

# Problem of Drop out among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India: An analysis on the basis of Secondary Data

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**Abstract:** *While progress in improving literacy in India has been remarkable, the phenomenon of school dropouts has remained a blot in the face of an otherwise commendable performance. Dropout rates have undoubtedly come down but are still high enough for us to sit up and take notice. Since dropping out is a worldwide phenomenon, the issue has been the subject of intense analysis and factors influencing such an outcome have been widely discussed. However, not much is known on how these factors play themselves in most disadvantaged groups like Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes of our country. Reducing drop out is central to improving access to basic education. Most of those who do not attend school are children who have enrolled but who have crossed the threshold from regular attendance to regular absence. In most countries especially in India the numbers excluded this way are much greater than those who never attend school. In low enrolment systems more than half the children who start primary schooling will fail to complete it successfully. So, looking all these problems in our education system an attempt has made in this paper to explore factors associated with high dropout rate of SC and ST students from Indian education which lie at the individual, household, school and community level and maps how some of them interact. This paper looks at the data on school 'dropouts' in India to understand the factors responsible for children being pushed out of schools. It unpicks some of the frequently advanced explanations for dropouts such as poverty, quality of education, lack of interest in education and examination failure. It locates the explanation in terms of an absence of the social norm which promotes a child's right to education, as well as the often - hostile administrative practices and procedures adopted by schools. It is found that their high dropout rate is the result of a process rather than a single event, has more than one proximate cause, and is fairly irreversible. This paper has outlined a range of factors which causes dropping out from the school education among this section of population. It argues that drop out from school can rarely be put down to one event or one impact. There are a lot of socio - economic causes of their drop out.*

**Keywords:** Educational system, Educational Policy, Primary Education, Elementary Education, High School Education, Enrolment, Retention, Drop outs, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes

## 1. Introduction

Over the years, the enrolment rate in elementary education has increased. The decade of the nineties seems to have witnessed a dramatic increase in literacy levels, school enrolment and retention rates, decline in dropouts, increase in number of teachers and schools and a major escalation of public funding for education. This expansion in the school system made Indian elementary education is the second largest in the world. But on the other hand, we are also reminded of vast number of children who continue to remain out of school that many who do join drop out, and that significant numbers learn little even after completing the primary cycle. Evidently, dozens of reports from Rahakrisanan to Kothari commission and most recently the national educational policy and Sarva Sikshya Aviyan (Education for All) have failed to provide quality and equality in education. After 63 years have gone since India got its freedom but it has failed to address the issue of drop out in all levels of education, in other words we can say it has failed to make out the grey areas in education. The situation is very worst if we look at the educational development of SCs and STs Population.

The Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) are among the most socially and educationally disadvantaged groups in India. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have different histories of social and economic deprivation, and the underlying causes of their educational marginalization are also strikingly distinct. However, a comparison of educational outcomes among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes yields a common picture that the government has sought to address through a common set

of policy prescriptions. Both issues concerning school access, enrolment for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe groups and also highlight their unique problems like the drop out phenomena, which may require divergent policy responses have been examined They are the most excluded and deprived from getting educational opportunities. More than 55 per cent from SCs and 62 per cent from the STs could not complete 8 years of elementary schooling for various reasons. Many children simply leave without mastering basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years is our Constitutional commitment. The Government of India has initiated a number of programmes to achieve the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) among which the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the most recent one. It aims at achieving universal primary education by 2007 and universal elementary education by 2010. Achieving universalisation means achieving universal access, universal enrolment, universal retention and universal quality of education However, despite this progress, a significant number of children in India, specially from disadvantage groups, are still out of school or for that matter who joins in the school could not able to survive in the system or they join in the group of drop out. A drop - out can be defined as a child who enrolls in school but fails to complete the relevant level of the educational cycle. At the primary level this means that the drop - out fails to reach the final grade, usually grade V or VI, at elementary level this means from I to viii and at secondary level this means from I to x class. Examining their problem of drop out by analyzing the secondary data collected through organizations like census, NFHS, DISE is the core of this paper.

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Before going to analyze the data, it is very much essential to know who are they and what is their historical legacy which made them the most disprevalaged in Indian society.

### The scheduled castes and scheduled tribes: social context and current educational situation

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are the terms of reference listed in the Indian Constitution, and in government, legal and scholarly writing, particularly of the colonial period. Terms such as 'depressed classes' and 'backward classes' were also used historically, but these were eventually replaced. The terms SC and ST are now used to refer to the communities listed in the Government Schedule as 'outcastes' and 'tribal's', respectively.

### Population Profile of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as per 2001 census:

As per the 2001 Census, the population of Scheduled Castes (SCs) is 16.66 crores amounting to 16.2% of the country's total population of 102.86 crores. The male population is 8.61 crores and female population is 8.05 crores which accounts for 16.18% and 16.22% respectively of the country's total population of respective groups. The population of Scheduled Tribes as per 2001 Census is 8.43 crore accounting for 8.20% of the country's total population.

Out of this, males are 4.26 crores and females 4.17 crores, accounting for 8.01% and 8.40% of the total population of respective groups.

In certain regions, and particularly the Northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya, Scheduled Tribes make up the overwhelming majority of the total population. The overall socio - economic and political status of Scheduled Tribes in these states is significantly better than in other parts of the country, a difference that is also reflected in their educational status and accomplishments. For instance, literacy among the ST population in Mizoram, a state with a ST majority population, is 89.34%, while in Andhra Pradesh, a state with a ST minority population, it is only 37.04% (See Table 2). This unevenness is further complicated when one notes that states with a majority ST population represent only a small percentage of the total Scheduled Tribe population of the country. As Sujatha (2002) points out, the states of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal together account for 82% of the total ST population in India, despite the fact that Scheduled Tribes are a minority group in these states (See Table 1).

