

A Study of Academic and Infrastructural Input and Achievement of Scheduled Caste Students of Residential Schools of Madhya Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The study is an attempt to examine infrastructural and academic inputs being provided and the outcome of schooling in terms of achievement of scheduled caste students of Residential Schools of Madhya Pradesh.

The findings of the study depicts that there are acute deficiency of infrastructural facilities in Residential Schools during the study period. Achievement of students in subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and General English is not satisfactory. There is a need to create congenial environment to promote learning in the campus of Residential Schools. The levels of achievement of learners are increasing in these institutions, thus the Government should continue the scheme of Residential Schools for scheduled castes and it must be further strengthened.

Introduction

India as a nation is bound by its constitution to establish an egalitarian social order in which every citizen is guaranteed liberty, equality and justice – social, economic and political. It has been the national society with rigid social stratifications, wide economic and cultural disparities persisting through centuries. It is a Herculean task to eradicate these inequalities and to establish an egalitarian social order.

Article 45 of the constitution of the country directs that 'free and compulsory education should be provided for all children up to the age of 14 years'. It is widely recognised that the spread of education plays a vital role in the socio-economic and cultural modernisation of the country in general and social mobility of the weaker sections

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in particular. Many efforts are to be made by all concerned with education to make it liberal in reality. Unless access to education and equality of opportunity and outcome are insured, democracy cannot be strengthened. Right To Education Act 2009 came into effect from 1st April 2010 is a step to achieve this objective. With this India has moved forward to a right based framework that costs a legal obligation on the Central and state government to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in the Article 21A of constitution, in accordance with the provision of the RTE Act.

The directive principles of state policy embodied in part IV of our constitution is a unique feature. Article 46 of the constitution deals with 'the promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections'. It says - "The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation." To fulfill the directive principle, as mentioned above, Central and State Governments formulated and enacted the policy of not only the reservation for SC/ST students in educational institutes but also launched programmes with special emphasis to these otherwise underprivileged sections of the society.

Profile of Scheduled Castes in India

Scheduled Castes are notified in 31 states and union territories of India. The total population of SCs in India is 20.14 crore (census 2011) which constitutes 16.6 per cent of the total population of India. Scheduled Castes population increased by 20.8 per cent in the previous decade. Total Population of India grew by 17.7 per cent during 2001-11 against 21.5 per cent in the previous decade. The variation in the SC population of India and Madhya Pradesh (sex wise) during 2001-11 is shown below:

Table 1
Population of SCs: 2011

(in crore)

	India			Madhya Pradesh		
	2001	2011	Variation(%)	2001	2011	Variation(%)
Total	16.66	20.14	+ 20.8	0.92	1.13	+ 23.9
Males	8.61	10.35	+ 20.3	0.48	0.59	+ 23.0
Females	8.05	9.79	+ 21.5	0.44	0.54	+ 24.9

To protect and safeguard the rights of scheduled castes Government of India is conducting various economic and educational schemes directly and through State Governments. Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) has been introduced in accordance with Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) for tribal. Under this plan fund is released to state governments for the educational and socio economical development of these communities exclusively.

Profile of Scheduled Castes in Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh is the state having an area of 3,08,800 sq km and population of 7.26 crore (census 2011). Madhya Pradesh is the 8th largest state in India having 1.13 crore (15.5 per cent) Scheduled Caste population. The decadal growth of Scheduled Caste population is 23.9 per cent. Forty eight castes are notified in the state. Out of the total Scheduled Caste population 72.9 per cent are rural and 27.1 per cent are urban by habitat (census 2011).

