CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important tool for development. It directly influences the economic, social and cultural status of the person. Therefore, increased access to schooling is often seen as a panacea to social inequality (EFA 2007). A person can be subjected to any form of injustice and discrimination only as long as he/she is ignorant. Lack of knowledge and awareness not only deters people from protesting against social injustice and violation of rights, but also leads to acceptance of oppression. It is important for the people to know their rights to liberate themselves from any unjust social practices. In such cases, education helps people to understand the prevalent socio cultural, economic, and political structures and norms which perpetuate inequality.

Education helps to build awareness in every individual about their position in society, to identify and develop the human potentiality, to ascertain and gain respect for the rights of everyone, and to get access to opportunities for personal and community growth on an equal footing. Education plays a key role in assessing the inequalities in access to opportunities. It is one of the key instruments for determining a person’s socio-economic health and capacity for social interactions, and also decides the person’s capacities to perform in society. Thus, unequal access to education is an influential factor in creating inequality in society (World Development Report 2006).

Education is one of the most important tools for the empowerment of the disadvantaged sections of the society. Unless the underprivileged sections of the society receive a minimum education, they cannot exercise their civil, political, economic, and social
freedom as enshrined in the constitution of India. Hence, it can be said that education serves as a vehicle for social change, which builds a path towards a just and equitable society.

Acknowledging the importance of education, systematic initiatives were taken by the government since independence to improve the literacy rate among all sections of society in the country. Due to these efforts, there has been a consistent improvement in the enrolment of children and overall literacy status of the country. The literacy rate has steadily improved from 28% (Census 1961) to 74% (Census 2011). The initiatives taken for universalizing elementary education such as ‘Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan’ (SSA) 2001, and later, the enactment of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2005, has made the country see a growth in the enrolment of children in primary school. In elementary education, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has increased from 81.6% in 2000-01 to 96.9% in 2014-15 (MHRD, 2016). However, this progress was not reflected in the retention, completion, and upward mobility of education attainment in the country.
Figure 1.1: Gross Enrolment Ratio for the year 2014 -15

Even considering the enrolment ratio, we notice that as we move towards higher levels of education, the enrolment ratio decreases. According to MHRD 2016, education statistics, the GER for the primary level of all is 100.1%, but it gets reduced to 78.5% at the secondary level, and only a meagre 24.3% enrolled for higher education (MHRD, 2016). From the primary level (100.1%) to the upper primary level (91.2%), the enrolment ratio exhibits only a marginal difference, whereas from the secondary level onwards to every next level the

\[ \text{Enrolment Ratio} = \frac{\text{Number of persons in the class-group}}{\text{Number of persons in the corresponding official age-group}} \]

This ratio is more than 100% because many children are getting enrolled above their official age group. The thrust on providing primary education, after the right to education, has yielded enrolment of never enrolled and dropout children to get enrolled for primary education. The progress is visible across the social categories and gender with GER for SC, ST and girls shooting above hundred (Educational statistics at a glance, 2016). Aforesaid explanation is given as note at the end of the same page.
difference widens greatly. From the data, it can be seen that from the secondary level onwards, there is a steep decline in the GER. So, it can be said that with the elevation of education levels, the enrolment rate is declining. Further, from the figure, it is clear that till the senior secondary level, there is not much of a difference between Scheduled Castes (SC from here on) and others in the GER, but from senior secondary to higher education, a noticeable difference appears between others and SC.

From the observation of statistics, one key question that arises is this – who are the ones dropping out or discontinuing their education? All over the country, across all sections, the drop out scenario needs adequate attention to improve the retention of children, as well as to elevate the level of education attainment. However, from the statistics, it is clear that some children are more prone to dropping out. So, special measures are required to address the concerns of these disadvantaged sections.

1.1.1 Lining of Social Groups in India

In Indian culture, the social hierarchies of groups are stratified along the lines of caste. In a stratified society, the access to resources and opportunities are not equal; it is determined on the basis of the position of the social group he or she belongs to, and thus, the inequalities created are structural in nature (Giddens, 2006). Therefore, individual opportunities and life experiences depend on the ranking of their social group in the society (Ibid). People who are higher up the ladder tend to enjoy more privileges than those who are in the lower rungs (Ram, 2008). In India, the social groups are classified based on class, caste, gender, ethnicity etc. However, caste plays a predominant role in determining a person’s position in the society.
Caste is broadly classified into four social groups; (i) Brahmins are the top of the caste hierarchy, who are mainly involved in priesthood and other scholarly occupations, (ii) Kshatriyas are next, who are warriors, (iii) the next is Vaishyas, who are involved in trading and business, (iii) Shudras, who are the bottommost in the social grouping of caste, and are involved in menial jobs. Apart from these four, there is one other category who are referred to as outcaste, panchamas etc; they do not belong to any of the caste group, but are the erstwhile 'untouchables' and are now constitutionally called as scheduled castes. As occupation was one of the defining bases for caste, in order to maintain the social status of a particular caste, occupational mobility is highly restricted. Permeation of the lower castes to the higher castes was/is forbidden. The ideology of caste justifies and encourages the prevailing relative inequality between various social groups, and prevents the creation of an equal society (Mencher, 1974).

There are three key characteristics ingrained in the Indian caste system

i. **Endogamy**

This is the one of the most important characteristics of the caste system. The members of any caste should not marry anyone from outside their caste. This is the main rule followed to restrict the permeability between caste groups.

ii. **Occupation restriction**

The next is division of labours; but, as rightly said by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, it is not actually a division of labour but a division of labourers. Every caste is associated with certain occupations which decide their social status and economic status in the society. Mandal Commission, 1978, reported that caste was the major factor in deciding the social and economic backwardness in the country. Thus, it can be said that in modern India, occupational mobility is happening on the grounds of education but it is not fully free from the clutches of caste hierarchy.
iii. Restriction of social interaction

The final characteristic is the restriction of social interaction between various castes. Those who belong to higher castes should not exchange or dine with lower castes, and effectively should not have social contacts. This is justified by an ideology based on purity and pollution, by which the lower castes are considered unclean and impure. It is structuralised under the institution of religion and established customs.

Therefore, untouchability is a process of social exclusivism, in which the interactions between the different castes are well demarcated, and this has been adhered to by the upper caste groups to protect their social status in the society. (Velssasery, 2008).

As mentioned in the World Bank report of 2010, the opportunities are made with glass ceilings one could see through, but to permeate them is impossible for socially disadvantaged people. It is true that direct exclusion was alleviated to a great extent, but indirect exclusion or access with differential treatment is often less recognized by the society, but is just as bad as direct exclusion. Nobel laurete Amartya Sen (1998) discusses silent exclusion, and affirms that unfavourable inclusion is equal to unfavourable exclusion. In both cases, the process is not inclusive and thus allows certain sections to enjoy more of the fruits. The exclusion will not be direct, but the process or the circumstances through which the person goes may not be amiable and would lead to exclusion. Sen (1998) talks about “relational roots of deprivation”; the root of deprivation is not just material but social, he says. Being a member of the socially and culturally marginalized group curtails the opportunities available to realise his or her potential and capabilities.

1.1.2 Relational Factors of Dropout

The reason for drop out is broadly grouped under two components

i. Household related factors – demand side
ii. School related factors – supply side

Both have equal importance in ascertaining the education levels of the children.

**Household Factors**

Under this factor, the parent’s role is the central. The household income, parents’ education level, parents’ occupation, parents’ perception of the importance of education, parents’ perception on gender education, and so on. These are categorised as demand side factors. Various studies highlight the importance of socio-economic status as one of the influential factors in determining the education of the children. Presently, the overall demand for education among all sections, irrespective of their socio-economic status, has improved, which is visible in the GER. However, this positive attitude is not sustained till the completion of the schooling period. Therefore, there are factors which are interplays between the interest in schooling among the parents and among the students. To mention a few, income shocks in the household, learning achievements of the children, economic returns of educated persons, gender preferences play key roles in the decision to continue education.

**School related Factors**

School related factors are as important as household factors in determining education continuance. For the most part, improving the infrastructure and material amenities are considered as key for improving the accessibility to school. If this is true, then all those who enrolled should have been retained at the school, which is not so.

In the listed reasons for dropping out, “not interested in studies” is highest for males, which is 40% (IIPS and OCR Macro (2000)). This leads one to critically think about the reasons which make students disinterested in studies. Classroom practices do not allow all children to equally participate and learn effectively. There are a lot of existing gaps which
need to be addressed effectively in order to ensure the equal participation of all without any forms of discrimination. The social identity of the children plays a key role in determining the teacher’s attitude towards the children. Studies conducted by DPEP on the classroom processes confirmed the biased practices on the line of caste and community (Ramachandran, 2005).