**Table 1:** Total Population, Population of SCs and STs, and their Proportion (%) of Total Population, 2001

State and UT	Population Proportion (%)				
	Total Population	Population SC	Population ST	Population SC	Population ST
<b>India*</b>	<b>1, 028, 610, 328</b>	<b>166, 635, 700</b>	<b>84, 326, 240</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>8.2</b>
Jammu Kashmir	10, 143, 700	770, 155	1, 105, 97	7.6	10.9
Himachal	6, 077, 900	1, 502, 170	244, 587	24.7	4.0
Punjab	24, 358, 999	7, 028,723 -		28.9	0.0
Chandigarh	900, 635	157, 597 -		17.5	0.0
Uttaranchal	8, 489, 349	1, 517, 186	256, 129	17.9	3.0
Haryana	21, 144, 564	4, 091, 110 -		19.3	0.0
Delhi	13, 850, 507	2, 343, 255 -		16.9	0.0
Rajasthan	56, 507, 188	9, 694, 462	7, 097, 706	17.2	12.6
Uttar Pradesh	166, 197, 921	35, 148, 377	107, 963	21.1	0.1
Bihar	82, 998, 509	13, 048, 608	758, 351	15.7	0.9
Sikkim	540, 851	27, 165	111, 405	5.0	20.6
Arunachal	1, 097, 968	6, 188	705, 158	0.6	64.2
Nagaland	1, 990, 036	-	1, 774, 026	0.0	89.1
Manipur*	2, 166, 788	60, 037	741, 141	2.8	34.2
Mizoram	888, 573	272 839, 31 0	-		
Tripura	3, 199, 203	555, 724	993, 426	17.4	31.1
Meghalaya	2, 318, 822	11, 139	1, 992, 862	0.5	85.9
Assam	26, 655, 528	1, 825, 949	3, 308, 570	6.9	12.4
West Bengal	80, 176, 197	18, 452, 555	4, 406, 794	23.0	5.5
Jharkhand	26, 945, 829	3, 189, 320	7, 087, 068	11.8	26.3
Orissa	36, 804, 660	6, 082, 063	8, 145, 081	16.5	22.1
Chhattisgarh	20, 833, 803	2, 418, 722	6, 616, 596	11.6	31.8
Madhya Pradesh	60, 348, 023	9, 155, 177	12, 233, 474	15.2	20.3
Gujarat	50, 671, 017	3, 592, 715	7, 481, 160	7.1	14.8
Daman & Diu	158, 204	4, 838	13, 997	3.1	8.8
Dadra & Nagari	220, 490	4, 104	137, 225	1.9	62.2
Maharashtra	96, 878, 627	9, 881, 656	8, 577, 276	10.2	8.9
Andhra Pradesh	76, 210, 007	12, 339, 496	5, 024, 104	16.2	6.6
Karnataka	52, 850, 562	8, 563, 930	3, 463, 986	16.2	6.6
Goa	1, 347, 668	23, 791 566		1.8	0.0
Lakshadweep	60, 650 -			0.0	94.5
Kerala	31, 841, 374	3, 123, 941	364, 189	9.8	1.1
Tamil Nadu	62, 405, 679	11, 857, 504	651, 321	19.0	1.0
Pondicherry	974, 345	157, 771		16.2	0.0
Andaman	356, 152	-	29, 469	0.0	8.

Source: Government of India (2002)

**The Scheduled Castes** constitute around 16 per cent (see Table - 1) of the Indian population today. There are marked state and regional variations in terms of these proportions. Punjab has the highest proportion at 28 per cent. Among the larger states, (barring the North Eastern, where high tribal concentrations exist) Gujarat has the smallest percentage of SCs at 7.41%. From a sociological point of view, apart from their increasing visibility the most significant contemporary fact concerning the Scheduled Castes is their growing political assertion and identity formation as 'Dalit'. As pointed out by Beteille, it is not easy to form a single consistent view of the present position of the Scheduled Castes because the regional diversity is so large and the balance between continuity and change so uncertain. Whereas in the past the social condition of the Scheduled Castes was governed strongly by the ritual opposition of purity and pollution, the calculus of democratic politics has become important today (Beteille, 2000).

**Scheduled Tribes** are similarly distinct from mainstream Hindu society, with lifestyles, languages and cultural practices different from the known religions of India. According to the Census of 2001, the Scheduled Tribes, constitute 8.1% of the Indian population. In absolute terms, this comes to some 83.6 million people, classified under 461 different communities. They are spread over the entire country but are most heavily concentrated in central, eastern and north - eastern India. Two broad types of scheduling viz. area based and community based exist for tribes. Areas under the Fifth Schedule belong to nine major states of western and central region extending from Maharashtra to the West to Jharkhand in the East. Vulnerable tribal populations of some states are left out however, such as in West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Sixth Schedule applies to tribal areas in states of the North East. Unlike the relatively dispersed SC population, about 90 percent of the Scheduled Tribes are found in a few states. Orissa and Madhya Pradesh have more than 20 percent. More than 50 percent lives in parliamentary constituencies where they form the majority. They are defined partly by habitat and geographic isolation but more on the basis of social religious, linguistic and cultural distinctiveness. The ST occupy a belt stretching from the Bhil regions of western India through the Gond districts of central India, to Jharkhand and Bengal where the Mundas, Oraons and Santhals predominate. There are also pockets of Scheduled Tribe communities in the south and very small endangered communities in the Andamans. Northeast India contains a large proportion of the Scheduled Tribe population, including the different Naga sub - tribes (Sundar, 2006).

