programme.

Some other effective suggestions:

- The proper implementation of the Right to Education Act should be monitored by the government to ensure not simply enrolment of students, but on the retention of every student in school.

- The government should take initiatives to check the dropout rate by monitoring children at risk of dropping out, and develop appropriate social mapping strategies has to develop by relevant authorities among marginalized and minority communities to ensure the retention.
- Any kind of discrimination should be stopped from all the educational systems including from the part of the policymakers, officials, teachers, and fellow students.
- The government should strictly monitor such practices in the educational institutions from primary level to higher education. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights can do much in this regard by making appropriate guidelines to address discrimination and other abuses of children and set out appropriate disciplinary measures.
- Penalty for such malpractices also should be strengthening.

Discussion

Through the study it has been observed that the condition of education of the marginalised has improved substantially in the past decades yet there is a long way to achieve cent per cent education. Furthermore, it is to be considered that the focus is not merely increase in enrolment ratio but also quality of education and inclusion of the marginalised in the mainstream. The children need to be given opportunities to carve a niche for themselves and break the stereotypes linked with the community they belong to. The suggestions provided above in the text along with other measures can help fasten the goal attainment.

Conclusion

The exploration concludes that lost of measures had been taken time to time to provide equal opportunities for education and uplifting those who had been exploited by the community in economic or social aspects. We are aware that education is the most powerful tool to bring the change in the society and remove the disparity among society. The most important factor is the awareness, making the provisions is not sufficient the efforts should be made for spreading the awareness among the marginalized and effective grievance redressal. The improvements are there but still miles to go.

References

- Maheswari, V. K. (2012). Education of the deprived/ marginalized groups. Retrieved from <http://www.vkmaheshwari.com/WP/?p=569>.
- Padhi, S.R. (2016). Overcoming Exclusion and Marginalization in Education through Inclusive Approaches: Challenges and Vision of Arunachal Pradesh in India. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, Vol. 6 (4)
- Ramesh (2013). Levels of education of the marginalized people in India. *International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research*. Vol. 2 (3)
- SaksenaD.(2014). The Problems of Marginalized Groups in India. Retrieved from <https://www.lawctopus.com/academike/problems-marginalized-groups-india/>
- Census of India, 2011, published on NITI Aayog (<http://niti.gov.in>)

- Gewirtz, Sharon . 1998. ‘Conceptualising Social Justice in Education.’ Journal of Education Policy, 13 (4). 469–484. Google Scholar
- Government of India, (2012), “Employment and Unemployment Situation among Social Groups in India”, NSS 66th Round, National Sample Survey Organisation, New Delhi
- <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/04/22/.../denying-education-indias-marginalized>
- Provisional Report, Seventh All India Education Survey, NCERT, New Delhi. 2005. Google Scholar
- Promising Practices and Implications for Scaling up Girls' Education, Report of South Asia Workshop organised by Commonwealth Secretariat in Partnership with UNICEF India. 2004. Google Scholar
- Public Report on Basic Education in India, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1999. Google Scholar