Literacy- Madhya Pradesh and India

Literacy and education are important indicators in a society and play a central role in human development. The present literacy rate of the state is 69.3 per cent and the national literacy rate is 73.0 per cent (census-2011). The same is depicted in the following table:

Table 2
Total Literacy rate of India and Madhya Pradesh: 2001 and 2011

	India			Madhya Pradesh		
	2001	2011	Difference (2011-2001) (% of diff.)	2001	2011	Difference (2011-2001) (% of diff.)
Persons	64.8	73.0	+ 8.2 (12.7%)	63.7	69.3	+ 5.6 (8.1%)
Males	75.3	80.9	+ 5.6 (7.4%)	76.1	78.7	+ 2.6 (3.3%)
Females	53.7	64.6 (20.3%)	+ 10.9	50.3	59.2 (15.0%)	+ 8.9

It is evident from the above table that during the last decade the increase in female literacy was higher than their male counterparts both at national (Females-20.3 per cent, Males-7.4 per cent) and state level (Females-8.9 per cent Males-3.3 per cent).

As the caste wise literacy rate of Madhya Pradesh is not yet been published by the Census, to know literacy status of Scheduled Castes and total literacy of the state and the country we have to take help of census 2001.

Table 3
Literacy-India and Madhya Pradesh (2001)

	Madhya Pradesh						India					
	Total Literacy			SC Literacy			Total Literacy			SC Literacy		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	63.7	76.1	50.3	58.6	72.3	43.3	64.8	75.3	53.7	54.7	66.6	41.9
Rural	57.8	71.7	42.8	55.4	69.7	39.4	58.7	70.7	46.1	51.2	63.7	37.8
Urban	79.4	87.4	70.5	68.0	80.1	54.7	79.9	86.8	72.9	68.1	77.9	57.5

Source: Census 2001

It is clear from the above table that total literacy rate in Madhya Pradesh as per census 2001 is 63.7 and that of SC's is 58.6. Where as at national level the total literacy is 64.8 and that of SC's is 54.7. Thus literacy among SC's in the state is still less than the national average. Both at State and National level, Rural female literacy is less than total Rural literacy. There is a sharp difference between the urban total female literacy and Urban SC female literacy at State level (70.5 and 54.7 respectively) and same is the scenario at national level (72.9 and 57.5 respectively).

Educational development of SCs in India

Following are some of the major educational development of SCs:

- Admission/ Tuition fees are exempted in KVs up to Class XII, for SC students. They are given concession in fees in National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).
- The SC students are given concessional fees to the extent of ₹ 450/- for Secondary Courses and ₹ 525/- for Senior Secondary courses.
- Under the Scheme of "Strengthening of Boarding and Hostel facilities for Girls students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools", 100 per cent financial assistance is given to voluntary organisations to improve enrolment of adolescent girls belonging to weaker sections.
- NCERT operates "National Talent Search Scheme"- 1000 Scholarships in Science and Social Science up to doctoral level, in medicine and engineering courses up to second degree level,

are being offered. Among these, 150 and 75 are reserved for SC and ST students respectively.

- Educational development of SCs is major concern of National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA).

UGC

- (a) Provides financial assistance for the establishment of SC/ ST cells in Universities for the implementation of reservation policy,
- (b) Issues guidelines for the implementation of the reservation policy,
- (c) Provides financial assistance for coaching facilities to prepare for NET conducted by UGC/ CSIR,
- (d) Introduced "Remedial Coaching Scheme" at UG/ PG level for under privileged students to improve academic skill and comprehension of basic subjects,
- (e) Created a Central Pool Data base for SC/ ST candidates.
 - The Scheme of "Community poly techniques" (since 1978-79) undertakes rural/ community development activities through application of S& T.

Engineering Colleges: The higher educational institutions administered by the Central Govt. including IITs, IIMs, National Institutes of Technology, NLUs etc. provide reservation to the extent of 15 per cent and 7.5 per cent for SC and ST students respectively.

Reservation Policy

Reservation in India is a form of affirmative action designed to improve the well-being of peoples of deprived classes, wherein a certain percentage of total available vacancies in educational institutes and government jobs are set aside for people from these communities. Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes are the beneficiaries of the reservation policies under the constitution. The reservation system has received a mixed response from Indians since its inception. It has been praised for diminishing the gap between the upper and lower castes by allowing the latter to enjoy the further increased opportunities as the former in jobs, education and governance by allotting seats exclusively for them. It has also been criticised for discouraging merit-based system (Wikipedia).