Once the child reaches school, the way the child is welcomed and treated by the teachers and peers creates belongingness in the child. This is important for retention at school. In order to achieve universal participation in school, it is important to make the participation at school meaningful, and to increase the efficiency of teaching and learning. Further, school is more than just paper work (EFA, 2004)

1.1.3 Importance of social relatedness at school

Relatedness is feeling oneself as connected in the social environment (Vallerand, 1997). If one’s belonging needs are not satisfied, it may result in a subjective perception of isolation, loneliness, and rejection. So, in order to feel connected with any environment, it is important that the person should feel belongingness in the environment. The belongingness is not just having social contact with others. The experience of social contact has to be a positive sharing and enjoyable social contact with significant others (Baumeister and Leary, 1995).

Sense of belonging in an educational setup is ‘the level of being accepted, acknowledged, involved, and motivated by the significant others. It is very important to experience and believe that they are an important part in the class room setting’ (Goodenow, 1993b). Hurtado and Carter (1997) said that belongingness in a student is the feeling of connectedness within the classroom and at school.
Various studies indicated that the need for belongingness is an essential component to performing well in any type of learning environments (Finn 1989, Deci & Ryan, 1991, Osterman, 2000). To enhance the motivation of any student, it is important to ensure that they are connected with the social environment. A feeling of belongingness with the significant others creates positive engagement in the learning activities. Thus, the sense of belongingness acts as an influential indicator of motivation among the students (Goodenow, 1993b). It can be said that when the expected support is ensured in the learning environment, it improves the academic motivation which will eventually lead to better success rate among the students.

Though the sense of belongingness is a need for all, it becomes more imperative for those who come from disadvantaged sections of the society. The disadvantaged children are already coming from a background of strained social relations, and they are at the risk of being alienated from the learning environment. In such cases, the school should work as a medium to improve their social interaction and exchange of relations in a positive way with the significant others to develop their self-concept—‘who we think we are’—the absence of the same may increase their risk of dropout. A sense of belongingness and a supportive environment are especially important for academic engagement and performance among the socially and economically disadvantaged children (Goodenow, 1992).

The importance of satisfying the need for a sense of belongingness is felt more among adolescent students. Because it is during that development stage that they move from a family–centred life to a life involving outside relationships with peers and significant adults. So, at this stage, being accepted and having positive social relationships with key persons develop and shape the self-identity (Roeser et. al, 1998). In the adolescence stage, self-consciousness tends to increase and, in this period, negative social contacts or relationships at school will accelerate negative emotions. So, it becomes critical to enhance the sense of
belongingness of adolescent student to ensure their academic motivation and engagement (Goodenow, 1993a).

**1.1.4 Differential education achievement of social groups**

The growing demand for schooling and its importance among all social groups is reflected through the significant increase in enrolment ratio at the primary level. Enrolment ratios are often over-reported; hence, it cannot be considered as a quality indicator to assess the educational attainment of the country (Position paper on SC/ST, 2005). Enrolment ratio cannot be taken as a single factor to analyse the educational attainment of the children. Retention and completion rate only helps us to understand the number of schooling years spent by the children as well as the upward mobility in the educational attainment of the children.

The average gross nation dropout percentage was 45.13 in 2010-11; for SC, the overall average dropout percentage was 51.72 for the same period. 62.57% of SC children dropped out by the time they reached upper primary level, and 83.62% of SC children dropped out by the time they reached secondary level (Pandita, 2015).

The government, as per constitutional directives, enacted various affirmative action policies, positive discrimination, and targeted relief aiming to improve the social and economic conditions of SC/ST (Scheduled Tribes) and non-creamy layer OBCs (Other Backward Castes) to address their material and accessibility needs. Keeping this in view, by this time, they should have achieved social and economic equity, but that is not the reality. Even after the completion of seven decades of independence, equity has not been achieved, at least in education; in the worst cases, the educational gap is widening between the SC and the others. This points to a clandestine issue which has not yet attracted proper attention.
1.1.5 **Identity ascribed by the school interactions**

Kakkar (1992) points out that identity evolves out of the interplay between the individual and their societal relationships. The process of evolution of identity involves the questions of ‘who we are’ and ‘who we think we are’. The former is ascribed by the self and the latter by the kind of societal relations enjoyed with the others. The social process involved in the formation and maintenance of identity are determined by the social structures. A school can be viewed as one such structure which designs the relations amongst the individuals through procedures of generalizing opinion which the individuals perceive in order to build their own conduct. Thus, school can be considered as a place for secondary socialization of the children. It has its unique role to be played in fashioning the identity of the young children (Jyoti Dalal, 2011).

The most prevalent cited reason for child dropout is family. But it cannot be considered as a single influential factor for dropout of school children. National Council of Applied Economic Research (1996) found that even after controlling the household variables, which are considered the key influential factors in enrolments and dropouts among the children, the number of children belonging to SC/ST or OBC communities who dropped out was higher than the number of general category children.

Apart from family, the next place which has more influence on dropout is the school; in that, peer and teacher relations play a crucial role in the liking for schooling.

The classroom structure is mostly non-conducive to SC children. Often, discriminative and abusive situations at school push the SC children out of school. The teacher is supposed to be an enabling person at school for the disadvantaged children to overcome the discrimination, but in many cases, the teachers themselves are involved in discriminatory practices (IDSN briefing paper, 2009). The discriminatory practices by teachers may include corporal punishment, segregation in the classroom, and assigning of
menial works to SC children (IDSN and Navsarjan briefing note, 2010). Special Rapporteur, 2006, on the right to education, noted that “teachers have been known to declare that SC pupils cannot learn unless they are beaten” (HRW, 2007). The felt school supportiveness was not same for all students, SC students perceived less supportive school climate than their counterparts i.e. non-SC children. Even teachers have shown less academic expectancy from SC children compared to the non-SC children (Pande, 1980). SC students are often humiliated by the teachers. SC children are treated as less educable and as having low intellect, especially by upper caste teachers (The Probe Team 1999). In schools, SC children continue to be put into unfavourable situations where they experience exclusion and discrimination within the institutional process. The school structure is neither inclusive nor supportive; rather, it is discriminative and unequal. SC children are denied equal opportunity in the institution to enhance their potential, whereas the non-SC children are provided with disproportionate support not only in academic process but also in social relations with teachers (Nambeesan. G, 2009). A combination of these factors results in high dropout rates, low academic performance, and low literacy rates of SC children.

The existing education policies focus on improving the physical accessibility to the school. Enrolment was the key priority of education policies. In order to increase enrolment, improvement of infrastructure and other facilities are sufficient. This was proved by the increase in enrolment ratios. However, the most ignored factor is retention and, subsequently, the upward mobility in the education ladder. From the data available, it is proved that the dropout rate is relatively higher among the socially disadvantaged children; and their participation in higher education is also comparatively low. These gaps reveal that achievements in education are not equal among all. Hence, the difference in achievements should not be seen only in the perspective of physical accessibility to school but also the quality of educational experience by the children (DFID, 2007). Hence, government policies
should be aimed at improving educational processes – i.e schooling and learning process of the academically and socially weak children – and not only at the provision of the necessary material conditions for schooling, such as adequate infrastructure, textbooks, and other learning materials. The following chapters will explore and explain the interlinks between social relatedness and schooling.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the information collected through secondary literature review to get a comprehensive understanding of the issues related to the importance of education in addressing inequality, educational attainment, motivation, social relatedness, social stratification and consequences of child dropout on economic and social well-being. It examines research studies conducted on education, and available national and state level data sets to know the trends in education since independence, and also reviewed government documents to understand the initiatives taken by the government in the form of programmes and schemes to universalise as well as improve the quality of education.

The first section of this chapter deals with the importance of education and literacy rate, gaps in academic achievements, and initiatives taken by the government to address the gap. The second section of the chapter deals with the importance of quality education in knowledge attainment, effective schooling, acceptance and academic engagement, teacher-student relationship, student-student relationship, and meeting psychological needs.

The third section of the chapter deals with the stratification in the societal interrelations and the ways in which it influences education attainment. To understand this, issues on illusion of inclusion, differential educational experiences, bias in school environment, caste restraint in equality, and inclusion as a medium for quality education are dealt with.