#### **State Provision for Education of SC and ST and Recent Trends in Their Educational Progress**

State commitment to the education of SC/ST children is contained in Articles 15 (4), 45 and 46 of the Indian Constitution. Article 15 (4) underscores the state's basic commitment to positive discrimination in favor of the socially and educationally backward classes and/or the SC and ST. Article 45 declares the state's Endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. Article 46 expresses the

specific aim to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of SC/ST.

In its effort to offset educational and socio - historical disadvantage, the Indian state conceived a range of enabling provisions that would facilitate access to and ensure retention of SC and ST children in school. In the initial Five - Year Plans, the focus was on making available basic educational facilities such as schools especially in remote areas and providing scholarships and books. Both Central and State governments took up the responsibility of special educational provision. The scope of enabling interventions expanded considerably after the Fourth Five Year Plan. Special schemes pertaining to school education of SC/ST children currently include:

- i) Free supply of textbooks and stationery at all stages of school education
- ii) Free uniforms to children in govt. approved hostels and Ashrams schools, and in some states also for children in regular schools;
- iii) Free education at all levels;
- iv) Pre - matric stipends and scholarships to students at middle and/or high school stage;
- v) Special scheme of pre - matric scholarships for children of castes and families engaged in unclean occupations like scavenging, tanning and flaying of animal skin;
- vi) Girls and boys' hostels for SC/ST students and lodging facilities in hostels of backward classes including SC/ST;
- vii) Ashram schools for tribal children started with the intention of overcoming the difficulties of provision in remote regions and also rather patronizingly to provide an environment "educationally more conducive" than the tribal habitat.

(National policy on education, 1985 and revised 1992)

In addition, several states have instituted schemes such as scholarships to SC students studying in private schools, merit scholarships, attendance scholarships for girls, special school attendance prizes, and remedial coaching classes, reimbursement of excursion expenses and provision of mid - day meals. The last has been recommended as an integral element in schooling by the Working group on Development and Welfare of the Scheduled Castes during the Eighth Five Year Plan (Kamat, 1985). Several studies carried out in the initial decades after independence and in particular, the landmark Report of the Commission of SC/ST of 1986 - 87 showed that educational progress till the mid 80's was slow and uneven (Kamat, 1985, Govt. of India, 1990). The following section attempts to capture the current picture of school educational advance of SC and ST children in the country and the states.

#### **School Participation of SC and ST Children and the drop out Phenomena**

My reflections on recent trends in enrolment, attendance and drop - out for SC/ST children are mediated by statistical data collected from various sources. The main sources which have been utilized are the Census of India, Commission for SC/ST District Information System for Education (DISE), Statistical Publications of the Ministry for Human Resource

Development, the NSSO, Reports of Commissioner. I have also taken insights from other publication by various authors

**Literacy Advancement among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**

Recent studies show that there is an increased demand for education among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The increasing literacy rate among these groups, though at a slower pace, is witness to this trend. According to 2001 Census data, Scheduled Caste children comprise 17.4% of the total youth population and Scheduled Tribes children are 8.97% of the total youth population (Census of India, 2002). Official data reveals that the educational progress of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe populations is quite remarkable but in practice they are the most socially and educationally backward. There are many dynamic factors related to this discrepancy, especially the fact that factors related to schooling processes. A study conducted in Tamil Nadu reveals that there is a significant difference in completing school education among Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe children due to the social disadvantages they face (Duraismy, 2001). Variations between states are also quite deceptive if one compares the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) with the literacy rates among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (See Table 2). For instance, in Bihar, the GER for Scheduled Tribes is 79.2% whereas the literacy rate is only 28.2%. The same is the case for Scheduled Tribes in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Uttar Pradesh where the literacy rate is below 40%. In general, literacy rates for Scheduled Castes are better than those for Scheduled Tribe populations. However, three states Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand – have Scheduled Caste literacy rates that are far below the national average, and Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have also performed poorly. The data shows that SC and ST children are frequently not retained in the educational process for the complete elementary school cycle (i. e. up to class VIII; see Table 2).

**Table 2: Literacy Rates and Gross Enrolment Rates for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes**

State/UT	Literacy Rate		GER Grades I - VIII (%)	
	SC	ST	SC Students	ST Students
India	54.69	47.10	83.35	86.06
Jammu & Kashmir	59.03	37.46	81.25	62.05
Himachal Pradesh	70.31	65.50	100.26	111.70
Punjab	56.22	-	97.72	-
Chandigarh	67.66	-	63.59	-
Uttaranchal	63.40	63.23	105.11	91.53
Haryana	55.45	-	81.19	-
Delhi	70.85	-	61.28	-
Rajasthan	52.24	44.66	81.88	85.58
Uttar Pradesh	46.27	35.13	61.25	62.37
Bihar	28.47	28.17	59.67	79.19
Sikkim	63.04	67.14	75.48	114.23
Arunachal Pradesh	67.64	49.62	-	90.11
Nagaland	-	65.95	-	60.19
Manipur	72.32	65.85	111.30	108.34
Mizoram	89.20	89.34	-	101.45
Tripura	74.68	56.48	104.75	101.19
Meghalaya	56.27	61.34	90.46	87.62
Assam	66.78	62.52	67.08	75.10
West Bengal	59.04	43.40	110.75	67.33

Jharkhand	37.56	40.67	54.90	85.03
Orissa	55.53	37.37	88.50	89.66
Chhattisgarh	63.96	52.09	96.24	105.95
Madhya Pradesh	58.57	41.16	97.28	79.55
Gujarat	70.50	47.74	72.96	89.01
Daman & Diu	85.13	63.42	98.34	103.02
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	78.25	41.24	102.39	93.32
Maharashtra	71.90	55.21	100.86	98.15
Andhra Pradesh	53.52	37.04	91.57	78.76
Karnataka	52.87	48.27	100.67	93.91
Goa	71.92	55.88	101.83	-
Lakshadweep	-	86.14	-	102.91
Kerala	82.66	64.35	91.43	108.99
Tamil Nadu	63.19	41.53	105.63	108.16
Pondicherry	69.12	-	116.45	-
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	66.79	-	88.36