According to a recent survey conducted by Human Resource Development, GOI, the percentage of students from SC Communities enrolled in higher education is only 10.2 per cent of the total enrolment (All India Survey on Higher Education-2012).

The debate (Manoj Joshi, 2006 Guru Charan Das, 2006, Arindam Choudhary, 2006 and Malay Choudhary, 2006) on reservation policy also extracted the fact that the students of weaker section should be provided with all facilities in the early stages of schooling so that they may be at par with general candidates, when grow up. Thus special attention must be given, while providing school education to the students of weaker sections (Arindam and Malay Choudhary 2006) some of them are:

- A healthy environment and all possible facilities should be provided to these students.
- Special attention must be given to improve the academic skills, linguistic proficiency and level of comprehension in various subjects.
- Besides normal diet, nutritious food should be provided to them, so that they may become physically and mentally strong enough to compete with the students.
- Rich library should be provided so that self-learning habit should be inculcated in them.
- All possible facility should be provided to meritorious students of these sections.

To fulfill such provisions the State Government felt that the students of weaker section should be provided with all facilities in the early stages of schooling so that they may be at par with general candidates.

Educational Initiatives taken by Madhya Pradesh for the upliftment of SCs- Residential Schools for SC students.

Madhya Pradesh has launched a large number of innovative schemes to promote education especially among the poor and deprived. Educational development of SCs is a major concern of Scheduled Caste Welfare Department, Madhya Pradesh. The department is running various schemes for the upliftment of SCs. In Madhya Pradesh, Scheduled Caste Welfare Department started Residential Schools for Scheduled Caste students at seven divisions with the logic of providing a healthy environment, nutritious foods, rich library, infrastructural facilities and to provide an environment which is more conducive to learning. They are opened in Bhopal, Gwalior, Ujjain, Indore, Jabalpur, Rewa and Sagar in the year 2003-04. The main objective of these Residential Schools is to provide quality education for Scheduled Caste students and to provide them all possible facilities free of cost.

Some of the specific features of the scheme of Residential Schools at Divisional Head Quarters are:

- These Residential Schools were established in seven divisional head quarters. (These institutions are besides the hostels and ashram run by the department). These institutes have classes from 6th to 12th. The total number of seats sanctioned in each of these institutes is 280 (140 for boys and 140 for girls). The maximum strength in each class is kept ideal as 40. Students admitted in these schools are provided with stipend of ₹ 500/- per month and ₹ 100/- per month for nutritious food. ₹ 2000/- per month is provided to each residential school as contingency expenditure. ₹ 30,000/- per year per school is allotted for library, There is also provision for computer education.
- Minimum 60 per cent mark is required in previous board examination for admission. Scheduled Caste students were given admission to these schools in class 6th, 9th and 11th on the basis of the merit list, based on marks obtained in the previous class and marks obtained in the entrance test.
- A committee headed by the Divisional Deputy Commissioner, Tribal welfare supervises the management of these schools.

Though the scheme was introduced in 2003-04 and more than 10 years have passed, no systematic and scientific effort has been made to find out the effectiveness of the scheme. A look at different reference materials and Government report reveal that so far no study is conducted by either Government or private agency at any level and at any point of time. Thus there is an urgent need to undertake an evaluation study of the effectiveness of Residential Schools for Scheduled Caste students in Madhya Pradesh. Therefore, following problem statement was specifically framed for the study.

"A Study of Academic and Infrastructural Input and achievement of Scheduled Caste Students of Residential Schools of Madhya Pradesh"

The study, is hoped, will not only provide the status of the scheme but will also contribute for the betterment and further impetus to the scheme.