The fourth section of this chapter looks at the various primary studies conducted on this and other related issues to identify the variables and methodology.
1.2.1 Education Status of India

Education is an essential component for overall development of the nation. In India, education is classified into pre-primary, primary, upper primary, secondary, higher secondary, and higher education. The increase in the literacy status provides ample evidence for the reach obtained by education initiatives and programmes in India (Sampath, 2012). The literacy status has increased from 28\% in 1961 to 74\% in 2011 (Census Data).

i. Education as a Change Maker

Education is an effective tool for social, economic, and cultural upliftment of disadvantaged sections of the society (EFA 2007). Education may help to curtail inequality based on caste, class, sex, religion, etc. Lack of education confines a person to menial jobs which are less remunerative, and thereby curtails the growth of human resources. Denial of education can inflict not only economic constraints but also suppress social awakening, leading to an unending marginalization. Education is decisive in bringing about any change in the social relations and functioning. It is central in bringing about social justice and equality (Position paper SC/ST, 2005). Hence, education attainment is not only related to occupational mobility but also to social mobility. Lack of education can stagnate progress which may widen the gap, or retain existing gaps, between social groups. Thus, education is a vehicle for mobility of social and economic progress. If you see the literacy status of India it shows a very dishearten status.

ii. Literacy Status in India

The literacy rate of India was very poor in the years after independence. During 1961, only 28\% of Indians were literate. If we further disaggregate the data, it shows that, across gender, only 15\% of the female as compared to 40\% male, and across social groups,
only 10% of the SCs, were literate. Initiatives were taken by the government of India to improve the literacy level. Though there already was a gradual improvement, after the universalization of elementary education, there has been a remarkable improvement in the literacy rate among all sections of society.

The literacy statistics of the last decennial census offer significant positive trends, not only at the aggregate level; significant improvement was shown even at the level of gender and caste groups. After more than forty years of independence, in 1991, the literacy rate among SC had improved to a little more than 37% whereas the national average at that time was 52%. The gap between the literacy rate of SCs and the national average was high; and now, after many programmes, it is gradually reducing.

**Table 1.1: Increase in Literacy rate of Total Population during 1961-2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Gender gap in literacy rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>15.35</td>
<td>10.27</td>
<td>16.96</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>25.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>34.45</td>
<td>45.96</td>
<td>21.96</td>
<td>14.67</td>
<td>22.36</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>23.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>52.21</td>
<td>64.13</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>37.41</td>
<td>49.91</td>
<td>23.76</td>
<td>24.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>64.83</td>
<td>75.26</td>
<td>53.67</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>21.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>74.04</td>
<td>82.14</td>
<td>65.46</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>16.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Populationcommission.nic.in, nlm.nic.in

The literacy rate went up from 64.83% in 2001 to 74.04% in 2011 — showing an increase of 9.21 percentage points. Significantly, the female literacy level saw a significant increase compared to males. Female literacy in 2001 was 53.67% and it had gone up to
65.46% by 2011. The census of 2011 has revealed that the gender gap in the literacy is reducing. The gap between male and female literacy rate has reduced from 21.59% in 2001 to 16.68% in 2011. Further, table no. 1.1 reveals that the literacy rate amongst the SCs increased by 11.25% over the last decennial, whereas the total literacy rate in India increased by 9.21%. In terms of gender, scheduled caste females recorded a significant 14.6% increase against a comprehensive all India average of 9.21%. This phenomenon indicates a progressive reduction in the literacy gap between the general and the Scheduled Caste population.

iii. Gaps in the Achievement of Education

Despite this, the fact remains that the overall literacy amongst members of the Scheduled Castes still lags far behind the all India average. The overall low average literacy levels in the country, especially amongst the members of Scheduled Castes, continues to aggravate inequalities in educational capabilities between different groups, which constitutes the existing capability deprivation in India. The first important aspect of these inequalities lies in the vast difference between the constitutive populations of various states. The five states which hold more than 60% of the SC population in the country – Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh (namely BIMARU) – account for the least social development indicators. The disparity becomes much more appalling when we find that the literacy rate of Bihar is lagging behind with only nearly 37% literacy rate, and the case is even worse for females, among whom the literacy rate is only 15.5%. In addition to these regional disparities, there are also large educational inequalities between different castes, between male and female, and between religions. Disadvantaged groups such as the Scheduled Castes, who are at a very low level of education, have it the worst.
Educational Attainment of Disadvantaged Children in India

Table 1.2: Enrolment Ratio of SC students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolment Ratio in (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class I-V (6-11yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>106.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>95.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>115.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>118.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>124.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MHRD, Selected educational statistics 2007-08

iv. Reflection of Quality of Education

The robust education campaigns and enrolment drive initiatives under SSA created positive trends in the enrolment ratio in the primary schooling. The enrolment in primary school among SC children has improved from 84.8% in the year of 1987, to 124.9% in 2008. The country is approaching near universalization of enrolment at the primary stage, but while the enrolment ratio has increased, the quality of education being provided remains a major concern. Getting enrolled will not bear any fruits by itself; rather, it is the meaningful participation and quality experience within a conducive environment of learning that creates upward mobility in the education level. There are many situations in which children mechanically go through five years of primary education and emerge barely literate, leading
to community apathy towards schooling. The poor quality of education is reflected in the continuing low level of completion rates of primary school.

Though we have achieved good enrolment ratio, retention still poses a big challenge, with nearly 68.42% of SC children dropping out between classes I-X. The enrolment ratio of 124.93% in primary school dips to 80.17% in middle school, declines even further to 52.64% for high school, and further, only 27.9% get enrolled for XI-XII. The skewed trend in the higher education levels clearly reveals the disadvantageous position of SC children in progressing to higher education levels. Even among those who are enrolled in classes I-VIII (6-14 years), the reading and writing ability of SC children (58.2%) is comparatively low than children from the other castes (72%). To improve the upward mobility of SC children in education, two factors are vital: one is reducing the dropout rate, and the second is creating demand for the education by creating quality educational experience under a favourable inclusive environment.

Table 1.3: Dropout Rate of SC Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dropout rate in (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I-V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>30.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MHRD, Selected educational statistics 2007-08
According to a UNICEF supported baseline survey which was undertaken in 2005 by the NSSO in 43 districts in the country, there are significant disparities in attendance rates and learning achievements between children from scheduled castes and those from other castes. The percentage of children (6-14 years) attending school is also less; 72.5% for SC compared to 83.6% for children from other castes.

**Figure 1.2: Percentage of children between 6-14 years attending school**

![Bar chart showing percentage of children attending school by category](chart_1.2.png)

Source: NSSO 2005

**Figure 1.3: Percentage of children between 6-14 years who can read and write**

![Bar chart showing percentage of children who can read and write by category](chart_1.3.png)

Source: NSSO 2005
Figure 1.3 indicates the percentages of children who can read and write across social groups. There is a difference between SC children and children from other castes in the percentage who can read and write; which is 58.2% and 72.0% respectively.

v. Literacy Rate of Tamil Nadu

In terms of the Education Development Index (EDI) as per Census 2011, Tamil Nadu is ranked third among all States in the country in elementary education, with 100% retention rate in primary level. Since independence, the literacy rate of the state has steadily improved and become distinctly better than the national average. Both overall literacy and female literacy rates in Tamil Nadu are higher than the national average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Census Year and Literacy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census 2011

Table 4 shows that, compared to India, the literacy rate of Tamil Nadu is much better. In 1951, the literacy rate of Tamil Nadu was only 21%, but in 2011, it has grown to 80%. The gap in literacy rates between all of India and Tamil Nadu was only 2 percentage points during 1951, whereas now it is 6 percentage points. It clearly shows Tamil Nadu is doing much better than many other states in the country.
vi. Education Attainment of Social Groups in Tamil Nadu

The disaggregated data of Tamil Nadu shows that there is a huge variation across caste groups in the completion rate, repetition rate, dropout rate (table 5). Though the gap has reduced a lot over a period of time and the completion rate at the primary level has increased tremendously, the gap still exists. At the upper primary level, the gap between the SC and general categories is much bigger than at the primary level. It clearly shows that as the standard of education increases, the gap also increases. Compared to 2002, the completion rate in the upper primary has increased steeply, but here too, the gap between the social groups exists and it is again bigger in upper primary compared to primary.

Table 1.5: Completion rate of primary and upper primary across social group in TN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Upper Primary</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>80.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>99.8</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>96.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>96.8</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>96.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cohort Study, SarvaSikshaAbhiyan (Note: General is inclusive of both OBC and other castes. It has been calculated based on the available data).
In the case of primary school dropout rate, in 2002, the rate of dropouts from SC was almost double that of among general (table 6). Till 2005, the gap continued, but the gap began to gradually reduce after that, and in 2010, it is almost similar. In the case of upper primary too, the gap between the SC and general was wide till 2005, and after 2005, the gap gradually narrowed and is now very less.