Between 1991 and 2001, literacy rates have increased for girls as well as for overall numbers of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe groups due to higher school participation (Government of India, 2006). The total literacy rate for Scheduled Caste groups during that time increased from 37.41% to 54.69%, and for Scheduled Tribes it increased from 29.6% to 47.1%. It is true that the literacy rate has increased but the problem of these communities is that they have failed to survive in the educational system. The data itself shows the phenomena clearly (see the figure - 1, 2, 3). Despite significant increases in literacy and enrolment rates, the overall low average literacy level of the country, and especially amongst Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe populations, continues to aggravate inequalities in educational capabilities between different groups. The first important aspect of these inequalities is the vast difference between states. On the one hand, the state of Kerala had achieved nearly universal literacy by 1991, and on the other, states such as Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have not yet reached even 50% literacy levels (See Table 2). In addition to these regional disparities, there are also large educational inequalities between rural and urban areas, between different castes and between men and women. When these diverse inequalities are combined, we get an idea of the extent to which socially disadvantaged groups, such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, have very low levels of education. Among these groups, it is women who tend to suffer the most. For example, the literacy level of rural SC women in Uttar Pradesh is only 8%, in comparison with 73% for the same group in Kerala (Government of India, 2006).

The situation of literacy provides a rough indication of overall educational progress as well as serves as an index of past educational opportunity. Table 1 shows that the rural female ST literacy rate has doubled since 1991 but is still the lowest at 32.4%. Sharp differences persist between the general population and SC/ST population in rural areas.

**Analysis of the data on drop out phenomena:**

In this section we examine Indian data on ‘drop outs’ of SC and STs in order to describe the scale of the problem and regional and social variations that exist. I will also describe some of the limitations of the data presented and show how problems with data and research on dropouts misrepresent both the number and nature of dropouts.



The growing demand for schooling and its utilization among Scheduled Castes is reflected in the significant increase in both enrolment ratios and attendance rates. Enrolment ratios (percent enrolment of population in age - group corresponding to the standards) as is very well known, are not reliable indicators of educational progress due to considerable inflation caused by over reporting and enrolment of overage children. A better picture of educational progress is conveyed by Table 1 and 2 which gives a comparative view of SC enrolment percentage with their population percentage. I find that among the large states also having substantial SC population, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal emerge as poorest performers at the primary level. Their enrolment per cent does not match their percentage in the population. In the rest of the state's school participation of SC is satisfactory in these terms. However, at the middle level, in as many as eight States enrolment per cent is much lower than population. Surprisingly, this list also includes Tamil Nadu. Current school participation data for the 6-14 - year age group, however, considerably deflates the scenario of impressive gains in enrolment and suggests that the task of enlisting continued educational participation continues to be enormous. Firstly, Non - attendance among Scheduled Castes is higher than among the general population rates (around 20 % in the 6 - 10 and 29 % in the 11-14 - year age group in 1998). The corresponding percentages for the general population are 16 per cent and 23 per cent. The percentage of non - attendance is higher in rural (19.3 %) as compared to urban urban areas (9.7 %). It is lower among rural girls as compared to rural boys (23.4 % and 15.4 % respectively) (Nambissan, 2002). Recently however, attendance rates are believed to have risen in hitherto educationally backward states under the impact of a spate of

new government schemes and programmes directed at attaining the elusive goal of universalization of elementary education. Large gains are claimed among SC and ST groups and girl children. In Rajasthan for instance, it is claimed that the increase was to the tune of more than 20 per cent. One will have to await detailed educational data from census 2001 and NSSO to confirm these perceived trends.

NFHS data show that only around 50 percent of children aged 10 - 14 years (the broad age group allows for late entry and stagnation) completed primary school and 42 percent have completed middle school in 1998 - 99. Caste - wise desegregation shows that Scheduled Caste children compare poorly with non scheduled caste groups. Only 43 per cent SC children completed primary schooling, and 42 per cent completed middle school in the respective age groups. Corresponding figures for the 'other' castes are much higher at 58 percent and 63 percent (NFHS, 2000). Another study points to sharp inter - state differences in completion rates of children aged 12 and 16 years. Primary school completion rates for Scheduled Castes are relatively high in Kerala (96 % for SC as compared to 100 % for the other castes). Maharashtra (79.21 %) lags behind Kerala. In Tamil Nadu the rate stands at 41.96 percent. Rajasthan (35.15 %) and Uttar Pradesh (30.52 %) are the most poorly off. However, the proportion of children who completed primary school is relatively low. West Bengal has a most shockingly low completion rate of only 19.28 percent for the SC children aged twelve. Middle school completion rates for sixteen - year - old SC children range from a low of 21 per cent in Bihar and 31 per cent in Rajasthan to 74 per cent in Maharashtra, 63.89 per cent in Tamil Nadu and 90.8 per cent in Kerala (NFHS and World Bank studies cited in Nambissan and Sedwal, 2002).