Objectives of the Study

Investigator laid following objectives for the present study:

1. To study the status of Academic Inputs of residential schools (Sambhagiya Awasiya Vidyalaya) in terms of the following:
 - Duration of Teaching

- Number of working days
 - Teacher student ratio
 - Teachers qualification
 - Teachers experience
 - Government Assistance
2. To study the status of infrastructural facilities of Residential Schools (Sambhagiya Awasiya Vidyalaya) of Madhya Pradesh.
 3. To study the reaction of students and teachers towards academic inputs provided and infrastructural facilities available in Residential Schools (Sambhagiya Awasiya Vidyalaya) of Madhya Pradesh.
 4. To study the outcome of schooling in terms of Achievements of students of Sambhagiya Awasiya Vidyalaya of Madhya Pradesh.

Delimitations of the study

The present study was delimited to:

1. Achievement of learners is limited to 2007 to 2009.
2. The academic and infrastructural inputs of Residential Schools were measured from 2007 to 2009.

Methodology

The methodology used in conducting the study is discussed under the following topics:

Design of the study

The design of the present study was Descriptive Survey.

Sample

The sample of the study comprised of seven principals, 59 teachers and 209 students. The details are as follows:

1. Residential School scheme for Scheduled Caste students in Madhya Pradesh is implemented through seven residential schools (Jabalpur, Indore, Ujjain, Gwalior, Rewa, Sagar and Bhopal) situated in seven divisional head quarters of Madhya Pradesh. The present study comprises all the seven Residential Schools (Sambhagiya Awasiya Vidyalaya) opened for Scheduled Castes by Government of Madhya Pradesh. They are situated in seven divisional head quarters of Madhya Pradesh.

The duration of the study was from 2006-07 to 2008-09. To further select appropriate sample for the study from these above residential schools, following consideration were made.

- (a) Since in the present study besides academic and infrastructural input, achievements of students of Residential Schools are also included, the learners of class 12th were chosen for the study.
- (b) To know the reactions of learners towards academic and infrastructural input all learners studying in 12th class in academic year 2007-08 and 2008-09 were included in the study.
- (c) To study academic inputs, infrastructural facilities provided and achievement of students data for three consecutive years were collected.

Tools

As per the objectives of the study, for knowing the infrastructural facilities available, academic inputs and reaction of teachers and students following questionnaires were designed by the researcher for the present study:

- Questionnaire for Principals
- Questionnaire for Teachers
- Questionnaire for Students

These questionnaires were designed and developed looking into the need of the content. These questionnaires were also validated with the help of principal and teachers of one of the residential schools for the authenticity of the content and language of the tool before actual use.

Marks obtained by the learners in higher secondary school certificate examination (12th), conducted by Board of Secondary Education Madhya Pradesh was taken as achievement of learners in the present study. Subject wise marks scored by each student of all Residential Schools for three consecutive years were collected from all residential schools.

Data collection and Administration of Tools

Data were collected through survey in all Residential Schools. For administration of tools the investigator personally visited these schools, established rapport with Principals, teachers and learners. Explained the purpose of the study and administrated the tools. Information was collected from principals, teachers and learners of all schools.

Analysis of Data

The data were scrutinised and put in a tabular form. The descriptive statistical technique (frequency distribution and percentage) was used for analysis of data. To analyse the reactions of students and teachers inferential statistics of Chi-square test was employed.

Findings

Findings of the study are presented under the following headings

1. Academic Inputs

- a. The duration of teaching varied from 32.4 to 44 hours per week from school to school and year to year.

This variation may be because of following reasons:

- Variation in duration of single period/class.
- Adjustment of time for organising two shifts.

- b. In the session 2008 and 2009, in all the seven schools the numbers of working days were six days in a week.

In Residential School Rewa, only in the year 2007, the working days were 5.5 days (as one day was half day because of the local weekly market day).

- c. Teacher student ratio varied from 1 to 5 teachers per student in different schools and across the three year duration of the study.

The variation in the teacher student ratio may be due to the following reasons:

- Residential Schools started without sanctioned permanent post of teachers.
- The actual posts of teachers sanctioned in these schools were of *Shiksha Karmi* and *Samvida Shikshak* (para teachers). They leave the school whenever they get a better opportunity, The salary of these posts is not attractive at all. In some schools teachers of other departments managed to get posting on deputation.

