

Development of Primary Education among Scheduled Castes In Andhra Pradesh

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The caste-based stratification of society adversely affected the equality of educational opportunities to the disadvantage of these groups like SCs and STs as they were engaged in traditional family occupations, which did not require any kind of education or special training. This situation persisted through the ages and the depressed classes continue to be deprived of educational opportunities, which were cornered by the upper castes. In this context the present Study aims at, to compare SC literacy rates with the overall literacy rates. The present study sought to place SCs vis-à-vis total population in respect of literacy rates, and enrollment ratio at the primary education stage. Besides, it also tried to focus on the relative significance of SC school teachers compared to all teachers. While gender dimension is provided in the study throughout, the inter-temporal data were also used in the analysis of literacy rates and enrollment ratios. For the reason that Andhra Pradesh exhibits wide regional variations at district/regional level, variations in the variables were taken into consideration. Low student-teacher ratio affects the quality of education at the primary level, because the school teacher does not find any motivation to teach if the ratio is low, let alone paying the much-needed individual attention, which is so essential at the primary stage of education.

[Key Words: SCs, STs, education, literacy rates, enrollment ratios.]

Introduction

In the traditional caste system (Varna vyavastha), the Indian society has been divided into four groups, known as castes, on the basis of occupations. But, in the modern Indian social system there are two more marginalized caste groups namely, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The term SC has a long historical origin. Prior to the year 1935, when the Government of India Act

was enacted, the communities suffering from the stigma of untouchability were being referred to as 'untouchables' or 'exterior' or 'depressed' classes or by various caste names most of which were derogatory. As a part of the social and political changes sought to be introduced in 1935 the various castes, which suffered social disabilities, were listed in a Schedule and from that time onwards they came to be described as SCs. After the Constitution of India was enacted, the list of scheduled castes was notified by the President of India in accordance with the provisions of Article 341 of the Constitution. The SCs thus represent constitutionally declared groups of castes or communities with the characteristic of being suffering from 'untouchability'. In terms of the provisions in Article 341, they have been specified separately in relation to each of the States and Union Territories.

The caste-based stratification of society adversely affected the equality of educational opportunities to the disadvantage of these groups as they were engaged in traditional family occupations, which did not require any kind of education or special training. This situation persisted through the ages and the depressed classes continue to be deprived of educational opportunities, which were cornered by the upper castes.

Policies and Programmes

The Government of India is adopting the following measures to bring the SCs literacy rates on par with others.

The central focus in SCs' educational development is their equalization with the non-SC population at all stages and levels of education, in all areas and in the entire four dimensions-rural male, rural female, urban male and urban female. The measures contemplated for this purpose include: Incentives to indigent families to send their children to school regularly till they reach the age of 14; Pre-matric scholarship scheme for children of those families engaged in occupations such as scavenging, flaying and tanning to be made applicable from class I onwards. All children of such families, regardless of income, will be covered by this Scheme and time – bound programmes targeted on them will be undertaken; Constant

micro-planning and verification to ensure that the enrollment, retention and successful completion of courses by SC students do not fall at any stage, and provision of remedial courses to improve their prospects for further education and employment; Recruitment of teachers from Scheduled Castes; Provision of facilities for SC students in students' hostels at district headquarters, according to a phased programme.

Since SCs lack primary education this paper focused its attention on several variants with special reference to Andhra Pradesh, The Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken up several projects to promote primary education in the State. These include Operation Black Board (OBB), Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Chaduvula Panduga (CP), Akshara Sankranti (AS), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Vidya-Volunteer Scheme (VVS), Mid-day Meal Scheme, etc. These programmes may have had some impact on enrollment of all children including SCs, recruitment of teachers including SC teachers, and student-teacher ratios. The present Study examined their impact on primary education of SC children. In the process, it also analyzed the trends in primary education in Andhra Pradesh, for the period 1959-60 to 2007-08.