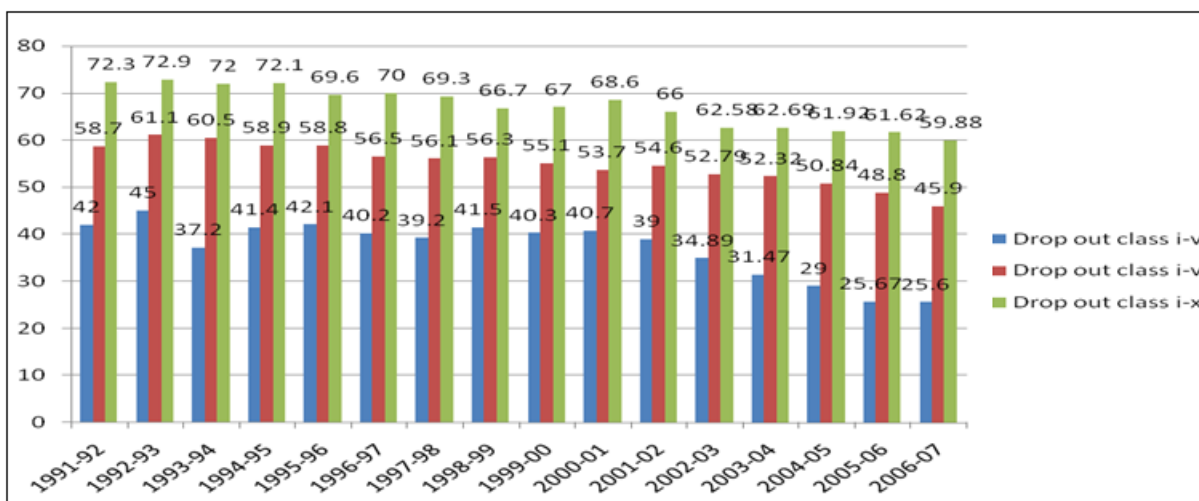


Figure 1: Drop out percent of the total Indian population (1991 - 2007)  
Source: MHRD, Govt. of India, 2006

Table 1 and 2, which compares enrolment percent of ST with their population percent shows that in all states, except in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan, the situation is satisfactory. At the middle level however, Maharashtra and Gujarat join this group of states. Even in Kerala one notes that ST enrolment percent in standard VI - VIII falls short of population percent, even if slightly so! Net enrolments rates were estimated by the 1994 NCAER household survey. The gap between ST and non - ST children in the 6 - 14 years

age group was as large as 17 per cent (World Bank, cited in Nambissan, 2000). Further, according to NCAER survey in rural areas, ST children had the lowest ever - enrolment rates (EER) in 1994 (68% among boys and 52% among girls) as compared to children in general (77% among boys and 65% among girls) and Other Hindus in particular (83% among boys and 71% among girls) (Shariff and Sudarshan, cited in Nambissan, 2000).

A majority of ST children who enroll in class I drop out within a few years of entering school. Official dropout rates of tribal children from schooling in 1988 - 89 were as high as 78 per cent between classes I and VIII. Almost 65 per cent of tribal children leave school between classes I and V. Dropout rates are extremely high among girls in general (68 per cent) and tribal girls in particular (82 per cent). Class wise enrolments at the primary stage also suggest that the sharpest drop in enrolment of tribal children is between classes I and II (NCERT 1998 cited in Nambissan, 2000).

There exist sharp differences between the states in terms of most indications of educational progress. Intra tribal variations in education must also prevail as suggested by literacy data. The Naga tribe of Meghalaya is the most highly literate. In Arunachal Pradesh, a huge gap in literacy is indicated between Khamiyargs and Panchan Morpa and in Orissa between Kulies (36.4 percent) and Mankirdias (1.1 per cent) (Sharma, 1994). Specific studies of educational disparities between and within tribal groups need to be done

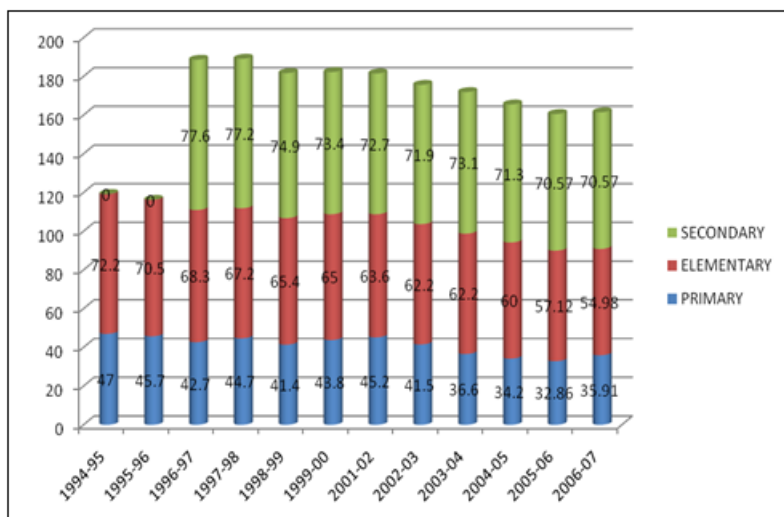


Figure 2: Dropout Rates of Scheduled Caste (SC) Students in Primary/Elementary and Secondary School in India (1995 - 2007)

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

If we look at figure 1, 2, and 3 very closely which provides data on the dropout rates total national population, SC population, and Population from 1997 to 2007, we will find that the drop out phenomena in a decreasing trend for all categories of ST population, but the matter of concern is that where for the total population the dropout rate have been decreased in to the lowest extent from 1997 to 2007 where as for SC and ST the dropout rate has not decreased so far. In 1997 the dropout rate in Primary, elementary and secondary class for total population was around 40, 56 and 70 respectively where as in the same year for SC the drop out for the same class was 42, 68 and 77 percent and for ST population the drop out was around 56, 75 and 84 percent

respectively. The data again shows after ten years in 2007 the dropout rate for total population for the primary, elementary and secondary class is around 25, 45 and 59 percent respectively it showed a very good decreasing trend. But in the same year the total SC and ST drop out percent for the same class was 35, 54 and 70 percent (for SC) and 33, 62 and 78 (for ST). which a very less decrease in the problem of drop out as against the national average. This stagnant and slow decrease of drop out among these categories needs an in - depth analysis for analyzing why the dropout rate is so high In spite of a lot of programmes and policies.