**Table 1.6: Dropped out rate of primary and upper primary across social group in TN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Upper Primary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cohort Study, SarvaSikshaAbhiyan

*Note: General is inclusive of both OBC and other castes. It is calculated based on the available data.*

An intriguing feature of Tamil Nadu’s educational system is that despite the incentives of free noon meals, free uniforms, and free textbooks up to eighth standard, the State has not been very successful in registering an impressive enrolment ratio in Class IX. The State ranks fifth in enrolment at the all-India level in Class X with 37% enrolment.
Table 1.7: Education attainment of boys and girls at primary and upper primary in TN (Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling</th>
<th>Education Attainment</th>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>ST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Completion Rate</td>
<td>76.14</td>
<td>79.07</td>
<td>77.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition Rate</td>
<td>20.01</td>
<td>17.16</td>
<td>18.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dropout Rate</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Primary</td>
<td>Completion Rate</td>
<td>79.91</td>
<td>84.26</td>
<td>82.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition Rate</td>
<td>12.04</td>
<td>8.66</td>
<td>10.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dropout Rate</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>7.07</td>
<td>7.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition Rate V-VI</td>
<td>98.43</td>
<td>98.36</td>
<td>98.25</td>
<td>97.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cohort Study, SarvaShikshaAbhiyan

The education attainment statistics among boys and girls show very interesting information. Both at the primary and the secondary level, the completion rate of the girls is very high in the SC, ST, and aggregate levels. The repetition rate among girls at both primary and upper primary is very less in the SC, ST, and aggregate levels. It shows that girls are studying better than boys, and that they are not repeating classes both at primary and upper primary level. But in the case of dropout rate, more girls tend to drop out compared to boys. It clearly shows that family members are not prioritizing the girl's education. If the girls are enrolled and not forced to drop out of school because of some family related circumstance,
they tend to perform better than the boys. Even the transition rate from V to VI is the same for both boys and girls.

Moreover, the given data clearly establishes that there is a heap of improvement across all social groups from 2005 onwards, and thus the data results could be considered as a manifestation of the benefits of the Right to Education Act, 2005. Here, we need to crucially think whether there is an improvement in the quality of education, or if these are mere numbers shown just to ensure that universal elementary education is achieved. The State has been successful in launching Sarva Shiksha Abhyaan - 10 - (SSA), and revamped the mid-day meal scheme, which was not given much attention since its inception in 1995, which is an excellent decision by the national government.

It is observed that the mid-day meal has improved students’ enrolment. However, just the attendance of the student cannot be taken as effective education engagement; only the upward mobility in the education ladder can be considered for education achievement (Dongonkar, 2008).

Analysis of NSS data reveals the following: (i) Scheduled castes and tribes, other backward classes and Muslims are seriously under-represented in India's colleges relative to their population shares. (ii) This can be mostly inferred from their low higher secondary school completion rates. Thus, the primary distortions creating an unequal representation in college lie at the lower rungs of the education ladder (Hasan & Mehta, 2006). Though the state gross enrolment ratio of SC in the primary is 106.19, it has been decreased to 34.04 in the higher secondary, and only 5.8% were able to reach higher education (Selected Statistics 04-05).
vii. Initiatives by Government to Improve Education Status

Since Independence, successive central governments have been very keen on improving the literacy rate of the people. They have constituted many commissions to analyse the status of education in the country, to take appropriate measures, to address the existing gaps, and to improve the overall education status of the people. Based on the commissions’ recommendations, the governments have formulated many programmes and schemes to improve the status of education.

The first education commission was on university education. It was done under the chairmanship of Dr. Radhakrishnan in 1948. The second commission focused on secondary education under the chairmanship of Dr. L. S. Mudhaliar in 1952. These two commissions laid the foundations for the secondary, higher and professional education in India. However, Kothari Commission (1964-66) was the first education commission to review the entire education system in India. It examined various aspects of education and provided a comprehensive recommendation. During that time in India, a common schooling system was not available. The two prevalent types of indigenous Indian educational institutions – i.e. a) Pathasala of the Hindus; b) Madrassahs of the Muslims – were restricted based on religion, and apart from these two, the modern education system that was introduced by Christian missionaries and British rulers existed, but had not expanded far. Hence, two of the key recommendations were the introduction of a common schooling system and expansion of quality education system. The recommendations of the commission led to the adoption of a national policy on education in 1968, leading to a considerable expansion of education facilities all over India, but this didn't get translated into a successful realization of the intended goals.

In 1976, education was transferred from the state list to the concurrent list by the 42nd constitutional amendment. This was the next major milestone in the education system, which
led to a larger responsibility for the central government. To rectify the lacunae of 1968 policy, an enhanced National Policy on Education was adopted again in 1986. This policy emphasized "elimination of disparities, equal access to every Indian of requisite merit, enhancement in support of research, and interdisciplinary research promotion" (Dongaonkar, 2008). In 2001, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan – literally translating to ‘education for all’ – was launched to create a transparent education management information system. A few of its initiatives include the revival of the mid-day meal scheme, improved infrastructure, enhanced teaching methods through ABL method, etc. With its various campaign methods, it brought a large improvement in the enrolment of the children, but still couldn't do better in the retention and higher education mobility of the children. The next milestone is the 86th Amendment in the year 2002, which included the Right to Education as a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution and put forward elementary education as universal and compulsory for the children between 6-14 years. As a subsequent to the amendment, the Right to Education Act was implemented in the year 2009.

1.2.2 Importance of Learning Environment and Process

i. Knowledge Attainment- Need for Quality Education

In any class, we can observe differential performance standards among students. Equality of opportunity requires an understanding that some individuals and groups of pupils will need more support or additional provisions in order to have an equal chance for success and achievement in the mainstream classroom. All children, without exception, are able to make learning progress.

The Concept of Poor Academic Performance – Poor academic performance according to Aremu (2000) is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other
significant as falling below an expected standard. Baker (1997) described poor academic performance as any performance that falls below a desired standard.

Though we claim that our education system is universal, our approach involves a lot of filtering; whoever performs better will be able to progress and those who are struggling will be left behind. Hence, this creates an environment which is unequal. Inclusion comes when people with different abilities are made comfortable and can continue the education. If someone is consciously or unconsciously restricted from fully participating, then it is not inclusive. The initiatives of the government have made commendable improvements in the education scenario of the country, especially with regards to accessibility. The focus of "access" to education— is more of physical and material such as enrolment, attendance, dropout rates, physical condition, facilities, etc.; all these are very important, but we need to equally focus on the quality of learning and equal accessibility for all.

By placing the emphasis on assuring Universal Primary Education, the government has laid its focus on the quantitative aspects of the education and the quality aspect has received very little attention or failed to receive adequate attention from the policy makers. Learning experience and teaching quality is crucial for imparting interest in the education. More than quantity, quality is important. The quantity of children who participate is, by definition, a secondary consideration: merely filling spaces called ‘schools’ with children would not address even quantitative objectives if no real education has occurred.

There are two main variables in education. One is the education outcome, and the other is the process of learning. Though the country had made remarkable improvement in the absolute number of literates, the quality of learning imparted is still a grave concern. This has reflected mainly in the perception of learning in parents as well as in students. For any student to continue education, the parents should feel the time and the cost invested is worth it and the student should enjoy learning process. If either of these has not been satisfied,
retaining a student with positive academic performance could be a difficult task. Our current system of education lays emphasis on education outcomes i.e. performance, rather than on the process of learning. Tapia (2002) notes that while the current educational system perceives that the student fails if he or she does not pass, more appropriate for determining the academic failure is whether the student performs below his or her potential.

ii. **Key elements for effective schooling**

A person’s self-concept is developed from the kind of engagement he/she has had with the significant others in his/her life. A greater value is assigned for acceptance and rejection by the significant others, because this is the key element of building self-concept and internalization of his or her social image. One interesting study indicates positive self-concept as a risk reducing factor against academic failure, in the case of an unfavourable family situation (Fullana Noel, 1995). For Sanchez (2000), academic self-concept is at the base of future school success or failure, having been formed starting in early childhood education via peer contact and teacher attitude and expectation. So, the key players who contribute to the development of positive self-concept at school are teachers and peers.

One of the important variables which evolves from the teacher attitude and expectation is student intelligence; greater the student’s intelligence, the better the academic results and the better reciprocal appreciation between teacher and student (Castejon and Perez, 1998). Other researches also show that positive correlations exist between performance and peer relationships (Buote, 2001), demonstrating in another study that students failing in school are those most rejected by their group class (Montero, 1990).

Key components which act as determinants of performance of children, except physical and material availability, are (i) quality of teaching, (ii) method deployed in teaching, (iii) learning environment, and (iv) teacher and peer relationship.
iii. Importance of Being Accepted for Effective Academic Engagement

Being a part of the school and being accepted for who you are are very important. Children should not be differentiated on any grounds such as gender, class, caste, or academic efficiency. School climate is measured based on the quality of teacher-student relationship. The feeling of belonging at school is important for interpersonal support and academic outcomes. Engagement in school is an important academic outcome in its own right. It improves performance and validates positive expectations about academic abilities (Skinner et al., 1998).