Objectives and Methodology:

Against the background the present Study aims at:

1. To compare SC literacy rates with the overall literacy rates.
2. To estimate and compare the rates of growth of enrollment of SCs and all children.
3. To examine the district-wise enrollment ratios of SC children and all children.

While pursuing these objectives it was also provided a gender-dimension to the study — literacy rates and enrollment rates of boys and those of girls and the relative significance of male and female teachers are highlighted. The secondary data relating to the number of children enrolled and the number of teachers working in

primary schools by caste group are obtained from the office of the Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Government of Andhra Pradesh and the Commissioner and Director of School Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh. It was, however, found that there are some discrepancies in the data supplied by these offices. Therefore, it is important to throw in some caveats at the very beginning, that the data are to be analyzed cautiously. First, there is a difference between enrollment in primary school and enrollment of primary stage. The former excludes the enrollment in primary sections of the upper primary schools, whereas the latter, includes such enrollment. Only the latter definition was considered in the analysis of the enrollment of primary stage. But, in the case of teachers, the number of teachers working only in primary schools, as per the data provided by the offices of the Bureau of Economics and Statistics; and Commissioner and Director of school education were considered.

Disparities in Literacy Rates between Scheduled Castes and All Communities

Literacy plays a vital role of all the social factors. As per the figures based on 2001 census, SCs constitute 16.19 per cent of the total population of Andhra Pradesh. In the field of literacy, the disparities between males and females are still large. Table-1 shows the gap between the literacy rates of all males and SC males, all females and SC females and total literacy (total males + total females) and SC literacy rate. It shows how the gap has been persisting since 1961. In 1961 SC males literacy rate was 13.4 per cent as against 30.2 per cent among all males. The disparity index (ratio of all male literacy rate to SC male literacy rate) in 1961 was 2.2. The literacy rate of SC males rose to 63.5 per cent in 2001 even as the rate for all males increased to 70.8 per cent. The disparity index in 2001 was 1.1. It shows the disparity in literacy rate between SC males and all males has come down from 2.2 in 1961 to 1.1 in 2001.

In the case of females, the literacy rate of SCs as recorded in 1961 was 3.4 per cent as against 12.0 per cent among all females. The disparity index in 1961 was 3.5. The literacy rate was 43.3 per cent

among SC females in 2001 as against 51.2 per cent among all females. The disparity index has decreased from 3.5 in 1961 to 1.2 in 2001. Understandably the female literacy rates at all points of time are lower than those for males. This is true irrespective of whether one considers SCs or all persons. Also, the disparity in literacy rates between all persons and SCs is higher among females than among males. The total literacy rate of SCs was 8.5 per cent as against the overall rate of 21.2 per cent in 1961. The disparity index in 1961 was 2.5. The total literacy rate was 53.5 per cent among SCs in 2001 as against overall rate of 61.1 per cent. The disparity index decreased from 2.5 in 1961 to 1.1 in 2001.

Table -1: Gender-Wise Literacy Rates among All Persons and SCs in Andhra Pradesh

Year	Male literacy rates			Female literacy rates			Total		
	All	SC	Disparity Index*	All	SC	Disparity Index*	All	SC	Disparity Index*
All	SC	Disparity Index*							
1961	30.2	13.4	2.2	12.0	3.4	3.5	21.2	8.5	2.5
1971	33.2	15.9	2.1	15.8	5.3	3.0	24.6	10.7	2.3
1981	39.3	24.8	1.6	20.4	10.3	2.0	29.9	17.7	1.7
1991	55.1	41.9	1.3	32.7	20.9	1.6	44.1	31.6	1.4
2001	70.8	63.5	1.1	51.2	43.3	1.2	61.1	53.5	1.1

Note: *Disparity Index: Ratio of literacy rate among all persons to that among SCs

Source: Census of India, different periods.