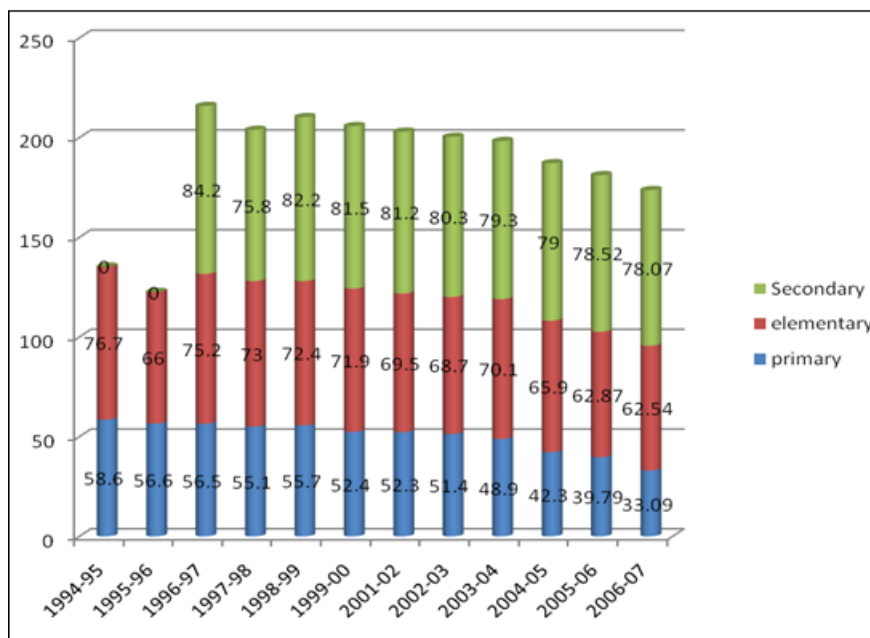


Figure 3: Dropout Rates of Scheduled Tribes (ST) Students in Primary/Elementary and Secondary School in India (1995 - 2007)

Source: MHRD, Govt. of India

A state - wise analysis of dropout rates reveals that Bihar has the highest rate of Scheduled Caste drop out, while Orissa has the highest rate of drop out among Scheduled Tribes. The lowest dropout rates for Scheduled Caste students are in Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Maharashtra, Tripura, Karnataka, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. For Scheduled Tribes, rates are lowest in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Kerala, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Jammu & Kashmir, Nagaland,

Sikkim (see Table 4). In recent years, Himachal Pradesh has reversed a previous negative trend and achieved the lowest dropout rates both for both Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This is due to active state intervention in the educational field, as primary education has remained a consistent priority of the state government, despite different political parties assuming power in the past years. This has provided the necessary conditions for Himachal Pradesh to achieve and sustain an impressive level of success in the primary education sector

Table 4: Drop Out Rates (%) of SC and ST Students by State

Drop Out Rates of SC Students (grades I - VIII)		Drop Out Rates of ST Students (grades I - VIII)	
<40 Kerala, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Maharashtra, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu	<60 Punjab, Chandigarh, Gujarat, Goa, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, India	<40 Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep, Kerala, Rajasthan, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Jammu & Kashmir, Nagaland, Sikkim	<60 Madhya Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Karnataka, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu
<80 Rajasthan, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Assam, West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh	>80 Bihar	<80 Mizoram, Meghalaya, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Tripura, West Bengal, India	>80 Orissa

Source: Government of India (2008)

So, the above data indicates Bihar and Orissa has a very high dropout rate for SC and ST population where as states like Kerala has a very a smaller number of drop outs. So, variation in the dropout rate invites to discuss the causes of this variation and the main causes of the drop out as well.

**Reasons for Drop out:**

In this section I will focus on several common reasons why children are not enrolled in school, do not attend regularly or drop out of school. In each case rather than the responsibility resting with the poorest and most disadvantaged in Indian society, we argue, the state and central government bears much of the responsibility for low levels of enrolment and

attendance among some groups and in some areas. A number of specific reasons for dropout have been cited by the drop out students from both male as well as female (See figure - 4 and 5). These are poor infrastructure in school, failure in examination (included in administrative reason), need to help siblings, not interested in study, poverty, school away from home, required for labour at home, working

outside to earn money for family and policy issues which come within the category of others. Here the reasons which are responsible for their drop out from the school as stated by them are analysed. The reasons of drop out varies for both SC and ST because of the difference on the legacy of their deprived status.