The goal of the public education system is to provide free and appropriate education to all students (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004); however, this is a complex task due to the unique needs of each child. One researcher who prioritized studying this basic psychological need was Carol Goodenow (1993), who referred to a student’s sense of school belonging as a psychological membership within the school, and she described it as “the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment” (p. 80).

iv. Influence of Teacher-Student Relationship in Perceived Sense of Belongingness of Students

Teachers have the greater responsibility of understanding their students in order to differentiate instructions so as to maximize the potential in each. Instructional support, emotional support, and classroom organisation are the three key components involved in the teacher’s effectiveness in creating conducive classroom climate. Often, teachers are expected to provide both academic and behavioural interventions for students who do not meet expectations with regard to their academic and behavioural performance (Pianta, 2012).
Supportive relationship of teachers is characterized by felt comfort level to engage in open communication. Felt supportiveness is associated with active academic engagement and greater academic and social competence. Further teacher supportiveness also reduces the disaffected behaviour and aggressiveness among the students (Pianta, 2004). It was found in the researches that the teacher relationship is more positive towards girls than boys. Girls and lesser grade children exhibits greater levels of classroom engagement with teacher support (Gest et al., 2005).

The broader indicator of loneliness refers to children’s feelings of dissatisfaction with their social relationships, which are often the result of lack of friends or low social status in the classroom (Asher et al., 1984). The factors involved in classroom engagement and activities may affect relationship quality more than the effect of the child’s characteristics. Hence, the differences perceived in the classroom affects the students perception of support more than his or her characteristics. (Danielson et al., 2010). Furthermore, a large-scale study in which teachers were randomly assigned to classrooms revealed that teaching effectiveness, as measured by students’ gains in mathematics and reading scores, varied significantly at the classroom level, with much less between-school variance. It seems that teacher assignment may be more important in determining students’ academic outcomes than school placement (Nye et al., 2004).

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observational framework is one attempt to conceptualize and measure potentially important differences between classrooms. A defining feature of the CLASS is the view that the most important aspect of classroom quality is not what is taught (i.e., the chosen curriculum), but how it is taught; in terms of emotional support, instructional support, and management of the classroom. Emotionally supportive interactions have been associated with students’ reading and math development as well as social competence (Pianta et al., 2008). Academic outcomes are predicted by the
quality of instructional support received. Of particular relevance to the current study are findings that children in classrooms with high-quality interactions have better relationships with their teachers, as indicated by teacher reports (O’Connor, 2010). Furthermore, teachers who were observed to be patient and encouraging had students who reported a higher sense of community within the classroom (Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1997).

In elementary school, children’s reports on the quality of their relationships with teachers predict their perceived control, positive coping, relative autonomy, and engagement in school (Ryan et al., 1994). In early adolescence, children’s feelings of teacher support predict achievement expectancies and values as well as effort, engagement, and performance (Goodenow, 1993; Murdock, 1999). In middle school, students’ reports of teacher caring predict changes in motivational outcomes over 2 years, even after controlling for previous academic performance and perceived control (Wentzel, 1997). Relationships with teachers are considered especially potent because of the many roles teachers play, for example, as a potential attachment figure, as a pedagogue, as a disciplinarian, and as the final arbiter of a student’s level of performance.

v. Influence of Student–Student relationship in Perceived Sense of Belongingness of Students

Several lines of research suggest that peers play a role in children’s school participation and completion. Studies show that children who are rejected by their peers, who experience more loneliness and social isolation, and who affiliate with more disaffected peers are themselves more likely to become disaffected from academic activities and eventually leave school (Sage & Kindermann, 1999; Wentzel, 1999). An especially influential factor seems to be children’s perceptions of the support they receive from peers. A number of studies have demonstrated a link between children’s perceptions of social and emotional peer
support and their academic goals, engagement, and self-concept (DuBois et al., 1992; Harter, 1996; Murdock, 1999; Wentzel 1997, 1998). Children who report more peer support also find the transition to middle school easier compared with students who are lonely and dissatisfied with their peer relations (McDougall & Hymel, 1998). In fact, Steinberg et al., (1992), although acknowledging the critical role parents play in students’ long-term educational goals, state that “peers are the most potent influence on their [students’] day-to-day behaviours in school (e.g., how much time they spend on homework, if they enjoy coming to school each day, how they behave in the classroom)” (p. 727).

The importance of supportive relationships with classmates has been addressed from an ecological perspective. Students’ sense of the classroom as a caring community is associated with positive academic behaviours, including increased intrinsic motivation and liking for school (Battistich et al., 1997), as well as better social skills and less externalizing behaviour problems (Demaray & Malecki, 2002).

a) Psychological Needs for Effective Academic Engagement

Johnson (2009) reported that schools which placed an emphasis on the affective domain of student development experienced increases in overall student motivation in the school environment. Furthermore, this leads to the conclusion that there is a need to conduct research on how schools can support the social-emotional needs of students. Research suggests that the quality of teacher-student and student-student relationships in the classroom predicts children’s academic engagement (Furrer & Skinner, 2003).

At the individual level, poor academic performance, retention, lack of teacher support and guidance, disliking school or teachers, and taking on adult responsibilities such as work and childcare have been found to contribute to lower achievement and dropping out of school (Barro 1987, Croninger and Lee 2001, Jimerson 1999, Rumberger 1995). Parental
educational attainment, parental involvement, household income and household wealth have informed family contributions to educational attainment (Rumberger 1995; Hauser et al 2000). Analyses of school and neighbourhood composition have found that urbanity and the socio-economic composition of the school significantly predict academic achievement. (Rumberger and Palardy 2005; Okpala et al 2001) Specifically found that the school’s socioeconomic status has as much effect on educational attainment as the individual socioeconomic status of the student, regardless of race, social class, or prior academic achievement, although high teacher expectations and positive academic climate eliminate the school-level effect of socio-economic composition (Rumberger 1995).

Researchers have often considered that a student's sense of belonging is an important variable that increases when schools focus on the social-emotional development of students. This sense of belonging leads to more motivation and positive academic outcomes for all students (Anderman & Freeman, 2004; Goodenow, 1993; Johnson, 2009; Juvonen, 2006). Sergiovanni (1994) advocated that schools often neglect creating a sense of connectedness, which increases a sense of belonging for their students, and reformers should focus on relationship-building within schools in order to improve student outcomes.

The sense of belonging or connection that students develop with their school environment is a highly studied topic; however, researchers have used various names to describe the bond that students develop within their school (Libbey, 2004). Terms such as school attachment, school bonding, school connectedness, and school belonging have been reported; however, all these refer to a basic psychological need to belong.
1.2.3 Stratification of Societal Interrelations and its Influence on Education Attainment

A society is stratified under various categories such as gender, class, caste, religion, ethnicity, race etc. The stratification evolved to create hierarchies, and thus, inflicts inequalities to make some of the people deprived of some of the resources and opportunities, which in turn restrict their capability, make them vulnerable, and excludes them from the process.

In India, exclusion revolves around the societal interrelations and institutions that exclude, discriminate, isolate, and deprive some groups on the basis of group’s identities like caste and ethnicity. Thus, privileges are not attained by an individual identity but are ascertained by birth. It is not an individual identity, rather a group identity. A person enjoys privileges based on the position which the group holds within the society. Thus, people’s life experiences and opportunities depend heavily on how their social category is ranked in a society (Ibid). People placed higher up in the hierarchy always enjoy more access and rewards than the people who lie below them (Ram 2008). Thus, the inequalities are structuralised in the institutions. The hierarchical order of the society decides the kind of accessibility a person could enjoy.

Irrespective of the improvement in the literacy rate among all, the gap between general population and SC prevails. Various data have documented that the gap widens with the increase of standards. The persistence of tremendous inequalities in education is reflected in the levels of access, retention, performance, and outcome among the oppressed sections and the rest of the society. Factors such as caste, class, gender, and religion played a major role in creating inequality among children achievement. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate of scheduled castes was 66.1% against the national average of 74.04%. Among
various factors, caste played a very crucial role which cut across all other factors in depriving the opportunity of the children in pursuing education (Diwakar, 2011).

i. Illusion of Inclusion

To ensure social justice and equity to socially and culturally disadvantaged sections of the society, the constitution directed various affirmative actions to improve their social and economic conditions. Keeping in view the historically disadvantaged position of certain sections of society due to social, cultural, and political influence, provisions in the constitution were created aiming at the establishment of an equitable society with universal development irrespective of caste-class, sex, and religion. This led to the development of specific targeted initiatives to address the issues of social and economic development among weaker sections of the society, such as SC/ ST. The positive discriminations were created expecting to bridge the existing gap between the socially disadvantaged sections and the mainstream society.

However, even with the implementation of various affirmative action such as free and compulsory education, scholarships, and various material assistance, the gap between the general population and SC/ ST in both education as well as economy has not been bridged and disparities persist (Desai et al, 2008). This may be due to under-recognition of the issues of disadvantaged people. It was believed that improving the infrastructures will improve the access. It may be true for material deprivation, such as privileged sections of the society who are culturally and socially strong, but not economically well off. For the socially and culturally disadvantaged sections, the materialistic approach alone may not be sufficient. There is a dearth in the recognition and acceptance of prevalence of discriminatory practices which systematically deny the opportunity and accessibility. In the presence of hostility, mere presence of any material or affirmative action cannot improve the true accessibility; hence,
along with infrastructure expansion, the schooling experience and learning process of SC/ST children need to be looked into.