- d. The findings about the qualifications of teachers are as follows:

- The percentage of trained teachers varied from 62.2 per cent to 65.9 per cent during the study period.
- Similarly the percentage of untrained teacher varied from 34.1 per cent to 37.9 per cent.
- The percentage of post graduate teachers varied from 86.7 per cent to 93.3 per cent.

- The percentage of graduate teachers varied from 9.1 per cent to 13.3 per cent in the study period.
The above mentioned variation in teachers' qualifications may be due to the same reason described in sub objective (c) above.
- e. Regarding experience the status was as shown below:
39 per cent of teachers have more than 10 years teaching experience
27.1 per cent teachers have less than two years experience.
This variation in experience may be due to :
 - Teachers who are on deputation have higher teaching experience.
 - *Shiksha Karmi/Samvida Shikshak* have very less or almost no experience.
- f. Following government assistance were provided to students of Residential Schools:
 - All students of residential schools are getting same amount of stipend.
 - Besides stipend, the learners of these schools are getting ₹ 2000/- per year for contingency expenditure. This contingency expenditure help them in getting stationery, uniforms etc.

2. Infrastructural Facilities

- a. Infrastructural facilities available in these schools are not satisfactory, especially library, laboratory, playground, common rooms for girls, teaching aids and quarters meant for teachers.
 - The available infrastructure is not able to meet all the requirement of the schools.
 - There is a need to provide more infrastructural facilities in Residential Schools. This will improve the quality of education, being provided in these schools.

Reaction of Students and Teachers

For analysing the reaction of students and teachers descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage and inferential statistics of Chi-square test were employed.

A. Reaction of Students

1. Students agree that infrastructural facilities provided in Residential Schools are not sufficient. Following may be the reasons:

- Most of the Residential Schools were running on rented buildings or some other Government institutions.
- Most of the schools lack facilities of library, laboratory, play ground etc.

There is a need to provide adequate infrastructural facilities in these schools.

2. Students agree that the teachers posted in Residential Schools are not sufficient according to the subjects and number of students. The reasons may be:

- Full time teachers are not sanctioned in these schools.
- The *Shiksha Karmi/Samvida Shikshak* appointed in these schools may not be according to subjects.

There is a need to appoint subject wise teachers according to the number of students admitted in these schools.

3. Students of Residential School agree that they are motivated to learn by Scholarship. The reasons may be:

- Most of the students belong to low SESS category.
- Thus free schooling and stipend might be a motivating factor for the students of Residential Schools to learn.

4. Students of Residential Schools agree that the amount of scholarship given to students is not sufficient.

- Scholarship amount provided to students are not very attractive.

- Only ₹ 250/- pa for boys and ₹ 260/- pa for girls is provided at present.

- This amount is quite meager and need to be enhanced for meet with the present day requirement.

5. Students agree that the amount provided as stipend to the learners residing in hostels is not sufficient to meet out their needs.

- ₹ 700/- pm is given to students to meat out the expenditure of mess and nutritive food in residential schools.

- This amount is less and need to be enhanced to meet with the present day requirement.

6. The students agree that facilities available in hostels of Residential Schools are not sufficient.

- Hostels in most of Residential Schools were running in rented buildings or alternative arrangements have been made.

- Due to this reason, all facilities could not be made available in these hostels by the Government.

- These hostels need to be upgraded to suit the requirement of the learners residing in it.