Enrollment of SC children versus All Children in Primary Stage

Literacy rate is but one dimension of the progress of education of a community. Another dimension of the progress is the enrollment ratio of children at the primary stage. Table-2 shows that the number of children enrolled in primary stage in 1959-60 was 28.06 lakhs. Of this, 62.12 per cent were boys and 37.88 per cent were girls. Enrollment of students in general increased to 91.12 lakhs by

1999-2000 recording a 52 per cent boys and 48 per cent increase among girls. By 2007-08 enrollment of students in general noticed a declining trend to 71.73 lakhs, consisting of 50.75 per cent of boys and 49.25 per cent of girls. An interesting trend which can be observed is that enrollment of girls has grown at a higher rate than that of boys during the period of study. The annual compound growth rate of enrollment of girls was 2.53 per cent as against 1.54 per cent among boys.

In the case of SCs, the total enrollment in 1959-60 was 3.91 lakhs. Of those enrolled, 64 per cent were boys and 36 per cent were girls and the proportion of the enrollment of SC children to all children was 14 per cent. The enrollment of SC children reached 18.83 lakhs by 1999-2000. Of this 52 per cent were boys and 48 per cent were girls. In 1999-2000 the proportion of the enrollment of SC children to all children was 21 per cent. After that the enrollment of SC children has been declined to 13.65 lakhs and the SC boys recorded 50.52 per cent and the SC girls recorded 49.48 per cent. The trend growth rate shows that the enrollment of SC girls has been higher at 3.34 per cent than that of SC boys at 2.12 per cent during the period of our study. This is a welcoming feature. The fact that the special programmes and initiatives taken to motivate SCs to enroll their children in ever-larger numbers in primary schools are bearing fruit and it is evident from the data presented in Table-2. The annual compound growth rate of enrollment during the period 1959-1960 to 2007-08 was 1.54 per cent and 2.12 per cent for all boys and SC boys and 2.53 per cent and 3.34 per cent for all girls and SC girls.

Enrollment of SC Children versus All Children in Primary Stage

Table-3 shows the percentage of enrollment of boys and girls among all and SC children. The enrollment of all children in the primary stage in Andhra Pradesh during the academic year 2007-08 was 71.73 lakhs of which 50.75 per cent were boys and 49.25 per cent were girls. The highest percentage of enrollment of all boys was recorded in Rangareddy District (in Telangana) viz, 51.74 per cent. It was around 50 per cent in the remaining districts of the State.

Table - 2: Enrollment of All and SC Students by Sex in Primary Stage in Andhra Pradesh: 1959-60 to 2007-08

Year	Overall enrollment				SC enrollment					
	Boys	Girls	Total	Proportion of SC boys to all boys	Boys	Girls	Proportion of SC girls to all girls	Total	Proportion of SCs to all children	
1959-60	1743486 (62.12)	1062965 (37.88)	2806451 (100.00)	14.44	251760 (64.33)	139567 (55.67)	13.13	391327 (100)	13.94	
1969-70	2331634 (59.72)	1572320 (40.28)	3903954 (100.00)	12.59	293483 (59.40)	209605 (40.60)	12.76	494088 (100)	12.66	
1979-80	3024697 (58.67)	2130618 (41.33)	5155315 (100.00)	19.19	580572 (59.63)	392992 (40.37)	18.44	973564 (100)	18.88	
1989-90	4205423 (57.45)	3115165 (42.55)	7320588 (100.00)	19.48	839177 (57.35)	609325 (42.65)	19.56	1428502 (100)	19.51	
1999-00	4702696 (51.61)	4409365 (48.39)	9112061 (100.00)	20.79	977601 (51.91)	905790 (48.09)	20.54	1883391 (100)	20.67	
2007-08	3640320 (50.75)	3533217 (49.25)	7173537 (100)	18.95	689936 (50.52)	675744 (49.48)	19.12	1365680 (100)	19.03	
% Growth rate in 2007-08 over 1959-60	108.79	232.39	155.61		174.04	384.17		248.99		
Annual compound growth rate	1.54	2.53	1.97		2.12	3.34		2.64		

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentage to the total

Sources: 1. Commissioner and Director of School Education, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad

2. Statistical Abstracts of Andhra Pradesh for various years, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad

Table - 3: Number of All and SC Students Enrolled By Sex in Primary Stage at District Level in Andhra Pradesh (2007-08)

Sl No	Name of the District	All enrollment (%)			SC enrollment (%)			Total Percentage	Proportion of SC boys to All boys	Girls Percentage	Proportion of SC girls to All girls	Total Percentage	Proportion of SCs to all enrollment
		Boys Percentage	Girls Percentage	Total Percentage	Boys percentage	Girls Percentage	Total Percentage						
1	Srikakulam	50.22	49.78	50.22	50.22	49.78	50.22	50.22	49.78	50.22	50.22	50.22	
2	Visakhapatnam	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
3	Visakhapatnam	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
4	East Godavari	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
5	West Godavari	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
6	Krishna	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
7	Guntur	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
8	Prakasam	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
9	Nellore	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
10	Coastal Andhra	50.34	49.66	50.34	50.34	49.66	50.34	50.34	49.66	50.34	50.34	50.34	
11	Chimero	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
12	Gudivada	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
13	Anaparthi	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
14	Kumbla	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	49.67	50.33	50.33	50.33	
15	Rayalasetta	51.13	48.87	51.13	50.78	49.22	19.21	19.21	49.22	19.4	19.4	19.4	
16	Atmakurapeta	51.56	48.44	51.56	51.56	48.44	51.56	51.56	48.44	51.56	51.56	51.56	
17	Parag Reddy	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	51.71	
18	Hydrabad	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	51.71	
19	Medak	51.68	48.32	51.68	51.68	48.32	51.68	51.68	48.32	51.68	51.68	51.68	
20	Nizamabad	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	51.71	
21	Acharya	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	48.29	51.71	51.71	51.71	
22	Karimnagar	51.69	48.31	51.69	51.69	48.31	51.69	51.69	48.31	51.69	51.69	51.69	
23	Warangal	51.68	48.32	51.68	51.68	48.32	51.68	51.68	48.32	51.68	51.68	51.68	
24	Khammam	51.65	48.35	51.65	51.65	48.35	51.65	51.65	48.35	51.65	51.65	51.65	
25	Nalgonda	51.68	48.32	51.68	51.68	48.32	51.68	51.68	48.32	51.68	51.68	51.68	
26	Idugana	50.93	49.07	50.93	50.70	49.30	17.44	17.44	49.30	17.63	17.63	17.63	
27	Andhra Pradesh	50.77	49.23	50.77	50.77	49.23	18.95	18.95	49.23	19.13	19.13	19.04	
28	Gross enrollment rate of primary stage in AP	50.79	49.21	50.79	50.79	49.21	18.95	18.95	49.21	19.13	19.13	19.04	

Source: Commissioner and Director of School Education Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad

Enrollment of girl children in the Districts of Guntur and Hyderabad are higher compared to the boys among the districts of the State. Rangareddy district recorded only 48.26 per cent enrollment, the lowest rate among the districts of the State. The gross enrollment ratio at the primary stage in the State was 96.40 per cent, 96.19 per cent among boys and 96.62 per cent among girls during the academic year 2007-08. Barring a couple of exceptions, enrollment ratio was uniformly lower, albeit marginally, among girls than among boys. The ratio was the highest among boys in the Rayalaseema region and the lowest in the Coastal Andhra — the most developed of the three regions. In respect of girls, however, the enrollment ratio was the highest in Coastal Andhra and the lowest in Rayalaseema.

In the case of SCs, the enrollment ratio of boys was the highest at 51.68 per cent in Kurnool district and the lowest at 49.34 per cent in Visakhapatnam district. The gross enrollment ratio at the primary stage in the State among the SCs was 112.78 per cent for boys and 113.94 per cent for girls. As in the case of the enrollment ratio of all boys was the highest in Rayalaseema and it was the lowest in Coastal Andhra. The ratio of SC boys was the highest in Rayalaseema and the lowest in Coastal Andhra. This is in contrast to the case of girls, where the enrollment ratio was the highest in Coastal Andhra and the lowest in Rayalaseema.