Social exclusion is a rupture in social fabrics, the defining characteristics of which are that it is a multidimensional concept and that it implies focus on the relations and processes that cause deprivation (ArjanHann, 2001). The term is seen as ‘the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society within which they live’. Sen (2000) draws attention to various meanings and dimensions of the concept of social exclusion. He distinguishes between a situation where some people are being kept out (or at least left out), and the one where some people are being included,(may even be forcibly included) on greatly unfavourable terms. He described these two situations as "unfavourable exclusion" and "unfavourable inclusion". "Unfavourable inclusion", with unequal treatment may carry the same adverse effects as "unfavourable exclusion". It not only affects the relationship between people but also leads to a systematic disadvantage in relation to economic assets and livelihoods, human resources such as health and education services, and political and social participation.

Unfavourable inclusions and hostile environments destroy the very purpose of the affirmative action and positive discrimination. Due to hostility and discrimination, the SC/ST were not able to reap the benefits of these targeted interventions to the fullest and to outgrow the disadvantages of socio-economic development. So, whenever any programme or policy is framed, the discrimination perpetrated against SC/ST needs to be kept in loop, and along with material support, a supportive and friendly environment in which the benefits can be accessed also needs to be built to realise the goal of affirmative action. Educational opportunities must be available without discrimination. Hence affirmative actions should also involve educational processes and not only the provision of the necessary material conditions for schooling, such as adequate spaces, text books, and other learning materials.
ii. Differential Education Experiences of Social Groups

Silver (1994), emphasizes that social differentiation is a process that leads to exclusion insofar as “differences are socially constructed through the unequal access to economic, political, and cultural resources”. In India, social exclusion has its roots in historical divisions along lines of caste, tribe, and the excluded sex, that is, women. These inequalities are more structural in nature and have kept entire groups trapped and unable to take advantage of opportunities that economic growth offers. Even for the people with equal levels of human capital and skills, there appears to be an important element of discrimination that is part of what one would define as social exclusion beyond purely economic considerations. Culturally rooted systems perpetuate inequality, and rather than a culture of poverty that afflicts disadvantaged groups, it is, in fact, these inequality traps that prevent these groups from breaking out. Therefore, cultural factors can play a role in sustaining intergroup differences in wealth, status, and power. Sen (1998) calls these the "relational roots of deprivation," whereby membership in a particular group (women, lower castes, indigenous people, or persons with disabilities) limits the "functioning" of individuals to acquire or use capabilities. “Social exclusion is therefore not about outcomes alone, but about the process that leads to these outcomes”.

Education exclusion is a facet of social exclusion, and manifests itself in a spectrum of social, economic, and psychological inequities. Extreme educational exclusion arises when individuals and groups find themselves systematically excluded from rights and entitlements which are theirs, as a result of their membership of a society, and includes denial of resources and facilities. At the other end of the spectrum, exclusion could manifest as subtle forms of manipulation in the delivery of educational goods and services to favour some individuals and groups at the expense of others, or the reinforcement of negative or discriminatory social
attitudes towards particular children. In these cases, while the effects are often as damaging as when extreme forms of exclusion occur, the proof is harder to adduce (DFID, 2007).

“Inequality of educational opportunities is a reality that has been prevailing in India for generations. In the traditional caste system, education was the prerogative of the upper castes. SC/ST experienced bore the brunt of the the inequality of educational opportunities resulting from the discriminatory social practices of the caste system and the elite-oriented educational system (Chokandre, 2011).

Schooling represents an exemplar institution through which social reproduction of caste, race, ethnic, gender, and social class inequality can occur. Functionalists highlighted the importance of education in creating productive citizens and workforce (Durkheim 1973; Collins 1971; Shultz 1961; Parsons 1959). Education is directly linked to better employment opportunity and economic development. Hence, to maintain social class and to retain the higher order in the society, people who are lower in the hierarchy in terms of caste, sex and religion etc. were always prevented from achieving education development. Higher Education is kept as prerogative under the strong influence of power relations to maintain the existing social positions (Sullivan 2002; Topping and Ferguson 2005).

The individual is not seen as an entity; not even the family is. Only social groups are considered as a primary unit of the society. The kind of social group that the person is affiliated with decides the privileges enjoyed by the person. Social networking and being part of a culturally advantaged group plays a key role in ascertaining opportunities (Dubois 1992). For example, Chatterjee (1993), in his theory of post-colonial nations being the product of elite imagined communities, highlights the creation and expansion of schooling opportunities as a mechanism to generalize and normalize elite language and culture. Instead of schools being a place for acknowledging the skills and knowledge of various socio-cultural capitals, it has been narrowed down to a particular merit system which entitles the interest of certain
capitalist perspectives (Ferguson 1998). For any child, school plays a key role in socialisation, though the opportunity to develop an equitable relationship in the school is not provided in many places. In various studies, the school has been documented as a place of reproduction of inequality among the children (Adams, 2007).

iii. Potential Bias of School Environment

Poor treatment in schools and loss of self-worth and dignity result in dropouts or poor performance in examinations. Thus, it undermines SC and ST students' opportunities to progress to higher levels of education. Economic pressures force a large number of SC children to leave school at an early age. However, this is not the only reason that children leave. Memories of humiliation can also play an important role in the decision to leave, albeit a less visible one (National Commission on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, 1998). Several micro-studies document how neglect and outright discrimination by teachers against SC and ST students is a major reason for the high levels of dropout at the primary level (Drèze and Gazdar, 1997; Batra, 2005). Individual teachers are scorned and criticized, while there is seldom any systematic analysis or suggestion of constructive actions to remedy the situation.

Studies of teacher education programmes are needed to see the types of attitudes and messages which are taught to new and in-service teachers; student teachers and their backgrounds should be researched in order to identify their perspectives on marginalized groups. Reliable quantitative data is not available related to the perception or levels of sensitivity of teachers to caste-based discrimination, but anecdotal evidence and certain smaller-scale qualitative studies suggest that teaching practices in the classroom negatively affect SC children and result in another 'push' factor from primary school (Ramachandran, 2004). "Teachers in India are predominantly upper caste and bring their own understandings
of the legitimacy of caste relations into the classroom. SC children are expected to run errands and are assigned menial tasks such as sweeping and cleaning the classrooms” (Kabeer, 11). The Joint Review Mission of SSA highlighted the importance of training teachers to “address issues of attitude and classroom practice in order to improve the academic performance of SC children” (Department of Education, 2006).

Nambeesan G (2009) suggeststhat a review of education policy and programmes for SC children would have us believe that the major impediments to their education are inadequate access to schools, poverty, and apathetic attitudes of parents. Hence, increasing the number of schools within easy physical access, provision of incentives, and mobilizing of local communities have been and continue to be major thrusts of education policy as far as the betterment of Scheduled Castes is concerned. Caste-based discrimination in education has never seen a mention in policy documents. Despite being 'included' in schools, they continue to experience exclusion and discrimination within these institutions. The study indicates that SC respondents became targets of discriminatory treatment where food was served/eaten together (the mid-day meal), where it was cooked and served to seniors (farewell functions), or where it had to be distributed to guests from the village. The study shows that teachers, a majority of whom belong to the general castes largely ignore discriminatory practices by non-SC children even when attention is drawn to them. Of greater concern are the many different ways in which teachers themselves tend to engage in caste-based discrimination in school. This is most strikingly seen in the division of responsibilities among children within the school. There are also classroom processes that tend to deny SC fair participation in curriculum transaction and a voice in classroom discourse. SC children are often excluded from co-curricular activities. What emerges from the study are the diverse spheres of school life where social relations and pedagogic processes fail to ensure full participation of SC
children, and that they are in fact subject to discriminatory and unequal treatment in relation to their peers.

iv. Caste as a Medium of Restraining Equality

Culturally rooted systems perpetuate inequality and, rather than a culture of poverty that afflicts disadvantaged groups, it is, in fact, these inequality traps that prevent these groups from breaking out. There has been a continued presence of deep-rooted caste-based inequity in the accessibility and availability of resources to the people of the lower castes to prevent the attainment of social and economic emancipation. Despite being charged with a constitutional mandate to promote social justice, various local institutions of the Indian State clearly tolerate and even facilitate the practice of untouchability. For other castes, the impoverishment is mostly due to the economic deprivation, whereas for SC, it is not only economic deprivation but also handicaps in social development due to the existing caste dominated social structures which are discriminative and exclusive. The government is asserting that it has given reservations and quotas, and formulated schemes and policies as a positive discrimination for social and economic development but has closed all the possible paths to acquire these benefits. All sections of the society have benefitted from the initiatives of the government and have shown progressive growth in development indicators across the nation. Despite the progress, a huge disparity exists between the SC and the others. The government creates a scheme/service to provide facilities and opportunities to benefit the impoverished and then lays down the power of accessing and controlling the resources with upper caste Hindus, thus systematically curtailing the opportunity of SC to get benefit out of it. The disparity between the SC and others is very much visible in every sphere of the social and economic development; in the poverty status, nutritional status, health indicators, educational achievement, occupational mobility and political participation (Shah et. al 2006).
Caste discrimination not only hinders SC/ST children from attending school but also affects the quality of education they receive. Therefore, the progress of schooling among SC children between the ages of 6-14 has been low and the dropout rate among them is very high compared to that of the general category (Ingole).