B. Reaction of Teachers

1. Teachers of Residential Schools opined that there is no need to increase the duration of teaching in schools. The reasons may be:
 - Most of Residential Schools have seven periods of 40-45 minutes in a day.
 - Thus teachers of the Residential Schools are of the opinion that there is no need to increase the duration of teaching.
2. Teachers of Residential Schools agree that working days of Residential Schools are sufficient. The reasons may be:
 - The working days are six days a week.
 - This is the maximum possible working days.
 - Thus working days in Residential Schools are sufficient.
3. The teachers of Residential Schools agree that the number of teachers is not sufficient according to the number of students. The reasons may be:
 - Due to the policy of appointing *Samvida Shikshak*, some schools may not be having sufficient number teachers.
 - More teachers are to be posted in Residential Schools.
4. The teachers of Residential Schools agree that the amount of scholarship/stipend provided to the learners of Residential Schools is to be increased. The reasons may be:
 - The prices of all commodities have been increased,
 - Thus there is a need to increase the rate of stipend and scholarship.
5. In the opinion of teachers, teachers of Residential Schools are well qualified.
 - The same is also revealed in objective 1 of the present study.
 - 86.7 per cent to 93.3 per cent teachers teaching in Residential Schools were post graduate.
6. In the opinion of teachers, teachers teaching in class 12th of Residential Schools are experienced.
 - But data regarding experience of these teachers shows a different story.
 - Only 39 per cent teachers are with more than 10 years of experience.
7. The teachers agree that the class rooms available in Residential Schools are not sufficient. The reasons may be:
 - Most of Residential Schools were running in rented buildings or some other buildings.
 - The class rooms needed for these schools are insufficient.
 - This also matches with finding of objective 2 of this study.

8. The teachers agree that the students are not benefiting from the library.
 - Most of the Residential Schools don't have library.
 - There is a need to provide library facility in Residential Schools. The same is also revealed under objective 1 of the present study.
9. The teachers agree that there is sufficient arrangement of drinking water in Residential Schools.
10. The teachers agree that Quarters are not allotted to them.
 - Most of the teachers have not allotted government quarters in school premises.
 - There is a need to provide government quarters to teachers.

C. Achievements of students of Residential Schools of Madhya Pradesh.

The findings revealed that:

- Overall results of Residential Schools in the year 2007, 2008 and 2009 were 75.2 per cent, 86.9 per cent and 86.6 per cent respectively.
- The maximum percentage of learners who have scored above 79 per cent is 6 per cent through out the study period.
- In the year 2007, 37 per cent learners of Residential Schools scored marks between 45 per cent and 59 per cent.
- In 2008, 42 per cent learners scored marks between 60 per cent and 69 per cent. In 2009, 50 per cent learners passed with marks between 60 per cent and 69 per cent. Thus the percentage of learners passing in higher marks range increased during the study period.
- Students mainly failed in Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and General English.
- It seems that with the execution of the scheme, year by year there is an improvement in the result of Residential Schools.

Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestions

- There is a need to provide better infrastructural facilities as these infrastructural facilities contribute significantly in creating better learning environment and foster the learning of the student.
- It is revealed that either there are no laboratories or they are not well maintained. To enhance the effectiveness of learning, laboratory is one of the important activity places for students.
- Achievements of students in subjects like Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and General English are not good. This requires proper care on the part of subject teachers.

- Concept of remedial teaching or extra coaching may be introduced in these schools especially for students who are poor achiever in these subjects.
- Presently very less amount of scholarship/stipend is given to the students. Looking into the need of the hour there is a need to increase the stipend/scholarship. Scholarship/Stipend should be increased so that it may work as an incentive for Scheduled Caste students.
- As per the provision of the scheme, *Shiksha Karmi/Samvida Shikshak* is to be employed in Residential Schools for teaching purpose. It has been observed that these teachers do not think of accountability, which in turn affects their performance in the classroom. It would be much better if provisions are made to appoint regular teachers in Residential Schools under the scheme instead of *Shiksha Karmi/Samvida Shikshak*.
- As per the provision of the scheme teachers are to be provided residential quarters in the premises of Residential Schools. There is a shortage of residential facilities for teachers. Efforts should be made to construct and allot residential quarters in the campus for teachers of these schools.

Overall it is revealed in the present study after the introduction of this Residential School scheme, the level of achievement of students of these school is improving. There is a need to continue such schemes; if possible this scheme may be further strengthened.

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