The enrollment among SC boys as a percentage of all boys and SC girls as a percentage of all girls was calculated using the district-wise and region-wise data. The following points emerge from this exercise (Table-3). (1) Barring three, enrollment ratio was relatively more among SC boys than among SC girls in all districts, (2) Enrollment ratio was the highest in the Coastal Andhra, for boys as also for girls (3) The highest proportion of the enrollment of SC boys to all boys was 29.33 per cent in Guntur District and it was the lowest (8.26 per cent) in Visakhapatnam District, and (4) In the case of SC girls, the highest proportion of enrollment (28.74 per cent) was recorded in Prakasam District and the lowest proportion (8.40 per cent) in Hyderabad District. The gross-enrollment ratio at the primary

stage in Andhra Pradesh among SC children was 113.3—112.78 among SC boys and 113.94 among SC girls.

The information relating to the enrollment of boys and girls from I to V standards during the academic year 2007-08. One interesting aspect of the Table is that the enrollment ratio of SC boys is equal to all boys except in II and V standards. One expects this to be because of the existence of social welfare hostels and Ashram schools. As food and clothes are provided freely, SCs are prompted to enroll their children here. Another important aspect which is noticed here is that SC girl's enrollment ratio is more than all girls enrollment ratio in II and V standards and in the remaining standards they are equal. In recent years, a number of steps have been taken up by the Government of Andhra Pradesh to strengthen the educational base of SCs. Ideally; the enrollment of SCs in educational process should be as per their proportion in the total population of the State. Though, overall progress in this direction is satisfactory, yet much work is to be done to bridge the educational disparities in enrollment. The dropout rates of children at the primary stage, and it may be concluded that (1) it is slightly higher for boys (19.1%) than girls (18.48%) in general, and also slightly higher for boys (21.45%) than girls (20.16%) among SCs (2) between all children and SC children, it is much higher for the latter (20.82%) compared to the former (18.79%).

The student-teacher ratio in the primary schools in Andhra Pradesh during the academic year 2007-08 was recorded at 42.94. In Coastal Andhra it was 42.02, in Rayalaseema region 43.79 and in Telangana 43.69. It is interesting that in the case of student-teacher ratio it was the lowest (33.32) in Cuddapah District and it was the highest (60.90) in Kurnool District. The student-teacher ratio of 40 students per teacher for aided schools is the norm. Low student-teacher ratio affects the quality of education at the primary level, because the school teacher does not find any motivation to teach if the ratio is low, let alone paying the much-needed individual attention, which is so essential at the primary stage of education.

Conclusions

The present study sought to place SCs vis-à-vis total population in respect of literacy rates, and enrollment ratio at the primary education stage. Besides, it also tried to focus on the relative significance of SC school teachers compared to all teachers. While gender dimension is provided in the study throughout, the inter-temporal data were also in the analysis of literacy rates and enrollment ratios. For the reason that Andhra Pradesh exhibits wide regional variations at district/regional level, variations in the variables were taken into consideration.

The major conclusions, as they emerge from the Study are while females generally lag behind males in literacy rates, the disparity in the rate between all persons and SCs is higher among females than among males. Government's initiatives aimed at motivating the SCs to enroll their children in increasing numbers are bearing fruit especially in respect of enrollment of boys. Enrollment ratio does not seem to be related to the development of a region. In fact the backward Telangana is found to have recorded high enrollment in respect of boys. The dropout rate among SC girls is much higher than that of SC boys and, between all children and SC children, it is much higher for the latter. The opportunity cost of sending SC children to primary school, notwithstanding the incentives provided by the government to them, seems to be very higher. Student-teacher ratio, as seen from the district-level averages, seems to be promising. However, wide variations between schools, with some schools reporting an extremely adverse ratio could be noticed. The study concludes that Females are yet to gain considerable foothold as teachers in schools and this is much more so in respect of SC females.

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