The quality of the educational experience has a crucial effect on the demand for and completion of primary education. Inequalities need to be seen not just in relation to the physical access of children to school but also in relation to the quality of the educational experience, and its ability to maximize the potential of every individual child, build self-esteem, and develop capacities to function fully as citizens.

The qualitative findings about the school experience of SC children at India are appalling. The children belonging to SC and ST community are not treated fairly at schools, and suffer lot of indignities due to their cultural disadvantage. SC students report instances of discrimination practiced by both teachers and peers. Teachers are often not supportive and tend to humiliate SC students. Upper caste teachers especially do not hold high expectations for the SC students, and the SC students were considered unintelligent (The Probe Team 1999).

The IHDS, 2008, paper documents substantial differences in reading and arithmetic skills between children from different caste, ethnic, and religious backgrounds in India. However, these differences persist even after controlling for current school enrolment, grade completion, and parental socio-economic status. This suggests that the differences in educational attainment between people of different social strata are not simply due to the difference in enrolment rates. Even when children from disadvantaged groups attend school, they fail to learn as much as their peers. These findings have important policy implications. Much of the current discourse has focused on the importance of constructing schools or encouraging parents to send their children to school. Very little attention has been directed
towards what happens in schools. Our results suggest that even holding school enrolment and grade attainment constant, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are likely to attain lower levels of reading and arithmetic skills. Since low performance at primary levels is likely to result in lower academic performance at subsequent levels, improving school quality and reducing discrimination may be the next challenge facing Indian educational policy (Desai et al, 2008).

v. Inclusion – Medium for Quality Education

Exclusion could occur through direct exclusion, violating fair norms of exclusion; or through inclusion, but under an unfavourable condition, again violating fair norms of inclusion. In many of the cases, it is unfavorable inclusion. The quality of the educational experience has a crucial effect on the demand for and completion of primary education. Inequalities need to be seen not just in relation to the physical access of children to school but also in relation to the quality of the educational experience, and its ability to maximise the potential of every individual child, build self-esteem, and develop capacities to function fully as citizens.

Achieving education is not mere enrolment but involves retention, progress, and achieving appropriate learning standards. Just by providing anything in common cannot ensure equity in access which can be enjoyed by all. Equitable access means equitable participation which is encouraged and promoted by the environment. Quality education is not only about learning achievement but also concerned with the learning opportunities enjoyed by every student to participate, learn, and develop in a non-discriminative environment.

An education which provides ample space for fullest participation of all students, inculcates tolerance and respect towards others, and is supplemented by positive attitude of teachers could be called as inclusive. Only inclusive education can promote equal opportunity
and participation. Hence, an education which is inclusive is a quality education. Without enhancing inclusiveness, achieving quality education could be meaningless. Learning environments need to be assessed to identify the barriers against inclusion. An appropriate approach has to be deployed to eliminate discrimination, especially among the socially disadvantaged. Education is an effective vehicle for constructing equity among all in both social and economic spheres only when it is inclusive.

When the education is viewed from the perspective of inclusion more than the material such as teaching and learning aids and essential infrastructure, it is more important to acknowledge the processes involved in the learning and teaching environment. It is essential to understand the environment that surrounds the learning processes. The learning is affected by the surrounding; it may foster or hamper the learning ability of the students. Therefore, the dimensions which create and support the learning experience of the students, both at the level of learner and the learning environment, need to be sensitive to social inclusion. In order to inculcate social inclusion of the students, it has to focus on (i) socio-economic and cultural background of the students, (ii) the school and learning environment, and (iii) political will and commitment with appropriate policies and system. Only with an inclusive learning and school environment could the learning ability of the students be improved. Upgrading the content that is taught alone may not improve the learning achievements of the students (IBE, OEI & UNESCO, 2008).

To improve the education progress among all, it is important to provide adequate support in both the physical environment, such as adequate learning and teaching aids, essential infrastructure, adequate and appropriate human resource, proper transport facility, necessary affirmative policies to promote education among socially and economically weaker sections, and safety and security; as well as the psycho-social environment, which involves non-stigmatisation, non-bullying, non-discrimination on the grounds of gender, caste, class,
and religion, and no corporal punishment along with adequate support of teacher and the school management who foster and encourage social inclusion.

1.2.4 Research Studies Conducted

Vimala Ramachandran and Taramani Naorem (2012), conducted a study on ‘Inclusion and Exclusion of Students in the School and in the Classroom in Primary and Upper Primary Schools’ as a part of the national synthesis report. This study found a range of exclusionary as well as inclusive practices. Teachers differentiated between neat and clean children and the ones who were untidy or “dirty”. Colour of the skin of a child seemed to play an important role when special duties were assigned in school, like speaking in the assembly or leading morning prayers. There also seemed to be a clear hierarchy of tasks from menial to educational, and teachers invariably called the best and the brightest, according to them, for constructive tasks, while the poor and marginalized were asked to do menial tasks. Teachers did not make any effort to "hide" their biases and, in fact, they took it as an extension of societal values and practices. This was the most worrying part – that teachers, administrators, and those involved with the school did not perceive this as being an issue. In three of the twenty schools visited in Andhra Pradesh, SC and ST children were seen standing away from the hand pump/tap, even to wash their hands or plates. They had to wait for other children to pour water for them. With regard to infrastructure and facilities and children’s access to them, this study also found a huge gap between formal availability, the status of its use, and even its usability.

Parthiban, (2012), conducted a study titled ‘Exploring the discrimination and caste-based violence aimed at Arunthathiyar children in schools in Coimbatore, Erode, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, and Tuticorin districts in Tamil Nadu, India’. The key findings are that the majority of the students' parents (534) were daily wage earners working as a
coolie in various sectors. 262 children reported being abused and discriminated on the basis of their caste. 607 children reported having been made to clean the school’s bathrooms. 148 children reported having been made to do the household work of their teachers. 228 children reported having been sexually harassed in schools. Almost 50% of children were denied scholarship opportunities. 532 children dropped out of schools mainly as a result of the discrimination and harassment.

Yuko Tsujita (2011) conducted a study on ‘Migration and Child Schooling: A Study of Delhi Slum Households’. This study is based on data collected from a slum survey in Delhi, from November 2007 to March 2008. Out of 200 clusters, the sample was confined to a total of 50 clusters. Totally, 417 households were selected for interviewing, in which the number of children aged five to fourteen, which basically forms the age group covered by Delhi’s compulsory education years, turned out to be 718 in 311 households: 417 boys and 301 girls. The key findings in the study were that the attendance ratio is lower for children in migrant households than for children in other households. This mainly reflects a low attendance ratio for lower castes and females. In spite of the remarkable growth in private schools in urban areas, slum children largely depend upon government schools. Migration tends to adversely affect school attendance. In particular, underprivileged children, in terms of gender, caste, and religion, in migrant households are disadvantaged, especially regarding initial attendance. Caste and gender bias are clearly expressed through expenditure on education, regardless of migration status.

Suma Scaria (2011) conducted research on ‘Does Caste define Inequality in education? Disparities in levels of and Access to Education in a Kerala Village’. The study uses the perspective of capability approach and social embeddedness to understand the inequalities in education. The findings in this work provoke us to look beyond the conventional indicators of education. The old forms of inequalities are replaced by new forms
of inequalities. This is reflected in the glaringly high inequality in the educational attainments of the population. The scheduled castes still stand at the bottom of educational attainments, despite many progressive educational policies and social reform movements. Their enrolment in higher education is relatively less compared to other communities. Also, the study reveals wide intra-group inequality within scheduled castes in enrolment in higher education. The present study also shows that the lower employment potential of the conventional university education dissuades people from enrolment.

Praveen Chokhandre (2011) used secondary data to describe the ‘Educational Inequality among Social Groups in India: A Comparative study of Selected States’. For this study, unit data from National Sample Survey organisation (NSSO) 64th round, on “Participation and Expenditure in Education” 2007-08 of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Rajasthan were used. The findings of the study suggest that inequality related to the social status in Elementary educational enrolment is very less and is consistent among all the three selected states, but enrolment at the graduate and above level in the state of Rajasthan is slightly more concentrated in advantaged social groups as compared to disadvantaged social groups. The results of CEI index for inequality among social groups in elementary educational enrolment suggest that there is very less inequality among SC/STs and OBC/Others in Maharashtra and Karnataka, but it is slightly higher in the case of Rajasthan; whereas in secondary and higher secondary enrolment, inequality is higher in Maharashtra and Rajasthan; and in Graduate and above, SC/STs enrolments are far lesser compared to OBC/Others in Karnataka and Rajasthan.