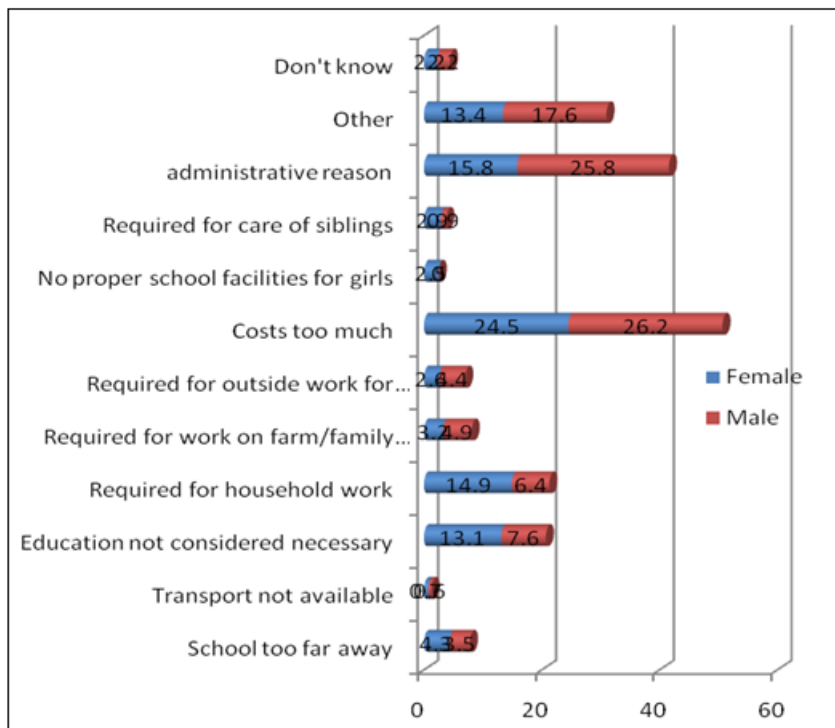


Figure 4: Reasons of Drop Out for Schedule caste Students

Source: National Family Health Survey - II 1998 - 99.

Compiled from the statistics released by: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Govt. of India.

There are as many as eleven reasons for drop out for the sc students but the most important reason for their drop out have come from the poor social and economic status of their

family, the second reason is from the administrative failure of govt. as well as the schools itself, includes kind of knowledge they receive from the educational administration, kind of curriculum they have in the school, the third important reason as they stated was to support family income and help in the domestic set up of the family'



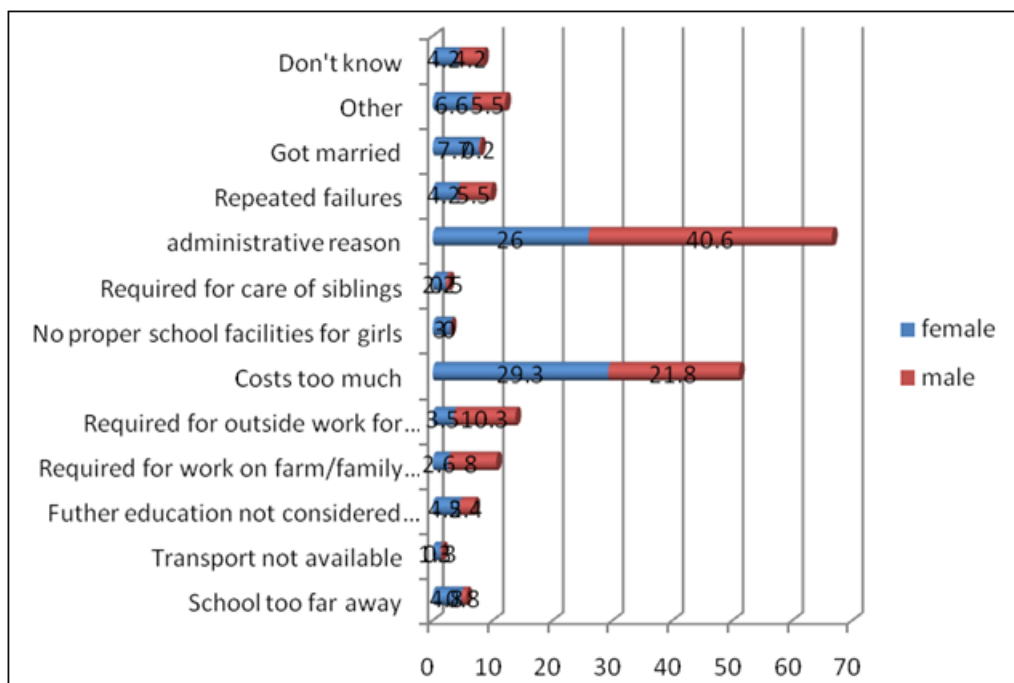


Figure 5: Reasons for ST drop outs from school

### Main reasons of the Drop out phenomena

#### Poverty and Cost of schooling, Administrative malfunctioning, Curriculum and pedagogy and lack of interest as the main reasons:

Many children drop out because they are poor and the survival of their family depends on the children's earnings. where parents send their children to work as a response to poverty. Poor parents can ill afford the costs involved in sending their children to school. Even when there are rules against school fees, school teachers frequently exercise pressure on children for resources for the maintenance of schools and classrooms, and to procure education materials, examination question papers, answer scripts and so on, instead of making demands on the department of education. The unaffordable cost of schooling becomes the reasons of drop out. when the child does not get any financial support from any source drop out becomes inevitable. The above figure - 4 and 5 shows there are highest number of drop out because of poverty concern. From the SC community 26 percent Boy and 24 percent girl and from ST community 21 percent boy and 29 percent girl becomes victims of drop out due to poverty reason. Due to poverty more student from Bihar and Orissa falls in the category of drop out. If we will look at gender concern then more boys from SC community and More girl from ST community becomes the victim of drop out because of poverty and the cost of education.

The most recent survey of the NFHS - III survey (IIPS, 2007) households were interviewed about school non attendance because of drop out. Specifically, they were asked about reasons for non attendance for children aged 6 - 17 who had dropped out before 2005 - 6. The most common reason given for dropping out was 'not interested in studies' (36% for boys and 21% for girls). For girls, the reason 'required for household work', accounted for a little over 15% of dropouts, while it was given for 7% of male dropouts. The need to provide 'outside work for payment in cash or kind' was cited by nearly 9% of boys and a little

over 3% of girls. Around 7% of boys and 3% of girls gave the reason of 'required for farm and family business' for not attending school. An additional 15% of females had never attended school because it was felt that education for girls was not necessary by their parents. In the case of boys, almost 8% gave this reason. In total, 23.3% of boys and 22.3% of girls were not attending school because they were engaged in an activity like paid work, household work or taking care of siblings. Around 18% of children dropped out of school because it 'costs too much'. Many other reasons like school too far away, repeated failures, got married, etc. also cited by several parents as the reasons for dropout. The NSSO Survey, 52nd Round (NSSO, 1998) similarly recorded a main reason for children dropping out of school as 'child not interested in studies' (24.4%), or 'unable to cope with or failure in studies' (22.5%). Other reasons given were financial constraints (12.4%), parents not interested in education of their children (9.4%) and participation in other economic activities (7.8%) (NSSO, 1998). This has indicated that in most cases poverty and a lack of interest in studies is one of the key reasons for school dropout, as indicated by parents.