Daniel Alexandro & Evgeny Kochkin (2011) conducted a study on ‘Educational Expectations of Children from Indian Rural Area’. One of the most important factors that predict educational expectations is the expectations of parents. The income of the family plays an insignificant role in the decision of children to continue education after completing
secondary school. Children who have better achievements tend to have higher expectations. Expectations of parents have a strong positive effect on expectations of children. Children whose fathers work in the non-farm sectors have higher expectations. Students from schools for schedule castes and tribes have significantly less educational expectations than students from private schools.

Dhaneswar Bhoi and Jyoti Ranjan (2011) conducted a research study on ‘Psycho-Social Experiences of Discrimination and the Scheduled Caste Students at Higher Education Level in the Indian State Orissa’. This study interviewed 150 students, among whom 80% were from families settled in rural areas. In the case of accessing the public resources, 54.66% students are still prevented from accessing the public resource where they were settled in. 59.33% students described having been instructed to sit on the last bench during their educational career, 51.33% students felt that they were excluded from their peer group in the playground and during the annual function activities. 66% students were discouraged by their teacher in the class. The most important part of the educational experience here is participation in different “Puja” (literally meaning “worship”) Idol worship in the school premises, where only 20% students were allowed to be involved – those who came from unbanning setup/background. The rest 80% were not allowed to participate in Puja activities. In this study, 58.66% students felt they were neglected / less preferred in the classroom, which is a kind of discrimination which is invisible in nature. 28.67% students are humiliated when they are eligible to get some opportunity. 60.67% students are discouraged and demotivated by their teachers in the educational premises.

Govindaraju R. & Venkatesan (2010) found in their study that child-centered reasons were the key factors for school dropouts, like transient or prolonged illness, accidents, disabilities, early menarche or marriage of the child, age of child, disinterest in studies,
distraction with play or games, feelings of inferiority, and problematic behaviour on the part of the child.

Geetha B. Nambissan (2009) conducted a study on ‘Exclusion and Discrimination in Schools: Experiences of SC Children’. The study was conducted at two sites in the state of Rajasthan, and points to a number of spheres where SC children, despite being ‘included’ in schools, continue to experience exclusion and discrimination within these institutions. The study also suggests that there are institutional spaces within schools that provide opportunities for equitable inclusion. Some of the most important spheres within the school where exclusionary practices continue to flourish are those that are concerned with water and food, which have been traditionally potent sites of caste-based discrimination, such as where ‘running water’ is not available in schools through taps (and hand pumps) and drinking water is ‘stored’ in earthen pots or jars, or served in glasses. The study indicates that SC respondents became targets of discriminatory treatment where food was served/eaten together (the mid-day meal), where it was cooked and served to seniors (farewell functions) or where it had to be distributed to guests from the village. The manners in which identities of caste (and class) constrain peer interaction and friendships, as revealed in the study, are particularly deleterious for SC children, as they circumscribe not only interpersonal relations but also the possibilities to seek resources and support both for curricular and co-curricular activities. The study shows that teachers, the majority of whom belong to the general category, largely ignore such practices by non-SC children even when attention is drawn to them. Of greater concern are the many different ways in which teachers themselves tend to engage in caste-based discrimination in school. The study reveals that tasks considered as being menial and ‘polluting’ (such as sweeping) are more likely to be assigned to children from SC than to those from the general category. There are also classroom processes that tend to deny SC fair participation in curriculum transaction and a voice in classroom discourse. SC children are
often excluded from co-curricular activities. The singing of prayers in daily assembly and performing of worship leads to the construction of ‘sacred spaces’ within the school where SC are likely to be excluded because of their perceived ‘low’ ritual status, as seen in the study.

Kirazoglu C. (2009) reported that some family and family-related issues like broken families, family’s socio-economic level, designation of the parents, and hard working conditions of the family are causes of dropouts. Poor communication between the parents and the school, family’s high expectations, and low educational level of the family are reasons pertaining to school dropouts.

Unni J. (2009) conducted a study on ‘Gender differentials in education: exploring the capabilities approach’. His finding reported that 36% boys and 21% girls were not interested in studies, and dropped out due to this. He found that young girls were engaged in helping their households with domestic duties and taking care of the sibling. Boys were also required for work on family farm or enterprise. Both these were reasons for leaving school early.

Center for Human Rights and Global Justice and Human Rights Watch, (2007), conducted a study on ‘Caste Discrimination against SC or So-Called Untouchables in India’. In the study, it was found that 99% of SC students are enrolled in government schools that lack basic infrastructure, classrooms, teachers, and teaching aids. SC children continuously face hurdles and abuse from teachers and fellow non-SC students, including through segregation both in classrooms and in the provision of mid-day meals. SC children are often subjected to corporal punishment by their teachers. As the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education noted in his report before the 67th session of the then-Commission on Human Rights, “teachers have been known to declare that SC pupils ‘cannot learn unless they are beaten.’” SC labour patterns (migratory and child labour) also adversely affect access to
education. A combination of these factors results in low enrolment, high dropout rates, and low literacy rates of SC students.

Christle C. A. et al. (2007) in their study compared schools with higher dropout rates to schools with lower dropout rates in terms of the school characteristics. The academic difficulty, absenteeism, sense of belongingness to school, and undesirable student behaviour were some of the themes identified as factors related to school dropout.

Duraisamy .D, (2006), conducted a study on "Enrolment and Retention of Girls in elementary Education in Tamil Nadu". Mother’s education seems to matter over father’s education in the enrolment of girl children, as observed from increasing enrolment as mother’s education increases. Percentage of dropout is higher in Chennai than in Perambalur, and higher in the middle stage in both districts. This is because of the concentration on slums. Parents and girls aspire to higher education but express the need for relevant education, employable skills, and fluency in English.

Selvakumar .S ( 2005) conducted “A Study of the migratory parents in Chennai city on the education of their Children”. In this study, the inter-link between the factor of migration and the education of the child was analysed. 95% of the respondents reported that their children’s studies were affected due to migration. 92% of the respondents reported that they do not encourage the children to work, and only a few per cent of the respondent reported that the family income was not sufficient to educate their children. 82% of the respondents told the researcher that getting admission in the area to which they migrated was difficult. 90% of the respondents were not aware of government schemes for the welfare of the construction workers. 30% of the respondents reported that they migrated for higher pay, and the rest of the respondents said that they migrated because there was no job in their native lands.
Battin-Pearson S. et al. (2000) suggest that school achievement is a mediating variable which, combined with delinquency, low bonding to school, bonding to deviant peers, and parents’ educational practices can lead to an increased dropout risk in their study on Predictors of early high school dropout: A test of five theories.

Janosz M et al., (2000), conducted an extensive study on ‘Predicting different types of school dropout: A typological approach with two longitudinal samples’. They evaluated the influence of the student-teacher relationship on the dropout risk using a sample of 134 adolescents studying in schools located in regions inhabited by impoverished communities. Their results indicate that warm relationships with teachers decreased the dropout risk of at-risk students whereas conflict actual relationships affected all students negatively.

Rumberger R. W. (1995) revealed that the students who experience a warm relationship with their teacher are 16% less likely to drop out than students who report a negative relationship in his study “Dropping out of middle school: A multilevel analysis of students and schools”.

1.2.5 Scope of the Proposed Research based on the Review

An in-depth analysis of the studies conducted in the area of school dropout has revealed that factors such as infrastructure facilities, parental support, socio-economic background of the children, migration of parents, motivation of students, and the role of caste in discrimination of SC children play key roles in the decision of continuing education. This provides a better understanding of school dropout in India. However, there are some gaps which could be further studied to strengthen the available knowledge on school dropouts. Factors such as the effect of discrimination, punishing attitude of the teachers, parental support, and peer support were discussed; but how they influence and the degree of their influence on the sense of school relatedness among the dropout children were not mentioned.
in the studies. Further, there is always an interplay between child labour and tendency to dropout. It has not been explored extensively whether wage labour undertaken during the schooling period leads to dropout, or whether children who dropped out become the major source of the child labour work force. Finally, the studies which talk about discrimination have taken the SC community alone and discussed their experience. However, it cannot be concluded that only the SC children are facing discrimination. Another key factor which was mentioned as unwelcoming by teachers was low competence. So, it is important to study the interplay between caste and competence of not only SC but also children of other communities, in order to understand the gravity of discrimination faced by the various social groups. Keeping this in view, it was planned to conduct research to understand interplay between factors such as the socio-economic background of the dropout children, academic competence, discrimination experienced at the school, and their effect on school relatedness.