#### Administrative Problem, Curriculum and Pedagogy and Drop out

The second most important reason of SC and ST drop out is the administrative lacunae of the state as well as the central government and the kind of curriculum and pedagogy formulated for them. 15 percent girls and 26 percent boys from SC category and 26 percent girl and 40 percent boys from ST category join drop out because of administrative reasons which includes discrimination from teachers, discrimination in distributing various educational schemes given by govt., curriculum and pedagogy in the school. sssAs described above, the marginalization of Scheduled Castes is closely related to their low occupational status, which is predetermined by caste ideology. In the agricultural sector, Scheduled Castes are mostly landless and marginal farmers, while in the non - farm sector they work in jobs that

are seen as demeaning and 'dirty', such as street cleaning, sewage and sanitation work, as cobblers, etc. School curricula are heavily biased in favor of middle - class professional households. Textbooks represent middle class lifestyle and preferences, and often portray them as models to emulate. The explicit discrimination faced by Scheduled Caste students from teachers and students is therefore implicitly legitimated through the curricula used in schools. The absence of any positive representation of the labour of the working poor, and especially of 'untouchable' Scheduled Castes communities, alienates SC children from their own communities and families and negatively affects their self-esteem. At the elementary school level, the curricula do not teach about their struggles for equity and dignity or the oppressive nature of the caste system, and it is barely dealt with at the secondary level either. Further, school curricula are restricted to bookish and abstract learning, and do not utilize local examples, materials and modes of learning to teach these concepts. The situation is similar for Scheduled Tribe children, whose culture and living environments are also very different from middle class rural and urban households. A curriculum that includes the histories, living environments and livelihoods of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities in a positive manner is needed in order to promote a sense of self - worth and facilitate meaningful learning. However, current mainstream curricula do not give attention to the socio - cultural and economic realities and ideals of Scheduled Tribe communities. Using the native language as the medium of instruction has also long been recognized as an important factor for successful learning. This is as especially important for ST children who often speak dialects that are different from the regional or state language. The 1986 National Policy on Education and the more recent revised National Curriculum Framework (NCERT, 2005) recommend the use of local languages in the early stages of education. Except in some rare instances (due to the efforts of local NGOs), however, there has been no real attempt to develop primers using words and phrases from the local language or dialect. Even in cases where there is clear justification for developing bilingual primers – such as in the case of the Gond tribal language, which is spoken by an estimated 3 million people in the central Indian belt – such efforts have been lacking

## 2. Conclusions

Dropping out of school usually implies the inability of children to continue in school for some reason. Most often the child, his/her family circumstances or macro - economic factors are considered to be responsible for them dropping out. Evidence from many studies in different parts of India above mentioned sources of data on drop out suggests that many children are drop outs not because of familial reasons but because of the administrative reason also. While expansion of government schooling has undoubtedly represented a shift from mass exclusion to mass inclusion, it has been an incredibly delayed, weak and highly discriminatory inclusion. Grossly unequal provision, accompanied by an alienating curriculum and disinterested and discriminatory teaching learning process seem to have kept alive the traditional Brahmanical principle of closure. SC/ST children are largely "cooled out" at the primary level itself. There occurs an effective physical exclusion of SC/ST

children or they achieve low levels of schooling, which do not necessarily reflect learning. Indeed, schools should be governed in such a way that children are comfortable and have a sense of belonging in the school. In many cases, it is the limitations of the system that result in children leaving school. From the data we not only find the reasons of drop out from family context her socio - economic condition but also the administrative reasons. A lack of capacity in facilities, training, administration, regulation and quality is meaning that many children are pushed out of school. There is an unwillingness to accept that millions of children get pushed out of school and an under estimation of the numbers of such children by official sources. Many children, before leaving school, have irregular attendance, temporary withdrawals and many join the labour force as child labour. Another problem has come to notice the insufficiency of the data. Most of the data gathering agency have not paid much attention to the drop out phenomena. The data's have not focused on the role of policy, curriculum and language issue for their drop out. Neglecting all these factors of drop out are the the grey areas of the data. from the empirical field work by many sociologists of education and demographers say that administration has a great role to play for drop out issue of SC and ST in India. The role of Teacher and the text books have been repeatedly neglected a cause of drop out. In this regard, the collection of data must make sense to school teachers, for it is they who grapple with the realities of meeting demands and pressures on the ground. They can come up with specific strategies to keep children in schools. Therefore, teachers need to be included in the process of data collection and encouraged to report correctly. It is only by focusing on the school and school data, that correct information about children identified. Finally in conclusion we can say that the high dropout rate is the result of a process rather than a single event, has more than one proximate cause, and is fairly irreversible. Among the causes the cause relating to low economic and social status of the children's family resulted in poverty, the administrative reasons which resulted in the insufficient implementations of policy and programmes for SC and ST students and reasons related to Students lack of interest was found in the most of cases in the study. The emphasis we given to the above three causes not because to neglect other causes of drop out but to understand the main reasons of their drop out.

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